MINUTES

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

November 9, 2017

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 11:03 a.m. on the above-written date.

PRESENT:
- PRESIDENT: BICH NGOC CAO
- COMMISSIONER: MAI LASSITER
- COMMISSIONER: JOSEFA SALINAS

EXCUSED
- ABSENT: VICE-PRESIDENT: KATHRYN EIDMANN

ALSO PRESENT: John F. Szabo, City Librarian; Susan Broman, Acting Asst. City Librarian; Arletta Maria Brimsey, Deputy City Attorney; Henry Gambill, President, Librarians’ Guild and staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting – 10/12/17:

It was MOVED by Commissioner Salinas, seconded by Board President Cao, and unanimously carried that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting held October 12, 2017 be approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION: There were no requests for public comments.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAPL’s battle of the “Book Spine Poetry Trash Talk” with Houston Public Library
Mr. Szabo reported that during the World Series the Library began what has been referred to as an “epic battle” with the Houston Public Library via social media. He and Rhea Lawson, Director of the Houston Public Library and a longtime friend, got into good natured trash talking. He said it was really great for both libraries in terms of promotion because it reached a broad audience. He said that Dan Rather had picked up an article about this battle from the online news site laist and wrote a Facebook post where he has 2.6 million followers: “I was delighted to find this story about the Houston Public Library and the Los Angeles Public Library. America needs a lot more of this. Good nature. Smart. Fun. Game on folks...” Mr. Szabo thanked Keith Kesler, Social Media Librarian in the Public Relations and Marketing Office, for his fantastic work in finding ways to promote the library. He said it was Keith who had initiated this challenge and the Houston Public Library picked it up.
New Director of Branch Library Services
Mr. Szabo announced that Chad Helton would be the new Director of Branch Library Services beginning November 13. Helton is currently the Deputy County Librarian for the Contra Costa County Library and has held management positions at the Palo Alto City Library, Stanford University Green Library, and University of California Davis Shields Library.

Hepatitis Vaccination and Flu Shots
In a partnership with the LA County Department of Public Health, the Library offered free Hepatitis A vaccinations and free flu shots at ten events held at the Central Library and some Branch locations. HIV screenings are also being offered in partnership with the non-profit Connect to protect Los Angeles, with 12 screenings events at Central and branch libraries. Last year, 117 individuals participated in the testing and this year that number is expected to grow. These services are part of the Library’s Health Matters Initiative.

Library Assists with Section 8 Sign-ups
Mayor Garcetti held a press conference with the Housing Authority of the City Los Angeles (HACLA) at the Central Library to announce the opening of the Section 8 housing waiting list for the first time in over 13 years, so it was very important to reach all potential applicants. The Library was HACLA’s principal partner because of the computers and Wi-Fi access, since HACLA was only accepting applications online during a two-week period. Approximately 780 people received direct assistance, staff answered over 3,000 inquiries on how to apply, and 40 events were held at the Library during that two week period. Mr. Szabo thanked staff who were fantastic partners to HACLA and helped reach many more people. Earlier this week, a senior librarian from the Vermont Square Branch mentioned at a meeting that an applicant, who received assistance at her branch, told her with a smile that if he gets a home he was going to invite her to dinner. Mr. Szabo said that it was really touching to hear this great story.

Financial Planning Workshops
Each year the Library works with the Mayor’s Office and the Los Angeles Chapter Financial Planning Association to offer educational workshops on a variety of personal finance topics, like basics of investing, financial strategies, estate planning and basic financial literacy classes. This is part of national initiative created by certified financial planners. This year, over 150 people attended the workshops. This is part of the Library’s Money Matters Initiative.

LA Saves Event
This event was about the importance of saving and it was held in partnership with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and their Alliance for Economic Inclusion. The 241 individuals who attended took a pledge regarding savings and in return they received information about various financial literacy topics from saving for retirement, information about taxes and other related topics.
The Source: Continues serving the homeless by bringing multiple agencies and non-profits together at Central Library to offer a one-stop-shop for services to the homeless, from transitional housing, distribution of hygiene kits, Social Security administration, Metro, etc. The Source has been expanding, it is now being offered at the Exposition Park Regional Branch Library and Will & Ariel Durant Branch, and soon at the Mar Vista Branch.

State Library Mental Health Initiative: This initiative helps train library staff throughout California on how to thoughtfully, sensitively, and effectively interact with people who may have mental health issues. Several LAPL staff members partnered with the County of Los Angeles Public Library to help create a series of videos that are now being used by libraries across California and in some other states for continuing education credits for library staff. Mr. Szabo thanked staff for their work on those training videos.

Governor’s Historic Preservation Awards: Mr. Szabo announced that LAPL had received the Governor’s Historic Preservation Award for The Valley Times Photo Collection, which were tens of thousands of photos that were digitized to preserve and make available through Library’s online platform. He congratulated Senior Librarian Christina Rice and her staff, the Library’s Digitalization Team, and the Photo Friends for the award. He thanked The Haynes Foundation for their support and the Library Foundation for helping apply for grants to do preservation work.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORTS:

City Librarian John F. Szabo reviewed the Consent Calendar and recommended its approval.

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

Approved Acceptance of Gifts

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2017-43

RESOLVED, That gift of a Paladine Mobile Book Display, valued at $1,377.68, received from the Friends of the Northridge Library for the benefit of the Northridge Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a letter of thanks be sent to the Friends of the Northridge Library, expressing the grateful appreciation of the Board and staff for the generous gift.
Approved Acceptance of Grant from
the Public Library Association for the
2017 Inclusive Internship Initiative

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2017-44 (C-38)

RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners approve acceptance of
funds in the amount of $10,500.00 from the Public Library Association for the 2017
Inclusive Internship Initiative to funds two summer interns at the Junipero Serra Branch
Library and at the Vernon-Leon H. Washington, Jr. Memorial Branch Library; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the funds be deposited in Trust Fund 419,
Account 339.

RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE
LIBRARY DEPARTMENT PROPOSED
BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018-19

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended that the Library’s Proposed Budget
Request for Fiscal Year 2018-19, totaling $182,433,355 ($178,533,356 in Charter appropriated
funds from Measure L and $3.9 million from Library generated revenue) be approved for transmittal to the Mayor’s Office. He stated that the Library will pay an estimated $72,804,754
(40.78%) in related costs (building maintenance, utilities, security services, fleet services, and
employee benefits). He reviewed each of the budget packages and funding requests, among
there were the following:

- Request for two (2) new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to enhance public
  services.
- Funding for key initiatives and priorities of the Library’s Strategic Plan and new
  Marketing Plan.
- Continue the new Student Success Library Card program with LAUSD and
  include charter and private schools.
- Support of the Community Mobile Outreach Program that will bring programs,
  resources and services to the residents of Los Angeles.
- Continue advancing the rollout of the rebranded New Americans Initiative that
  includes expanding outreach and services to targeted communities.
- Enhance the Library’s Information Technology infrastructure and providing
  new equipment for the benefit of Library patrons.

Mr. Szabo stated that the Library is submitting a very cautious budget. He stated
that the increments in percentage of Measure L funds has reached the .03% and will remain
the same percentage in future budgets. In planning for the future, in case property values
decrease, the Library has mitigating factors such as the Library Budget Reserve Fund that can
be used in case of need, and the MICLA debt, which is a $5 million dollar expense in this
budget, but will be paid off and those funds will be available for the Library after Fiscal Year
2020-21.
Board Discussion

Board President Cao asked if the percentage for related costs are anticipated to go up each year and Commissioner Lassiter asked why custodial services are going up. Mr. Szabo replied that related costs go up every year, primarily due to personnel costs. He said the Library reimburses other departments for their costs of providing services to the Library. Sometimes the Library chooses to expand those services, as with security this year.

Commissioner Salinas asked whether the costs were due to increase in personnel or if costs for current personnel were going up. Mr. Szabo stated that only two positions were included in the proposed budget. Madeline Rackley, Business Manager, added that the increase in personnel are mainly for the employee salary increases due to costs of living adjustments.

Commissioner Salinas asked how many jobs does the Library provides a year, and how it is stimulating employment aside from providing services. Mr. Szabo replied that when staff is hired from within, it creates a domino effect that results in hiring from outside. He said that the new Targeted Local Hiring Program, an initiative of the Mayor, is designed to get people coming from the outside to get some experience. There is a targeted audience that would get an opportunity to get hired without going through the civil service testing process. He said he would ask Human Resources for the numbers and classifications of new staff hire (half-time, full-time, etc.).

Commissioner Lassiter inquired about the additional $1.1 million for library materials being in various parts of the budget. Mr. Szabo said the funds are being divided in various areas and subjects.

Commissioner Lassiter asked for a further breakdown on how the materials budget is spent. Mr. Szabo stated that it is broken down between Central Library and Branch Library Services and divided by format, e.g., e-content, print and so forth.

Commissioner Lassiter asked how the tech kiosks, laser jet printers, mobile charger stations spread out among libraries and does he make sure that the branches that have the most need get the equipment. Mr. Szabo replied that those determinations are made by Branch Library Services based on were would that equipment would be most effective.

Board President Cao asked if the Library gets government discounts in terms of buying equipment and licensing. Mr. Szabo replied that it does.

Commissioner Lassiter asked what the next step was for the budget. Mr. Szabo replied that after the Board approves this budget, it will be submitted on November 17 to the Mayor’s Office.
Board Discussion (Cont.)

Board President Cao asked for more information about the funds that would be needed for marketing services.

Peter Persic, Director of Public Relations and Marketing, stated that since Fiscal Year 2015-16 the funding for the operations of the Public Relations and Marketing (PR&M) Office has increased dramatically to the current $2.3 million. He said staff feels the request in the proposed budget is an adequate amount to meet the public relations and marketing needs that have been identified by the department and contained in the marketing plan. He said that a request for $200,000 had been added for a targeted campaign for children and young adult services that would be used to unify and standardize a visual branding for both services that can be applied to the marketing materials.

Commissioner Salinas asked about the time frame for the completion of that project. Mr. Persic replied that the concept and branding should be completed by the end of Fiscal Year 2018-19.

It was MOVED by Commissioner Lassiter, seconded by Commissioner Salinas and unanimously carried that the following resolution be adopted

**LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2017-45 (C-39)**

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2017, the Board of Library Commissioners (Board) approved the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Proposed Library Budget in the amount of $182,433,355 to fund Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) services and programs; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2018-19 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 2018-19 in the amount of $182,433,355, for funding Library services and programs; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorize the City Librarian to make revisions to the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Proposed Library Budget, if necessary.

APPROVED AWARD OF CONTRACT TO
WICKED BIONIC, LLC FOR MARKETING SERVICES FOR LAPL

City Librarian John F. Szabo recommended approval of a contract with Wicked Bionic, LLC to provide marketing and public relations services to the Library on an as needed basis.
Board Discussion

Board President Cao asked how Wicked Bionic had been selected for this particular contract, since they seem to be just media buys. Mr. Szabo replied that staff had sent out a scope of work to the 16 consultants on the list that was preapproved by the Board; four of them responded and Wicked Bionic was selected from those four responses.

Board President Cao asked if staff would be getting monthly reporting from the firm on the campaigns; and if so, she would like to be added to the distribution list for that information. Commissioners Lassiter and Salinas requested to be on the list also.

Commissioner Lassiter asked if the vendor would be coming here at any point because she would like to hear from them. Mr. Szabo stated that it could be scheduled.

Board President Cao stated that she was particularly interested in the online marketing.

Commissioner Lassiter asked who in the Library monitors that the services provided as stated in the Contract, Section 6, under payment (Page 3). Mr. Szabo responded that Business Manager Madeline Rackley and Director Peter Persic will be involved in making certain that services are provided as stipulate in the contract.

Commissioner Salinas asked why radio spots and video ads were listed separate from e-media or media buys. Mr. Persic clarified that those two items are for costs of production of radio and video for the media buys.

Commissioner Salinas asked if the Library has a say on which ad media agencies are used in regard to the media buys and that they are targeting the demographics you are looking for. Mr. Persic replied that Wicked Bionic will be dealing with the ad agencies directly.

Commissioner Lassiter asked if the firm was strong in the Spanish market. Mr. Persic replied that they are very strong on multilingual competency, which is one of the reasons they were selected since all of these campaigns have multilingual messaging.

Deputy City Attorney Arletta Maria Brimsey requested revisions of the contract; specifically, the sections of the contract referring to Exhibit C (Standard Provisions) by replacing the new version of Standard Provisions dated 10/2017 Rev2.

It was MOVED by Commissioner Salinas, seconded by Commissioner Lassiter and unanimously carried that the following resolution be adopted with the contract amendments:
LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2017-46 (C-40)

WHEREAS, On June 8, 2017, the Board of Library Commissioners approved the pre-qualification list of sixteen (16) consultants, including Wicked Bionic, LLC, to provide as-needed and as-requested marketing and public relations services to the Library; and

WHEREAS, on August 10, 2017, the Library staff issued Notice of Work Number 17-001 to provide Media Buys on the Library Career Online High School, E-Media and New Americans initiatives, and on August 18, 2017 Library staff reviewed and evaluated the four (4) responses submitted by consultants from the list, and recommends that the Board of Library Commissioners award a contract to Wicked Bionic, LLC, to provide Media Buys on Library initiatives for the Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL); and

THEREFORE, RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners award a contract to Wicked Bionic, LLC, to provide Media Buys on Library initiatives to the LAPL; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Librarian and City Attorney be authorized to make technical changes if needed to the agreement; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President of the Board of Library Commissioners is authorized to execute the contract.

ORAL UPDATE ON THE MARKING PLAN

Peter Persic, Director, Public Relations and Marketing, provided an update on the progress made on the marketing plan. He stated that the marketing plan is a 3-year road map to increase the visibility and engagement in Library services and programs. The first year of the marketing plan focuses on increasing capacity and readiness, which is very important because budget and staffing levels to do marketing and public relations was very small compared to the ambitious goals set on the marketing plan.

Mr. Persic reported that staffing levels have increased in the Public Relations Office by hiring an in-house graphics designer, filled one PR specialist position, supported the creation of the digital content team, and is in the process of hiring three (3) PR specialists that will provide direct PR and marketing support to the branch libraries. Also, his office has 16 outside firms to select from to assist in the various tasks and three (3) new campaigns that are being created with a new brand strategy.
Mr. Persic also reported progress on many of the deliverables suggested in the plan. For example, its social media strategy increased patron engagement and participation by 155% over the previous September. Based on feedback received from participants, social media posting increased participation on the Summer Reading Club, summer lunches, and exhibitions. The PR office created a new cardholder welcome e-mail, launched a new e-newsletter, redesigned the Central Library calendar of events for which it received the 2017 Gold Award from the Public Relations & Marketing Professionals for the new design; designed the new Student Success Library Card and the Teacher Library Card, expanded the technology branding with travelers’ digital library at LAX, tech-to-go and digital commons; by wrapping LAPL delivery vans and wrapping the Central Library curb side book drop boxes, and with banners outside the Library.

Mr. Persic reported that PR office will begin its largest and most ambitious major marketing campaigns created for the New American Initiative, Career Online High School, and E-Media (Digital Library). Each campaign has a comprehensive strategy, and implementation plan and multiplatform creative and will begin marketing with the media buying partner to launch those campaigns. The first campaign launched in August was the Career Online High School, which was a great success. Website traffic increased 121% on COHS website, signups increased 156%; enrollment increased 51%. They are following with the New American Initiative in January and E-Media (Digital Library) campaign. Looking forward to next year, he is looking forward to creating a unified brand for the children and teen programs, and deploying the three PR specialists into the field.

Mr. Persic explained the process they used to come up with the brand strategies that are defining the campaigns. He presented the Board a document titled, “Testimonial Campaign System.” He said they began the process by identifying the challenges of one organization with multiple campaigns aimed at many different audiences; specifically, the difficulties of achieving individual campaign objectives and overall Library objectives; each campaign has distinctive look and are competing with each other and building branch equity for each campaign would be very expensive.

Mr. Persic stated that they identified through market research and focus groups, key elements of the campaigns and created the “Testimonial Concept.” He said this concept does several things: It establishes a cohesive familiar look across all programs, ensures each campaign is distinct while still extending the overall Library brand; resonates with targeted audiences, reinforces recognition, supports specific programs and provide significant savings. He showed the difference samples they using for the campaigns, they include posters, banners, advertising, bookmarks, PSA slides, Facebook concept design and Instagram, screen savers, exterior banners. The same application would be incorporated to non-collateral material. Looking forward to applying this concepts to our ongoing major initiatives moving forward and realizing additional success.
Board Discussion

Board President Cao thanked Mr. Persic for the presentation and stated that she really liked this concept and was excited and interested to see it come to play. She asked if for future campaigns would be possible to use real life patrons in the photography because that would lend a lot of authenticity; also, those people who own their own networks would be proud to tell people, “I participated in this campaign and this is how the library changed my life.”

Mr. Persic replied that these are evergreen campaigns and as target audiences shift and as people become more aware of it, it is really a terrific opportunity to engage the people participating in the programs be part of the actual campaign.

Commissioner Lassiter stated she was concerned that in the samples presented the Library logo is not standing out enough as being the source of the program it advertises and would prefer the logo be at the top rather than at the bottom. She said that recognition of the Library brand should be very important in all advertisement. She also asked if they had a tag line in the advertisement.

Mr. Persic replied that they did focus groups looking at a variety of different ways to/of messaging because one of the major challenges they are facing is that the services being provided are not traditionally associated with the Library. He said the primary goal is to grab the attention of people who have a need for these specific services as and then link it to the Library. He said it has been found that it is much more effective attracting people’s attention if the specific service such as homework help, creating playlist, etc. was front and center. They also explored applying this campaign to a general library campaign and it fits beautifully. For example: “The library is where I can…” He said that best part of this campaign is the flexibility to apply it in a variety of different ways. Hershey Cause and the various teams within the library who provide these services were really helpful focusing and developing this campaign. He said it is something that is organic and will be adjusting it, changing it, and adapting it.

Commissioner Lassiter asked at what point they would get to the general library campaign. Mr. Persic responded that the Career Online High-School has already been launched, the New Americans Initiative will be launched in January, and the E-Media will be the first quarter of next year. They will be running concurrently for a year and will be ramped up and ramped down to accommodate the market. After that, they will be having a more general library campaign, probably 2018-19 fiscal year.

Commissioner Lassiter said that she is trying to figure out the individual campaign objective vs the recognition of the library brand because the Library has a $180 million-dollar budget with all these programs and services, and she feels that not a lot of people know what’s going on at the Library. She said it was important hearing from people outside the vendors and from this building because she wants to make sure that the Library brand gets out there.
Board Discussion (Cont.)

Mr. Persic responded that once these three campaigns are running and they’ve been up for a time, people will see a bold primary color with a person next to it and a quote and begin to internalize that as the Library brand and being from the Library.

Commissioner Lassiter said that it is similar to other bright colored ads with a single person.

Mr. Persic responded they had originally approached these campaigns as three very separate and distinct campaigns and did focus groups with both the general public and the intended audiences and had three separate designs for each campaign. Unanimously throughout all three programs the testimonial campaign came across as the one that resonated the most with people. He said that was sort of the “AHA!” moment when they realize they have this opportunity to really maximize resources and create a strategic broad brand to target specific audiences and that would resonate with these audiences.

Commissioner Salinas suggested creating a slogan or tag line that would make it easier to remember the Library, something that crosses all of the programs that leads back to the library. She asked if the average person on the street knows that we have online high-school at the library.

Mr. Persic stated that one of the reasons they have been so strategic in identifying the market and the audiences who are most receptive is because that is a very niche program. Someone who has a diploma may not get past the tag line because it’s not relevant to them and that’s why is really important to identify potential markets and really focus on those markets instead of promoting widely.

Commissioner Cao said that targeting these ads would be more effective because of limited funds. She said that the E-media campaign is something that is more broad-based because that applies to almost everybody, everyone has a phone or some sort of computing device versus the New Americans campaign that would be for immigrants. Career Online High-school is the smallest audience. She thinks the ads are fine, but she sees the e-Media campaign as the biggest one that will show if they are reaching people. She said she finds that in her daily life she is starting to meet more and more people that know that e-Media exists at the Library, but it’s still not a huge number.

Commissioner Salinas suggested again using some kind of library slogan or tag line that would become like the hook of a song or movie line that everyone knows but it would be about the library and that can be used on all of these campaigns.

Mr. Persic stated that they could explore that for the general campaign.
VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS: None.

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS & REVIEW OF MATTERS PENDING:

Commissioner Rita Walters retires after 15 years

Board President Cao announced that Commissioner Walters had resigned from the Library Commission after serving on the Board for 15 years (2002 - 2017). She said Commissioner Walters’ prior experience as member of the City Council and LAUSD School Board was invaluable in her service as commissioner, and the Board will recognize her service at a future meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017-18: Continued.

BOARD ACTION

It was MOVED by Board President Cao, seconded by Commissioner Salinas, and unanimously carried that the Election of Officers be moved to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Bich Ngoc Cao                      Raquel M. Borden
President                        Board Executive Assistant

Approved: January 25, 2018