

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

April 9, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library starting at 11:00 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 welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. **Approval of the Minutes:**

a. Regular Meeting - February 26, 2026

It was moved by Vice President Blank and seconded by Commissioner Wesson to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on February 26, 2026. 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 four public comments from the following community members: Ben Eubanks, Derrick Blassingame, Glen Bailey and an Anonymous caller.

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

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

Discussion Items

a. **Approval of the First Restated and Amended Contract No. (C-143802) with SJ McCleave Events, Inc. to extend the term of the contract for six months from July 26, 2026, through January 25, 2027.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended an approval to amend the current contract of professional services for Special Events Coordinator SJ McCleave Events,

Inc. to extend the term of the contract for six months. This contractor manages internal and external library events for various city departments and outside organizations. The extension is intended to allow sufficient time to develop a new RFP for the board's approval before opening a new bidding process. The current contractor has been engaged for three years, following an original board approval on July 26, 2023. Previously, services were provided by Debbie Dendrinis, though there was a gap in coverage between her tenure and the current contract.

Discussion

Commissioner Shaw asked which events the contractor has helped facilitate. Mr. Szabo noted that the contractor has recently assisted with an increased number of events for the Mayor's office and other city entities. He highlighted that the contractor is involved in all events in the Mark Taper Auditorium and the Courtyards, as well as all internal festivals.

Mr. Szabo added that the request for a six-month extension does not require additional funding, as the existing contract contains sufficient financial capacity to cover the period. He emphasized that the purpose of the request is solely to extend the timeframe rather than seek further dollars.

It was moved by Vice President 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. 2026-14 (C-14)

WHEREAS, the Library requires the professional services of a Special Events Coordinator to provide professional and technical services to coordinate and oversee a wide range of special events at the Central Library and the 72 Branch Libraries on an as-needed and as-requested basis (Library Resolution No. 2021-24);

WHEREAS, On July 26, 2023, the Board approved a contract with SJ McCleave Events, Inc. (Contact No. C-143802) to provide professional and technical Special Event Coordinator services (Library Resolution No. 2022-40 [C-34]);

WHEREAS, on April 9, 2026, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the First Restated and Amended Contract between the Los Angeles Public Library and SJ McCleave Events, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, additional time is needed to complete a new request for proposal for these services and services will still be required while the process takes place, no additional funding is requested.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board adopts the recommendations and findings of the City Librarian's Board Report; and authorizes the execution of the First Restated and Amended Contract No. (C-143802) with SJ McCleave Events, Inc. to extend the term of the contract for six months from July 26, 2026, through January 25, 2027.

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.

b. Appointment of Acting Secretary to the Board

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval to appoint Management Analyst Emily Wooten, currently assigned to the Business Office to serve as acting Secretary to the Board in the absence of the Secretary to the Board. Mr. Szabo highlighted Ms. Wooten's relevant background, noting her previous experience providing similar support to the El Pueblo Commission. He remarked that the Library is fortunate to have someone with her expertise available for this role.

Discussion

Board President Valadez welcomed Ms. Wooten and invited her to provide a brief introduction and overview of her professional background.

Ms. Wooten shared that it has been an honor to serve the Library for the past seven months. She shared her extensive background at El Pueblo, where she began as a Museum Guide before being promoted to Commission Secretary and eventually serving as Acting Assistant General Manager. Ms. Wooten stated she is pleased to support the Board and committed to serve the Library in any capacity required.

It was moved by Commissioner Besser 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. 2026-15 (C-15)

WHEREAS, a staff member from the Library Department needs to be appointed by the Board as Secretary to the Board authorizing that employee to sign resolutions, minutes, contracts, letters, and legal documents when the Secretary to the Board is absent due to illness, vacation, jury duty, etc.; and

WHEREAS, designating a staff member as Secretary to the Board ensures that the Board Office is properly staffed for Board Meetings and for processing documents prior and after the meetings:

RESOLVED, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) authorizes Emily Wooten, Management Analyst, currently assigned to the Business Office to serve as Secretary to the Board during the absence of the Secretary to the Board.

c. Approval to dedicate the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Filipino-American novelist, poet and labor activist Carlos Bulosan

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of the dedication of the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Filipino-American novelist, poet, and labor activist Carlos Bulosan. This follows a board-approved recommendation from November 2025 to initiate the formal dedication process. The Library conducted an extensive public outreach

process that garnered 121 comments, all of which were in support of the recommendation. Additionally, Mayor Karen Bass provided a formal letter expressing her strong support and enthusiasm for the dedication. Support for the initiative extends to local community organizations, including the Echo Park Neighborhood Council. The Board report also includes biographical information highlighting Bulosan's history as a dedicated user of the Los Angeles Public Library in the 1930s. Bulosan frequently attributed his self-education and literary career to the books and resources found in public libraries, creating a profound historical connection to the system. Mr. Szabo concluded by recommending full approval of the dedication in honor of Bulosan's lasting legacy.

Board President Valadez remarked on the volume of comments received, noting representation and support from different corners of the city. Stating that endorsements from leaders such as the Filipino Workers Center, the Historic Filipino Town Coalition and two City Council members demonstrate the overall and overwhelming support for this dedication.

Commissioner Besser shared a moving anecdote about two community elders who visited the Central Library in search of a Centennial stamp and connected with Board Secretary Lynda Achi. Ms. Achi confirmed the visit and noted that they presented a formal written letter of support for the Carlos Bulosan dedication. Commissioner Besser expressed that this personal support, particularly from elders navigating the digital divide, was deeply moving.

Commissioner Besser highlighted the profound connection between Carlos Bulosan and the Los Angeles Public Library by citing a passage from the introduction to his memoir, *America Is in the Heart*, written by Carey McWilliams. The passage illustrates Bulosan's reliance on the library for his self-education and writing, stating that during a period of hospitalization, he read "a book a day," and when he was unable to work, he "spent long hours at the Los Angeles Public Library" and gained knowledge that he 'knew enough of it to carry for a lifetime of writing.'

It was moved by Commissioner Besser 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. 2026-16 (C-16)

WHEREAS, City Librarian John F. Szabo received a letter from Mayor Karen Bass on October 3, 2025 endorsing the dedication of the Echo Park Branch Library in honor of Carlos Bulosan; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bulosan immigrated to the United States at the age of seventeen, where he soon encountered the harsh realities of racial discrimination and exploitation as a service worker. Despite these challenges, emerged as an important labor organizer, advocating for workers' rights and equality with an unwavering dedication to education; and

WHEREAS, By the late 1940s, Mr. Bulosan had risen from a laborer to an internationally recognized writer and activist. A self-educated thinker, he used

his work to expose the injustices faced by Filipino American immigrants and to advocate for equality and civil rights; and

WHEREAS, Bulosan's legacy continues to inspire Filipino and Asian American communities and reflects the library's mission to honor voices that champion knowledge, inclusion, and social justice; and

WHEREAS, The Echo Park Branch Library serves the Historic Filipinotown community; and

WHEREAS, On November 13, 2025 the Board of Library Commissioners initiated, in accordance with Board policy 1:312, the process to consider dedicating the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Carlos Bulosan; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Library Commissioners received a total of 121 comments, all in support of the dedication of the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Carlos Bulosan; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners dedicate, in accordance with Board policy 1:312, the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Filipino-American novelist, poet and labor activist Carlos Bulosan.

7. Staff Presentation: California Collection

Ana Campos, Assistant Director of Central Library introduced Librarian Kelly Wallace, California History Subject Specialist. Ms. Wallace provided a comprehensive overview of the California Index, a unique, in-house, free, and accessible research tool created by the Los Angeles Public Library. The California Index can be accessed through the library indexes and through TESSA, the home for the library's digital collections. This index helps users quickly locate material—including books, articles, photos, and ephemera—related to people, places, and events important to California, with an emphasis on Southern California. Its core value lies in indexing materials often ignored by larger research libraries, such as community newspapers and defunct publications. The index is particularly strong in areas such as Southern California Architecture, neighborhood histories, ethnic groups, notable events, and transportation. The system, which was accessed 5,663 times in 2025, is currently migrating from the Magic system to Presto, after which future plans include linking California Index entries to the library's oral history collection and implementing a new workflow for adding scanned images.

Board President Valadez thanked Ms. Wallace for her detailed and thoughtful presentation.

8. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements

- Board President Valadez shared that during her recent travels to Sacramento, she visited the Sacramento Central Library. She remarked that while the Los Angeles Central Library

remains her favorite, she enjoyed exploring other library systems, which serve as a wonderful reminder of the vital role libraries play within their communities.

- Vice President Blank noted that she also enjoys visiting local libraries in the counties she visits.
- Commissioner Besser shared her excitement on a collaboration with the UCLA Library Special Collections, Punk Collective and the Van Nuys Branch Library to host a zine-making workshop.
- Commissioner Shaw congratulated Madeline Peña Feliz on her recent promotion as Director of the Engagement and Learning Division.

Next Board Meeting Notice: The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., and will be held at the Central Library.

9. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 p.m.

ATTEST:

Mayra Valadez
President

Lynda Achi
Secretary to the Board