

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

October 22, 2020

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	Mai Lassiter
	Commissioner	Josefa Salinas

Absent: None

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

2. OPENING REMARKS: Commissioner Franzen opened the meeting with poems by Russian poet Ana Akhmatova.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting – September 10, 2020: APPROVED

It was moved by Vice President Eidmann and seconded by Commissioner Salinas to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on September 10, 2020. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Cao, Eidmann, Franzen, Lassiter and Salinas). No: 0. Absent: 0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD'S JURISDICTION:

The Board heard three comments on Item 6, eight comments on Item 7, and five general comments.

5. CITY LIBRARIAN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Librarian John F. Szabo reported the following:

- **Six new Library to Go hubs** have been opened. A total of 26 locations are now available across the city for patrons to pick up holds.
- **National Financial Planning Week** LAPL will be offering workshops streaming on Facebook and YouTube channels, in partnership with the Financial Planning

Association of Los Angeles, from October 19 to 24, 2020. Free financial advice is being provided by appointment.

- **The Octavia Lab** has continued creating personal protective equipment (PPE), in partnership with Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI), for distribution to hospitals. LACI is also having face shields assembled by L.A. County's Youth@Work participants who are paid to explore a potential career in an inclusive green industry. LAPL has facilitated distribution of the PPE's to hospitals. More than 10,000 face shields have been distributed so far, with 20,000 more expected.
- **Press coverage of LAPL:** KTLA promoted the ballot boxes and a Ballot Measures discussion with Mona Field, Co-President of the Los Angeles League of Women Voters, which had more than 450 participants. A recent *L.A. Times* article highlighted the challenges of distance learning and included LAPL as a resource for local students who need homework support. A column from Nita Lelyveld inspired further attention from *LA Times Today*, where the journalist described her experience "library-hopping" to attend many of the programs she detailed in her column.
- **Virtual Student Zone** offers trained, L.A. based Homework Helpers to assist with school assignments and help navigate the library's online student resources. Students can schedule a free 25-minute appointment Monday through Thursday, as well as Saturday and Sunday. This service will soon be offered in Spanish as well.
- **New exhibit: "Life on a String: The Yale Puppeteers & The Turnabout Theatre."** This online exhibit includes an audio tour narrated by James Reynolds of "Days of Our Lives" and provides a historic perspective on the LGBTQ community of the time. As part of that project, Photo Friends have reprinted the 1930's book *Better Angel* by Forman Brown, one of the Yale Puppeteers.
- **Status of Facilities Master Plan:** The contract was approved by the Board in October 2019 and there have been some initial meetings and staff looks forward to continuing with the project.

6. **STAFF PRESENTATION:**
REIMAGINING SAFETY INITIATIVE

The Board heard three comments on this item during the all agenda comments section.

Presentation

Kren Malone, Director, Central Library Services, provided information on the Reimagining Safety Initiative (RSI) that has been created with the goal of identifying alternatives that support a safe and welcoming library environment that do not rely on law enforcement, manage the use of the \$2 million dollars that were reallocated by the Board for this purpose; and to support the development of a multi-year plan that re-visions safety. She said alternatives to law enforcement would involve service providers by hiring and contracting for services on social work, mental health, crisis intervention and de-escalation, and community outreach.

Ms. Malone stated that the four areas the RSI Team is focusing on are services, public programming, facilities, and staff training. She provided history of

LAPL's work in these areas, including trauma-informed training for staff, programs and connections to resources for Angelenos experiencing homelessness, partnerships with the LA County Dept of Mental Health and the LA Housing Services Authority, technology enhancement projects, and forming the Safety & Security Project for staff engagement, and discussion.

Ms. Malone also spoke about the various types of partnerships RSI is pursuing for contractual services in the areas of case management, outreach work/peer navigators; mental health first aid; comprehensive violence reduction strategies; and public engagement.

Ms. Malone reported that a Library Experience Office is being proposed in the Fiscal Year Budget for 2021-2022, to serve as a central part of the Library's effort to reimagine security and safety. Social Workers and Library Experience Specialists are new positions being proposed in the new office. This new team would work on developing tactics, partnerships, and committees to inform how the Library can provide accessible, welcoming, and supportive environments for all library users.

Ms. Malone also spoke about public programming and staff training offered by the Library such as "Past, Present, Future: Black & Brown L.A." on implicit bias awareness, and she concluded by stating the RSI Team involves representatives from all departments and areas of the Library.

Discussion

Board President Cao thanked Ms. Malone for the information and all the staff involved in contributing to this project, which demonstrates the Library's commitment to long term change. She asked about the timeline for implementation.

Ms. Malone replied that the service component is key and the RSI Team is in contact with several potential partner organizations. Facilities projects, training, and programming are components that they are in progress. She noted that there has been discussion about which services could be provided virtually so they can implement them in the current situation.

Board President Cao asked who would be heading the Library Experience Office and if the hiring of the staff could be expedited.

Ms. Malone said the Library Experience Office will be spearheaded by a person dedicated to safety and they are looking at a senior level social worker that has the experience to help navigate and triage different needs throughout the communities the Library serves, work with partners, and supervise social workers.

Commissioner Salinas asked how social workers and library experience specialists will be assigned to all 73 libraries and whether they are envisioning to keep some type of security while this plan is being rolled out.

Ms. Malone replied that they are proposing that the Library Experience Office have a social worker and several Library Experience Specialists, and they will assess where they are needed, gradually shifting resources.

Commissioner Franzen asked if staff at any of the libraries have an immediate way to get response when there is a hostile situation and if they do, what is the response time.

Ms. Malone replied that the Central and branch libraries have panic buttons for police response when immediate response is needed from LAPD. These are for situations which a social worker wouldn't be able to address.

Commissioner Salinas suggested the use of a portable device such as a pen with a panic button to request help when staff is not near at their station where they are not near a panic button.

7. UPDATE FROM THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON RE-ENVISIONING SECURITY

a. Draft Library Experience Office Budget FY 2021-22

The Board heard eight comments on this item during all agenda comments section

Vice President Eidmann, co-chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Re-envisioning Safety and Security, reported that the committee met last Friday to preview today's presentation and security budget. She asked City Librarian John F. Szabo to provide more information.

City Librarian John F. Szabo stated that staff is working on the Library's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22, which would contain a draft budget for the Library Experience Office for the first full year of the Multi-Year Plan and including social workers, some staff coming from other areas of the Library as well as funding for library experience specialists, social services outreach contracts, badge access and cameras, staff training, LAPD services. He noted that this budget proposes \$1 million less than the current budget for LAPD and contract security.

Discussion

Vice President Eidmann stated that staff had done a great job in investigating and starting to build up new alternatives to traditional law enforcement. She said she is happy to see those alternatives being funded and asked if there was room to further reduce the amount of the budget for traditional law enforcement. She would like a \$1.5 million cut from the traditional law enforcement component of this budget.

Commissioner Franzen asked the Vice President how she had come up with \$1.5 million.

Vice President Eidmann replied that her thinking was around the 3-year plan. She said she's proposing \$1.5 million in addition to the \$1 million that has already been reduced for the proposed budget for a total of \$2.5 million.

Board President Cao asked the City Librarian to work with them on reducing the security budget before the next iteration of the proposed budget and before it moves forward.

**8. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Commissioner Salinas said she had received an email reminder to renew her library card and asked if it was a legitimate email because it looked very generic.

Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman confirmed that it is a legitimate email.

- The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. via Teleconference.

9. ADJOURNMENT: The Meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

ATTEST:

Bích Ngọc Cao
President

Raquel M. Borden
Board Executive Assistant

Approved: 1/14/2021