MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

October 27, 2016

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    KATHRYN EIDMANN
           COMMISSIONER       MAI LASSITER
           COMMISSIONER       JOSEFA SALINAS
           COMMISSIONER       RITA WALTERS

EXCUSED

ABSENT:     NONE

ALSO PRESENT:  John F. Szabo, City Librarian; Kris Morita, Assistant General Manager; Arletta Maria Brimsey, Deputy City Attorney, General Counsel; Elaine Owens-Sanchez, Sr. Administrative Analyst II, CAO’s Office; Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild; and staff.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: Regular Meeting – 10/13/16

MOVED by Commissioner Walters, seconded by Commissioner Lassiter, and unanimously carried that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 13, 2016 be approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION: (Taken Out of Order)

Rick Young, patron of the Central Library, talked about computer usage and the no Drinks allowed policy.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Library staff participated in the following events: CicLAvia at McArthur Park: Staff and the Book Bike was there to promote the Library and signed-up approximately 400 people for library cards; and on October 29, Library staff will be at the Grand Avenue Arts Festival.
• Hoopla featured in LA Weekly: LAPL’s Hoopla service was featured in a recent LA Weekly blog post where it mentioned our digital collections and promoted the economics of being able to download 15 books a month for free. It was great publicity for the Library.

• Mini Job Fair: Central Library’s Career Center, in partnership with Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE), will be hosting a mini job fair for Andrews International. They will be interviewing for security guard positions.

• Financial Planning Day: On October 29th, patrons can sign-up for individual sessions to discuss a variety of financial topics with 50 certified financial planners that will be available that day for one-on-one sessions. City Controller Ron Galperin will be participating in this year’s program.

• The Exhibit “Herstory: Chinese American Women – 165 Years of Struggle and Success.” The Taipei Economic Cultural Office in Los Angeles is sponsoring the opening reception on November 1.

• The Exhibit, “America’s Shakespeare: The Bard Goes West,” will open on November 15. This exhibit is being presented in partnership with the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles. The LAPL’s copy of the Fourth Folio printed in 1685 will be part of the exhibit. Staff is planning a variety of programs for branch libraries throughout the city.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORTS:

PRESENTATION: MARKETING PLAN

City Librarian John F. Szabo stated that the team from Hershey Cause Communications who had been working on the marketing plan for the Library were here to discuss the plan and answer questions. He thanked Peter Persic, Director of Public Relations and Marketing and his team for working with Hershey Cause Communications on developing this marketing plan.

Peter Persic reported that over the past five months, Library staff had worked very intensely and collaboratively with Hershey to develop a plan that is not only very realistic and creative but one that will help build capacity, scale existing operations and innovate new strategies. He thanked Lauren Skinner, Assistant Director, Public Relations and Marketing and his entire staff for all their work; and Alex Castillo, former FUSE Fellow, who brought in his global marketing experience into the project. He also thanked Nick Bhatt, Senior Advisor, and Vanessa Schnaidt, Project Manager, Hershey Cause Communications for their experience, knowledge, and responsiveness. He introduced Hershey’s President R. Christine Hershey.
R. Christine Hershey, President, Hershey Cause Communications, stated that Hershey is a unique agency that selects the projects they work on. She said she was very excited about this project because Hershey has been involved in the Library for many years, whether advising, volunteering in projects or consulting. She spoke of Hershey’s extensive experience and high profile projects and clients, among them are the White House, Kaiser Permanente, First Five campaign, etc. She introduced Nick Bhatt and Vanessa Schnaidt, from her team, to talk about the plan.

**Presentation**

Nick Bhatt, Senior Advisor, Hershey Cause Communications, talked about how the plan was developed and provided an overview. He said the three-year plan is based on Hershey’s research and background work they performed as part of the project. He stated that the Los Angeles Public Library is transforming how libraries serve their communities and with the marketing plan it has the power to accelerate that transformative role by increasing visibility, awareness, and usage of the LAPL’s extensive offerings. The Marketing Plan includes essential best practices, new ideas and approaches; and it builds upon the broad range of efforts currently being implemented by LAPL’s Public Relations and Marketing Department.

Mr. Bhatt stated that among their findings, they learned that the Library has significant strengths, including quality programming, enthusiastic staff, a well-regarded library director, and a strong product to market. The Library also has many assets that can be used for marketing as well as external resources. He said the plan is a road map for a three-year period beginning January 2017 and Hershey is recommending that the Library: 1) Strengthen brand consistency, visibility and reputation; 2) Enhance LAPL’s own communications channels, and 3) Build out internal communications tools and systems.

Vanessa Schnaidt, Project Manager, Hershey Cause Communications, spoke about strategies and tactics Hershey is recommending in the Marketing Plan for five objectives: 1) Attract new audiences, 2) Engage existing audiences, 3) Bridge the gaps for all Angelenos, 4) Strengthen branches, and 5) Become an L.A. icon. She also talked about the campaigns approach to get maximum results.

**Public Comment**

Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild, stated that he was pleased with the marketing plan, and the creativity of the entire document was impressive. He made the following comments in relation to the marketing plan:

- The Guild recommends that any database use by the Library be secure and patron information be kept confidential and not used for marketing; unless, there is a way to ask them if they want to opt into it.
- The Tap Card $5 idea can be very expensive to offer.
Public Comment (Cont.)

- Metro’s maps currently don’t show libraries but now it can happen.
- The example about having signage in hospitals so people can be using or thinking about the Library while waiting is excellent.
- Library signage hopefully will be more prominent. For example, branch library signage needs to be at eye level.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Lassiter asked whether any preparation was underway before implementation begins in January 2017.

Mr. Persic replied that they have already started the preparations. He referred to page 143 of the Marketing Plan that shows the broad overview of the implementation and the Glossary of Terms that shows the breakdown of the detailed work that needs to be done. He said staff will go through it to decide what needs to be in place to create the foundation to support the infrastructure of the campaigns. Mr. Bhatt added that Hershey is recommending on Page 143 concentrated work for campaign readiness to organize the campaigns.

Commissioner Lassiter said she would like the Library to have a clear road map that outlines how it is going to be done because it takes a while to do everything and to get people on the same page at the same time.

Vice President Eidmann noted that the plan identifies challenges with the website and lack of consistent branding. She said that it would be important to address those issues and have them in place before launching an outreach campaign. Also, it would be helpful to have a plan for essential preconditions in place prior to doing the campaigns outlined in the document.

Board President Cao stated that because the website has a vast amount of content it would be difficult to overhaul it, but there might be some things on the website that could be updated. She asked Mr. Persic what parts of the plan the Library would need to hire for and what parts would be done internally.

Mr. Persic replied that currently they are assessing what skill sets they have in the office and what skill sets they need to hire for. He noted that the Library is in the process of hiring a graphics designer, which will help enormously with consistent branding. For elements of larger campaigns such as the New Americans Campaign and Career Online High School Online, they need to hire partners.

Commissioner Salinas asked about the type of paid media that would be used and whether the Library had laid out a budget for that. Mr. Bhatt answered that those steps need to be worked out by whoever the implementation partner is and the resources the Library has available.
Commissioner Walters stated that she had read the Marketing Plan and she was very impressed with the entire document. She said the plan is well-thought out and it will be easily adapted for full implementation in the Library system. She stated she was anxious to see some timelines on when the Board can expect a follow up and be kept informed along the way. She complimented the staff and the agency that was awarded the project, noting that it was time and money well-spent. She volunteered her help because she would like to see some of those recommendations come to fruition.

Commissioner Lassiter asked if the five major campaigns would be happening all at once or separately. Mr. Bhatt referred to page 143 that shows where each of the campaigns fall in the first 18-month timeline. He said being mindful of Library resources, some campaigns are periodic, some are focused at the beginning of the calendar, and others are dispersed. Page 144 contains the second 18-month phase of the plan.

Commissioner Lassiter asked if the branding standardization would be implemented first. Mr. Persic replied that was one the reasons the general LAPL campaign runs throughout the entire period to have the flexibility to create a campaign to highlight various current and new resources or implement a new program or service. The general campaign provides the structure and built-in flexibility.

Vice President Eidmann spoke in reference to the feedback received about undocumented patrons who might feel fear about potentially providing personal information to the Library. She said she didn’t see that issue addressed in the New American Campaign or elsewhere about outreach strategy. She asked if there had been any thought given to outreach targeted to undocumented residents or is there anything the Library can do in regards to its own policies to make undocumented individuals feel safer in accessing the services.

Mr. Szabo stated that the key was in the messaging letting people know that the Library doesn’t share information and that library services are for all. The library serves undocumented residents and the organizations the Library partners with help in carrying the message that being undocumented is not a barrier to using Library services.

Mr. Persic added that that message would certainly be part of all the campaigns and especially the New Americans Initiative.

Board President Cao said that in the New Card Holders Campaign talks about working with Metro and asked if there was any possibility of creating a dual card with METRO and the Library so people can use one card for both services. Mr. Szabo replied that they have had conversations and continue to have conversation about that.

Commissioner Lassiter stated that there are so many other city departments, other services like cable and organizations the Library could partner with to send out information about the Library. For example, new mothers could receive in their hospital bags, information about the library promoting how essential the Library is to the child’s literacy and learning.
Mr. Persic stated that staff is going through the plan to prioritize and determine what can be done internally. They will be creating project outlines for each campaign then they would go back to Hershey for implementation. He said they have a lot of internal structural work they need to realign. He noted that some of the recommendations in the plan, are already being done but the plan gives them tools to help them be more strategic on their priorities.

Board President Cao asked Mr. Persic when he could report back to the Board. Mr. Persic replied that he will be ready to report back in January.

Mr. Bhatt thanked Commissioner Walters for her kind words about the plan. He said that he was happy that the love and enthusiasm that the Hershey team has for the Library came through in the plan and they would be delighted to partner on the implementation.

RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017-18

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended that the Library’s Proposed Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2017-18, totaling $172,686,809, be approved for transmittal to the Mayor’s Office. He indicated that as a result of Measure L, the Library’s Charter-mandated appropriation for FY 2017-18 will increase by $9,877,510. He reviewed each of the budget packages, including the newly created Engagement and Learning Services Division, as well as the following funding requests:

- Request for 54 new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to enhance public services, outreach, marketing, and support services.
- Implementation of the Library’s Strategic Plan and new Marketing Plan.
- Continuation of the new Student Success Library Card program with LAUSD.
- Support of the Homeless Engagement Initiative and the Library’s mobile operations to provide services and programs to homeless and at-risk individuals.
- Advance the rollout of the rebranded New Americans Initiative to expand outreach and services to targeted communities.
- Enhance the Information Technology infrastructure.
- Increase Library Materials Budget by $1.6 million for print and e-content materials.
- Funding for upgrades and improvements for Central Library and branch libraries facilities.

Mr. Szabo stated that the budget also supports the Library’s new strategic plan goals and the Library’s support of Mayor’s Garcetti’s Initiatives. He extended special thanks to Business Manager Madeleine Rackley, Sr. Management Analyst Robert Morales and the entire staff who had been engaged in the budget process.
Public Comment

Roy Stone, President, Librarians’ Guild, stated that he had a concern about Item A-3 of the Board Report where the Board authorizes the City Librarian to make revisions to the Proposed Budget.

City Librarian John Szabo answered that the purpose of this authorization is to be able to make adjustments to the budget as necessary, such as changes in revenue projections, related costs, etc. However, if there is any revision/change of substance to the budget, in terms of funding, that would come back to the Board.

Arletta Maria Brimsey, Deputy City Attorney, stated that the type of revisions the report refers to on A-3 are for technical, non-material revisions. She said the Board typically gives this type of authority to the City Librarian.

Mr. Stone stated that the language of technical, non-material should be included in that sentence. Ms. Brimsey replied that the Board could amend it.

Mr. Stone also spoke in reference to the Espresso Book Machine. He said it is an interesting concept, but they need to have the staff in place to implement these new services.

Board Discussion

Commissioner Salinas asked if the Espresso Book Machine would be located at Central Library and stated that this new service could be a huge campaign.

Mr. Szabo replied that the machine would be at Central Library. He pointed out that the Library already has the Self-e service, which allows individuals to publish their own e-books, but the Espresso Book Machine would be an opportunity for them to create a physical book. He said it is a way to support local writers of all ages and allow them to see their books come to life and anticipates this service will be very popular.

Commissioner Lassiter had questions about the repair cost of the existing escalator versus a new escalator.

Mr. Szabo replied that the repair includes the replacement of fundamental mechanical parts of the escalator.

Madeleine Rackley, Business Manager, stated that the elevator and escalator repairs proposal is for the fifth and final year to upgrade the elevators and escalators in this building, which are over 23 years old. Some of the parts are not replaceable so they are being modernized and replacing as much as possible, essentially becoming new escalators.
Board President Cao commented that there are some substantial increases for security and custodial services and asked if those increases were with the intent to bring the levels to what they were before. She also asked in which year the MICLA obligation would be paid up.

Mr. Szabo responded that the final payment for the MICLA debt will be in Fiscal Year 2019-20. He explained that MICLA debt payments are for the Central Library construction and expansion project that the city required the Library to pay back. There will be additional funds available to spend on other priorities for the Library after that year.

Robert Morales, Senior Management Analyst, reported that the security costs are for salary increases for the security officers and the overhead based on those salary increases. For custodial services, the increase is for the salary increase and related overhead. Also, they are increasing power washing at some of the branch libraries.

Commissioner Eidmann asked for clarification on the New Americans Initiative enhancement and whether the funding was for additional salaries for existing employees or for hiring additional staff.

Mr. Szabo stated that with that funding, the Library will hire contract staff from existing partners that would work at the six super centers.

Board President Cao asked where the super centers would be located and who had branded that name.

Mr. Szabo replied that the name “super centers” is just an internal word for the New Americans Initiative centers that will be located in six libraries where there is the greatest need. The list of locations hasn’t been finalized yet but Central Library will certainly be one of them, and five branch libraries.

Vice President Eidmann asked if there was an item in the Central Library’s alterations and improvements budget to create more customer friendly self-serve spaces and upgrading the Children’s Literature area. She said that some of the weaknesses identified in the plan as a perception standpoint that some spaces are thought of as dark and dingy. She also asked if there was a process of looking at the physical spaces at the branch libraries to identify which branches might benefit from internal improvements.

Mr. Szabo replied that there are funds in the current budget to contract out for a firm to create a facility master plan at Central and every one of the 72 branch libraries. He said there are libraries that need major improvements and investment. For example, the Van Nuys Branch Library is very outdated and needs a dramatic improvement, which will cost half a million dollars. For the Central Library, improvements are minor repairs for the entire building and they need to determine how to better utilize square footage. The facility master plan will help to determine where all the needs are.
Vice President Eidmann asked if there was a timeline for the facilities master plan.

Mr. Szabo replied that this was initially included in the current year’s budget planning and it was something that did not get funded, but it’s something that is very important so they are looking to find dollars in the current year’s budget to get started rather than wait until Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

It was MOVED by Commissioner Lassiter, seconded by Vice President Eidmann, and unanimously carried that the following resolution be adopted:

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2016-53 (C-48)

WHEREAS, On October 27, 2016, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Proposed Library Budget in the amount of $172,686,809 to fund Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) services and programs; and

WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2017-18 Proposed Library Budget continues support of the six LAPL Strategic Plan goals, including outreach and promotion to enhance public awareness of the Library’s services and programs:

RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners approve for transmittal to the Mayor’s Office the Proposed Library Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18 in the amount of $172,686,809, for funding Library services and programs; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board approve the creation of a new Budget Program (“Engagement and Learning Services”) for the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Proposed Library Budget; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board authorize the City Librarian to make revisions to the Fiscal Year 2017-18 Proposed Library Budget, if necessary.

VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS: None.

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS & REVIEW OF MATTERS PENDING:

Filling of vacancy on Library Foundation Board

Board President Cao announced that there was a vacancy in the Library Foundation Board that needs to be filled with a Library Commissioner. She informed the Board members that she will appoint a member at the next meeting, unless there is a volunteer.
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

ATTEST: _________________

__________________________  ______________________________
Bich Ngoc Cao               Raquel M. Borden
President                   Board Executive Assistant

To be approved: December 8, 2016