



CITY OF RICHMOND  
 LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES  
 SPECIAL MEETING  
 MAIN LIBRARY  
 Via Zoom Video Conference  
 February 2, 2023  
 6:30 p.m.

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

**Pursuant to the Governor of the State of California’s Assembly Bill 361 and in the interest of the public health and safety, attendance at the City of Richmond Library Commission meeting was limited to Library Commission members, essential City of Richmond staff, and members of the news media. Public comment was confined to items appearing on the agenda and limited to the methods provided in the agenda.**

**Library Commission Members:**  
 Thomas Harrison, Jr., Marcela Jaimes, Thomas Kaun, and Risa King (w/one vacancy)  
 Gayle McLaughlin, City Council Member Liaison

1) **Roll Call** Lisa Carter-Owens, Executive Secretary II, opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

**Present:** Thomas Harrison, Jr., Marcela Jaimes, Thomas Kaun, and Risa King

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** LaShonda White, Deputy City Manager of Community Services; Christopher Larsen, Administrative Librarian/Zoom Meeting Host, Library Commission Staff Liaison; and Lisa Carter-Owens, Executive Secretary II

2) **Appoint Chairperson Pro Tem**

Commissioner Harrison volunteered to serve as the Chairperson Pro Tem again for this meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner Jaimes to appoint Commissioner Harrison to serve as the Chairperson Pro Tem for this meeting. Motion carried unanimously by the following Roll Call vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

3) **Library Commission Chairperson Election**

The situation with respect to designating a Chairperson Pro Tem for each meeting was explained in that without a full membership and with no knowledge as to when the final vacancy would be filled, the Commission had waited to designate a Chairperson. At this time, Commissioners had no desire to wait for a full Commission to designate a Chairperson.

Deputy City Manager of Community Services LaShonda White stated the term for Chairperson would be one year, as specified in the Richmond Municipal Code (RMC), Section 3.16.030, who would call the meetings to order, work with staff on agendas, and act as the presiding officer over meetings, with staff present as support.

Commissioner Kaun suggested if a Chairperson was elected it was important that a Vice Chairperson also be elected to be able to chair meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. He was interested to serve in either of those positions but he traveled a fair amount and while he could attend Zoom meetings, it would be challenging for him when face-to-face meetings resumed.

Ms. White stated that as posted, the agenda allowed the election of a Chairperson only at this time. She would have to check whether or not a Vice Chairperson could be part of the Library Commission. She read into the record that section of the RMC related to the appointment of a Chairperson in whose absence the election of a Chairperson Pro Tem could be pursued by the Commissioners present at that time to call a meeting to order.

Christopher Larsen, Administrative Librarian, Zoom Meeting Host and Library Commission Staff Liaison confirmed the language in the RMC and understood there was no provision in the RMC for a Vice Chairperson. He was uncertain whether that was something that could be addressed in the Bylaws.

On the election of Chairperson, Commissioner King declined to be considered for the position at this time, as did Commissioner Jaimes. Chairperson Pro Tem Harrison expressed a willingness to serve as the Chairperson.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner Jaimes to elect ***Thomas Harrison, Jr.*** as the Chairperson for the Library Commission for 2023. Motion carried unanimously by the following Roll Call vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

- 4) **Welcome and Meeting Procedures:** The meeting procedures were as shown on the agenda for the meeting.
- 5) **Agenda Review:** Commissioner King requested the removal of agenda item 9(e) at this time given the number of items on the meeting agenda.
- 6) **Public Comment:** Ms. White identified the meeting procedures, the format of the web-based meeting and the public's ability to speak during the meeting.

No written comments were submitted, or oral comments made, by any member of the public.

7) **Approval of Minutes**

- a. Approval of November 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of January 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner King to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2022 meeting, as submitted. Motion carried unanimously by the following Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner King to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2023 meeting, as submitted. Motion carried unanimously by the following Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. 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:** There were no guest attendees other than Library staff.

b. **DISCUSSION/ACTION: Library Commission Meeting Frequency**

Chairperson Harrison understood that meetings had been held every other month.

Commissioner Kaun confirmed that meetings had been held every other month but according to the history provided, the meeting schedule had changed over time. During a recent workshop, he had raised the concern with the meeting frequency of Library Commission meetings since there was a lot to consider and he was uncertain the current meeting schedule was adequate to push the mission of the Library Commission forward.

On the discussion, Commissioner King suggested meeting monthly may make it difficult for some members to attend; Commissioner Kaun explained that when he could attend he would and when he could not he would not be attending, and he suggested that meeting every other month dragged things out longer than necessary; and Commissioner Jaimes recommended a hybrid meeting format with a Zoom and an in-person meeting format rotation every other month.

Commissioner King agreed that a hybrid meeting format would be more convenient although she understood that the meeting frequency would impact City staff who had to attend each meeting. She clarified with staff that three members would have to be present to have a quorum to allow meetings to occur.

Executive Secretary Lisa Carter-Owens stated with respect to a hybrid option that the Governor's declaration of a State of Emergency related to the pandemic would end in March and meetings would have to be in-person at that time. She was uncertain a hybrid option would be possible.

Commissioner Kaun stated there was currently no Library Director who would be impacted by monthly meetings and he questioned whether the Library Commission had enough work to require monthly meetings.

Chairperson Harrison commented that with the new infrastructure grant, footwork involved and connections required, he wanted to see the Library Commission support the Library in its work to overhaul the space. He asked staff to comment on the frequency of Library Commission meetings and the potential impacts to staff time.

Mr. Larsen was uncertain when things would become busy related to the receipt of the Library Infrastructure Grant, which was another item to be discussed on the agenda. In order for Library Commissioners to fully communicate with one another a formal meeting was needed. He reported that he also served as the Staff Liaison to the Richmond Public Library Foundation, which met on a monthly basis.

Chairperson Harrison asked whether or not the Library Commission should delay taking action on this item prior to having more information related to the Library Infrastructure Grant and suggested retaining the every other month meeting schedule at this time.

Mr. Larsen confirmed that the meeting frequency could be continued to a future meeting after more information had been provided from the state related to in-person meeting requirements.

Commissioner Kaun offered a motion to table the discussion of meeting frequency to the next meeting of the Library Commission scheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. He commented that the Library Commission moved slowly but should be more involved in some items as discussed during the recent workshop. He suggested between meetings Commissioners, as individuals or as a committee of two, could work to move agendas along. He recommended the Commission discuss the additional items under Item 9 and then discuss the frequency of meetings.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner King to table Item 9(b), the discussion of Library Commission Meeting Frequency to the next meeting of the Library Commission scheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by the following Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

c. **DISCUSSION/ACTION: Commission Responsibilities and Work Plan**

Mr. Larsen provided some background at this time and explained that the item was being considered by the Library Commission in its role as an advisory body and that LaShonda White was currently acting as the Library Director in its day-to-day operations. Councilmember Gayle McLaughlin had been designated as the City Council Liaison to the Library Commission, and he provided information from the RMC on the Powers and Duties of the Commission.

Mr. Larsen stated it had been recommended to the City Manager that the Library Commission's rules and regulations be reviewed along with Library operations and that an Annual Report be submitted to the City Council. Recommendations had also been made for capital expenditures and improvements, establishment of policies for the selection of materials and other items of an advisory nature, along with engaging in a program of acquainting the Library with operations and performance of such other duties. He added the Commission may consider the formation of a subcommittee to address and review RMC Chapter 10.06, Conduct of Library Patrons Code and work with staff to review with an equity lens on possible items that required updating, and may designate a subcommittee to work with Library staff to complete the Annual Report the Library Commission was charged with submitting to the City Council.

The Library Commission may also consider a subcommittee to work with staff on the Infrastructure Grant. As to the charge for establishing a policy for the selection of materials, staff had reviewed and proposed a policy, which was at the point to be reviewed by staff and at some point would be reviewed by legal staff and thereafter brought back to the Library Commission for adoption. A collection policy document and a larger policy document, part of that effort, would be presented to the Commission soon.

Commissioner Kaun expressed an interest in serving on a subcommittee to discuss these issues. He recommended the Library Commission decide who wanted to work on each of the items and suggested a group of two Commissioners working together as a subcommittee. He also suggested the Annual Report could be combined with some of the other topics. He had not seen the Library Commission work on an Annual Report since he had been a member but suggested the Commission should be able to see that report and provide comment prior to submittal to the City Council, which could be done either at a Library Commission meeting or as part of a subcommittee discussion. The same should apply to the other topics.

Of the topics to be considered by a subcommittee, Commissioner King volunteered to serve on an Annual Report Subcommittee.

As to when an Annual Report was required to be submitted, which date had not been identified but was typically part of the budget process, Mr. Larsen stated he had a copy of an Annual Report from the City of Oakland, which submitted its report during the month of June as part of its budget cycle.

Ms. White reported the City of Richmond's budget process had commenced for the next fiscal year, July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. She suggested the Annual Report could be a report on Library Commission activities for calendar year 2022/23 or for a fiscal year cycle that would coincide with the budget process.

Commissioner King suggested the Library Director, when designated, be part of that effort and Ms. White agreed.

Mr. Larsen confirmed that an Annual Report had not been submitted during his time with the City nor during Ms. Carter-Owens' time with the City. A copy of an Annual Report from the City of Oakland's Library Commission, which was also an advisory body, was available and could be used as a template for a fiscal year report.

Commissioner Kaun also expressed an interest in serving on the Annual Report Subcommittee.

Chairperson Harrison recommended that Commissioners Kaun and King serve on the Annual Report Subcommittee, meet with Library staff and work on ideas to be included in an Annual Report and with copies of annual reports from other jurisdictions to be provided to help in the development of that report.

Commissioner Jaimes was interested in serving on a Collection Development Policy Subcommittee.

Ms. White confirmed that one Commissioner could be appointed to a subcommittee to work with staff and the Commission did not have to form subcommittees for all of the topics at this time.

Commissioner King suggested that some of the other topics identified could be considered as part of the Annual Report Subcommittee discussions.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner Jaimes, to appoint Commissioners Kaun and King to an Annual Report Subcommittee, to work with Library staff on an Annual Report. Motion carried unanimously by the following Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

Ms. Carter-Owens verified with Ms. White that any working group/subcommittee must comply with certain rules consistent with the Brown Act and must meet for a specific purpose as defined and for a specific duration and time. In this case, the Annual Report Subcommittee would likely serve four to six months intended to assist staff in the development of an Annual Report, and while not required to be part of the motion was part of the public record.

Mr. Larsen added that once a policy had been approved, any member of the public had the right to review and read the policy, and once approved would be posted on the City's website as a public document. As to the timeline for the remaining topics to be completed, as an example the creation of a Collection and Development Policy had been completed in December, to be reviewed by staff. A policy had been drafted, was ready for staff review, but certain portions of the larger policy document required legal review.

Commissioner Kaun asked that the Library Commission be provided a copy of the draft Collection and Development Policy which could be reviewed by the Library Commission at its next meeting, at which time the Commission could then decide whether or not a subcommittee should be created to further review the document.

Ms. White suggested the information could be distributed to the Library Commission for review and be agendaized for the next meeting to allow a presentation, review and final comments. She hoped to have everything in place by the next fiscal year after legal review.

As to the Conduct of Library Patrons policy in response to Commissioner Kaun, Mr. Larsen explained the policy was part of the RMC and any recommended changes would have to be referred to the City Council for approval and adoption. He added that the Commission could review the policy to ensure it was a functional document meeting the needs of the community.

Commissioner Kaun suggested the Conduct of Library Patrons policy should also be discussed at the next Library Commission meeting after Commissioners had an opportunity to review it.

Ms. White clarified that any recommendations from the Library Commission would be taken to the City Council and that staff would have the discretion to provide an alternative opinion in the staff report, if needed.

The Collection and Development policy and the Conduct of Library Patrons policy would be agendized for the next meeting.

d. **DISCUSSION/ACTION: FY 2022/23 Work Plan (continued)**

Commissioner Kaun reported that in 2022, he and Commissioner King had prepared a Work Plan on what the Library Commission was charged to do.

One of the suggestions offered was that the Library Commission have some kind of workshop for Commission members, which had been accomplished, allowing the Commission to have a better view of its role. While there was currently no Work Plan, the Commission was beginning to develop one as part of the subcommittee process. He asked the Commission to consider whether or not anything should be added to a Work Plan for this year beyond the Library retrofit and the items previously discussed with the understanding that the Library Commission would be somewhat involved in the selection of a new Library Director.

Commissioner King commented that after the Effectiveness Training, she had been struck by the fact the Library Commission would be evolving around the remodel of the Library and everything happening with the Library would revolve around that. She suggested the Commission should focus its attention and energy on what could be done to support the new Library and keep it going during this very specific time period.

Commissioner Jaimes liked the idea of advocating more for the Library. As an example, a new mural had been designed at Nicholl Park as part of a youth program and this could be a new way to engage the youth with a mural for the Library, possibly encouraging more patrons to use the Library. She wanted to see the type of emphasis dedicated to the Nicholl Park improvements to be dedicated to the Library and supported a greater effort to engage youth.

Commissioner Kaun pointed out the Library would be closed for some time, with updates only to the infrastructure and not cosmetic improvements, and once that had been done suggested investing the Commission's energy into other things such as beautification.

Chairperson Harrison recommended that a Work Plan include an outreach aspect to the role of the Library Commission, as an example, he wanted to make connections with other Library branches, identify what programs may be lacking when the Library was closed and what the Library Commission could do to support the Library during its closure. Another example was that Parchester Village residents missed the Bookmobile and its frequency into neighborhoods. His main focus would be to have an agenda report on the effort to establish connections with the community and ensure the community that the Library Commission was available to them and identify what could be done to support the patrons of the community.

Commissioner King added that since the Main Library may be closed until January 2025, the Library Commission should know what needed to be done to maintain the interest in the Library during the period of closure.

Chairperson Harrison sought input from the staff of the Main Library as to what the Commission could do to support the Library moving forward or provide input vis-à-vis being a runner for and advocating for the Main Library.

In terms of what Library Commissioners may or not be able to do and to avoid potential conflicts of interest, Ms. White advised that staff would let Commissioners know when a potential conflict existed. She agreed that outreach in the community and sharing the great work of the Library and its opportunities and services was important and should be promoted and continued, such as tabling and having a presence at numerous community events.

Chairperson Harrison asked that the Commission be apprised of the calendar of City events where Commissioners could be identified by name tags or other means when attending those events.

Mr. Larsen explained that staff was working on having a common calendar and scheduling of events, which could be shared with the Library Commission. Based on his personal outreach experience pre-pandemic, many people did not know about the Library. His role as an employee was to provide information on available services and how to access those services; however, he was not in a position as an employee of the City to engage with the community in the same way as a Library Commissioner who could better engage with the community.

Ms. White stated staff could share information on available opportunities over the next few months with the Commission.

Mr. Larsen added the City had a grant for the Bookmobile and would be going into the planning process soon, which was something the Commission would be asked to advise in the future as well. He clarified that the existing Bookmobile was old and had an expired registration that could not be renewed.

On the discussion, Commissioners were comfortable with the existing Work Plan, as discussed, and Commissioner Kaun recommended that the Commission continue working on a Work Plan this year, separate and specific from the detail in the meeting minutes that was not a working document.

Commissioner Kaun took this opportunity to report on Ken Haycock's Better Boards Online Webinars and explained that Mr. Haycock had run the San Jose State Library School several years ago. He explained that the groups he was helping tended to be those with legal or fiduciary responsibilities and his materials had limited use for the Library Commission. He added that Mr. Haycock's website had information on the services he offered, some of which were free, and announcements were also available on Mr. Haycock's Facebook page. He suggested Mr. Haycock's work was aimed more towards School Boards and Boards for non-profit organizations rather than advisory committees such as the Library Commission.



Commissioner Kaun suggested that when the new Library Director or Librarian was hired the Library Commission may provide advice on how Mr. Haycock's materials may be of assistance. A link to Mr. Haycock's work could be provided to staff and the Commission could then consider as a group whether or not to take advantage of Mr. Haycock's resources. He otherwise suggested the Commission had moved towards accomplishing what he and former Commissioner King had been working on as a subcommittee.

Referencing the questions submitted by Commissioners Kaun and King, specifically related to Library Commission emails, Chairperson Harrison clarified that Commissioners currently did not have emails because of the provisions of the Brown Act, with communications required to go through staff and with staff clarifying the current email and communication process between Library Commissioners and staff, and information to subcommittee members.

As to the recruitment of a fifth Commissioner, Commissioner Kaun spoke to his recruitment via an end-of-the-year announcement by the Mayor announcing Commission vacancies. He suggested recruitment should be ongoing and there should be something to better describe the role of a Library Commissioner, which could be published in the City Manager's Newsletter, newspapers or social media.

Chairperson Harrison asked whether or not there would be a conflict of interest if an advertisement of a Commission vacancy was published in the Richmond Confidential, as an example.

Ms. White commented that she had not seen vacancies advertised in that way but there was nothing wrong in getting creative. She stated staff would have to review whether that was viable. She described the current recruitment process staff followed to advertise vacancies for a number of City Boards and Committees/Commissions.

Chairperson Harrison suggested that questions related to the Work Plan be revisited as needed.

e. **DISCUSSION: Two Things You Would Like to Share From Effectiveness Training:** The item was deferred to the March 16, 2023 Library Commission meeting.

f. **DISCUSSION/ACTION: Library Infrastructure Grant Timeline**

Mr. Larsen reported the City had received a State Library Infrastructure Grant to address life safety and crucial maintenance needs in Public Libraries, with matching funds having been appropriated. He had attached the budget staff had submitted to work with the Public Works Department and clarified that the deadline was for all funds to be expended by March 31, 2026. The expectation was that for this year, the work would be primarily related to planning and working with Public Works Department Engineers and external engineers and going into the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. No physical work was expected during this calendar year. Possible alternative locations were still being sought with some different options having been identified but there was no funding in the grant or matching funds allowed to be used for a temporary location. Staff was also working to determine the parts of the Library collection that must be placed in storage and what could be housed in one or more temporary locations.

Mr. Larsen also reported that the State Library had announced a second round of Infrastructure Grants. The City had issued a Letter of Interest to renovate the interior of the Library and this round of grants may involve fewer restrictions than the current grant process. If the City succeeded in round two, the hope would be to dovetail into the current grant process, which allowed management a transition from one grant to the next. Additionally, all fittings, furnishings and fixtures were outside the scope of the grant and the City had not identified the needed funding for those items.

Mr. Larsen asked whether or not the Library Commission would consider one or more subcommittees to be part of the planning process when moving forward to help advise on ways the Library Commission could assist in the process, and possible coordination with other funders. The subcommittee would be able to coordinate with Library staff and advise the Library Commission on future actions to be taken in regards to the Infrastructure Grant.

As to the status of Library staff when the Library closed and in response to Commissioner King, Mr. Larsen explained that staff would not be laid off, which was the reason for the need for alternative location(s) in order to keep some form of Library services in the area.

Chairperson Harrison expressed an interest in serving on the subcommittee.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner Jaimes, to form a subcommittee consisting solely of Chairperson Harrison to coordinate with Library staff and advise the Library Commission on future actions about the Infrastructure Grant, carried unanimously by the following Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Jaimes, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

Ms. White thanked Mr. Larsen for all his hard work on the Infrastructure Grant. She reported the City Manager had recognized the lack of funding for fixtures, furniture and equipment and temporary location(s), with staff to request additional funding from the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to ensure the project was done right. There could also be additional opportunities for funds through a capital campaign.

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

Mr. Larsen reported he had attended a Library Foundation meeting which had submitted a request to Assemblymember Buffy Wicks for additional funding, and although there had been no response yet, the Library Foundation was advocating on the City's behalf with an opportunity for Commissioners to work with the Foundation on capital funding.

Ms. Carter-Owens read into the record a message from Council Liaison Gayle McLaughlin who apologized for not being able to attend the Library Commission meeting but was excited to serve as the Liaison from the City Council.

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

a. **Creation of Bylaws**

Ms. White explained that the Library Commission may create Bylaws and this topic could be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Commissioner Kaun recommended a few sample Bylaws be provided with ample time for review prior to being agendized.

Chairperson Harrison agreed to table the item to the next meeting.

b. **SCHEDULE**: Ken Haycock's Better Boards Online Webinars

Commissioner Kaun reiterated he would share links to Mr. Haycock's website and business and before the next meeting Commissioners could decide whether or not to pursue it.

While the agenda had posted that the next meeting would be held on March 16, 2023 via Zoom, given the expiration of the State of Emergency Declaration, Ms. White would have to verify with the City Clerk and City Attorney's Office, and communicate with all Boards/Commissions and Staff Liaisons as to whether or not all March meetings would be in-person meetings.

12) **Adjournment**: The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m. to a regular in-person meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.