

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

January 22, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library starting at 11:04 a.m. on the above-written date.

1. Roll Call:

Present:	President	Mayra Valadez
	Vice President	Linda Blank
	Commissioner	Kelly Besser
	Commissioner	Valerie Lynne Shaw
	Commissioner	Fabian R. Wesson

Absent: None

Also: City Librarian John F. Szabo, Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman, Deputy City Attorney Josh M. Templet, administrative staff, and members of the public.

2. **Opening Remarks:** Board President Valadez opened the first meeting of the year with a warm welcome to all attendees. She expressed her excitement for 2026, noting that this year marks the Central Library's 100th anniversary.

3. Approval of the Minutes:

a. Regular Meeting - December 11, 2025

It was moved by Commissioner Shaw and seconded by Commissioner Besser to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held December 11, 2025. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

4. Public Comments on Matters Within the Board's Jurisdiction:

The Board heard seven public comments.

- Ben Eubanks, William Huang and Sarvath Sathiamaram spoke on a proposal to dedicate the Playa Vista Branch Library in honor of the late Joseph Atkinson, former Senior Librarian.
- Glen Bailey suggested the Library contact the Echo Park Neighborhood Council about the proposed Echo Park branch dedication, and voiced concerns regarding a Memorandum of Agreement for the Friends groups.
- David Ferrándiz and Karen Olivia expressed concern and disappointment regarding the cancellation of the "Read Palestine Week" program, highlighting the program's significance.
- An anonymous patron noted a technical issue regarding the Library's internet access only displaying the most recent post on government social media pages.

5. **City Librarian's Comments and Announcements:** City Librarian John F. Szabo reported on past and upcoming events.

6. **City Librarian's Reports:**

Consent Items

a. **Approval of publishing agreement between Stacey Ravel Abarbanel & Lynne Clark and Angel City Press at the Los Angeles Public Library**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of the publishing agreement between Stacey Ravel Abarbanel & Lynne Clark and Angel City Press at the Los Angeles Public Library for the exclusive license in the copyright of *B is for Birdwatching: A Children's Guide to Southern California Birds*. Notably, this is the first agreement with an author for a children's book that Angel City Press has ever done.

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Wesson to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2026-1 (C-1)

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2023, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved a Gift Agreement to accept the Angel City Press publishing operation and committed to continuing the legacy of Angel City Press by publishing new books that amplify the voices of local authors and preserves the stories of Los Angeles and Southern California;

WHEREAS, Staff will ensure that the required compliance documents are completed and submitted prior to the execution of the agreement. The publishing agreement has been reviewed by the City Attorney and is ready to be transmitted for processing.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report, including approval of the award and execution of the publishing agreement with Stacey Ravel Abarbanel and Lynne Clark for the exclusive license in the copyright of the *B is for Birdwatching: A Children's Guide to Southern California Birds*; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby authorizes the City Librarian and the City Attorney to make technical and clerical corrections, if needed, to the agreement.

Discussion Items

- b. **Acceptance of \$18,400 Library Development Impact Mitigation Fee to fund materials, supplies, equipment, furniture, programming, maintenance, and improvements for the Fairfax Branch Library**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended acceptance of Library Development Impact Mitigation Fee to fund various needs for the Fairfax Branch Library. Mr. Szabo explained that the fees, which are assessed per capita and paid by developers based on a planning-determined radius around a new development, are put into a special fund for the benefit of the impacted libraries. The purpose for which the funds can be used has been expanded over the years to provide libraries with more flexibility, including facility needs and materials. He clarified that the dollars were received in 2023 but were not formally accepted due to an administrative error. The library is now reviewing all of its "831 Funds" (special funds) to ensure they are spent for the benefit of branch libraries and, in some cases, the Central Library.

Discussion

Vice President Blank asked if the mitigation fees are still being assessed by a specific department when their new projects are being done. Mr. Szabo confirmed that the Planning Department does so and requires a contribution from developments that meet specific criteria, such as a library falling within a certain radius of the project. This requirement does not apply to every development.

Vice President Blank asked if the branch libraries which are tied to the funds have identified their specific needs for the funds. Mr. Szabo stated that while the needs for library improvements are known, there is no specific plan to execute the spending of the allocated funds. The plan is to spend these dollars soon because all libraries, including the Fairfax Branch have needs. The funding is being allocated to specific accounts for each library to ensure that the money is spent where it is specifically needed. He noted that Fairfax Branch Library has its own account, and Westwood and Palms-Rancho Park share an account.

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Besser to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2026-2 (C-2)

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2026, the Board of Library Commissioners found that Howard Laks Architects, applied for and received conditional approval from the Department of City Planning (DCP) to construct the Wilshire Community Plan Area (the "project") consisting of 71 residential units to be located at 7901 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the DCP imposed a condition of approval requiring the developer pay a Library Development Impact Mitigation fee of \$200 per capita based upon the 92 projected number of residents in the 71 residential units, which fee totals \$18,400; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners approved the acceptance of \$18,400 for payment of a Library Development Mitigation Fee; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners authorized the City Librarian, or designee, to deposit \$18,400 into the Library Trust Find 831, to pay for library materials, equipment, supplies, furniture, programming, maintenance, and/or improvements for the Fairfax Branch Library; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Librarian, or designees, send a letter to Vince Bertoni, Director of DCP, with a copy to Jerry Montero, Howard Laks Architects, located at 1545 Twelfth Street., Santa Monica, notifying DCP that the Library Development Mitigation fee has been paid for this Project.

c. **Acceptance of \$117,000 Library Development Impact Mitigation Fee for materials, supplies, equipment, furniture, programming, maintenance, and improvements at Westwood and Palms-Rancho Park Branch Libraries.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended acceptance of Library Development Impact Mitigation Fee to fund various needs for Westwood and Palms-Rancho Branch Libraries.

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2026-3 (C-3)

WHEREAS, on January 22, 2026, the Board of Library Commissioners found that Next Century Partners, LLC, applied for and received conditional approval from the Department of City Planning (DCP) to construct the Century Plaza Towers Permit #4 Project (the "project") consisting of 262 residential units to be located at 211 Elm Court and 115 Park Circle, Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the DCP imposed a condition of approval requiring the developer pay a Library Development Impact Mitigation fee of \$200 per capita based upon the 585 projected number of residents in the 262 residential units, which fee totals \$117,000; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners approved the acceptance of \$117,000 for payment of a Library Development Mitigation Fee; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners authorized the City Librarian, or designee, to deposit \$117,000 into the Library Trust Fund 831, to pay for library materials, supplies, equipment, furniture, programming, maintenance, and/or improvements for the Westwood and Palms-Rancho Park Branch Libraries; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Librarian, or designees, send a letter to Vince Bertoni, Director of DCP, with a copy to Rick Arambulo, Woodridge Capital, located at 10250 Constellation Blvd., Los Angeles, notifying DCP that the Library Development Mitigation fee has been paid for this Project.

d. **Acceptance to name the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval to name the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King. Following the June approval to initiate the process, a 90-day solicitation period received 17 comments, all in support of naming the meeting room after Ms. King. Ms. King was

appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners by Mayor Sam Yorty in August 1961 and made history as the first African American to serve on the Board. She served 12 years on the commission, and became involved with national and state library associations, where she championed library access, as she had done in Los Angeles. Mr. Szabo remarked that upon her passing in 1976, the Board of Library Commissioners adjourned the second meeting in January in her memory. Mr. Szabo concluded by expressing gratitude for the widespread support and gave special thanks to Commissioner Shaw for the initial advocacy.

Commissioner Shaw noted that Ms. King was also the first African-American to serve as Board President of the commission. The idea to honor her originated from a visit to the Vernon Branch Library, where an earlier acknowledgement of her had been removed. The suggestion was to celebrate her legacy at the library, and Mr. Szabo proposed naming the meeting room in her honor. Commissioner Shaw spoke with Ms. King's granddaughter, who currently lives in Mexico and hopes to attend the dedication event.

It was moved by Commissioner Wesson and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Blank/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2026-4 (C-4)

WHEREAS, The contributions of former Library Commissioner Leontyne Butler King remain an enduring part of the Los Angeles Public Library's history.

WHEREAS, Ms. King was appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners by Mayor Sam Yorty in August 1961 and made history as the first African American to serve on the Board; and

WHEREAS, Ms. King's dedication to public libraries transcended her service to the Los Angeles Public Library, achieving a national scope. She was appointed to the American Library Trustees Association Board of Directors in 1969, where she became a vital advocate for public libraries across six states: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Furthermore, her active participation in both the American Library Association and the California Library Association demonstrated her commitment to supporting libraries nationwide; and

WHEREAS, On January 26, 1976, the Board of Library Commissioners adjourned their meeting in tribute and respect to Ms. Leontyne Butler King; and

WHEREAS, On June 26, 2025 the Board of Library Commissioners initiated, in accordance with Board policy 1:312, the process to consider naming the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Library Commissioners received a total of 17 comments, all in support of the naming of the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King. Of note, submissions were received from family members of Ms. King, a former colleague and members of the community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners name the Central Library Board of Library Commissioners Meeting Room in recognition of Leontyne Butler King, the first African American appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners.

7. Staff Presentation & Recognition: Five Years of Book Bundles (*Taken out of Order*)

Children's Librarian Anna-Marie Farquhar and Beth Feinberg, Senior Librarian at the Pio Pico - Koreatown Branch Library, provided a detailed overview of the Book Bundles to Go program. Conceived in April 2020 during the pandemic, the program was a direct response to children being unable to visit the library, aiming to deliver books into their hands, boost circulation, and highlight lesser-known titles in the collection. Patrons start the process by submitting a request for books through a webform, available in English or Spanish, on the Library website. The requests are then processed by Book Bundlers, and the completed bundles are placed on hold for the patron to pick up at any open branch. The program serves families with children up to elementary school age, handles around 500 requests per year, and is promoted via flyers and the Library's Parents and Kids webpage.

Discussion

President Valadez asked which are the most active branches that receive bundles. Ms. Feinberg stated that the program sees the same distribution across all branch libraries, ranging from all over Los Angeles. The program receives requests from multiple languages but primarily in English and Spanish.

Commissioner Wesson asked how parents learn about the program, and how books are selected for the bundles. Ms. Farquhar stated that the program is referenced on the Library website and also promoted to children, parents and teachers through school visits. Bundles are curated by Book Bundlers, which include Librarians and also Messenger Clerks, which are staff that shelve the books so they are very familiar with them.

President Valadez thanked Ms. Farquhar and Ms. Feinberg for their presentation and dedication on the initiative.

The Board presented certificates of appreciation to the following Library Department staff: Anna-Marie Farquhar, Beth Feinberg, Carina Sandoval, Diane Estrella, Joanna Fabicon, Laura Duncan and Maddy Gillette. Ashleigh Grayson, Basya Samuels, Beth Gallego, David Tran, Erin Purcell, Graciela Gallegos, Leah Wong, Marc Horton, Martha Sherod, Nicole Harris, Noelle Evangelisti, Soo Jin Kim and Wendy Huss were not able to attend. The Board congratulated and thanked the recipients for their valued contributions to the Library and city.

8. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements

- Commissioner Shaw attended a meeting concerning the relocation of the Dorothy Vena Johnson Black History Collection. This collection, which is the Library's first collection of African American books, was moved from the Vernon Branch to the Baldwin Hills Branch Library. Commissioner Shaw and Commissioner Wesson met with the librarians and plan to organize an event to celebrate the collection.

- Commissioner Shaw provided the following edits to the FY 2025-26 Commissioners Assignments Document: She will oversee Council Districts 8, 14 and 15. Commissioner Wesson will cover Council Districts 4, 9 and 10.
- Commissioner Wesson thanked Commissioner Shaw for recognizing the need to move a large collection of books into a community where the history can be celebrated, recognized, and learned. She is looking forward to working on an event to highlight the collection's presence.
- Commissioner Besser reported on the successful event at the Cypress Park branch in collaboration with the UCLA Library Special Collections Punk Collective, where the meeting room was transformed into an art gallery and zine fair, complete with a punk show. She highlighted the safe and welcoming atmosphere and gave a shout out to Lorena from Cypress Park, and looks forward to collaborating with the Library for another zine-making event to talk about the Punk Collective's 15-year history.
- Vice President Blank attended a magic program at the Westwood Branch Library. She noted that the magician's wife had recently passed away and he decided to proceed with the event anyway, which was a great success, drawing in parents and children and demonstrating the universal appeal of magic. She emphasized that the branch library programs are exceptional because they are not traditional, but diverse, creative, and relevant to the communities they serve. These unique programs help build a sense of community and encourage people to visit the library for more than just reading books.
- President Valadez adjourned the meeting in memory of Renee Nicole Good, an advocate, mother, Minnesota resident, and poet.

Next Board Meeting Notice: The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., and will be held at the Central Library.

9. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mayra Valadez
President

Lynda Achi
Secretary to the Board