



LIBRARY COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Date: January 26, 2026

Recording: https://oakland.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=cd1f3e5f-fd7d-11f0-bb28-005056a89546

Location: Main Library, 125 14th Street, Oakland, CA 94612

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Gabrielle Sloane Law called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: 11

Chiye Azuma
April Bell
Mary Cain-Simon
Gay Plair Cobb
Andrea Henderson
Carolyn Jones
Anand Patel
Justus Samuels
Gabrielle Sloane Law
Cristina Tostado
Karen Zukor

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: 2

Kevin Covarrubias
Alex Weinberg

STAFF PRESENT: 2

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

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of Draft Minutes: November 24, 2025

Commissioner Bell made a motion to approve the minutes as published. Commissioner Zukor seconded. Commissioners Azuma and Cobb abstained. Commissioners Henderson and Patel were not present for this portion of the meeting and did not cast a vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

3. Open Forum/Public Comment

Public speaker Byron introduced himself as a 20-year Oaklander and resident of District 2. He commended the staff of the Books for Wider Horizons training that he had taken last year. The Books for Wider Horizons trains volunteers to read stories for preschool and daycare aged children. He stated that he'd put the training to the test recently at the Allendale Elementary story time and it had been a rip-roaring success. He thanked Pat Toney for coordinating and overseeing the program, all the Children's librarians and assistants, and Kam DeLeon-Fong, volunteer coordinator who made him feel supported. Byron ended by stating that the Books for Wider Horizons is an amazing program.

4. Annual Report to Life Enrichment Committee

Chair Sloane Law explained that the report would need final amendments done and a vote would be taken as the report would be going to the Life Enrichment Committee in February. She thanked Vice-Chair Azuma for her work on getting the document complete and published for the meeting. Director Turbak explained the process for joining the meeting in person, online or submitted a comment to the meeting. It was explained that the language in the report is largely taken from the action plan. There were no proposed amendments to the report and motion was made by Commissioner Cobb to forward the report to committee. Commissioner Zukor seconded the motion. Commissioners Henderson and Patel were not present for this portion of the meeting and did not cast a vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

5. Elections for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Chair Sloane Law announced that she would not seek reelection for the role of Chairperson and thanked everyone for their support during her two years in the role. Director Turbak and commissioners thanked Chair Sloane Law for her service and commended her for taking on the role so early in her role as commissioner.

Staff Gonzales explained that immediately following the vote, the gavel would pass to the newly elected chair who would share their vision about the direction and future of the commission under their leadership. The nominations were as follows:

A nomination for Commissioner Azuma as Chairperson which she accepted. There were no more nominations for Chairperson, so nominations were closed.

A nomination for Commissioner Cain-Simon as Vice-Chairperson which she accepted. There were no more nominations for Vice-Chairperson, so nominations were closed.

When the nominations were taken to vote, the votes for both were unanimous.

Commissioner Sloane Law made a motion to appoint Commissioner Azuma as Chairperson and Commissioner Cain-Simon as Vice-Chairperson. Commissioner Bell seconded. Commissioner Henderson was not present for this portion of the meeting and did not cast a vote. All others in favor. Motion approved.

6. Newly Elected Chairperson’s Update

Newly elected Chair Azuma outlined her vision and priorities for her tenure in the upcoming year as follows:

- Restoration of the general fund’s appropriation.
- Increased recognition of the role of the Library by Oakland residents and elected officials.
- Ensuring coverage of all seven city districts by commissioners who live in the district to help integrate the communities into commission activities.

Chair Azuma also made the following announcements to commissioners:

- The Branch Friends meeting is on March 7th from 1:15p-3:00p at the Melrose branch.
- The OPL Advocates Spring Mixer is on May 17th from 1p-3p at Main.
- There will be an exclusive tour of AAMLO on a date to be determined.
- The Life Enrichment Committee meeting is on February 24th. Commissioners are invited to show up to support Commissioner Sloane Law as she presents to the committee.

7. Commissioner Assignments

The following changes were made to commissioner assignments:

Commissioner	Term	Branch	Committee	District of Residence	Assigned CM	CM District
Chiye Azuma*	03/01/23-02/28/26 (1 st)	King	Sustainability	6	Jenkins	6
April Bell	11/17/24-11/16/27 (1 st)	AAMLO	Community Engagement	3	Fife Mayor	3 N/A
Mary Cain-Simon**	11/13/24-11/12/27 (1 st)	Elmhurst Dimond	Sustainability	4	Houston Ramachandran	7 4
Gay Cobb	10/16/23-10/15/26 (1 st)	Main AAMLO	Community Engagement	3	Fife Mayor	3 N/A
Kevin Covarrubias	06/24/25-06/23/28 (1 st)	Asian At- Large	Sustainability	2	Wang Brown	2 At-Large
Andrea Henderson	11/14/25-11/13/28 (1 st)	Chavez Melrose	Community Engagement	5	Gallo	5
Carolyn Jones	06/19/24-06/18/27 (1 st)	Eastmont Piedmont	Community Engagement	6	Jenkins Wang	6 2
Anand Patel	11/14/23-11/13/26 (1 st)	Montclair	N/A	6	Ramachandran	4
Justus Samuels	11/14/24-11/13/27 (1 st)	West Oakland	Sustainability	3	Fife	3
Gabrielle Sloane Law	09/14/23-09/13/26 (1 st)	Brookfield 81 st	Community Engagement	7	Houston	7
Cristina Tostado	10/05/23-10/04/26 (2 nd)	King Chavez	Community Engagement	3	Wang Fife	2 3
Alex Weinberg	03/01/23-02/28/26 (1 st)	Rockridge Golden Gate	Sustainability	1	Unger	1
Karen Zukor	03/01/23-02/28/26 (1 st)	Temescal Tool Lending Melrose	Sustainability	1	Unger Gallo	1 5
Unassigned		Lakeview				

8. Director's Update

Director Turbak shared the following:

- I want to thank all the Commissioners who joined the 75th anniversary celebration at the Main Library this past Saturday, January 24th. OPL received a lovely proclamation from Mayor Barbara Lee. Also, in honor of a year of 75th anniversary events, we have billboard advertising the library across the street on 14th Street.
- OPL has posted the 2025 annual report and it's available online on our website and I provided print copies for those of you here today.
- There is a community town hall meeting tomorrow, January 27th from 6-7:30 pm regarding the City's 2026 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The meeting is online and will discuss "What should the City of Oakland do prior to a disaster or an emergency? Provide your input based on your own experience and knowledge. Your input will shape the City of Oakland's mitigation strategies."
- The application period for Youth Poet Laureate is open until February 1st. Eligibility is for youth who live in Oakland and are between the ages of 13 and 18 on the day the application is due. The winning Laureate will receive an educational scholarship of \$5,000 and each finalist receives a \$500 prize. Please encourage applicants.
- There will be a Trades Career Fair at Elmhurst Branch this Saturday, January 31 from 10am-5pm. Meet representatives from local trade organizations and unions and learn how to enroll in paid training and apprenticeship programs. Get step-by-step guidance on how to start your path in carpentry, electrical work, construction, and more!
- There will be a lot of activities at libraries in February celebrating Black History Month and Lunar New Year. If anyone has not subscribed to the monthly e-newsletter, I strongly encourage it. The link is near the bottom of the homepage at oaklandlibrary.org. The newsletter comes out once at the beginning of the month and will keep you updated on our initiatives and interesting events.
- I spent yesterday at a retreat for the FOPL Board at which they discussed their goals for the next 3 years. They raise funds on behalf of OPL and give about \$250,000 annually and fund almost all programming and anything that is extra or fun. Most of FOPL's funds are raised through book sales at the Bookmark bookstore in downtown Oakland and through membership subscriptions.

9. Committee Announcements

- **Community Engagement**
Has not met. Will have a special meeting on February 9th at 5:45p for elections, meeting day, and talking points.
- **Sustainability**
Has not met. Will have a special meeting on February 19th at 6:00p for elections and meeting day.
- **General Plan Ad Hoc**
Has not met. The General Plan Advisory Committee released a report. Commissioner Cain-Simon will distribute the report and schedule a meeting.

- **Action Plan Ad Hoc**
Does not meet but operates by updating the action plan and has just released the most recent iteration of the Action Plan.
- **Room Naming Ad Hoc**
Committee met and decided that the immediate request would be denied and other alternatives suggested for the individual. Committee will continue to meet to update the policy.

10. Agenda Building

February 2026- Advocacy Coordination, Quarterly Maintenance Report

March 2026- OPL Facilities Manager, Talking Points

April 2026- Auditor Presentation, OPL Advocates Mixer

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kere Gonzales, Executive Assistant