

MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Special Meeting

November 18, 2021

A Special Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held via teleconference at 11:03 a.m. on the above-written date.

1. Roll Call:

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

Absent: None

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. Public Comments on Matters

Within the Board's Jurisdiction:

The Board heard four (4) Public Comments on Item 7 regarding the Proposed Budget for security and one (1) comment for Item 4B in support of the mural at the Vermont Square Branch Library.

3. City Librarian's Comments

and Announcements: City Librarian John F. Szabo reported the following:

Emergency Connectivity Funding Grant: LAPL has been awarded an Emergency Connectivity Funding grant of nearly \$1.7 million. With this grant, LAPL will loan hotspots and Chromebooks, giving patrons the necessary tools they need to be connected. The program will target communities with the greatest barriers to high-speed broadband access.

The Source Returns: The Source resumed in October at Central Library and Edendale Branch Library. The Source is a multi-agency collaboration that provides resources and assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness and to low-income residents. This time, partners offered free flu shots and COVID vaccines. Typically, they offer same day transportation to emergency shelters, free cell phones, housing assessment through the Coordinated Entry System, enrollment into Medi-Cal and CalFresh, employment assistance, mental health services, HIV education and resources, child support services and referrals to expert providers.

Tom LaBonge Archive: The Los Angeles Public Library is now the proud home of the Tom LaBonge Archive. Former Councilman LaBonge, known as Mr. Los Angeles, took thousands of photos of events, activities and locations throughout the city for the last 50 years. His widow, Brigid LaBonge, donated that archive of prints, negatives, slides and digital images to LAPL's Photo Collection.

Children's Citizenship Ceremony: The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) returned last month to the Central Library to host a Children's Citizenship Ceremony. Mayor Garcetti spoke to the families in attendance and took photos with the children and their families. The children were ages 6 to 10 and they were from 11 nations.

College Q&A: LAPL librarians continue to help students get ready for the rigors of college. Recently, the Young Adult Librarian at the Chinatown Branch organized an outdoor College Q&A and Channel 35 ran a segment about the program.

Actor Danny Trejo in LA Made Event: A recent LA Made program featured actor, restaurateur and intervention counselor Danny Trejo in conversation with Donal Logue. Trejo discussed his new memoir *Trejo: My Life of Crime, Redemption and Hollywood*, and shared stories about his fascinating life in and out of the spotlight. This program is available online.

Teens Leading Change create graphic novel to raise domestic violence awareness: A Teens Leading Change group from Encino-Tarzana and Canoga Park came together to create a graphic novel about domestic violence in collaboration with StrengthUnited. Their book includes visual definitions of types of domestic violence, a resource guide, terms glossary, zine pocket handbook and essays of the teens' reflections on domestic violence. The graphic novel will be available on OverDrive, and the team is planning for each library location to have a print copy in circulation.

Native American Heritage Month: November is Native American Heritage Month and LAPL is offering a variety of programs, including book discussions, films and a children's author talk by Lyn Risling about her book *A Is for Acorn*. Hands-on activities include making dream catchers, creating a gratitude journal after hearing a book about Native American heritage and an outdoor craft at the Cypress Park Branch where teens will create corn cobs out of beads. One special event was an author talk with Theodore C. Van Alst, Jr., who wrote the books *Sacred Smokes* and *Sacred City*.

4. City Librarian's Reports:

Consent Item(s)

It was moved by Commissioner Salinas and seconded by Commissioner Franzen to approve Item 4a. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Cao, Edmonds, Eidmann, Franzen and Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

- a. **Recommendation to Approve 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.

Discussion Items

- b. **Recommendation to approve the installation**
of a mural at the Vermont Square Branch Library: APPROVED.

It was moved by Commissioner Salinas and seconded by Commissioner Franzen to approve Item 4b. The motion passed with 5 Ayes (Cao, Edmonds, Eidmann, Franzen and Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2021-30

WHEREAS, the Vermont Square Branch (BRANCH) is owned and operated by LAPL and is located at 1201 W. 48th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90037; and

WHEREAS, VOICES NC is one of 99 Neighborhood Councils created by the City of Los Angeles in 1999 by an amendment to the City Charter to provide grassroots access to City Hall and is supported under the City's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment; and

WHEREAS, LAPL owns the water cooler structure located behind the BRANCH on property owned and operated by LAPL; and

WHEREAS, VOICES NC desires to install a mural on the water cooler structure located behind the BRANCH, at no cost to LAPL, for the visual enjoyment of patrons and residents of the community, with a maintenance schedule to be determined; and

WHEREAS, VOICES NC will provide and coordinate all efforts to create a design for the proposed mural, and commission an artist to paint the mural on the water cooler structure behind the BRANCH; and

WHEREAS, On September 8, 2021, the Department of Culture Affairs granted conceptual and final approval of the mural's design; and

Library Resolution
No. 2021-30 (Cont.)

THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners approves the installation of the mural on the water cooler structure on LAPL property at the BRANCH and authorizes the City Librarian to enter into an agreement regarding the mural with the City Clerk Funding Program on behalf of the VOICES NC.

MOTION:

Vice President Eidmann made a motion to discuss Item 5 prior to Item 4c. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Franzen and passed with 5 Ayes (Cao, Edmonds, Eidmann, Franzen and Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

c. Recommendation to approve the Library Department

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023: APPROVED AS AMENDED

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of the Library's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023 in the amount of \$227,048,610 for submission to the Mayor's Office. He noted this is an increase of \$9,058,589 from the Fiscal Year 21-22 budget. He provided a general overview of all the funding requests contained in the budget and noted that some areas of the budget had been reorganized, mainly, new budget programs have been established for Emerging Technologies and Collections and Facilities planning and maintenance. He said this budget recognizes that the Library is moving into a phase of facilities planning and investment.

Mr. Szabo stated that the Proposed Budget also includes new and continued funding for the Library Experience Office to provide for 12 Community Service Representatives (Library Experience Ambassadors) positions, one Senior Librarian and one Administrative Clerk. There is a \$500,000 increase in funding for LAPD security services and contract security over the amount proposed in the previous year's budget. Also being proposed are new positions for a Senior Librarian to oversee bilingual and mobile outreach efforts, a new Library Assistant position for the Octavia Lab, two Community Program Assistants to provide literacy services, and two administrative positions dedicated to contract development and administration.

Mr. Szabo reported that the other budget packages are for alterations and improvements of facilities with \$1,056,175 increased funding. For the Library Materials budget, a \$1 million increase is being proposed, which will increase the total materials budget to \$20,035,130. This would increase the per capita spending from \$4.75 to \$5.00. The goal is to reach \$8 - \$12 per capita.

Mr. Szabo stated that the Proposed Budget itemizes the direct and indirect costs, which together comprise the related costs. In FY 2022-23, the Library will pay an estimated total of \$87,224,413 for related costs, which is 38.42 percent of the Library's total Proposed Budget.

Discussion

Commissioner Franzen inquired about the amount in the Library Stabilization Fund account and asked if the Library had a plan for how it would be used during an uncertain economic scenario, whether it be a recession or inflation.

Mr. Szabo replied that funds that go into the Library Stabilization Fund come from unspent funds during the previous fiscal year. Currently, there is around \$13 million in the fund.

Commissioner Franzen stated that due to the uncertainty of the next 18 to 24 months, the Library should be thinking about a preventive and proactive plan.

Vice President Eidmann stated that during the past two fiscal years, the Board has tried to gradually reduce the amount allocated to traditional law enforcement and she would prefer to be consistent with the multi-year plan to continue with the gradual reduction; however, she recognizes that the delays in hiring have prevented the Library from implementing the alternatives to law enforcement. She said she is concerned about the \$2 million increase in the proposed budget over the approved budget that would increase the security budget from \$5.9 to \$7.9 million. She asked for clarification on the CAP rate formula used to account for the overhead costs for the LAPD positions.

Mr. Szabo replied that the CAP rate is used to determine the related cost of positions, and has gone up for some of the LAPD Security Services positions, and is lower for non-sworn positions. He noted that the CAP rate is adjusted during the budget process from fiscal year to fiscal year.

Vice President Eidmann asked if the budget amount was to stay consistent from the previous year's budget, then the Library could have the ability to get increased services with the same amount of money.

Madeline Rackley, Business Manager, stated that the CAP rate is determined by the City Controller with information provided by the city departments on their expenditures. The Controller uses that data to calculate the Cost Allocation Plan rate for each department, and those rates are published at different times during the year. For example, the Library is using CAP 41 rate for the current fiscal year. For the proposed budget, the Library anticipates that the city will adopt CAP 43 because it has been published, but it has not been adopted yet.

Vice President Eidmann stated that it is her understanding that the Board can make modifications to the budget in the event that there is a change in the CAP rate that was not anticipated when voting for the budget.

Ms. Rackley replied that the adjustments to the CAP rate may take place as the Mayor assembles his proposed budget that he will release in April. The Board can make adjustments when the Budget is presented back to the Board in June.

Vice President Eidmann proposed to keep the amount allocated to traditional law enforcement consistent with the budget the Board approved last year under the multi-year plan. She stated that if they keep the amount for LAPL that was allocated last year, because

the CAP rate has not increased at this point, it would represent roughly the same amount of services that the Library has for the current fiscal year.

Board President Cao stated she would support Vice President Eidmann's proposal to continue the trajectory they had planned for the traditional security budget in the last two budgets.

Commissioner Franzen said she would support the proposal and would like to have a discussion at some point about an independent security system at the Library, similar to what the Music Center has, because it seems that every year the cost goes up and the Library has no control over it.

Commissioner Edmonds said she would like to make sure that the libraries are safe and secure and that's the reason they now have the Library Experience Office and are bringing in social workers, but it is also critical to secure the buildings and it doesn't have to be LAPD. She inquired about the current security services at libraries.

Mr. Szabo stated that there is a division within LAPD called Security Services Division that provides unarmed security officers to various city departments. They are trained LAPD personnel, but they are not sworn police officers and do not carry a gun. The Library also has contract security who have less training, which allows the Library to have more coverage across branches.

Commissioner Edmonds stated that it was important to make the distinction and think about messaging with the public, and start thinking about other security options within the next couple years. For the staff, it is helpful to know that they have security, especially, when they are leaving late at night or need the additional support.

Board President Cao stated that without increasing the Budget, the amount would remain at \$5.9 million

Vice President Eidmann moved to amend the proposed budget without an increase to the security budget. The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Franzen and passed with 5 Ayes (Cao, Edmonds, Eidmann, Franzen and Salinas). Noes: 0. Absent: 0.

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2021-31 (C-25)

WHEREAS, On November 18, 2021, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Library Budget in the amount of \$227,048,610 to fund existing and enhanced Library services and programs; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Library Budget funds the new Emerging Technologies and Collections program for the Library's key initiatives and priorities; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Library Budget funds the new Facility Planning and Maintenance program for facility assessments, alterations, improvements, and maintenance; and

Library Resolution
No.2021-31 (C-25) Cont.

WHEREAS, The Board authorized the Chief Accounting employee to create three Sub-Accounts in Fund 831 as follows: Sub-Account 501 for Fines, Sub-Account 502 for Fees and Sub-Account 503 for Other Library revenue, and authorized the expenditure of funds as approved by the City Librarian or designee:

THEREFORE RESOLVED, That the Board approves for further consideration by the Mayor's Office the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Proposed Library Budget in the amount of \$227,048,610 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 2022-23 Proposed Library Budget and advise the Board and the Mayor of any such changes.

5. Oral Update from the Ad Hoc Committee on Re-imagining Safety & Security
(Taken out of order - Discussed before Item 4c.)

Vice President Eidmann reported that the Ad Hoc Committee had met several times this week to discuss the vaccination mandate passed by the City Council and ensuring that the library remains open to all patrons, the progress on the Library Experience Office, and the security budget in context to the multi-year plan to Re-envision Safety and Security in the Library that the Board approved in August of 2020.

Vice President Eidmann said that the Board understood it would take time to develop alternatives and to implement them and for that reason the multi-year plan was developed, and estimated that it would have been implemented by fiscal year 2022-23. The Library Experience Office has been created and many people are working to develop alternatives to traditional security, but hiring and contracting has taken longer than the Board anticipated, due to the bureaucracy involved. She asked City Librarian John F. Szabo to provide an update.

City Librarian John F. Szabo spoke about the vaccination requirement at city buildings, which staff has been discussing with city leadership and focusing on providing education and information about vaccination and the vaccination requirements within city limits. He stated that libraries are about access and equity and staff are working with city leadership to implement the ordinance in a manner that will preserve access to library services.

Mr. Szabo asked Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman to provide information on a new pilot project at the Goldwyn-Hollywood Branch Library.

Ms. Broman reported that the Library is collaborating with Urban Alchemy to implement a proof-of-concept project that would bring in practitioners with lived experiences into the library to help library patrons and people in crisis. They will build trust through positive engagements with people, provide referrals to social services, and intervene when negative behaviors disrupt library services and patrons. They are trained in de-escalation and other crisis intervention techniques. The project will provide an

opportunity to determine how to measure success and determine performance indicators. This project will start in about six weeks.

Discussion

Commissioner Edmonds thanked Board President Cao, Vice President Eidmann and City Librarian John F. Szabo for their leadership on this project. She asked whether the librarians at the Goldwyn Hollywood Branch had provided any feedback as they put the project together.

Assistant City Librarian Susan Broman replied that staff is very enthusiastic about this approach. She said the branch, which is in the heart of Hollywood, is a high-incident library and staff is engaged with the community and interested in actively working to ensure the library is a welcoming and safe place for everyone.

Board President Cao asked about the timeline for the hiring.

City Librarian John F. Szabo replied that since the last update about the positions, the union that will be representing the Library Experience Ambassadors in the classification of Community Service Representative, has enthusiastically endorsed the use of the Bridge to Jobs program for the classification.

Ms. Broman reported that the City's Personnel Department has submitted a request for the salary establishment for the two new Library Experience Ambassador positions from the Bridge to Jobs program. The Library is working with Personnel on the Library-specific requirement for the social worker position. There is no specific timeline.

Commissioner Salinas expressed concerns regarding the deployment of the new positions given the large number of locations, the clear establishment of job duties, and the training of staff related to using the correct terminology to ask for assistance for people in crisis.

Mr. Szabo replied that staff training is a very important component of the Library Experience strategy and training has been conducted with current already, because staff are part of the overall solution.

Commissioner Franzen asked if the Library had a plan or roadmap on how they see staff from the Library Experience Office would be working across 73 locations, and if that information could be shared with the Board to help better understand how it would work.

Mr. Szabo replied that the new positions would be in addition to the staff that is already assigned to the Library Experience Office, and it doesn't include the social workers that are already funded in the current budget. He said he expects the Library Experience Ambassadors to be successful and that the numbers will grow in future budget years and it will mitigate the need for uniformed security officers. The Library is learning as we go, and the initial positions will be deployed based on need.

Commissioner Franzen inquired about the total number of staff already assigned to the Library Experience Office.

Ms. Broman said the 12 positions will be a starting point for city workers, and they will also use the contractual workers to help with other types of intervention throughout the system.

Mr. Szabo noted that through partnerships and contracts, the Library might find successful solutions to particular issues that would help in deciding in which services to invest more.

Commissioner Edmonds asked what kind of systems does the Library have in place to help create real success for this new team, since this is new to this library, not new to other library systems within LA County and across the country. She asked if they are prepared to support a team with these very complicated tasks.

Mr. Szabo stated that staff collectively are very supportive of the solutions that originated with the Safety and Security Project that involved staff from all classifications through the system.

Commissioner Edmonds asked what are the tools they are providing, such as peer to peer talk and with other libraries about the tools they are providing to new staff.

Ms. Broman stated that the Library Experience Office is developing an onboarding and training program to make sure new staff have the support they need and clear expectations of their duties. The Library is working with partners to develop a training course for Library Experience Ambassadors. Safety is a part of everyone's job, and they will be supported by other staff at their work location. The Library Experience Office has been offering weekly Zoom sessions where staff can drop in to ask questions and get training and support from their colleagues.

Board President Cao thanked City Librarian John F. Szabo and Asst. City Librarian Susan Broman for the update.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Bích Ngọc Cao
President

Raquel M. Borden
Board Executive Assistant