MINUTES
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

January 9, 2014

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Central Library, 630 West 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071, convening at 11:05 a.m. on the above-written date.

PRESENT:

PRESIDENT JOSEFA SALINAS
VICE PRESIDENT BICH NGOC CAO
COMMISSIONER GREGORY BETTINELLI
COMMISSIONER MAI LASSITER
COMMISSIONER RITA WALTERS

EXCUSED

ABSENT: NONE

ALSO PRESENT: John F. Szabo, City Librarian; Kris Morita, Assistant General Manager; Basia Jankowski, Deputy City Attorney; Elaine Owens-Sanchez, Analyst, City Administrative Office (CAO); Christine Jerian, City Services Manager, Mayor’s Office; Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild; Henry Gambill, Executive Vice President, Librarians’ Guild; and staff.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: Regular Meeting –12/11/13

MOVED by Commissioner Walters, seconded by Vice President Cao and unanimously carried that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held December 11, 2013 be approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION: None.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday Hours Update

Mr. Szabo thanked Board President Josefa Salinas for doing an amazing job with the PSA’s (Public Service Announcements) informing the public about the restoration of Sunday hours beginning on Sunday, January 12, at the Central Library and eight Regional Branch Libraries.
“Health Matters” Initiative

Mr. Szabo provided an update on the “Health Matters” Initiative, which is the Los Angeles Public Library’s (LAPL) effort in the area of health with the provision of health information and programming. He said that the Library is currently working with Covered California, in partnership with over 20 organizations, to provide certified enrollment counselors at 28 libraries across the city beginning this Saturday through the end of March. Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Vision y Compromiso, and County Health Councils are among the partners. He noted that the Library is already a destination and a source for authoritative and accurate health information in its “Health Matters” web portal as well as with traditional print resources.

Eureka Fellows announced

Mr. Szabo announced that two librarians from Los Angeles Public Library have been selected to participate in the California State Library’s Eureka Leadership Institute. They are Joanna Fabicon, Children’s Librarian II from the Children’s Literature Department, and Jennifer Noble, Young Adult Librarian from the Will and Ariel Durant Branch Library. Those selected are known as “Fellows” and they are given a $5,000 grant for a project at their library. Mr. Szabo congratulated the recipients and noted that the Library will benefit from their projects.

IDEAS@LAPL Mini-Grants Program

Mr. Szabo reported on the new IDEAS@LAPL Mini-Grants Program funded by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles. Library staff is invited to submit grant applications with ideas on innovative ways to improve library operations or services and a team of Library staff selects the projects that will be funded. Its intent is to empower staff and to recognize and implement their creative ideas. The following eight projects have been selected for the current grant cycle: The Aphasia Book Club at the Echo Park Branch Library; a Digital Storytelling program in Teen’Scape; Mobile Technology Petting Zoo from Access Services at the Central Library; iPads for Kids at the Palms-Rancho Park Branch Library; an LAPL Book Bike at the San Pedro Regional Branch Library; Legos at the Junipero Serra Branch Library; Outreach Kit to promote LAPL at the Studio City Branch, and a Teen Cooking Project at the Valley Plaza Branch Library.

Mr. Szabo stated that the mini-grants total $20,000 and the recipients are very excited. He noted that the grant writing process also helps staff with their grant writing skills. There will be a second application process in March.

Mr. Szabo highlighted various events/programs at the following libraries:

Holiday Literacy Events Hosted by Councilwoman Nury Martinez

Councilwoman Nury Martinez, an enthusiastic supporter of the Library, hosted holiday literacy events at three branch libraries located in Council District 6 (Panorama City, Sun Valley and Van Nuys). Families from neighborhood schools were invited to come to the library for crafts, treats, and story reading by the councilwoman. She also gave away books as gifts to each child and families received library cards.
Children and Youth Programs

- Sherman Oaks Branch Library offered dance programs for toddlers, preschoolers and infants.
- Palms-Rancho Park Branch Library presented a performance of the “Grinch” with kids from the Mar Vista Recreation Center.
- John C. Fremont Branch Library presented origami expert Peggy Hasegawa who taught children how to make origami crafts.
- Sunland-Tujunga Branch hosted a live music program where musician George Graham Allan gave an introduction to the sonic characteristics of a wide variety of instruments.
- Teen’Scape held a Job Interview Practice and Tips for Teens program to help teens prepare for employment. Teens were able to participate in mock interview sessions.
- Children’s Department at the Central Library held a “Family Storytime: Happy New Year! Countdown” program on December 28 that included stories, songs, poems, noisemakers and a puppet show, where 90 participants counted down to 2014.

Computer Science Education Week - “Hour of Code”

The Children’s Literature Department presented an “Hour of Code” during Computer Science Education Week where every day from December 9 – 14, children were introduced to the basics of coding and programming using iPads and computers to invent and create.

Mr. Szabo also announced the following upcoming programs:

15-Week Citizenship Class

The Pio Pico-Koreatown Branch Library will begin hosting an intensive 15-week citizenship class starting mid-January as part of the Citizenship Initiative.

African American History Month and Women’s History Month.

Mr. Szabo provided a list of programs planned in celebration of African American History Month; they include: film screenings, children and teen programs, story times, etc. He noted that staff is currently working on the list of programs for Women’s History Month in March.

Commissioner Walters stated that she had the opportunity to review the list of programs celebrating African American History Month and she was very pleased with the extent and quality of the programs. She thanked staff for putting the programs together and she hopes to attend some of them.

Career Online High School

In March, the Library will begin offering an accredited Career Online High School program that allows adults to earn an accredited high school diploma. Mr. Szabo stated that this is a pilot program for a limited number of adult learners who were not able to complete high school and it will focus on areas with the highest number of individuals without a high school diploma. He noted that this program embraces the role of Library in lifelong learning.
Commissioner Lassiter asked what the participants would need to do to enroll in the Career Online High School program and if they would receive a GED certificate upon completion. Mr. Szabo replied that the course work would begin with an assessment to determine what courses they took in high school and which courses they need to take to complete the requirements to graduate. He said that participants who complete the program would receive a high school diploma, not a GED.

Board President Salinas asked how does the Library determines where the program is needed and how would the participants be selected. Mr. Szabo replied that staff looked at the demographics and the areas with the highest percentages of individuals without high school diplomas or GED would be where the program is focused. He stated that staff is still looking at how they will determine admission.

Vice President Cao asked how long would the program take and if Smart Horizons was the partner in the program. Mr. Szabo confirmed that Smart Horizons, an accredited program, was the partner and that there would be an academic coach who will determine how many courses the students need based on credits from their time in high school. Completion time would vary depending on the number of classes students have to take.

Commissioner Lassiter asked if the students would have a meeting location. Mr. Szabo stated the Library currently has 23 literacy centers and the program would be facilitated through 10 Literacy Centers located in areas with the highest need, but their courses will take place online.

Deputy City Attorney Basia Jankowski advised this item be placed on the next agenda if the Board would like to discuss it further.

**BOARD DIRECTIVE**

Board President Salinas requested that this item be placed on the Agenda for discussion at the next Board Meeting.

**January 12- Restoration of Sunday Service Hours**

Mr. Szabo provided an update on the upcoming celebration of the restoration of Sunday service hours on January 12, 2014, at nine libraries (Central, Arroyo Seco, Goldwyn-Hollywood, Exposition Park, Mid-Valley, North Hollywood, San Pedro, West Los Angeles, and West Valley Regional Branch). He reported that the ribbon-cutting events would start at 12:30 p.m. with simultaneous programs at all nine locations. The programs will include crafts, magic shows, mural painting, film screenings, etc.

Board President Salinas stated that she had placed the listing of all the locations and programs for that event on the radio station website with a link to the LAPL website. She asked the City Librarian to provide information on the high school diploma program and how the Library is planning to put that message out to the public because she would like to help in that area as well.
The Board President thanked Mr. Szabo for the information and stated that many people have expressed to her that they are very pleased about the restoration of Sunday service hours at the Library. She underscored the importance of continuing to promote the new hours to the public and to let them know about all the amazing programs available in their community libraries.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORTS:

Recommendation to Accept Gift

It was MOVED by Commissioner Bettinelli and seconded by Commissioner Walters, and unanimously carried that the following resolution be adopted:

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2014-1 (C-1)

RESOLVED, that the gift in the amount of $10,000 from the Friends of Westwood Library to the Westwood Branch Library to purchase adult library materials be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a letter of appreciation be sent to the Friends group expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board of Library Commissioners and staff for their generous donation.

RECOMMENDATION TO RECEIVE AND FILE STATUS REPORT ON LAPL LIBRARY USAGE

City Librarian John F. Szabo provided an overview of a report containing statistics of annual and monthly comparisons of the usage of the Los Angeles Public Library for the month of December 2013 and for the entire year in 2013 in comparison to 2012. The report includes number of cardholders, visitors, circulation, number of holds, computer usage, etc. He said that the data in the report is a quantitative measurement that presents a picture of the usage of the Library and it also helps determine which areas need improvement. He stated that recently the Library started using a service called “Counting Opinions,” a service that allows the use of a single system to capture more detailed data and reports. He noted that this is a priority for the Mayor, who wants departments to look at data in meaningful ways and use it to improve services. He also discussed highlights from the report.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Bettinelli asked if there were counters at every facility and how many of the total cardholders were active (checking out materials, attending programs, etc.). Mr. Szabo replied that all library facilities have counters and everyone who comes into the library is counted. He said data is captured on how many items each individual checks out and how many people attended programs.
In reply to a question from Board President Salinas, Mr. Szabo stated that anybody can use the LAPL website and can sign up for an online library card to use online services; however, they need a regular library card to check out physical materials.

Commissioner Bettinelli inquired about the capacity to support the technology demand. Mr. Szabo responded that there is a space capacity issue and the usage of technology needs to be looked at, not just wired PC’s but also wireless technology, since people also bring their own computers or tablets to take advantage of the wireless access. He stated that once Sunday hours begin it would result in an increase in circulation and computer usage.

Board President Salinas asked if there had been any efforts by the Library to bring certain programs to be offered exclusively by the Library such as online math programs to entice more people to come to the Library, and how would someone present such programs to the Library. Mr. Szabo stated the Library offers many online classes like that and he would be happy to talk about those kinds of opportunities to determine if it is a great program accessible to everyone and it fits well into the Library’s mission.

Board President Salinas pointed out that the increase of 191% in usage of the Student Zones is significant. She said that the belief that young people don’t go the library or that they are not interested in books is false because the data clearly indicates that young people do use the library.

The City Librarian commented that the Harbor-Gateway Branch Library has a Student Zone, but after school the entire Branch becomes a full Student Zone with over 100 students from nearby Narbonne High School make use of the Library daily.

Board President Salinas recommended that communication efforts with the School District be increased to make sure that the relationship grows.

Commissioner Bettinelli stated that as the Board looks at the budget, it would be helpful to know what percentage of the budget goes into each of the initiatives to determine if the Library is under-investing in certain programs that are highly used by the public.

**BOARD ACTION**

MOVED by Commissioner Bettinelli, seconded by Vice President Cao, and unanimously carried that the report on the usage of the Los Angeles Public Library be received and filed.

**PRESENTATION: CHILDREN SERVICES INITIATIVES**

City Librarian John F. Szabo introduced Eva Mitnick, Coordinator of Children Services, who would make a presentation on the initiatives for children and youth.
Eva Mitnick, Principal Librarian, Children Services Coordinator, informed the Board that Youth Services has two principal librarians, one that oversees Children’s Services for ages 0-12, and another that oversees Young Adult Services for teens, ages 12-18. They also serve teachers, families, and caregivers. She stated Children Services works on two distinct areas, Early Literacy and Out School Time programs. Early Literacy: has three main parts (Storytime, Early Learning Areas, and Parent Workshops).

1) **Storytime**: offered at every single library, and includes Family Storytime, Preschool Storytime, Toddler Storytime, and the new Science Storytime program that was added in 2013. Library partnered with the California Science Center, who trained children’s librarians on how to use science kits to teach preschoolers about science concepts such as gravity, botany, etc.

2) **Early Learning Areas**: all of the branch libraries have a section in the Children’s Areas where caregivers and kids can play and read together and encourage family interaction.

3) **Parent Workshops**: are provided using a model by the American Library Association and the Public Library Association, titled, “Every Child Ready to Read.” This program is a research driven model that teaches parents how to get their kids ready for school with five activities: reading, talking, writing, playing, and singing. These workshops are provided in preschools and staff models the activities for the parents. They usually organize them with Head Starts and are they are well attended.

Ms. Mitnick introduced Sr. Librarian Diane Olivo-Posner, Children Services, who would talk about STAR (Story Telling and Reading) and a new pilot program, titled “Learn and Play.”

“Learn and Play” program: This new program started last fall to assist parents with early learning and they attend Storytime with their children. Ms. Olivo-Posner stated that Children Services currently is providing this program at five University of Southern California (USC) Head Start locations, in partnership with Reading is Fundamental, who gives six books to each child in this program. She said the program would be expanding to other communities.

**STAR (Story Telling and Reading) Program**: Originally started 25 years ago as GAB (Grandparents and Books). Currently, there are 320 volunteers in the STAR Program. This year, seven training workshops would be conducted for new STAR volunteers. The children in the program receive a book the third time they attend to have a book read to them. Ms. Olivo-Posner reported that 500 books have been given out since August. The Library Foundation of Los Angeles provides the funds for the books, activity materials, and pays for one special presenter.

Ms. Mitnick spoke about the Out of School programs (Summer Reading, Summer Lunch, Student Smart), and the Full STEAM Ahead Project:

**Summer Reading Program**: has three main goals: 1) to encourage children to read; 2) to have children come to the Library to have fun with learning activities, to engage with librarians, and to learn about library resources; and 3) to bring in new library users.
Ms. Mitnick stated that staff goes out into the community to provide information about the Summer Reading Program and they also bring the program to off-site locations such as Boys and Girls Clubs where site leaders present the program with materials provided by the Library.

Ms. Mitnick provided some statistics from the Summer Reading; for example, in 2011, there were 20,368 kids in the program. In 2013, there were a total of 30,533 kids in the program; 50,715 books were read and 33,994 surveys were returned. The surveys provide information on first time library users, and other useful information such as 55.3% were first time users, 86% children said they will come back after the summer, etc. Ms. Mitnick stated that Children Librarians are asked to target children and teens from underserved groups (ethnic, community, new immigrants, etc.) that are not currently using the library and then develop an outreach strategy and a programming strategy for the group they chose to get them into the Library.

**Summer Lunch Program:** was offered at two locations last summer, Central Library and Pacoima Branch, where every single weekday all summer long for eight weeks meals provided by Food Bank were served during the Summer Reading Program. Ms. Mitnick stated that this is a way the Library is trying to address the need of hunger and food insecurity for children during the summer when school is not providing them with a meal. The Packard Foundation provided funds for program activities. She indicated that the Library is planning to do this program again this summer.

**Student Smart Program:** The Library works with Princeton Review to offer the Student Smart Program that is designed to help students be successful in school and prepare them for college by providing seminars, speakers, writing workshops, five-session SAT preparation tests offered for free at two branch locations. Ms. Mitnick stated that the Library focuses this program in areas with low-income communities.

**Full STEAM Ahead project:** funded by a $77,000 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant from the California State Library to provide programming for children ages 8-13. The programs are designed to increase interest in the sciences, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. Programs on science, robotics, 3-D printing, engineering, LACMA science art projects, etc. are being offered at 12 branch libraries and Central Library. Librarians were trained on how to do science experiments to teach with kids and the materials purchased for the projects can be used to continue the programs beyond the one-year phase. She stated that she hopes to continue this valuable program in future years with Library Foundation funding because kids are learning about science.

Ms. Mitnick concluded the presentation by reporting that the Mayor would soon announce a new initiative titled, “Summer of Learning.” This new initiative is based on Chicago’s recent Summer of Learning program. She will report more as it develops.

**Board Discussion**

Board President Salinas asked which two branch libraries provide the SAT Preparation Series. Ms. Mitnick replied that the locations are included in the Student Smart Schedule brochure. (The SAT Preparation Series locations listed are Encino-Tarzana and Echo Park Branch).
Commissioner Walters discussed the inclusion of the Encino-Tarzana Branch and selection of libraries for the SAT programming.

Vice President Cao inquired about the new schedule. Ms. Mitnick replied that a new printed schedule for the spring that includes three more locations would be out soon.

Commissioner Walters stated that since the locations for the spring schedule had already been selected, it would be next year before any changes could be made. Therefore, she requested a list of locations before any of these programs are set up for the summer.

City Librarian John Szabo offered to provide information on how those locations were selected and which are the additional three locations selected for the spring. He noted that the goal is to provide the program to those most in need. He stated that if there are any serious issues the Board has with some specific program, he could look for a remedy since the new program schedule is already being printed. In reference to the summer schedule, he said he would provide information on all of the programs for youths at all library locations and what is being offered at specific locations as well as what the criteria is and what the goal is of those programs.

Commissioner Walters discussed the importance of selecting program locations based on established criteria. Mr. Szabo will provide the Board with a list of the children’s and teen programs and their criteria.

Board President Salinas said that she is aware that the Princeton Review has an online component and asked if there was a way for the Library to work with them to make the 5-session component available on-line, so that kids at all 73 libraries could have access to that information. Ms. Mitnick replied that it could be possible and she will look into it.

Board President Salinas recommended the Library record presentations, such as the motivational speakers for the SAT preparation offered only at the Central Library, and podcast them on the Library’s website. She said that doing that would allow people who weren’t able to attend to have access to it and those who attended could revisit the seminar if they need to listen to it again for motivation. She suggested using YouTube videos as an easy and inexpensive way to reach more people and it would also be a tool to enhance the relationship with the schools.

Ms. Mitnick replied that the Library has the technology and currently streams programs from the Taper Auditorium.

In regard to the Summer Reading program, the Board President asked if the Library finds out from the schools about the books students have to read during the summer to make them available; and Commissioner Lassiter asked if the library has its own summer reading list by grade. Ms. Mitnick stated that unfortunately every school has their own list and there are hundreds of schools, but staff tries to find out and makes every effort to provide them. She said the Library has its own list of recommended books by grade and they make it available to teachers.
In response to Commissioner Lassiter’s question about online reading programs for young children, Ms. Mitnick stated that the Library offers two fabulous online resources, Tumble Books and Book Flakes; these online books include fiction and non-fiction.

Commissioner Lassiter asked how many children participated in the Summer Lunch program. Ms. Mitnick replied that Library staff and 19 volunteers assisted in serving 2,741 lunches and signed up 355 kids and teens for the Summer Reading Program.

The Board President asked how does the Library recruit volunteers for the STAR program because she hadn’t heard about it before. Sr. Librarian Diane Olivo-Posner replied that the information is on the Library’s website under Volunteers and on Facebook. Staff also does outreach to recruit volunteers in specific areas in the communities such as senior centers, recreation centers, Neighborhood Councils, etc. She noted that the STAR program has a higher number of volunteers in the Valley and the Central/Southern areas.

**VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS & REVIEW OF MATTERS PENDING:**

**L.A. Times Article on libraries**

Commissioner Lassiter commented that a recent article in the “Los Angeles Times” had beautiful pictures of libraries showing their interior spaces and reading rooms; however, for the Central Library it only included a close up of a statue, which it did not reflect the beauty and architecture of the building. She suggested Library staff develop a relationship with the L.A. Times to have input for future articles and really show the great image of the Library.

**Cooperation among Area Libraries**

Commissioner Bettinelli inquired about LAPL’s relationship with other public library systems in the surrounding areas and whether LAPL collaborated or partnered with Los Angeles County Public Library to seek opportunities like purchasing materials together.

Mr. Szabo replied that most public libraries in California have a reciprocal lending system. He noted that he and Margaret Todd, his counterpart in the County of Los Angeles Public Library (LACPL), know each other well and they look for ways to cooperate, including procurement.

**Sunday Service Hours**

Commissioner Bettinelli suggested that all council members have their library card on their keychain as a marketing technique for the upcoming press conferences on the restoration of Sunday hours.
Appointment of Board Member to the Library Foundation Board

Board President Josefa Salinas announced the appointment of Commissioner Gregory Bettinelli to serve on the Board of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles. An updated schedule of the Library Foundation Board and Committee Meetings was requested.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

ATTEST: ________________

_________________________________      _____________________________
Josefa Salinas                                                 Raquel M. Borden
President                                                             Board Executive Assistant

Date to be approved: February 12, 2014