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 11:10 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; Fontayne Holmes, Retired City Librarian; Kris Morita, Retired Assistant City Librarian, Tom LaBonge, former Councilmember, CD 4; and staff.

Approval of Minutes:  Regular Meeting – November 9, 2017: Approval was continued by unanimous consent.

Introduction of Librarians from Buenos Aires

Mr. Szabo stated that this year the City of Los Angeles was featured at the Buenos Aires International Book Fair; and the Library was asked by Mayor Garcetti to represent the City. While there, Mr. Szabo signed a sister library agreement with the Buenos Aires Public Library and the LAPL staff members in attendance had the opportunity to interact with their staff. As part of that relationship, three staff members from the Buenos Aires Public Library came to Los Angeles this week.

Mr. Szabo introduced staff representing the Buenos Aires Public Library: Nancy Koller, Assistant Coordinator of Technical Services Department and Adriana D’Onofrio, General Manager of Libraries and Promotion of Reading, both were in attendance at the meeting. He said Javier Martinez, Director, had already returned to Argentina. During their visit, they toured many branch libraries and looked at the variety of services throughout the library system. He said he had a discussion with Director Javier Martinez about having an exhibit from their collections here and doing same in their library.
Presentation of Retirement Resolution
To Commissioner Rita Walters

City Librarian John F. Szabo thanked Commissioner Rita Walters on behalf of staff, supporters and library patrons for her incredible contributions to the Los Angeles Public Library. He said he had tremendous amount of gratitude and great appreciation for everything she has done for our libraries and for all of her public service.

Mr. Szabo stated that he had the pleasure of being at the City Council Meeting when she was reappointed and he was delighted to see councilmembers stand up to speak about her contributions to our schools and city, and her role as a city councilmember and library commissioner, giving her the recognition that she absolutely deserves.

Mr. Szabo said he considers an honor to serve as city librarian for a time while she has been commissioner. In addition to being an outstanding commissioner, asking tough questions, she really knows the Library and our services; who we truly are as an institution and what we mean to the people we serve. He said he hopes that she would continue to be an amazing ambassador and advocate for libraries all over; especially, for the Los Angeles Public Library.

Mr. Szabo remarked that to have someone like Rita, whose name is so associated with libraries and with Los Angeles Public Libraries, is such a gift to this institution.

Speakers

(1)

Kris Morita, Retired Assistant City Librarian, said she was privileged to have worked with Rita Walters for the last 25 years and she can’t think of anyone else who has supported the Library as much as Rita, in terms of her political, physical, emotional and moral support. As councilwoman, she called every year during budget season asking how she could support and improve the Library’s budget. During the 20-year library construction program, Rita was very involved in her role as councilmember. She was very much part of the decision making process of the design of the Central and of many branch libraries. She also attended almost every grand opening of the 65 libraries, more than any staff member.

Ms. Morita stated that Rita always put the public first; for example, 20 years ago, she fought for the expansion of service hours because she wanted to make the library more accessible to everyone and she has always believed that libraries enhance people’s lives.

Ms. Morita commented that several times over the years, she had told Rita that the Library should erect a statue of her likeness to honor her for the tremendous support she has provided to the Library over all these years. She said we could never thank Rita enough, especially for her support of the Measure L campaign. She concluded by telling Rita, “You have been awesome. Thank you so much.”
Fontayne Holmes, Retired City Librarian, said that it was a pleasure and privilege to be here today to honor Rita. She wanted to thank Rita’s family for sharing Rita during her time on the commission and her years in city council. She said Rita has had her admiration and respect for many years now, even before she came to city council, because she was an LAUSD watcher when Rita was on the school board and it was such an important time for equal education here in the city and for the integration of our schools. Then, when Rita was elected to the 9th Council District in 1991, library staff got to meet her and her staff, since her district included Central Library and five branches. At that time, the Library was beginning the first bond construction program to build 26 branch libraries and Rita became active right away helping find locations for the Junipero Serra Branch and Ascot Branch.

Ms. Holmes also mentioned that on April 29th, 1992, Los Angeles had one of its worst disasters -- the riots that followed the not guilty decision on the Rodney King case. At that time, several historic libraries had been moved to mini malls from their historic buildings because they were not seismically safe; two of those libraries in mini malls were burned down during the riots, Junipero Serra and John Muir. She said the day after the riots, she and Rita went to the Junipero Serra Branch site, which was pretty much gone. She recalled that LAPD was there to protect the DWP workers who were there to restore power, but she and Rita were there without any entourage at all. She pointed out that this was the beginning of the Library Foundation and the very first fundraising the Library Foundation did was for the Junipero Serra and John Muir branch libraries.

Ms. Holmes said Rita has always been a wonderful spokesperson for the Library and she has always had great integrity and honesty. Coming to testify before Rita was always a learning experience because she asked hard questions and direct questions; she did not suffer fools gladly at city council meetings or committee meetings, she really looked for the right information to help make the right decisions, in terms of the public. She stated that Rita has so many wonderful principles, but certainly equity of service and equity of access to everyone in the city to the libraries and to the parks.

Ms. Holmes stated that it was remarkable that Rita had been appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners by Mayor Jim Hahn, reappointed by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and then reappointed by Mayor Eric Garcetti. She said Rita brought so much knowledge and wonderful judgment and honesty to the Board of Library Commissioners and we have all benefitted from it. “Thank you so much I loved working with you all the time.”

Tom LaBonge, Retired Councilmember, 4th District, said Councilwoman Rita Walters served the 9th District so well that they said you have got to help the greatest of all departments who helps the most people, that is the Library Department. At the Library Department people find a way to get to where they want to go. He told Rita that he had always loved her special deputy, David, and said that Rita is an angel from the city of angels and that she is very much loved.
Presentation

Board President Cao said that, to her, Rita Walters is not just an icon of the Los Angeles Public Library, but also of the City of Los Angeles, and she feels so grateful that she had an opportunity to serve on this Board with her and to learn from her. She thanked her for all her service over the years.

Commissioner Salinas told Commissioner Walters that she has been such an inspiration to her and that she admires her greatly.

Commissioner Lassiter told Commissioner Walters that she is a jewel to the city and a good citizen, and that everyone in this room has witnessed what she done with her life, being a voice for people who are voiceless and she appreciates that.

The Board Members read the following resolution and presented it to Commissioner Walters.

Resolution

WHEREAS, RITA WALTERS was appointed to the Board of Library Commissioners on February 15, 2002, and has served nearly five terms under three mayors. She presided on the commission during the greatest period of expansion and innovation in the library’s 145-year history, an unprecedented era, which included the largest library construction program in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Walters’s experience, commitment and in-depth understanding of the library and the city played a crucial role in the remarkable success of the massive expansion project, which was completed under-budget and ahead of schedule, and built or renovated 65 branch libraries; doubled the size of the library system to 1.4 million square feet; expanded the system from 62 to 73 libraries; and modernized libraries citywide; and

WHEREAS, Her skills and experience also helped the library navigate the unprecedented challenges created by the 2007 recession, which resulted in the city’s largest budget deficit and led to the most severe cuts to the library’s budget and services in its history; and

WHEREAS, In response to this difficult time, Commissioner Walters worked with elected officials, other city departments, library advocates and other stakeholders to help pass Measure L, the landmark 2011 legislation passed by voters to restore the library budget and permanently stabilize its funding; and

WHEREAS, during her long tenure of public service, Commissioner Walters made political history in 1991 as the first African-American woman elected to the Los Angeles City Council, and won re-election in 1993 and 1997. During this time, she chaired the City Council’s Arts, Health and Humanities Committee, which reviewed matters related to the Library Department. She served on the
Los Angeles Unified School District’s (LAUSD) Board of Education from 1979 to 1991, and she served as a teacher in the Adult Division of the School District for four years; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her extraordinary career in public service, Commissioner Walters has been an inspiration to countless people, a lifelong civil rights crusader fighting for the rights of all, a champion of the library’s mission and a staunch defender of intellectual freedom and access to information. She is also recognized for demonstrating a strong commitment to the welfare of library staff and patrons; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Library Commissioners extends to RITA WALTERS its heartfelt gratitude for her extraordinary service to the Board of Library Commissioners, library staff and patrons and the people of Los Angeles and for her work in helping to transform the Los Angeles Public Library into one of the world’s great libraries.

BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS

Honoree

Rita Waters, former commissioner, introduced her daughter Susan and sons David and Phillip. She stated that libraries have been very special places from the time she was a child growing up in Kansas City because her parents instilled the importance of libraries to all the children in the family. She said the library she went to was in a park in an ancient building and there were library branches in the schools she attended so she had good exposure to the Library. She said Kansas was back then a segregated society and the African American librarians took interest on the children as much as the teachers did. She stated that her parents expected her and her siblings to behave in the Library because if they didn’t, they would know about it. She said behavior meant being a good citizen, being respectful of others and obedient to the librarian and all the official people. She said her children have grown up with the same respect for libraries.

Ms. Walters stated that she has enjoyed being part of the Library, not only during her childhood, but also being here interacting with everyone. She said she is very proud of the libraries in Los Angeles. She told staff, “You are a real jewel, a real gift to the City of Los Angeles and hope that those that come after you have the same feeling about the libraries and what they stand for. I thank you very much.”

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MATTERS WITHIN THE BOARD’S JURISDICTION: None.
CITY LIBRARIAN’S COMMENTS
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Skirball/Creek Fire
Mr. Szabo reported that all libraries were scheduled to be open today throughout the city and they are expecting to be very busy because 250 schools in the Valley were closed today. He said the Mayor had a press conference today where he was to mention the libraries as being open and being places where young people and families can come and participate in variety of activities that librarians are providing. Four libraries had closed this week: Sylmar, Sunland-Tujunga, and Lakeview Terrace were in evacuation areas; and the Brentwood Branch, although it was it was not in the evacuation area, it had to close. Mr. Szabo said he was very proud of the staff who are working during this crisis and providing wonderful service.

“I Love My Librarian Award”
Mr. Szabo announced that Senior Librarian Annie Cipolla from the John C. Fremont Branch had been honored on November 30th in New York as one of ten winners of the 2017 I Love My Librarian Award. He said this award recognizes librarians throughout the country for the impact they have and services they provide to the communities they serve. This award is a collaborative program between the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the New York Public Library, The New York Times and the American Library Association. He said he was very proud of Annie for being one of the ten selected from over 1,100 entries nationally.

Mini-Maker Faire
On Saturday, November 2, the Library hosted the DTLA Mini-Maker Faire at the Central Library. Mr. Szabo noted that there was nothing mini about the faire, since it had over 1,800 registered attendees. The Library was filled with families and dozens of exhibitors from non-profit organizations and from other libraries. All sorts of activities and STEAM topics were being provided with programs on robotics, sewing, 3-D printing, virtual reality, etc. He said staff did a really great job and had tremendous success and many people were exposed to the library and its STEAM Ahead program for the very first time, and thanked Eva Mitnick, Director, Engagement and Learning, for leading this effort.

Winter Reading Program
On December 15, The Library is launching the Winter Reading Challenge. It is a new opportunity for patrons to discover programs, resources, and services and collections for the holidays. It will run through January 15. Participants can online and log the number of minutes they read and participate in libraries events, submit book reviews to accumulate winter reading challenge points to earn prizes. The big prize winner will receive a family membership to Discovery Cube LA.
Native American Heritage Month
Mr. Szabo stated that he was incredibly proud of the staff for really doing a great job providing programs and topics for Native American Heritage Month programs, hosting 36 events across the library system that included displays, craft programs, story time. The Studio City Branch Library had a great program on the Chumash and Navajo tribes and storytelling and the Silver Lake Branch Library had a faculty member from UCLA present on Tongva, the original language of Los Angeles.

ALOUD Program with Khizr Khan
Tonight, the ALOUD Program will host Khizr Khan, who has written a new book. He came to national attention following the speech at the 2016 Democratic National Convention along with his wife, Ghazala. They are the parents of the US Army Captain who was killed in 2004 during the Iraq War.

Board President Cao thanked Mr. Szabo for the information and said she would be attending this ALOUD program tonight.

CITY LIBRARIAN’S REPORTS:

City Librarian John F. Szabo reviewed the Consent Calendar (Exhibits A-B). For Exhibit B, he reported that a revision had been made to the Board Report (Transfer of Funds) to correct the account number from 1070 to 1090 and requested that it be approved as revised.

It was MOVED by Commissioner Lassiter, seconded by Commissioner Salinas and unanimously carried to approve the Consent Calendar with the revision on Exhibit B:

Approved Acceptance of Gift

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2017-47 (C-41)

RESOLVED, that the gift of $1,000 from David Tulanian for the benefit of the Ascot Branch Library be accepted; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the funds be deposited in Fund 831, Code 327, Ascot Branch.

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

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Approved Transfer of Funds between
Salaries Accounts within Fiscal Year 2017-18

LIBRARY RESOLUTION NO. 2017-48 (C-42)

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

WHEREAS, Staff requested the transfer of $340,000 to various salary accounts within the Library’s Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget:

THEREFORE, RESOLVED, That the Board of Library Commissioners hereby approves the following transfer of funds within the Library’s Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget, Fund 300, Department 44:

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<th>Account From:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1010 – Salaries General</td>
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<th>Account To:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1070 – Salaries As-Needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1090 – Salaries Overtime</td>
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**TOTAL:** $340,000

VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS: None.

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS & REVIEW OF MATTERS PENDING:

Election of Officers for Fiscal Year 2017-18:

**BOARD ACTION**
It was MOVED by Commissioner Lassiter, seconded by Commissioner Salinas, and unanimously carried that the Election of Officers be moved to the next meeting.

Board Meeting Schedule for January-June 2018
Board President Cao announced that the Board Meeting Schedule for January – June 2018 had been distributed with the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

ATTEST:

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

Approved: January 25, 2018