



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: October 30, 2023

Recording: Due to a technical issue, this meeting was not recorded.

Location: Main Library, Brad Walters Community Room, 125 14th St., Oakland, CA 94612

CALL TO ORDER: Co-Chair Caleb Smith called the meeting to order at 5:46 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 9

Chiye Azuma
Brittany Buckmire
Mary Forte, Vice-Chair
Carolyn Moskovitz
Karen Roye
Gabrielle Sloane Law
Caleb Smith, Co-Chair
Alex Weinberg
Karen Zukor

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 4

Bradley Boyd
Alternier Cook
Ayushi Roy, Co-Chair
Cristina Tostado

STAFF PRESENT: 2

Jamie Turbak, OPL Director
Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant to the Director

It should be noted that, at the call of the Co-Chair, agenda items were taken out of sequence. However, these minutes reflect the published sequence.

1. Roll Call

2. Open Forum/Public Comment (2-minute limit)

There were no members of the public present.

3. Approval of Draft Minutes: July 31, 2023

Commissioner Mary Forte noted a typo in the minutes and then made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Karen Roye seconded the motion. All others were in favor. Motion approved.

It should be noted that at this point, staff to the commission, Kere Gonzales, made an error in the call for adoption of the minutes. Since new commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law was not present at the July meeting, Kere should have advised her to abstain from the vote.

4. Special Guest CAO Jestin Johnson

CAO Jestin Johnson spoke about his support of and commitment to the library. He requested that commissioners speak freely and openly regarding their concerns and bringing things to his attention.

CAO Johnson shared that he is approachable and asked commissioners to reach out to him when they have asks. He noted that while he may not be able to make everything happen, he will make the ask.

Commissioners invited CAO Johnson to visit Elmhurst, Melrose, and AAMLO; he committed to doing so at some point in the future.

5. Update on By-Laws

Commissioners Mary Forte and Chiye Azuma introduced the first draft of the commission bylaws. Commissioner Forte explained that the bylaws were drafted using samples from other commissions and using the ordinance. The discussion was as follows:

Article I: NAME AND PURPOSE

No changes made and very little discussion.

Article II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Board Membership Composition, subsection C- There was discussion around whether it is practicable to have at least two commissioners from each district. The concern was that vacancies may be difficult to fill and/or filling of vacancies should be based on the needs of the commission rather than geographic residence. In response, there was further discussion that the intent of the language in the ordinance which states, “*appointments to the Library Commission shall reflect the geographical diversity of the City*” means the commission should have representatives from each district. There was a suggestion made to add a bullet point which states that when there are three or more vacancies on the commission, an appointment can be made regardless of the district of residence, however that edit was not made. It was decided that this

requires further discussion to determine. Although there were no changes made, the language may be amended after further discussion.

Section 2: Number of Members and Appointment, subsection B- There was discussion that this is new and will help new commissioners as they learn about the commission and its work. All agreed that this is necessary and will be helpful. There were no changes made.

Section 2: Number of Members and Appointment, subsection E- There were questions about holdover status and the rights and roles of commissioners in holdover status. Staff sent those questions to City Attorney. The questions and responses were read as follows:

1. If a commissioner is serving in their final term, can they go into holdover status when the final term ends? *Yes, under the legislation, holdover status can occur following the conclusion of a commission member's term for a period not to exceed one year; the legislation does not distinguish between the first term or second/final term. Therefore, holdover after final term is allowed, for a period of up to one year. (Section b(E).)*
2. Does a commissioner in holdover status have a voting right? *Yes, holdover members continue to serve as members of the commission and nothing in the legislation indicates they can't vote.*
3. Does a commissioner in holdover status count towards quorum? *Yes, holdover members continue to serve as members of the commission and nothing in the legislation indicates they can't count towards quorum*

With the answers providing clarification, there was no further discussion, and the question was removed. There were no additional changes made.

Section 4: Removal and Filling Vacancies, subsection A- There was discussion about the definition of excused versus unexcused absence. While there was no absolute definition given, it was decided that an unexcused absence is generally defined as being absent without notification to the Chair or staff. It is understood that emergencies happen, and notification is not always possible, and circumstances will be considered.

Section 4: Removal and Filling Vacancies, subsection B- The question about holdover and quorum was answered during earlier discussion in Section 2. The question was removed.

Article III: OFFICERS

Section 1: Elections, subsection A- There was discussion regarding the current practice of having co-chairs versus the ordinance language of a Chair and a Vice Chair. A few people recalled that it was decided that co-chairs are best because the duties are too much for a single individual to handle. It was split between two people to lighten the load. Carolyn Moskovitz, who has served as Co-chair and Vice Chair added that she thinks it is best to have two because it is quite a bit of work for a single person. It was decided that this requires further discussion and there were no changes made to this section.

Section 3: Officer Duties, subsections A and B- It was noted that if there are changes made to Section 1, Elections, subsection A (above), changes will need to be made here as well.

Article IV: MEETINGS

No changes made and very little discussion.

Article V: VOTING

No changes made and very little discussion.

Article VI: PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

No changes made and very little discussion.

Article VII: REPRESENTATION OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION

No changes made and very little discussion.

Article VIII: LIBRARY COMMISSION CITY OF OAKLAND DEPARTMENT ROLES

No changes made and very little discussion.

Article IX: BYLAWS

No changes made and very little discussion.

As part of the larger discussion, there were questions asked that Staff promised to follow up with City Attorney regarding. As of the drafting of these minutes the responses have been received. The questions and answers are below:

1. When a new commissioner is appointed to a special vacancy (a vacancy created when a previous commissioner leaves prior to completing their term), they are appointed for the remainder of the previous commissioner's term. This results in a shortened term for the new commissioner. Does this shortened term "count" as the commissioner's first term, or can they serve two full terms after that initial appointment? *Yes, to the former (the shortened term is still considered a first term). The legislation provides that no person shall serve more than two consecutive terms, and doesn't distinguish between full terms or terms filled due to a vacancy. That said, some members may be able to stay on as holdover for an additional year, provided that the mayor doesn't appoint someone else in the meantime.*
2. Can a former commissioner who served two full terms come back and serve as commissioner ever again? *The legislation for the commission only prohibits persons from serving more than 2 consecutive terms; it does not provide a limit on non-consecutive terms. So yes, a former commissioner could return so long as the prior 2 terms are not consecutive with the new term(s).*

6. Special Co-Chair Election

This agenda item was not heard. It was decided that since there is only one meeting left in the year, this election would be deferred to January in accordance with elections timeline outlined in the ordinance.

7. Quarterly Maintenance Report

Commissioner Mary Forte shared the quarterly maintenance report. She noted that while open service requests have trended downward, there had been a recent spike in requests. It was suggested that perhaps the spike was due to increases in HVAC requests due to unusually warm weather.

Commissioner Mary Forte stated that the report has helped to address long-outstanding issues and get repair work done and reminded commissioners that it can be used as a tool for communication with the branch managers as they advocate for branches.

The commission commended Commissioner Mary Forte on her continued diligence around maintenance and janitorial.

8. Director's Update

Director Jamie Turbak covered the following:

Feasibility Studies

These are explorations of potential changes to existing services and/or the establishment of new services. Please do join these conversations and help us to spread the word.

- [Hoover Durant Library](#)
- The [Main Library](#): please complete the Main Library's community survey: [Reimagining the Oakland Main Library!](#)
- Piedmont Avenue Library: [Building Campaign – Friends of PAL](#)
- [San Antonio Park](#) (no formal process in place yet)

Capital Projects

There are many capital projects currently underway at OPL due to decades of deferred maintenance. In addition to protecting collections and making OPL facilities safe and comfortable, these renovations are helping the City of Oakland to meet its resiliency goals. Keeping libraries open during periods of high heat and smoke is only possible when the building and HVAC systems are in good working order.

- **African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO)**: Thanks to a \$1.69 million grant from the California State Library and matching funds from Measure KK, AAMLO will be able to make critical repairs and improvements.
- **The Brookfield Branch Library** is also getting ready to undergo extensive critical maintenance work, funded by a grant from the California State Library for \$2.15 million and matching funds from Measure KK.
- **Elmhurst Branch Library**: This facility recently completed extensive upgrades funded by Measure KK, including a new public bathroom, the conversion to all-electric power (including a heat pump that also provides air conditioning), new flooring, and interior/exterior painting. Thanks to the Friends of the OPL and a local private foundation grant, work is also being done to make improvements to the backyard.
- **Main Library Infrastructure Project**: Separate from the long-term vision being created through the feasibility study, the Main Library is preparing to tackle critical maintenance projects in 2024. With a \$4.1 million grant from the California State Library and matching funds from Measure KK, the Library Infrastructure project will improve electrical and data capacity (critical for our server room which supplies data to all library locations), and will include lighting, flooring, roofing, and energy upgrades. If the project stays on track, construction will begin in March 2024 and wrap up by December 2024, and the building would close entirely to the public for four months in the middle of this project (June-September). Bidding has closed but a contract has not yet been awarded.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.:** Part of the City’s Transformative Climate Communities program grant, this project will enhance the bike repair facilities and outdoor program area at this busy neighborhood library.
- **Tool Lending Library:** Public Works opened the Request for Proposal (RFP) process and is accepting contractor bids.

News & Updates

- On Wednesday, September 6, the Friends of the OPL Board of Directors approved \$235,000 in Annual Grants to support OPL programs, services, and facilities. These grants will make a positive impact at every location in the library system. Additionally, the Board authorized one-time grants of \$30,000 to support teen programming at the 81st Avenue Branch Library and \$88,000 to continue weekly art workshops for children at 11 library locations in the 2024-25 school year. Thanks to all the Friends and members who made this generous support possible.
- OPL applied for and received a \$12,000 grant from the Pacific Library Partnership to provide “Tech for All” basic computer classes at 81st Avenue Branch, the Main Library, and West Oakland Branch. These classes kick off with a pilot session in November at the Main Library which will cover basics about computer including using the mouse, email, password management, google suite, internet searching, applying for free/discounted home internet, and library resources. Participants who attend all four sessions will receive a refurbished laptop from Tech Exchange at the end of the class. This pilot session – which is now full -- will be followed by six more cohorts the first half of next year. To get on the waitlist for the November sessions or to be notified of future classes, please call the Second Start team at (510) 238-3432.
- The national theme for Black History Month 2024 is African Americans and the Arts. To celebrate, OPL is honored to launch a limited-edition Library Card Contest to celebrate African Americans and the Arts in Oakland. This contest invites artists of all ages to submit original works in five categories: Music, 50th Anniversary of Hip Hop, Visual Arts, Theater and Performing Arts, and Literature and Poetry. Winning artists will have their art featured on a limited-edition OPL Library Card that will launch during Black History Month, February 2024. The contest opened for submissions on October 15 and ends November 15, 2023. More details can be found at: <https://oaklandlibrary.org/artcontest/>

9. Co-Chairperson’s Update

Co-chair Caleb Smith stated that he had nothing critical to share and would forego comments in the interest of time.

10. Ad-Hoc Committees Updates

Commissioner Karen Roye shared that she and Commissioner Alex Weinberg continue to work on the survey which will be on agenda in November. She invited commissioners to continue to provide feedback and stated that there would be more discussion after the future of the Sustainability Committee has been determined.

Commissioner Carolyn Moskowitz shared that there had been no movement on the ad hoc committee for censorship due to Barbara Lee being busy with other things. She will continue to reach out and move the work forward.

11. Agenda Building

- **November 2023**-LAC Survey Report, Audit Update, Bylaws Vote.
- **December 2023**- Recess
- **Early 2024**- Geographical Balance of Specialized Services (i.e. tool lending in East Oakland)
- **Spring 2024**- Midcycle Budget Update

12. Welcome and Goodbye to Commissioners

Commissioner Gabrielle Sloane Law was welcomed to the commission. There was no goodbye because Co-chair Caleb Smith will remain in holdover status for at least one more month and stated that he would be present for the November meeting.

13. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 7:46 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

/ s /

Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant to the Director