

# **MINUTES**

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

### **SPECIAL MEETING**

**October 8, 2020**

A Special Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held via teleconference at 12:09 p.m. on the above-written date.

#### **1. ROLL CALL:**

<b>Present:</b>	President	<b>Bích Ngọc Cao</b>
	Vice-President	<b>Kathryn Eidmann</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Dale Franzen</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Mai Lassiter</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Josefa Salinas</b>

**Absent:** None

**Also present via teleconference:** City Librarian John F. Szabo, Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman, Asst. City Librarian; Deputy City Attorney Basia Jankowski; Adrian Avelar, representative, LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk; Library staff and members of the public.

#### **2. CITY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT:**

- a. **Agreement and authorization is granted by the Los Angeles Public Library ("Host") to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk ("RR/CC") for the use of library facilities to host ballot drop boxes to collect election ballots from the public; Categorical Exemption from the Provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 3(4) [Installation of New Equipment Involving Negligible or No Expansion of Use If Required for the Public Convenience] and Class 4(7) [Issuance of Any Lease, License or Permit to Use Land Involving Minor Alterations to the Condition of the Land] of City CEQA Guidelines and Article 19, Sections 15303 and 15304 of California CEQA Guidelines**

City Librarian John F. Szabo stated that this agreement is to grant authorization to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to use library facilities to host ballot drop boxes to collect election ballots from the public at all 73 library locations. The ballot boxes would be installed by the City's Bureau of Street Services. He said the Department of Recreation and Parks has a similar agreement.

#### **Public Comment**

The Board heard one comment in support of this item.

**Discussion Item**

The Board had questions about the measures being taken to make sure the ballot boxes and ballots are secured and not tampered with. They also asked about the frequency they would be emptied.

Emily Fate, Asst. Director of Branch Library Services, who has been coordinating this agreement with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office, stated that the insert space on the ballot boxes is not as wide as a regular mailbox and it is also much thinner so that no one can't reach to take anything out. She said the boxes are locked and the only people who have the keys are the staff from the L.A. Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk who will empty the boxes on a regular schedule.

Adrian Avelar, representative from LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office, stated that the County has an incident response plan for any emergency issues involving the compromising the ballot boxes or ballots. He said the boxes are high-grade steel boxes and are bolted down. For security, the boxes are placed in line of sight of cameras as much as possible, but they also have to make sure that the boxes are accessible to meet ADA compliance. He said ADA compliance is a priority. He stated that ballots are collected every 72 hours from the beginning of the program and daily during the last ten days. The staff picking up the ballots are identifiable as LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk employees.

The Board also asked whether these ballot boxes are being promoted or working with bipartisan voting organizations to get the message out to the public and convey the safety of the mailboxes.

Mr. Avelar replied that in the City of Los Angeles the largest partners are the Library system and the Department of Recreation and Parks. They are also partnering with Metro to install boxes at some Metro stations. He said that included in the vote by mail packet, are the six nearest drop off locations to each voter using their home address. In addition to that, a very robust outreach and engagement team works with several non-profits, as well as a voter outreach committee, a language accessibility committee, and a voter accessibility committee to make sure every voter has the information they need to vote. He also pointed out that all ballots can be tracked using the tracking system on the County Records' website to make sure that it was received and counted.

It was moved by Vice President Eidmann and seconded by Commissioner Franzen to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Cao, Eidmann, Franzen, Lassiter, Salinas). 0 Noes. 0 Absent:

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2020-35**

**WHEREAS,** In March 2020, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) introduced a new voting system for the Presidential Primary Election. It is estimated that up to one (1) million voters were served at more than 970 vote centers throughout the County of Los Angeles (County). Post-election surveys and voter exit polls indicated that twenty (20) percent of the voters had a negative experience. About fifteen (15) percent of the voters

reported waiting more than two (2) hours to vote. As a result, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (LACBOS) directed the RR/CC to report back with corrective measures for all identified issues to be implemented in time for the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election; and

**WHEREAS**, In response to the directive from the LACBOS, the RR/CC, through its Board Report of April 27, 2020, acknowledged that not all voters were properly supported on Election Day which resulted in long waits and great frustration for many voters. The report identified several key points as root causes for the issues experienced by voters and provided an implementation plan to address the identified issues. One of the recommended actions was to install Vote Drop Boxes (VDBs) at various public facilities throughout the County of Los Angeles to make it easier for voters to drop off their vote ballot; and

**WHEREAS**, The Los Angeles Public Library (Library) wishes to provide assistance with RR/CC's implementation plan to address the identified issues by entering into an Agreement to install VDBs at Central Library and its 72 Branch Libraries; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Board of Library Commissioners approve the Agreement, substantially in the form on file, with the County of Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) for the use of the Library to host VDBs on Library property to collect election ballots from the public. The term of the Agreement will be for three (3) years with a one (1) year renewal option with no cost to the Library; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board determines that this project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 3(4) and Class 4(7) of City CEQA Guidelines as well as to Article 19, Sections 15303 and 15304 of California CEQA Guidelines.

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the City Librarian and City Attorney be authorized to make technical changes, as needed, to the Agreement; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the City Librarian is authorized to execute the Contract upon completion of the Mayor's Office review in accordance with Executive Directive No. 3.

**3. ADJOURNMENT**: The Meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Bích Ngọc Cao  
President

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Raquel M. Borden  
Board Executive Assistant