



CITY OF RICHMOND  
LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAIN LIBRARY  
MADELINE F. WHITTLESEY COMMUNITY ROOM  
325 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, RICHMOND, CA  
March 3, 2022  
6:30 P.M.

**CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) ADVISORY**

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Contra Costa County and Governor Gavin Newsom had issued multiple orders requiring sheltering in place, social distancing, and reduction of person-to-person contact. Due to the shelter in place orders, participation in the Library Commission to be by teleconference only. Public comment to be confined to items appearing on the agenda and to be limited to the methods provided in the agenda.**

**Library Commission Members:**

Megan Bleckinger, Risa King, and Mimi Vitetta (w/two vacancies)  
Eduardo Martinez, City Council Member Liaison

1) **Call to Order/Appoint Chairperson Pro Tem:** As she had previously, Megan Bleckinger served as Chairperson Pro Tem and called the Library Commission meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2) **Library Commission Chairperson Nomination, Vote and Appointment**

Deferred pending the appointment of additional members.

3) **Roll Call**

**Present:** Megan Bleckinger, Risa King, and Mimi Vitetta

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** Melinda Cervantes, Interim Deputy Director of Community Services – Library  
LaShonda White, Interim Library and Community Services Director

4) **Welcome and Meeting Procedures:** Chairperson Pro Tem Bleckinger identified the meeting procedures.

Interim Library Director Melinda Cervantes introduced Tom Kaun, who was in the process of being appointed as a Library Commissioner later this month and who identified himself as a High School Librarian last with the Tamalpais Union High School District, and who was associated with the Friends of the Oakland Public School Libraries that had merged with the Oakland Literacy Coalition and who was still involved in the Advisory Board of that organization. He had also been pursuing volunteer work with the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Ms. Cervantes identified an email from Cordell Hindler dated March 2, 2022: *“Hello Melinda. I have a couple of comments for the record: 1) The Mayor has mentioned the Library Commission at the February 22<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting; 2) For a future agenda there should be a discussion of the reorg chart that our former City Manager had implemented.”*

When asked by Commissioner King, Mr. Hindler clarified that the Mayor’s mention of the Library Commission was in the context of a consent calendar item related to Mr. Kaun’s appointment, which was on the City Council’s March 15, 2022 agenda.

5) **Agenda Review**

The agenda was accepted, as submitted.

6) **Open Forum**

There were no comments.

7) **Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of November 4, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner King, seconded by Commissioner Vitetta to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2021 meeting, as submitted. Motion passed by Bleckinger, King and Vitetta. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

8) **Department Reports For Information:** The following reports were received and filed.

- a. Library Services
- b. Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP)
- c. Circulation Statistics
- d. RPL Newsletters
- e. Director’s Report

9) **Presentations, Discussions and Action Items**

a. INTRODUCTION of Guest Attendees

Tom Kaun explained, when asked why he wanted to be a Commissioner that while he lived in Richmond, he was physically closer to the El Sobrante, Pinole, Hercules and San Pablo Libraries. As a Librarian, he was concerned that the Richmond Public Library consisted of the Main Library and two branches that were situated primarily in the south of the City, and he was farther from the Richmond Public Library than from the libraries in the surrounding communities. He wanted to know the Richmond Library’s relationship to the County Library and he wanted to know the services provided. He commented that he had never seen anything to identify the services offered by the Richmond Library and it was his desire to learn how to provide services to areas that were outside the main access to the Richmond Public Library.

Ms. Cervantes stated that information on the Book Van and the Bookmobile could be provided in her next report.

Chairperson Pro Tem Bleckinger stated that access and more hours of operation were other areas of concern, particularly in light of the shutdown caused by COVID-19.

Cordell Hindler stated he had been in conversation with the El Cerrito Library Foundation and El Cerrito's Commission and he recommended that they be invited to a meeting of the Richmond Library Commission to share what had been done in their area.

b. INTRODUCTION of Interim Deputy Director Community Services – Library (Melinda Cervantes)

Ms. Cervantes described her background and how she had come to serve as Interim Library Director after 40 years of public library experience as well as experience with school and academic libraries, most recently as the Contra Costa County Librarian. She stated there were ways that the Library Commission could partner with the County Library, and while Richmond did not have a branch library in every area of the City, the Richmond Library had attempted to address outreach services through the Book Van and the Bookmobile. She described her library affiliations and was happy to serve as the Interim Director while the City was recruiting for a permanent Library Director, hopefully by June 2022.

LaShonda White, Interim Library and Community Services Director, described the areas encompassed by the Community Services Department. As a patron of the Richmond Library from an early age she appreciated what the Richmond Library had to offer and thanked Ms. Cervantes for coming out of retirement to help find a permanent Library Director for Richmond. She also thanked Library Commissioners for their commitment to the Library.

Ms. Cervantes referred to her report and identified the multiple projects and activities involved, and spoke to the staff and many others, including the Richmond Library Foundation that was helping to produce a state grant application to fund Library infrastructure improvements. She noted the grant required a 50 percent cash match and hoped to have something in the \$3 to \$4 million match of local funds to be able to conduct some of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements to the Main Library, including life-safety, critical maintenance and other improvements such as to the HVAC system.

c. DISCUSSION/ACTION: Role of Library Commissioners – Continued

Commissioner Vitetta noted her interest in clarifying the role of Library Commissioners and to that end she had been studying the documentation related to the formation of the Library Commission to determine what Commissioners could do for the Library. She suggested that Commissioners branch off into separate groups to allow comprehensive discussions of the Commission's role and stated that brainstorming could help clarify what could be done to promote the Library such as marketing the mobile library and other ideas.

Commissioner Vitetta made a motion to appoint a subcommittee to study the City's ordinances in order to gain a deeper understanding of the Commission's purpose and

possibly come up with an action list of how to help the Library.

Commissioner King sought some basic information related to the Library. She seconded the motion to allow a discussion.

On the discussion, Commissioner King asked how many people would be on the subcommittee and Ms. Cervantes explained that the subcommittee had to be less than a quorum, in this case two Commissioners, and the Commission might want to offer some direction on the function and purpose of the subcommittee.

Ms. White stated that there was a larger conversation citywide, and she encouraged the appointment of an ad hoc committee because ad hoc committees were defined in the Brown Act. She explained that care had to be taken given that an ad hoc committee had a limited duration, a limited quorum and a requirement for a focused item of discussion. In addition, ad hoc committee meetings would not be noticed.

It was also clarified that the full Commission could open the item of the discussion about the role, purpose and action items that the Commission wanted to take and the Commission could limit the items on the agenda for discussion. In that case, there would be no need for separate meetings.

Commissioner King suggested that given the few members available, the second option of focused agendas might be preferred. She suggested that breaking off into a group of two was unnecessary.

Ms. Cervantes recommended that the Commission schedule an orientation meeting which could be publicly noticed for one hour prior to the regular Commission meetings where Commissioners could review the City of Richmond Boards, Commissions and Committees Handbook for orientation purposes and be clear about anything specific to the Library and City commissions. She suggested there had not been an orientation of the entire group of their role on the Commission. She also referred to board effectiveness training offered through the California Public Library Advocates, which would be outside of the meeting. She explained there were many places where Commissioners could get some training. She recommended agendaizing something in greater depth at the May meeting to establish a work plan and the Board training could occur prior to that time.

Commissioner King supported any kind of training available to Commissioners.

Commissioner Vitetta had concerns for what the Commission was allowed to do within the context of Commission meetings. She liked the idea of an orientation meeting.

Ms. White stated an ad hoc committee meeting would be allowable to create something to be brought back to the full Commission for consideration.

Chairperson Pro Tem did not support the motion and preferred to consider an orientation first.

Ms. Cervantes stated that an orientation would be put together to touch on other roles in addition to the Brown Act such as library advocacy, ambassadors in the community, connecting to the community, and the differences between subcommittee and ad hoc

committees, among other topics.

Commissioner Vitetta withdrew her motion to appoint a subcommittee, later changed to an ad hoc committee, to study the City's Library Commission ordinances in order to gain a deeper understanding of the purpose of the Library Commission. She supported an orientation meeting with information provided beyond simply a Brown Act discussion.

10) **Items of Interest to the Commission and Announcements**

a. **Richmond Museum of History, Once a Member of Carnegie Library System Update**

Commissioner Vitetta stated there had been talk amongst Library Commissioners to allow the Richmond Library to absorb the collection at the Richmond Museum, which had recently had some issues on the administrative side and which had been closed for a while. There had been talk of a permanent closure. She had been aware from a former museum administrator of a formal contract that everyone had signed where the Library was strictly prohibited from absorbing the Richmond Museum's collection. She noted that the museum had since reopened and the former museum director had moved on to manage the Vallejo Museum. She understood there was some crossover of intellectual materials and she had mentioned the situation in case the issue were to come up again. She also noted that the museum also managed the WWII ship at the dock but added that the Rosie the Riveter Memorial was a totally separate organization.

11) **Agenda Setting for Next Meeting and Future Topics**

a. **DISCUSSION/ACTION: Rescheduling Meeting Dates – Continued**

Chairperson Pro Tem Bleckinger noted that a few decisions had been deferred pending appointments to the Library Commission.

Ms. Cervantes stated that the meetings of the Library Commission and the Library Foundation were on the same evening which oftentimes created conflicts. The request was to consider the third Thursday of the month as opposed to the first Thursday of the month for Library Commission meetings given that it was important for staff to be available to facilitate both bodies.

When polled, Commissioners (including soon-to-be-appointed Tom Kaun) had no problem with a change of meeting date to the third Thursday of the month, to be an agenda item for Commission action at its next meeting in May.

b. **REVIEW/DISCUSS: City of Richmond Boards, Commissions and Committees Handbook for Orientation Purposes**

By consensus, an orientation was to be scheduled with Library Commissioners prior to the May meeting of the Library Commission.

12) **Adjournment:** Motion by Commissioner King, seconded by Commissioner Vitetta to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:35 P.M. to Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 6:30 P.M. via Zoom. Motion passed by Bleckinger, King and Vitetta. Noes: None. Absent: None.