

# **MINUTES**

## **BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**July 13, 2023**

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:**

<b>Present:</b>	Vice-President	<b>Kathryn Eidmann</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Linda Blank</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Valerie Lynne Shaw</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Hiram Sims</b>

**Absent:** None

**Also present:** City Librarian John F. Szabo, Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman; Deputy City Attorney Josh Templet; Library staff and members of the public.

**2. Opening Remarks:** None.

**3. Approval of the Minutes:** Regular Meetings - May 25, 2023 and June 8, 2023

It was moved by Commissioner Shaw and seconded by Commissioner Sims to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meetings held on May 25, 2023 and June 8, 2023. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Blank/Eidmann/Shaw/Sims); Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

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

**5. City Librarian's Comments**  
**and Announcements:** City Librarian John F. Szabo reported the following:

**Libraries/Cooling Centers:** During the summer libraries serve as cooling centers, and during heat emergencies, bottled water is provided in libraries. Mr. Szabo said special effort is made to notify local media to inform the public that libraries are cooling centers.

**Street Vendor Financial & Digital Literacy Fair:** LAPL held its first Street Vendor Financial & Digital Literacy Fair, which drew a crowd of more than 100 vendors to Central Library for a day of presentations, workshops, and networking. After a presentation on "Be a Successful Street Vendor/Sea Un Vendedor Ambulante Exitoso," attendees could get assistance in using the mobile phone micro-courses developed as part of the program. Channel 35's LA This Week featured a story showing the Library's work in this area.

**Reflections on the U.S. - Korea Alliance: A Humanistic Perspective:** This special event was held at the Central Library to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Korea-US alliance. The Los Angeles Public Library collaborated with the Korean Library Association and with the local consulate of the Republic of Korea, and the Consul General of the Republic of Korea to promote the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism "Humanities on the Road" project. Because this program was very successful at libraries throughout the Republic of Korea, they decided to take it abroad to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC and to the Los Angeles Public Library.

**Firefighter Storytime:** Firefighters from Los Angeles Fire Department Station 29 showed up in a firetruck and dressed in full protective gear at the Pio Pico-Koreatown Branch Library to present Firefighter Storytime to children and their families. More than 160 people attended and looked around the fire engine.

**Summer With the Library Artist at Chinatown:** Mr. Szabo said that one of the great things about the Summer Reading program each year is that the artist who does the art for the program is also asked to do a program with kids. Summer Reading artist Brenda Chi did a great job with the nearly 30 children and teens that attended a tutorial workshop at the Chinatown Branch, including Eloise from the Asian and Latinx all-girl rock band, The Linda Lindas, who still comes back and gives love to the library and participants.

**Citizenship Ceremony:** The Library hosted a citizenship ceremony at the Central Library around Independence Day. Mr. Szabo said that 63 individuals from 27 countries became citizens. The ceremony was held in partnership with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Kren Malone, Director of Central Library Services, welcomed everyone and spoke about the Library at the event.

**NASA Astro Camp:** The Alma Reaves Woods-Watts Branch Library has a NASA Astro Camp partnership this summer. The 10-part series incorporates science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) topics into Storytime and crafts programs. The Watts Branch staff began a series of programs virtually during the school year, which reached a large audience and now it's carrying it over for more hands-on activities as part of the summer reading in the branch. Also, STEM Code workshops for 4 to 8 grades are offered at the branch library to create squishy circuits. They're using Plato 3 snatch circuits as part of that programming.

**Compliments from Library Patrons:** Mr. Szabo stated that the Library receives many compliments from patrons and read one from a Sherman Oaks Branch patron who had attended programs, the Valley Hive, Evening with the California Wildlife Center, and the June Jubilee event at Central Library.

In response to a question from Commissioner Blank about the Street Vendor Program, Mr. Szabo replied that it was offered by the Library citywide, but the core of the program is online and by app. He said the Library's team is seeking to reach the street vendor community throughout Los Angeles and that an in-person event had been held at Central Library. He noted that the program is promoted through social media and through specific organizations.

In response to Commissioner Shaw's question about the Street Vendor Program, Eva Mitnick, Director, Lifelong Learning Department, said her department works closely with several different city departments and nonprofits that work specifically on advocacy and regulations. She said that a presentation will be made at the next meeting by Madeleine Ildeson, who oversees the New Americans programs.

Commissioner Shaw requested to be notified monthly about events that will be coming up locally so she can attend some of them. She said there are programs that are just absolutely wonderful but she learns about them after the fact, and there are wonderful things happening at all libraries all the time. Mr. Szabo said that a good place to start is the website, which has the most up to date programs, and via social media.

Vice President Eidmann commented on the Street Vending topic, saying that as the Chief of Litigation and Legal Programs for Public Counsel and supporting and empowering street vendors for the past decade, she is really excited at the partnership between the library and the advocacy community around street vending, because the library provides a forum and a reach that is difficult for other nonprofit organizations to achieve.

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

**Consent Item(s)**

It was moved by Commissioner Blank and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the following resolutions for the Consent Items. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Blank/Eidmann/Shaw/Sims) Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

**a. Acceptance of a gift from Sherman Oaks Friends of the Library for the "Hot Off the Press" Program**

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-33 (C-25)**

RESOLVED, That the gift of \$3,000.00 for the "Hot Off the Press" program for the Sherman Oaks Friends of the Library received from Sherman Oaks Friends of the Library be accepted, **and deposited into Trust Fund 831, Account 257**; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a letter of thanks be sent to the Sherman Oaks Friends of the Library, expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

**b. Acceptance of gift from The Friends of Studio City Branch Library for the "Hot Off the Press" Program**

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2023-34 (C-26)**

RESOLVED, That the gift of \$3000.00 for the "Hot Off the Press" program for the Studio City Branch Library received from The Friends of Studio City Branch Library be accepted, **and deposited into Trust Fund 831, Account 257**; and

Library Resolution  
No. 2023-34 (C-26) Cont.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends of the Studio City Branch Library, expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

## **7. STAFF PRESENTATIONS:**

### **a. Shipping Department**

Eloisa Sarao, Manager, Facilities Division, introduced George Valdivia, Senior Store Keeper, who manages the Shipping and Receiving Department. Ms Sarao noted that George has served the City for 32 years and transferred from the Department of Water & Power to the Library in 1996 and promoted over the years to his present position.

Ms. Sarao reported that in the 1990's, the Shipping Department distributed materials to 68 library locations and had 14 employees. Since then, the number of libraries has increased along with the workload. In 2006, a second Shipping Office was opened at the Mid-Valley Regional Library that serves 21 locations in the East and West Regions.

George Valdivia, Senior Store Keeper, Shipping and Receiving Department, provided a presentation on the logistics of moving library materials and supplies throughout the library system on a daily basis. They also move furniture and overflow of supplies and materials to the Anderson Street warehouse. He said his staff currently consists of 36 employees, which include supervisors, drivers, warehouse workers, messenger clerks, and event attendants. In 2022, his staff delivered over 298,000 tubs of books and media.

Mr. Valdia noted that his department has been in charge of ordering, supplying and distributing COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment supplies for library staff and patrons at library branches and Central Library departments. He reported that his department handles setting up and taking down of equipment and furniture such as tables, chairs, pop-up tents, and the very popular library book bikes for special events.

Vice President Eidmann thanked Mr. Valdivia for his presentation and for the work he and his staff do behind the scenes that is essential to making the library system work. She said it is great that she can place holds for her books and they all get shipped to her library and she gets notified when they are ready to pick up; a lot of work is required to make that seamless, wonderful system happen.

### **b. Collections at the Los Angeles Public Libraries**

Jené Brown, Director of Emerging Technologies and Collections, joined by Phoebe Guiot, Manager of the Acquisitions Department, provided an overview of the Emerging Technologies and Collections Division, which is made up of seven departments with 60 staff members who manage acquisition of print and digital library collections system-wide, including cataloging and processing library materials, developing language collections, providing multinational services, maintaining the

website, and overseeing the circulation system, all of which are the core services necessary for the library to function.

Ms. Brown stated that the Emerging Technologies and Collections has the following departments: Acquisitions, Cataloging, Collection Services, CARL Support Office, Materials Processing, Multilingual Services, Digital Content Team and Emerging Technologies. She said these departments are the backbone of the library system, ensuring that materials are purchased, cataloged, discoverable, and easily accessible for patrons and for staff to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Ms. Phoebe Guiot spoke about the methodology used to select and acquire content for collections. She said that staff makes sure that collections reflect the communities and meet demand, licensing the content and providing materials and languages spoken by Angelenos. She said staff use a title notification system with one of the vendors that provides lists containing over 1,700 publishers and staff at each branch and department select material for their collection. Library patrons can also submit suggestions for purchase. She noted that the Library receives an average of 700 patron requests for physical materials and 27,000 requests for digital titles each month. When requests are received, staff investigate the title availability from vendors and assess whether the titles meet selection criteria. LAPL has material selection policies that are currently being reviewed, and to work within our budget. Collection Services makes every effort to fill requests.

Ms. Brown stated that LAPL has five primary material vendors contracted through the City of Los Angeles who have capacity for large quantity orders and quick turnaround times. Those vendors also have relationships with publishers and can offer competitive discounts, and do shelf-ready processing services, and send materials ready to circulate to any of the 73 agencies. The Library also works with many small vendors of specialty items such as sheet music and rare books. She noted that LAPL is actively collecting books in Farsi, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian, French, Chinese, Korean, and Armenian. Staff also attend international book fairs to purchase special language materials not available for purchase in the United States. Last year, over 500 popular Spanish language titles were purchased at the Guadalajara International Book Fair. LAPL also uses various vendors to provide digital content like Libby and Kanopy.

Ms. Guiot and Brown reported that LAPL also has non-traditional items added to the collections, such as State Parks passes through the California State Library that are available for check out, thus expanding equitable access to these natural resources. Laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot bundles, which are checked out by users for an extended loan period, provide crucial connectivity; Neighborhood Science kits allow young patrons and families to experiment and learn about the world around them and ukuleles are circulated at 17 branches throughout the system.

The presenters provided statistics on the use of the collections for the last Fiscal Year, which totaled over 21 million circulations, 7 million physical and 14.5 million digital checkouts. There were 234,000 unique users accessing the Libby e-media platform, and staff fulfilled 1 million requests on items in the physical collection.

## **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Blank asked if the annual reports were available. Ms. Brown said the annual reports were available and she could share that information with her.

Vice President Eidmann said that one of the library's long term goals is to increase the per patron collections budget, and asked where is the Library now on per capita and where it needs to be and what's the consequence of being a little lower than we want to be. Mr. Szabo replied that in the current fiscal year budget, the Library has a little over \$21 million dollars, which it climbed from around \$8 million dollars in the 2010-2011 timeframe, and that translates to about \$5.50 cents per capita; still not where it needs to be. He said a reasonable target would be \$8 to \$12 per capita.

Commissioner Blank asked if each branch has a budget that is part of that allocation of materials. Ms. Brown replied that each branch receives a budget annually to make purchases for their local collections.

Commissioner Blank asked how it is determined how much each branch would get. Ms. Brown answered that it's very close for all branches.

Vice President Eidmann commented that she had noticed that it helps the library meet demand for very popular titles if patrons use the skip the line copy on electronic formats. She asked how the Library is able to offer that and if there are any constraints on it. Ms. Guiot replied that the Library has licensing that is always available and there is no limit on the number of users that can access the title on Libby and availability is based on the publisher.

Vice President Eidmann said that from a user perspective, she has noticed how well the patron request function works when you request the purchase of new material, it automatically puts you in the line to place a hold and receive that material, and asked if it's possible to do the same for physical books. Ms. Brown answered that she will meet with the team for some solutions to that. Vice President Eidmann suggested adding an email notification when a hold on a physical item is placed to keep a record of who has made the request, and then notify them when it is purchased.

Commissioner Sims asked that when it comes to people making a request via the website for a book to be purchased by the library, what is the likelihood of the Library purchasing that book. Ms. Brown replied that the likelihood is very high, because sometimes those requests help fill in gaps. She said if multiple requests come in for the same title that also increases the likelihood that it would get purchased and a number of factors go into play to help determine whether or not to make that purchase.

Commissioner Sims, in reference to the numbers provided of patrons' requests to purchase materials, asked why the difference was so vast. Ms. Brown said the trend staff has been seeing, especially after the pandemic, is that more folks are using digital services and materials. Mr. Szabo added that when it comes to digital collections, staff are often buying for demand and that the volume of requests is often for very popular titles.

Commissioner Sims asked what drives demand for titles. Is it popular materials, or school needs? Ms. Guiot replied that yes it does, as well as world events, big news events, or a movie that comes out tends to drive demand.

Commissioner Sims asked how staff decides on what to expel from the collections. Ms. Guiot said that the staff from the Acquisitions Department, branches, and Central Library get reports on items that are outdated, such as medical guides, and look at a host of factors to weed their collections regularly. She said the Library has a sustainable recycling program and any money generated is used for the collection.

Commissioner Sims commented that some libraries that are loaning nontraditional items like tools and asked if those types of requests could be made. Ms. Brown replied that currently the Library doesn't have tools or equipment for loaning, but that's something to look at.

Commissioner Shaw asked who are the five major materials vendors mentioned and how they were selected by the Library. Ms. Guiot replied that the vendors are Brodart, Baker & Taylor, Ingram, Children's Plus and Midwest Tape. Mr. Szabo added that the vendors were selected through the procurement process that comes through this Board for approval.

Commissioner Blank asked if people are still using DVDs. Ms. Guiot replied that the Library has actually been expanding the audiovisual collections of DVD's and audiobooks by purchasing documentaries and foreign languages and sets of movie themes because there are people who aren't very tech savvy or don't have a computer or access to Wi-Fi. LAPL wants to be equitable and provide formats that everyone can use.

Mr. Szabo added that, generally speaking, libraries are hesitant or reluctant to discontinue formats of materials that people are still using and that libraries are still able to support and acquire materials in that format.

Commissioner Shaw asked the presenters what they would like to see happen in the next two to five years in their area. Ms. Brown replied that she would like to see the offering of more titles by and about BIOPIC individuals and would like that collection to be a little more representative of the communities the library serves, as well as more programming with independent local authors and looking at ways to help support book publishing for those individuals.

Ms. Guiot replied that currently they offer annual events at Central Library that highlight and feature independently published works by local authors. The Library is a venue for them as well as providing options for content and engaging and learning and making that available as much as possible and diversifying is a top priority.

Commissioner Shaw asked the presenters what they would suggest to do to make more things happen in the communities in terms of programming or anything else. Ms. Brown replied that a lot happens already at the branches and it's the same for Central Library departments where they focus on engagement and learning and working collaboratively in terms of collections, outreach and bringing more programming to the local libraries and they look forward to more collaboration.

Vice President Eidmann commented that it was very interesting to get insight into how the whole system works. She said it is one of the strongest components of equity among the branches because the branch is not limited to the collection at that branch, but every patron using a branch library has access to the entire collection.

Ms. Brown replied that patrons have access to 6 million plus titles in the Los Angeles Public Library with the power of their library card. Mr. Szabo added that it is one collection that resides at 73 different locations.

**8. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements**

Vice President Eidmann made the following announcements:

**a. Election of Officers for Fiscal Year 2023-24 Announcement**

The Election of President and Vice President for Fiscal Year 2023-24 will be scheduled for July 27, 2023, as required by the City Charter.

**b. Next Board Meeting Notice**

The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, **July 27, 2023**, at **11:00 a.m.**, at the Central Library.

**9. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned 12:20 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Kathryn Eidmann  
Acting President

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Raquel M. Borden  
Board Executive Assistant