M I N U T E S

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

April 3, 2014

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Commissioners was held at the Panorama City Branch Library, 14345 Roscoe Boulevard, Panorama City, CA 91402, convening at 11:03 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; Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild; Imelda Padilla, Field Deputy, 6th Council District; Jan Brown, President, Friends of the Panorama City Branch Library; and staff.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: Regular Meeting – 3/13/14

MOVED by Commissioner Walters, seconded by Vice President Cao and unanimously carried that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held March 13, 2014 be approved as submitted.

REMARKS BY THE EAST VALLEY AREA MANAGER
AND THE PANORAMA CITY BRANCH SENIOR LIBRARIAN

East Valley Area Manager

Emily Fate, East Valley Area Manager, welcomed the Board to the Panorama City Branch, one of 11 branch libraries in the East Valley Area. She reported that the East Valley Area spans across four council districts. She gave a general introduction of the East Valley branch libraries and pointed out that the region has two “Green” libraries, the Lake View Terrace Branch and the Sun Valley Branch. The Lake View Terrace is a “Green” building designed to have minimal impact on the environment through the use of recycled materials and features that conserve energy and water. The Sun Valley Branch is also an environmentally friendly building and received LEED Gold Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council in recognition of its superior expression of environmentally sound design. She said this is the second highest level of environmental award offered for buildings in the United States.
Ms. Fate provided an overview of the various programs offered throughout the region, including grant funded programs and system-wide initiatives and highlighted some of the special programs offered at the following libraries in the region:

- The Panorama City Branch and Pacoima Branch libraries offer programming on the “Full STEAM Ahead” Program. This grant-funded program is aimed at 8 to 13 year-olds to encourage them to develop interest in science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM).

- The Pacoima Branch Library will be offering the “Summer Lunch” program for its second year and at the Van Nuys Branch for its first year. This initiative seeks to combat both summer hunger and summer learning loss by providing lunch to kids age 18 and younger every weekday from June 9 – August 1. The food would be provided and delivered daily by the L.A. Regional Food Bank.

- The Van Nuys Branch has a special partnership with the L.A. Law Library to provide print resources and legal databases at the branch. The branch also hosts a law librarian every Friday who teaches a monthly law class.

- The Lake View Terrace Branch has a CalVets center where two AmeriCorps volunteers assist veterans by helping with job searching/placement and referrals to social services.

**Senior Branch Librarian**

Teri Markson, Senior Librarian, Panorama City Branch Library welcomed the Board to the Panorama City Branch Library. She introduced the following staff members that were present at the meeting: Philip Le Vie, Young Adult Librarian II; Beth Gallego, Children’s Librarian III; Christine Godinez, Clerk Typist; and Bryan Bazalar, Computer Aide.

Ms. Markson reported that the Panorama City Branch had to be closed last summer for several months for repairs due to major water damaged caused by a broken water pipe on June 7, 2013. She showed a power point presentation with photos taken after the incident.

Ms. Markson stated that during the branch repairs, staff evaluated the space at the branch and made some improvements. For example, lighting was improved in the children’s area and the space that was being used for adult paperbacks was turned into an early literacy area, which now is a very popular spot. She said that on October 21, 2013 an event was held to celebrate the reopening of the Branch. In attendance were Councilwoman Nury Martinez, Commissioner Rita Walters, President of the Panorama City Friends Jan Brown and City Librarian John Szabo along with many happy patrons.
Ms. Markson highlighted some of the wonderful work done by staff and spoke about the many programs the branch provides for children, teens, and adults. She also showed photos and videos of the activities and creative programs kids worked on, including “Full STEAM Ahead” programs such as Stop-Motion Animation workshop where participants created their own short animated films; 3D Printer demonstration; a Robotics workshop series (Scribblebot, Balloonbots! and Drawdio); and a four-week Preschool Science series, including one on "Bugs" and "I am a Scientist" program.

Ms. Markson also reported on the various initiatives the branch is engaged in. She said that 15 Covered California education and enrollment events had been held; and the last two weeks were very busy with hundreds of people lining up to enroll for health coverage. She stated that the branch is also very dedicated to early literacy and a team of staff members from the branch has applied for an Ideas mini-grant to create a circulating play kit collection that would include a book and a related toy.

Ms. Markson spoke about partnerships with community organizations and said the branch also receives great support from Councilwoman Nury Martinez, who last December hosted holiday literacy events at the three branch libraries located in Council District 6 (Panorama City Branch, Sun Valley Branch and Van Nuys Branch). She said the councilwoman gave each child a book as a gift and read to the children.

Board President Salinas thanked Area Manager Emily Fate and Senior Librarian Teri Markson for their presentation.

Board President Salinas welcomed Imelda Padilla, Field Deputy, representing Councilmember Nury Martinez of Council District 6. She asked Ms. Padilla to relay to Councilwoman Martinez that the Board is very appreciative of her involvement and support of the Library.

Ms. Padilla stated that Councilwoman Martinez is very dedicated to education and literacy. She said that she was happy that the holiday literacy events hosted last December by Councilwoman Martinez was highlighted in today’s presentation. She announced that for this year, they are planning to have a bigger event and donate many more books to children as well as include characters and more activities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION:

Kathy Schreiner, Member of Best Start Panorama City, a local organization dedicated to early literacy by assisting low income families with resources to help their children thrive, said she was thrilled about the new early literacy area at the entrance of the branch. She also spoke of the partnership that Best Start has developed with the Panorama City Branch. She said that Children’s Librarian Beth Gallego attends Best Start community meetings where she reads to children and promotes Library services and programs.
Ms. Schreiner stated that it was unfortunate that the Summer Reading Program was not offered at the Panorama City Branch last year because Best Start and Ms. Gallego had worked very hard promoting and signing up children to participate in the program. She mentioned that at the reopening event, she suggested to the senior librarian about the Library planning for other alternatives such as having transportation to the surrounding branch libraries or by providing a bookmobile to the site so patrons can still receive some services when a branch has to be closed.

Ms. Schreiner also mentioned that Best Start is collaborating with the Ideas mini-grant application by writing a recommendation. She said she believes they made a strong case as to why they felt this project was very compatible to what Best Start is trying to accomplish. She said Best Start targets children 0-5 in low-income communities in the Northeast Area. She said the play kits would be used to teach parents about the importance of talking to their children, both during play and by reading to them. She concluded by stating that the Panorama City Branch and Best Start continue working together and finding ways to collaborate.

Board President Salinas asked the City Librarian if the Library had something already in place for when a library closes for a long period of time.

City Librarian John F. Szabo replied that this was a unique situation but staff is working on a plan for when situations like this occur. He said the Library owned bookmobiles many years ago, and that it would be helpful to have one to provide temporary services to the community.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Librarian John F. Szabo thanked all Library staff for the great work they do. He said the presentation is a reminder that the library is a center to the community and how critical its services are. He commented that a lot of people came during the reopening and used every space and the collection. It showed how much the patrons make use of library services.

Mr. Szabo reported on the following events and programs:

Citizenship Initiative Update

Mr. Szabo reported that the LAPL’s Citizenship Initiative program continues to be very successful. He said that last Saturday, the Library held a USCIS Naturalization Information and Citizenship Workshop event at the Central Library focused on Spanish-Speaking residents. He stated that over 600 people attended the event where they received assistance information on eligibility and requirements, application assistance, attorney review; and a copy, packaging and photo station. The event also offered an overview of the citizenship interview, study materials, and online resources.
Mr. Szabo stated that this naturalization event was offered in partnership with NALEO and Catholic Charities of Los Angeles. He noted that another event would be held for the Asian Languages on May 31 in partnership with Asian Americans Advancing Justice.

Annual Dr. Seuss Birthday Readathon

Mr. Szabo reported that all libraries throughout the system celebrated Dr. Seuss’ Birthday with readathons where librarians, special guests, and other participants read their favorite Dr. Seuss stories and poems. Children also created Dr. Seuss themed arts and crafts.

Mr. Szabo also highlighted several events at the following libraries:


- Little Tokyo Branch presented popular novelist Foumiko Kometani, winner of the Ukutagawa Prize, a prestigious literary award in Japan.

- Cypress Park hosted an author talk with Chicana author and poet Iris De Anda.

- Pico Union Branch presented a program on “Fight Against Diabetes” with Chef Laura Gonzalez who discussed taste, seasoning and Zumba. This event was presented in English and Spanish and was sponsored by the Latino Diabetes Association.

Los Angeles Opportunities and Industrialization Center (OIC)

City Librarian John F. Szabo reported that Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) has partnered with the Los Angeles Opportunities and Industrialization Center (OIC), a non-profit organization that refurbishes donated used PCs and distributes them in communities where people don’t have access to them.

Mr. Szabo stated that OIC requires computer recipients to receive training on how to use the computers. The training is provided at 15 LAPL branch libraries and participants also receive a library card and information about all the resources and services offered by LAPL with a focus on the digital resources they can access with their new computers.

LAPL Partners with L.A. Homeless Services Authority

Mr. Szabo reported that a 60-day Homeless Outreach pilot assessment and outreach program is being conducted by the L.A. Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) at six LAPL libraries (Central Library, Hollywood, Venice, Little Tokyo, Northridge and Will & Ariel & Durant) to address the needs of the growing number of homeless
individuals and families in Los Angeles, many who use the public libraries for shelter. He said the pilot program is successful and has been distributing hygiene kits, assisting patrons with their needs and providing referrals for temporary housing and other social services.

Councilwoman Nury Martinez selects Sun Valley and Van Nuys Branch Libraries to receive funds

Councilwoman Nury Martinez, Council District 6, through a Council Motion made on March 28, 2104, appropriated funds to supplement child education and technology at the Sun Valley and Van Nuys Branch Libraries. Mr. Szabo stated that Councilwoman Martinez is a wonderful supporter of the Library and thanked her for continued support and championing children’s education.

Board President Salinas thanked Mr. Szabo for the information and asked if any of the author presentations had been recorded. Mr. Szabo stated that the SAT Seminars were recorded to make them available on the website. He said that not every single public program has been recorded.

In reference to the Covered California information, Commissioner Bettinelli asked if staff would be able to report on how many people were helped, the grant funds received for that purpose and whether those programs were successful. Ms. Szabo replied that staff has that data.

Commissioner Lassiter asked for a copy of the calendar of events.

Board President Salinas congratulated staff for the great work they are doing. She said that she had heard from a number of organizations that people had reported feeling safe coming to the Library for information and assistance because they trust the Library.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORTS:

Recommendation to Accept Gift

It was MOVED by Vice President Cao and seconded by Commissioner Walters, and unanimously carried that the following resolutions be adopted:

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2014-10 (C-9)

RESOLVED, that the gift of $3,000 received from the Friends of Los Feliz Library for the “Hot Off The Press” Bestseller Program at the Los Feliz Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a letter of appreciation be sent to the Friends of the Los Feliz Library expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board of Library Commissioners and staff for their generous donation.
UPDATE REPORT ON CAREER ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

City Librarian John F. Szabo provided an update on the Career Online High School program that was launched in March of this year. He said that up-to-date, 350 applicants have taken the self-assessment questionnaire, which is the first phase of the program; 147 have enrolled in the prerequisite course (second phase), and 13 of them have already passed the course. The third phase is the interview phase and five applicants have already been interviewed and admitted into the program.

Mr. Szabo thanked Board President Josefa Salinas for helping the Library promote this pilot program through her radio program. He said that applicants have reported learning about the program through the Library’s website, the press and the media. He noted that this program embraces the role of the Library in lifelong learning and workforce development.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Lassiter asked about the maximum number of students that could be admitted into the program. Mr. Szabo replied that currently 125 students would be admitted into the program, which will be evaluated in terms of demand and student success.

Board President Salinas inquired about the time frame from the start of the assessment to admission to the actual start of the program.

Candice Mack, Senior Librarian, Adult Literacy & Volunteer Services, responded that it takes approximately one month to complete the admission process. The self-assessment questionnaire takes about one hour and the prerequisite course takes approximately two weeks to complete. She said that upon completion of the prerequisite course, the applicants are scheduled for an interview at their closest literacy center. Once accepted for enrollment, they have to come back to the literacy center to fill out an agreement and request their transcript.

Board President Salinas asked if there was a time frame period was set for enrollment or if it was ongoing. Ms. Mack replied that the initial plan was to offer a limited number of seats each month, but the process is evolving and now is ongoing where students begin the program as they complete the admission process.

Mr. Szabo stated that it was important to make certain not to allow any significant amount of time to lapse between the completion of the prerequisite course and the scheduling of the interview because the students’ enthusiasm and motivation is a huge part of their success.

In response to Board President Salinas’ question about graduation, Mr. Szabo said that he is looking forward to seeing those students succeed and graduate and doing something for them to celebrate their accomplishment, but the details haven’t been worked out yet.
PRESENTATION ON PATH TO CITIZENSHIP INITIATIVE

City Librarian John F. Szabo reported that the Citizenship Initiative that was launched in September of 2012 in partnership with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has been very successful. He noted that the official title of the initiative is “Your Path to Citizenship Starts at the Los Angeles Public Library.” He pointed out that the Library has won a couple of awards for this innovative initiative that has also gained a lot of national attention.

Mr. Szabo stated that the USCIS selected the City of Los Angeles for the Citizenship Initiative pilot program. He stated that this initiative has been embraced by stakeholders and by the residents of Los Angeles, and it has led the Library to many other partnerships with non-profits that serve the new immigrant communities. He indicated that those partnerships have been very fruitful and have had benefits beyond the citizenship program.

Mr. Szabo reported that Mayor Garcetti has established an office of Immigrant Affairs that is headed by Chief Deputy Linda Lopez, who is doing a wonderful job helping promote the Library’s services in the citizenship arena. He mentioned that other two libraries that do this work on a large scale are the Queens Library in New York and Hartford, CT. He said that this initiative is consistent with the Library’s mission and is part of the wonderful history of public libraries being engaged in immigrant integration and being welcoming places for new Americans.

Mr. Szabo stated that staff from all levels had made the program possible and thanked them for that. He praised Cheryl Collins, Director of Branch Library Services, for helping implement this program. He introduced Melissa Potter, Adult Services Coordinator, who currently oversees the Citizenship Initiative to provide more information.

Commissioner Walters said she had to leave the meeting but wanted to commend the City Librarian and staff for the outstanding work and effort they have put into this initiative. She said she was very proud of the City Librarian for supporting this kind of program.

Melissa Potter, Principal Librarian, Adult Services Coordinator, stated that Cheryl Collins, Director of Branch Library Services, did an amazing job getting the program off the ground. She reported that former Mayor Villaraigosa signed the agreement with USCIS on April of 2012 and designated the Library Department as the proper agency for this task. She said the Library joined a taskforce for citizenship for Los Angeles that was formed and meets every month with the partnering organizations. She pointed out that this taskforce is a key part of the initiative because it involves partners like NALEO, Catholic Charities, CHIRLA, CARECEN, El Centro del Pueblo, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, and many more.

Ms. Potter stated that Cheryl Collins had worked with USCIS in providing training for staff on the basics of naturalization and obtaining the informational materials and forms from USCIS to set up citizenship information corners at all library locations by September 2012. She said that USCIS is trying to combat fraud whereby many people are
scammed for thousands of dollars to process their immigration status but they don’t receive the services promised and this is a big problem across the country. She said that USCIS is working with the libraries because libraries are safe spaces. The citizenship corners offer a list of vetted, legitimate providers where patrons can go to receive legal advice and assistance at low cost or at no-cost when applying for citizenship.

Ms. Potter reported that since September 2012, the Library has provided 732 citizenship-related programs attended by 9,248 people across the library system. Most of them were partnership led. She underscored the importance of the partnerships because they are experts in the field. She indicated that the partner organizations also bring new library patrons because every time the Library offers these kinds of classes, new people sign up for library cards. Also, participants come up to staff to say thank you for offering that service.

Ms. Potter also reported on the most recent Citizenship event that was held last Saturday. She said 134 applications were worked on; 74 were completed and the rest were referred back to agencies for additional information, but the 74 applicants are on their way to becoming citizens. Also, citizenship classes are promoted at these events to start preparing the applicants for the exam. She said staff is making sure to maintain the cycle from naturalization event to education and continue that cycle to help the 1.2 million permanent residents get through the citizenship process.

Ms. Potter concluded her presentation by stating that the Library is now working with the League of Women Voters to come to the Library to provide information on how to vote and the process for voting. She said that Deputy Chief Linda Lopez from the Office of Immigrant Affairs has requested civic engagement as part of the program.

**Board Discussion**

Discussion was held on Commissioner Lassiter’s question regarding the tracking of those individuals who made it through the entire process for the purpose of determining success rate. Ms. Potter indicated that many patrons take their first step to citizenship by getting information and referrals from the Library, then they move on to obtain legal services to file their paperwork. She stated that some people come back to the branch with their certificate and staff has started taking their pictures and posting them. The Benjamin Franklin Branch is one of them. She said the Library is also asking the partners to share the information to determine how many people have been helped by the Library and by other partners to become citizens.

Vice President Cao stated that she remembers that when her parents and extended family were going through the citizenship process there weren’t any programs like this available back then so she is happy to see that this happening now.

Board President Salinas asked if there was a cost for the program. Ms. Potter responded that informational sessions and materials are free and consultations by the partners at the events are free as well, but the participants may have to pay for the paperwork they have to do off-site and the fees they have to pay to USCIS to process their application.
Commissioner Bettinelli asked if this initiative was being paid from the Library’s budget. Ms. Potter stated that LAPL has been providing the books, space, promotion and staff time. She said that bilingual staff has been conducting many small groups sessions to teach and help applicants practice for the citizenship exam.

Board President Salinas stated that this Citizenship Initiative is such an important service to offer because people feel so comfortable and safe at the Library and the Library is building lifelong relationship with those patrons.

**VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

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

**Scheduling of Strategic Plan & Marketing Plan**

Vice President Cao inquired about the scheduling of the Strategic Plan and the Marketing Plan presentation. Mr. Szabo stated that the Strategic Plan draft has been completed and it will be shared with the Mayor’s Office. He expects to bring it to the Board soon for review and discussion. He said the Marketing Plan would be presented at a meeting following the adoption the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Lassiter asked that the Board be provided with the draft of strategic plan well ahead of time of the meeting to allow them sufficient time to review it.

**Next Board Meeting**

Board President Salinas stated that she would not be able to attend the Board Meeting on April 24, 2014. Commissioner Bettinelli stated he would be excused absent on that date also.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

**ATTEST:** ___________________

Josefa Salinas               Raquel M. Borden
President                   Board Executive Assistant

Date to be approved: May 8, 2014