MINUTES
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

December 10, 2015

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

EXCUSED
ABSENT:   COMMISSIONER  MAI LASSITER

ALSO PRESENT:  John F. Szabo, City Librarian; Kris Morita, Assistant General Manager; Arletta Maria Brimsey, Deputy City Attorney, General Counsel; Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild; Henry Gambill, Vice President, Librarians’ Guild; and staff.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: Regular Meeting – 11/12/15

MOVED by Commissioner Salinas, seconded by Commissioner Walters, and unanimously carried that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held November 12, 2015 be approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION:

Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild, read a letter from the Librarians’ Guild to the Board, in response to statements made during the November 12th Board discussion on the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2016/17. The Guild, in its letter, stated that there was speculation that the Library already has a big enough team, and that historically, the Library has been lean. The letter said that back in 2006, Substitutes supported the branches and departments only when they were needed. Today, Substitutes have become the staff, that is, when they are available to work.

In the letter, the Librarians’ Guild also noted that not all the promises of Measure L had been met as stated by the City Librarian. Measure L promised to voters that staffing levels would return to pre-2008 levels but due to retirements, attrition and a hiring process that cannot keep up with vacancies this has not come to pass yet. Every time the Library service hours were expanded, it was done while being grossly understaffed. When Librarians have to set aside their own jobs and perform clerical work, it results in less time for programs, outreach, and school visits. There are at least
20 libraries that have to borrow staff from another agency just to stay open. Staff struggles to provide the best possible service every day and the Library remains in a desperate state in terms of staffing.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S COMMENTS
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Librarian John F. Szabo reported the following:


2. **Ascot Branch Dedicated to Wanda Coleman**: City Librarian John F. Szabo thanked Board President Cao and Commissioner Walters for attending the dedication of the Ascot Branch to Wanda Coleman. Councilman Curren Price, Jr., Council District 9, was in attendance, along with a number of poets including Poet Laureate Luis Rodriguez, and members from the arts community, participated in the event. There was significant community reaction to the Board’s decision to dedicate the Ascot library to Wanda Coleman as well as positive feedback received from social media.

3. **The Benjamin Franklin Branch** will celebrate today the completion of the “Todos Juntos” Landscaping Project. Mr. Szabo stated that the non-profit organization Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) re-landscaped the area between the library and the corner of Boyle Heights. He thanked Wells Fargo for funding the project; Councilmember Huizar, Council District 14, for his involvement and for advocating that a fence be taken down to make the space much more open and pedestrian friendly. The project includes decorative pylons that feature quotes from poet Octavio Paz.

4. **Councilmember Nury Martinez’ “Gift of Reading” annual holiday program** will be hosted at branch libraries in Council District 6 (Panorama City, Sun Valley, and Van Nuys). The Children’s Librarians are involved and the holiday themed program includes story time by the Councilmember Martinez, and crafts and refreshments sponsored by the Council Office.

5. **AIDS Day Event**: On December 1, the Library hosted an AIDS Day Event in the Central Library’s Taper Auditorium. It was a multi-dimensional program that included a theatrical performance, a short film, and a panel discussion. Mr. Szabo said it was great working with the City’s Department on Disability and its AIDS Office.

6. **El Niño Preparation**: The Library has begun preparations for El Niño to make certain that all library facilities are ready (inspections of roofs and gutters). The library is also disseminating information to the public.
7. **“Born This Way”:** The Central Library hosted a screening of the film, “Born This Way,” a documentary that tells a story about LGBT life in Cameroon. Mr. Szabo said that a couple of the characters featured in the film have asylum in the U.S. and now live in San Francisco, and one of them was at the program. There was a panel discussion afterwards with Congressman Adam Schiff, KCET partners, and Frontiers Magazine.

8. **Culinary Historians of California:** This Friends group which supports the menu and cookbook collection of the Library, will be hosting a program on December 12, titled “Peru: Five Thousand Years of Fusion.” The program will feature Chef Ricardo Zarate, author of “The Fire of Peru: Recipes and Stories from my Peruvian Kitchen.” The program will include food tasting.

9. **Citizenship Classes:** A new set of Citizenship classes will be starting in January 2016 at the following libraries: Chinatown, Pio Pico-Koreatown, Felipe de Neve, Benjamin Franklin, El Sereno, Sun Valley, Mid Valley, Lake View Terrace, Vernon, and Junipero Serra. Partner organizations include the International Rescue Committee, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), Catholic Charities, and Asian American Advancing Justice. Mr. Szabo said these organizations continue to support the Library’s work and staff is delighted to work with them to offer these classes.

10. **Children’s Citizenship Ceremony:** The Library is working with USCIS to host another Children’s Citizenship Ceremony at the Central Library on January 14th. He invited the Board Members to attend this wonderful event.

11. **Staff from Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services** will be present at 18 libraries to help the public sign up for Medi-Cal, Covered California, Cal Fresh, and other government assistance programs. The Affordable Care Act sign-up is being offered at 32 of libraries by partner organization between November 1st and January 31.

12. The Library, in collaboration with Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and the Los Angeles Homeless Service Agency (LAHSA), is providing services to the homeless population in Los Angeles beginning December 2 and continuing on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. A staff member from both of those agencies will be in the Central Library (Meeting Room A) to provide referrals and services for the homeless members of our community. Also, conversations continue with the Mayor’s Homeless Policy Advisor Greg Spiegel as well as LAHSA about the Library’s role in the Mayor’s efforts around coordinated entry.

13. **Career Online High School (COHS) Update:** The twenty-second student has graduated within the last week from COHS. Currently, there are 127 students enrolled. The State Library is funding 55 additional scholarships for the program. A graduation ceremony has been scheduled for January 26, 2016. The Mayor has been invited to attend, but we are still awaiting for an official confirmation. Mr. Szabo invited the Board Members to attend the ceremony noting that this is a wonderful accomplishment and highlights what the Library is doing and the impact it has on people.
Commissioner Salinas asked if there would be public service announcements (PSA’s) for the new set of citizenship classes that are coming up; if so, she would like to get a copy. Peter Persic, Director, Public Relations & Marketing, replied that he would provide that information to her.

Commissioner Salinas also inquired on how homeless people are being informed of the services the Library is offering. Mr. Szabo responded that the Library services the current homeless population and works with partner agencies on providing information. Hygiene kits are being distributed at Central and at ten branch locations.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORTS:

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of the Consent Calendar.

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

Recommendation to Accept Gifts

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-59 (C-48)

RESOLVED, that the gift of $13,275.82 received from the Friends of the West Los Angeles Regional Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this gift of $13,275.82 be deposited in Trust Fund 831, Account Code 325–West Los Angeles Regional Branch Library.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends Group expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

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LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-60 (C-49)

RESOLVED, that the gift of $9,500 received from the Friends of the Encino-Tarzana Branch Library to purchase library materials for the Encino-Tarzana Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

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LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-61

RESOLVED, that the gift of six (6) lounge chairs, valued at $6,556.66, received from the Friends of Studio City Branch Library to the Studio City Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

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LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-62

RESOLVED, that a gift consisting of five (5) Designer Roller Shades, valued at $2,788.56, received from the Friends of the Chatsworth Branch Library for the meeting room at the Chatsworth Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

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LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-63 (C-50)

RESOLVED, that the gift of $2,000 received from the Friends of the Woodland Hills Branch Library to purchase library materials for the Woodland Hills Branch Library Young Adult Collection be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.

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Recommendation to Accept CLLS Grant for the “Uke Can Do It! Ukuleles” Project at the Wilmington Branch Library

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-64 (C-51)

RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners approve the acceptance of the Library Services and Technology (LSTA) grant award of $4,990 for the project “Uke Can Do It! Ukuleles at the Wilmington Branch Library”; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the funds be deposited in Fund 419, Code 324.

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Recommendation to Approve Transfer of Funds with Fund 300, FY 2015-16

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2015-65 (C-52)

WHEREAS, The Library transfers funds between salaries accounts each year to ensure that libraries are properly staffed:

RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners approve the following transfer of funds within the Library’s Fiscal Year 2015-16 Budget, Fund 300, Department 44:

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RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT AND THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION OF LOS ANGELES

City Librarian John F. Szabo requested withdrawal from consideration of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Los Angeles Public Library and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles.

Vice President Bettinelli asked if he could make a suggestion.

Deputy City Attorney Arletta Maria Brimsey advised that the Vice President Bettinelli recuse himself from making any comments, suggestions, decisions, or have any involvement on this item citing that she had been informed that two Board Members of the Library Commission also sit on the Board of the Library Foundation, thus creating a conflict of interest under Charter Section 222.

It was MOVED by Commissioner Salinas, seconded by Commissioner Walters, and carried by a vote of 3/4 (Cao/Salinas/Walters) to approve the City Librarian’s request to withdraw the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Los Angeles Public Library and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles from the agenda. Vice President Bettinelli recused from voting. Commissioner Lassiter was excused absent.

VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS: None.
COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS & REVIEW OF MATTERS PENDING:

Vice President Bettinelli stated that he wanted to clarify that the comments he made during the Budget discussions on November 12 regarding staffing levels were his own opinion, not of the entire Board. He said, secondly, he views his role in the city as helping to manage the department very important, even though he is not being paid to serve on the Board, it did not mean that people who fill those vacancies are not important. However, libraries are changing and Board members have to make choices on how to distribute funds in the best way possible. He stated that the Minutes noted that the City Librarian specifically said that levels of staffing had not yet been met.

Commissioner Salinas stated that each Board Member has his/her opinions about the Library and its goals and each of them play an intricate role in bringing balance to the benefit of community and staff. She said she has always pushed to hire more people from the communities and to bring them into the city family. She thanked her fellow commissioners and staff for a great year of service and wished everyone happy holidays and the best for 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Board President Cao wished everyone Happy Holidays. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

ATTEST: ____________________

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Bich Ngoc Cao                  Raquel M. Borden
President                      Board Executive Assistant

To be approved: January 28, 2016