

# **MINUTES**

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

**November 13, 2025**

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

**1. Roll Call:**

<b>Present:</b>	President	<b>Mayra Valadez</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Kelly Besser</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Valerie Lynne Shaw</b>
	Commissioner	<b>Fabian R. Wesson</b>

<b>Absent:</b>	Vice President	<b>Linda Blank</b>
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**Also present:** City Librarian John F. Szabo, Asst. City Librarian Susan Broman; Deputy City Attorney Vanessa Atkins; Administrative staff and members of the public.

**2. Opening Remarks:** Board President Valadez welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to Commissioner Fabian R. Wesson.

Commissioner Wesson expressed her excitement to join the Board and the opportunity to serve the city once again.

**3. Approval of the Minutes:**

**a. Regular Meeting - October 23, 2025**

It was moved by Commissioner Besser and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 23, 2025. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Besser/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Blank).

**4. Public Comments on Matters Within the Board's Jurisdiction: (1)**

The Board heard one public comment from Ben Eubanks, a patron of the Playa Vista Branch Library who expressed interest in dedicating the Playa Vista Branch Library in memory of former Senior Librarian Joseph Atkinson who served for 20 years.

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

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

**Consent Items**

a. **Acceptance of gift of Birding Backpacks for the West Valley Area Branch Libraries from the San Fernando Audubon Society.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended acceptance of a gift of 30 Birding Backpacks for the West Valley Area Branch Libraries from the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. These backpacks, which are equipped for birdwatching, are designated for ten branches in the West Valley area to support a new creative programming initiative.

It was moved by Commissioner Besser and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Besser/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Blank).

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-36**

**RESOLVED**, That a gift by the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society to the Los Angeles Public Library of Birding Backpacks for the West Valley Area Library Branches appraised at \$3,201.50 be accepted; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a letter of thanks be sent to Board of Directors member, Marianne W. Davis for the generous donation.

**Discussion Items**

b. **Approval of the Library Department Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo provided an overview of the Library's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget totaling \$279,695,417 and recommended approval. This reflects an increase of \$9,930,280 from the current fiscal year, tied to the assessed value of property. Mr. Szabo noted that approximately \$8.5 million of the increase is necessary to cover the same level of services and positions. The budget includes \$10.3 million for Alterations and Improvements (A&I), which are small capital projects, with the vast majority allocated for branch library needs like roofing, HVAC, and renovation projects.

**Discussion**

President Valadez asked if the Library anticipates the need to transfer funds to cover overtime costs, and how the necessity for such transfers is determined. Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman confirmed that fund transfers are probable because the overtime budget is kept flexible. She stated that overtime funds are vital for keeping libraries open during staff shortages and for covering special events. The budget is adjusted by initially allocating funds and then monitoring monthly salary spending throughout the fiscal year.

President Valadez asked if the budget increase for the Library Experience Office was entirely for covering salary increases (LAPD COLAs and security guard wages) or if it also included an allocation to increase coverage capacity. Mr. Szabo confirmed that the increase covers both existing cost increases and an expanded scope of security. This includes funding for one new sworn position and ten additional contract security guards.

Commissioner Shaw asked if setting aside funds for a new capital fund for larger projects would negatively impact the smaller, necessary projects. Mr. Szabo clarified that the A&I budget mostly covers essential branch infrastructure, such as \$9.75 million for HVAC, roofing, and painting. He agreed that without a new bond, philanthropy and capital campaigns are needed for larger, long-term renovations or expansions, acknowledging the significant, city-wide capital funding challenge.

Commissioner Shaw inquired about a 5-year plan to address ongoing challenges like staffing problems and rising costs. Mr. Szabo stated that while a formal 5-year plan does not yet exist, the upcoming Strategic Plan will serve as the starting point to define major priorities. He concluded that the Library's funding is tied to the city's general fund and overall economic health, which presents a challenging outlook for maintaining a rigid budget in the coming years.

Commissioner Wesson asked for clarification regarding the requirement for the Library to reimburse a percentage of its budget (around 36%) back to the city for certain operating expenses. Mr. Szabo explained that this requirement is mandated by the City Charter as specified when Measure L was passed by voters. The Library is responsible for all its related operating costs, which was phased in to 100% over a four-year period. Business Manager Madeleine Rackley clarified that the money is an internal transfer back to the General Fund through the Controller's office, meaning it is not recorded as new revenue for the city, but rather as money being given back from the general fund.

Commissioner Shaw noted the reimbursement as a Charter issue and asked if the Board could recommend a change to the Charter Commission. Mr. Szabo noted that the Charter Commission is an opportunity for change and that the Board could certainly propose an amendment, as the Charter is currently open for discussion.

It was moved by Commissioner Shaw and seconded by Commissioner Wesson to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 4 Ayes (Besser/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: (Blank).

#### **LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-37 (C-28)**

**WHEREAS**, On November 13, 2025, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Library Budget in the amount of \$279,695,417 to fund existing and enhanced Library services and programs; and,

**THEREFORE RESOLVED**, That the Board approves for further consideration by the Mayor's Office the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Library Budget in the amount of \$279,695,417 to fund existing and enhanced Library services and programs; and,

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board authorizes the City Librarian to make any necessary technical revisions to the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Library Budget and advise the Board and the Mayor of any such changes.

- c. **Approval to initiate the process to consider dedicating the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Carlos Bulosan.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval to initiate the process to consider dedicating the Echo Park Branch Library in recognition of Carlos Bulosan, a Filipino-American novelist, poet and labor activist.

Mr. Szabo stated that the proposal came through a letter from the Mayor Karen Bass, and noted that Carlos Bulosan has an incredible life story and was an amazing writer. The Echo Park Branch Library is situated in a Historic Filipinotown, and the proposal has already received great support from the Mayor's office, Library staff and the Filipino community. Upon approval, this recommendation would initiate a 90-day solicitation period to gather commentary and input from the public. Following this, staff would compile a report with a final recommendation for the Board to consider.

### **Discussion**

Commissioner Besser strongly supported dedicating the Echo Park Branch Library to Carlos Bulosan, an initiative she called "an honor." She is currently reading Bulosan's book, a gift from the Friends of the Echo Park Library, and thanked the Echo Park and Historic Filipinotown communities for their organized efforts to recognize Bulosan's legacy.

President Valadez described the dedication as a wonderful way to honor not only Bulosan but also the Filipino immigrants and workers who established roots in Echo Park and Historic Filipinotown in the 1940s. She highlighted that Bulosan's personal story is an excellent symbol of the Library's mission, noting that Mr. Bulosan's "self-education, commitment to lifelong learning, and adult literacy is very much in line with the library."

It was moved by Commissioner Besser and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Blank).

### **LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-38**

**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:

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

d. **Approval to authorize Safe Parking for the Edendale Branch Library and West Valley Regional Branch Library.**

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval to authorize the Safe Parking Program at the Edendale Branch Library. The program allows unhoused individuals and families residing in their vehicles to use designated library parking lots for safe, legal overnight parking. Mr. Szabo stated that there is no cost to the Library, as an outside organization manages the program, providing security and janitorial services. This program supports a vulnerable population, and the presence of overnight security has helped address prior security issues at the branches. Mr. Szabo recommended approval, citing the success of previous efforts.

**Discussion**

President Valadez expressed her support for the program noting that it was done with support and in collaboration with Council District 3. She asked for clarification on which branch libraries the program is being implemented. Director of Branch Library Services Joyce Cooper clarified that a new, time-sensitive agreement is necessary for the Edendale Branch Library because service at that location was suspended in 2019 and must be formally reestablished. Service was never suspended at the West Valley Regional Branch Library; however, the intent is to formally amend the language of its existing agreement following the approval of the Edendale agreement. She noted that the surrounding community, including a nearby church, has been supportive of the program.

It was moved by Commissioner Wesson and seconded by Commissioner Shaw to approve the following resolution. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Besser/Shaw/Valadez/Wesson); Noes: 0. Absent: 1 (Blank).

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2025-39 (C-29)**

**WHEREAS**, The City of Los Angeles established a Safe Parking Program pilot to allow for unhoused individuals and families who currently reside in their vehicles to do so overnight legally in designated parking lots within the City;

**WHEREAS**, The Library entered an agreement in 2019 with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority to utilize parking lots at the Edendale and West Valley Regional branches for the Safe Parking Program Pilot; and

**WHEREAS**, The Library now wishes to license the use of the Edendale branch parking lot by Safe Parking LA for the Safe Parking Program.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Board adopts the award and execution of the license agreement between the Library and Safe Parking LA for the Edendale/Safe Parking LA Program; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board hereby authorizes the City Librarian and the City Attorney to make technical and clerical corrections as deemed necessary.

**7. Commissioners' Comments and Announcements**

- Board President Valadez was excited to join Councilmember Ysabel Jurado for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Benjamin Franklin Branch Library in Boyle Heights. She praised the Friends group and local activists for moving the project forward and looks forward to the grand opening, anticipated for 2027.
- Board President Valadez thanked the Woodland Hills Branch staff for hosting the last meeting and gave a shout-out to former Councilmember Dennis Zine for attending as a member of the Friends group.
- Commissioner Shaw remarked that it was good to be back following her surgery and thanked Mr. Szabo and staff for checking in on her.
- Commissioner Shaw offered a warm welcome to Commissioner Wesson and commended her impressive history across the private and public sectors, and as a community leader.
- Commissioner Shaw gave a farewell acknowledgement to outgoing Board Secretary Raquel Borden for her contributions over the years. She lauded Raquel for her efforts to secure funding in the latest budget to digitize records.

**Next Board Meeting Notice:** The next Regular Meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., and will be held at the Central Library.

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Mayra Valadez  
President

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Lynda Achi  
Secretary to the Board