

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

May 12, 2022

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

1. Roll Call:

Present:	President	Bích Ngọc Cao
	Vice-President	Kathryn Eidmann
	Commissioner	Dale Franzen
	Commissioner	Josefa Salinas

Absent:	Commissioner	Arianne Edmonds
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Also present via teleconference: City Librarian John F. Szabo; Asst. City Librarian Susan Broman; Deputy City Attorney Basia Jankowski; Library staff and members of the public.

2. Opening Remarks: None

3. Approval of the Minutes: Regular Meeting - April 14, 2022

It was moved by Vice President Eidmann and seconded by Commissioner Franzen to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 14, 2022. The motion passed with 3 Ayes (Cao/Eidmann/Franzen/Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Edmonds).

**4. Public Comments on Matters
Within the Board's Jurisdiction:** None.

5. City Librarian's Comments

and Announcements: City Librarian John F. Szabo reported that he was unable to attend the previous two Board meetings due to scheduling conflicts with the Mayor's State of the City Address event and the City Council Budget and Finance Committee Meetings. He thanked Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman and Central Library Director Kren Malone for representing him and providing the announcements. He proceeded to report the following information:

Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month: Mr. Szabo pointed out that it was in this month, last year, that AAPI Heritage Month was launched with The Linda Lindas at the Cypress Park Branch Library. In April, they gave another concert in the Central Library's Literature Department as part of the NPR Tiny Desk Series, and they will be performing at the Hollywood Bowl on October 6.

LAPL wins two Webby Awards: The Los Angeles Public Library won in the two categories it was nominated: Social Diversity & Inclusion for “AAPI Heritage Month Kick-off with The Linda Lindas” and the People’s Voice Award. Mr. Szabo said the Webby is the leading international award honoring excellence on the Internet. He said the viral video of the Linda Lindas is a gift that keeps on giving and he thanked everyone who voted for the Library. He noted how important the Library’s social media channels are and how creative Librarians and staff are with Social media content.

30th Anniversary of the 1992 L.A. Civil Unrest: The LAPL’s Changing Tones team held an online and in person screening of the film, “*The Fire This Time*,” followed by a panel discussion composed of local African American civil rights and civic leaders including Capri Maddox, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department. They talked about the state of race relations in Los Angeles 30 years ago, and a possible look ahead to the future, moderated by award-winning NBC4 Journalist Beverly White. Mr. Szabo noted that Historic Black College and University leaders in Ohio, Virginia and Texas, are sharing with their students the YouTube video of panel discussion. Also a teen program was held online with actor John Cho’s new middle grade novel, *Troublemaker*, with a panel discussion with former City Councilmember Michael Woo; author and filmmaker Carol R. Park; and teen moderators.

Notable Visits to the Library:

- **New LAUSD Superintendent Alberto Carvalho visited the Central Library during National Library Week:** Mr. Szabo thanked Board President Cao for inviting Superintendent Albert Carvalho to the Central Library, which included a tour to the Octavia Lab. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss new opportunities for the future. To date, the Library has issued over 800,000 Student Success Library cards to L.A. Unified students.
- **Representative Nanette Diaz Barragán and ALA President-Elect Lessa Pelayo-Lozada toured the San Pedro Regional Branch:** Both visited the branch last month. Congresswoman Barragán, who represents the Bay Area, participated in the first in-person storytime held at the branch since the pandemic. Mr. Szabo said he spoke about emergency conductivity funds with the congresswoman and how important they are to address digital equity. Ms. Pelayo-Lozada works at the Palos Verdes District Library, but lives in San Pedro.
- **Federal Communications Commissioner Geoffrey Starks** and Brenda Shockley, the City’s Chief Equity Officer, staff from the Mayor’s Office, and a team from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) came to Central Library to discuss our partnership with HACLA and our digital equity and inclusion efforts in the community.

LA Times Festival of Books: The Library participated in the first in-person *L.A. Times* Festival of Books since the pandemic. Staff was on hand at three LAPL booths at the USC campus. Children’s Librarians held interactive and bilingual storytimes on stage, and staff interacted with thousands of community members at the booths. During the two-day festival, staff interacted with 9,450 attendees, issued 1,219 library cards and

distributed over 7,000 promotional items and 826 free books from the ever-popular Book Bike.

Central Library glass-enclosed Study Rooms: Central Library's Literature and Fiction and Business and Economics Departments now offer a total of 16 glass-enclosed study rooms available for patron use. They have been getting great use, with 538 reservations in just their first three months.

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles Celebrates 30th Anniversary with Passport Challenge: The Library Foundation of Los Angeles (LFLA) has created the 30th Anniversary Passport Challenge to encourage patrons to visit at least 30 LAPL libraries in 2022. Also, a new President and CEO of LFLA will be coming onboard in June.

Overground Railroad: The Green Book and the Roots of Black Travel in America: This book was recently released as an adaptation for young adults. Librarian Amanda Charles interviewed its author Candacy Taylor with questions submitted by the Teen Council and also discussed LAPL's collection of Green Books, which is the second largest collection in the country and used by Taylor for early research on the topic.

Aphasia Book Club: The Aphasia Book Club at the Echo Park Branch is for people who have been diagnosed with aphasia and it is known to be the only one of its kind at a public library in all of North America. It was recently highlighted in an *LA Times*' article about actor Bruce Willis' diagnosis of aphasia.

Black Maternal Health Week: LAPL offered three streaming programs focused on self-care, wellness and joy for African American women and their families. This week aims to raise awareness on maternal health inequity to improve maternal health outcomes. Mr. Szabo said this is important work the Library is doing to address social disparities.

The Source gets media coverage: Director of Central Library Services Joyce Cooper was interviewed by The *LAist* and by *La Opinión* on current and future library resources for people experiencing homelessness to connect them to The Source, which is the LAPL's one-stop shop to get help with employment assistance, social services and other critical resources.

Library Experience Office media coverage: The Library Experience Office was recently covered by Spectrum News for a story on the Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for mental health and social services.

LAPL's Brockman Gallery Archive loans poster to Hammer Museum: The poster titled, *Crenshaw Wall Celebration* (1976), was loaned for the Hammer Museum exhibition: *Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation*. The poster features a group portrait of artists in the Los Angeles Street Graphics Committee, including Ulysses Jenkins, in front of a mural on the Crenshaw Wall. The exhibition runs through May 15.

Budget Update: The Mayor released his budget on April 20th. All of the funding for the Library Experience Office (LEO) was approved, and language about the mission of the LEO was featured in the budget document. Staff attended the Budget and Finance Committee meeting and answered questions from councilmembers and received great comments about the important work libraries do and how the budget has real impact on the people of Los Angeles.

6. City Librarian's Reports:**Consent Item(s)**

It was moved by Commissioner Salinas and seconded by Commissioner Franzen to approve the following resolutions. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Cao/Eidmann/Franzen/Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent during vote: 1 (Edmonds).

a. Approval of Findings to Continue

Teleconference Meetings Pursuant to AB 361: APPROVED.

(Public Hearing was held at the Regular Meeting of October 14, 2021.)

Determination in accordance with AB 361 Section 3 (e)(3) that, while the state of emergency due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as originally proclaimed by the Governor on March 4, 2020, remains active and/or state or local officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote social distancing, this legislative body has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency and that the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of the members to meet safely in person and/or state or local officials continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing.

**b. Recommendation to accept a gift from the grant
from the California Humanities Library Innovation
Lab (LIL) for the Woodland Hills Branch Library's
"Khanah, A Place of Belonging" program series****LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2022-16 (C-11)**

WHEREAS, On March 8, 2022, The California Humanities has announced the 2022 round of Library Innovation Lab (LIL) awards. The Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) - Woodland Hills Branch Library has been awarded \$5,000 for its project entitled "Khanah, a Place of Belonging." This grant will be utilized to create multigenerational programming and resources to provide a welcoming, safe, and creative space for Afghan refugee families who are being resettled in the Los Angeles area; and

WHEREAS, These funds must be accepted by the Board of Library Commissioners to activate this award; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners accept the California Humanities LIL grant of \$5,000 for the Woodland Hills Branch Library's "Khanah, a Place of Belonging" for Fiscal Year 2021/22 and 2022/23; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the funds be deposited into Trust Fund 419, Account 370.

Discussion Items**c. Recommendation to award contract to the
YMCA) of Metropolitan Los Angeles to provide
Immigration Integration and Immigration Assistance Services**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended awarding a contract to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Metropolitan Los Angeles, which was one of the twelve (12) proposals to be responsive to the RFQ requirements for consultants to provide on-call and as-needed immigration integration and immigration assistance services for the Library.

It was moved by Commissioner Salinas and seconded by Commissioner Franzen to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 3 Ayes(Cao/Franzen/Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent: 2 (Eidmann/Edmonds).

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2022-17 (C-12)

WHEREAS, On June 25, 2020, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the release of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to establish a list of pre-qualified consultants to provide on-call and as-needed immigration integration and immigration assistance services for the Library (Resolution No. 2020-22); and

WHEREAS, On August 26, 2020, the Library received twelve (12) proposals in response to the RFQ, including the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Metropolitan Los Angeles, and an evaluation committee found all twelve (12) proposals to be responsive to the RFQ requirements; and

WHEREAS, The Board found, in accordance with Charter Section 1022, that it is more economical and feasible for independent contractors to perform services than using City staff; and

WHEREAS, On May 12, 2022, Library staff recommended that the Board award a contract to the Young Men's Christian Association of Metropolitan Los Angeles to provide as-needed and as-requested immigration integration and immigration assistance services to the Library for a term of three (3) years with a contract amount not to exceed \$500,000 per contract year. No amount of work will be guaranteed and the work shall be awarded on an as-needed basis; and

WHEREAS, The proposed contract includes a process that Library staff will utilize to select a contractor for specific immigration integration and immigration assistance work during the contract term; and

WHEREAS, Sufficient funds are available in the Contractual Services Account 3040 of the Library's operating budget to compensate the contractor for services; and

Library Resolution
No. 2022-17 (C-12) Cont.

THEREFORE, RESOLVED, That the Board adopts the Board Report's Recommendations and Findings and awards a contract to the Young Men's Christian Association of Metropolitan Los Angeles to provide as-needed and as-requested immigration integration and immigration assistance services for the Library; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Library and City Attorney be authorized to make technical changes, if needed, to the contract; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board President is authorized to execute the contract in accordance with City policies and guidelines.

7. Oral Presentation on the Patron Experience Survey

Lauren Skinner, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, provided an overview on the findings of the Patron Experience Survey conducted last year. She noted that the survey was conducted during the rolling reopening of the Library and that the pandemic may have impacted the survey. She said patrons participated voluntarily with more than 20,000 completing the survey and many answered the open ended questions, with some adding thank you comments. She said responses represented all 73 locations. She noted that they would have liked to see more representation and she is encouraged that the vast majority of patrons feel both welcome and safe at the library. She stated that the most common requests were for more of what people already love about the library. She noted the data is overwhelmingly positive; however, staff would have liked to see more participation from Latinos in Los Angeles to better reflect the makeup of the city. Targeted outreach was part of the survey effort.

Ms. Skinner stated that the survey is part of an ongoing process in asking patrons for feedback, and the survey is only one tool that can serve as a baseline as the Library continues exploring the patron experience and applying the lessons learned. She introduced the survey team that was made up of Wicked Bionic and their partner agency, EvalCorp. She said they were selected from the Request for Qualifications list to design and administer the patron survey, and her office collaborated with them throughout the process.

Ms. Skinner introduced Carlos Sapene, Chief Strategy Officer at Wicked Bionic, who provided outreach support for the survey and media campaigns to help engage patrons. She also introduced Dr. Kristin Donovan, Principal Consultant at EvalCorp, who provided survey design and implementation, and oversaw data analysis and report development. Dr. Donovan has more than 20 years of experience conducting survey initiatives on behalf of municipal, county, state and federal government agencies and community based nonprofits.

Carlos Sapene from Wicked Bionic spoke about the purpose and scope of the survey that was conducted from September 27 through October 31, 2021, via online and print in six languages (Armenian, Chinese, English, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog). He said the purpose was to collect information on patrons' experience with library

services as welcoming, safe and useful. The survey was conducted within four months of the Library's reopening following pandemic closures. The Survey was composed of 14 items and it was voluntary and patron initiated, and focused on library card holders. Promotion included email distribution to library's newsletter subscribers, library's social media channels, media campaigns, on the library's website, and used QR code banners in all six languages at all libraries.

Dr. Kristen Donovan, EvalCorp, provided information on the data results from the survey, starting with demographics such as age, gender, race, and ethnicity. She said almost 24,000 individuals responded representing all 73 locations, with 85% completing the survey. The data was analyzed by system and by region. The answers were generally consistent, not only regionally, but also as aggregate. She noted that a completion rate of 85% is an important indicator because typically survey completion rates for similar length surveys usually average 56-63%. The responses also showed a high level of engagement by the inclusion and length of the responses provided. Many patrons expressed thankfulness, love of the library, appreciation and how meaningful the library is to them.

Dr. Donovan stated that the patron experience survey asked participants to rate the Library on the following categories: I feel welcome at the library, the library is quiet, the library is clean, the library is well lit inside and outside, I feel safe at the Library (not COVID related). Overall, more than 80% strongly agreed on all of these items. Another important item was about the number of security personnel, and results show that 7 out of 10 felt that the number of security personnel was just right; 28% expressed it was too few, and 2% reported that in their perception it was too many. The survey also allowed participants to select items that would be helpful to have at the library. The top two items selected were more books, materials, or resources (57%); and second, more programs for adults and older adults (38%).

Dr. Donovan stated that the survey also included open-ended questions such as, "What would increase your feeling of being welcomed and safe at the library?" She said more than 95% comments were themed into a total of seven categories: Environmental Safety, Persons Experiencing Homelessness, Staff, Security/Police Presence, Library Services and Materials, Cleanliness, and Community Outreach. She noted that participants also shared comments of thanks and appreciation. In summary, she said the nearly 24,000 responses received from across the city provide a baseline to understand what's being perceived as working well, and most importantly, how to continue to enhance the library experience for all patrons.

Dr. Donovan pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the levels of engagement, and LAPL libraries were reopening when the survey was administered. This may have impacted the number of patrons coming into the library and taking a survey on paper, as well the number of people eager or not eager to complete the survey online. They assessed that email linking to the survey was the most effective outreach strategy and saw spikes in responses after emailing a follow up reminder and sending the initial invite to the survey.

Ms. Skinner stated that staff recognizes the value of the information gathered and now has a roadmap for the next steps, noting that surveys are not the only way or even the best way to reach some communities, and that LAPL would like to hear from everyone. She stated that the Library will share the results with the patrons and will work on implementing some of the suggestions so they know we have heard them. She stated

that in future opportunities, they want to expand outreach so they can hear from underrepresented groups and non-represented groups. She concluded the presentation with a quote from a patron that completed the survey, "We have relied on your online services during the pandemic. They have been invaluable. We read more books during the pandemic than in many years. Thanks!"

Discussion

Commissioner Salinas said she was pleased that many responses were received and suggested conducting surveys at large public events to reach out to people not using the library yet and asking participants what would make them come to the Library. She said it would be interesting to know what a person, who is not a library card holder, would like to see at a library.

Ms. Skinner said that LAPL has discussed and will be considering a community survey targeting people who aren't yet library users.

Board President Cao noted that the male/female demographic was very wide, with 66% percent of participants being female. Ms. Skinner noted that was not very uncommon in surveys.

Board President Cao asked if there was anything they learned from the report that would make them change how they are doing particular things. Ms. Skinner said that there are some specific suggestions that they will be sharing in their report and findings that get into more granular detail within the regions; and there are even some suggestions for particular branches that will be considered.

Vice President Eidmann said she noticed that in the demographics there weren't many comments from people under 25 and asked if there had been any thought given to how they could gather more feedback from young people in the future.

Ms. Skinner replied that staff has discussed that email may not be the most attention getting for that age group. They also discussed that it might have been related to the rolling reopening, during which time the Teen Councils had not returned yet. She said going forward they will be outreaching through the Young Adult Librarians to use their connections.

Board President Cao thanked the presenters and the staff for all the work put into this project.

8. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements

Board President Cao announced that the next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 11:00 a.m., via Teleconference.

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

ATTEST:

Bích Ngọc Cao
President

Raquel M. Borden
Board Executive Assistant