1) **Call to Order/Roll Call**

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Harrison.

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

**Absent:** None

**Staff:** LaShonda White, Deputy City Manager of Community Services
Kate Eppler, Deputy Director of Community Services - Library
Christopher Larsen, Administrative Librarian
Lisa Carter-Owens, Executive Secretary

2) **Welcome and Meeting Procedures:** The meeting procedures were as shown on the agenda for the meeting.

3) **Agenda Review**

Commissioner Kaun referenced a prior discussion of a report from the Library Commission to the City Council to identify the Commission’s accomplishments and he wanted to continue that discussion.

It was pointed out that discussion could be included under Item 7e, Library Commission attendance at the next Council meeting and introduction of the new Library Director.

4) **Public Comment**

Executive Secretary Lisa Carter-Owens read the following public comment received by email into the record from CORDELL HINDLER:

Hello Lisa. I am submitting the following comments into the record: 1. For a future agenda, the Library Commission should consider revisiting the Reorganization Chart that I had sent as an attachment. 2. The Library Commission is invited to the Richmond Rotary Club meeting on October 6, 2023, 12:30 p.m., Richmond Country Club, $25.00 dollars for lunch, Wesley Alexander will be presenting on CoBiz. Sincerely, Cordell.
Ms. Carter-Owens also noted that a copy of the Reorganization Chart was requested and received from Mr. Hindler, and was previously forwarded to all Library Commissioners.

5) **Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of July 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes

   Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner King to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2023 meeting, as submitted. Motion passed by a Roll Call vote: Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, Kaun, King, and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

6) **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. Director’s Report

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

   a. **INTRODUCTION of Guest Attendees**

      There were no guest attendees other than LEAP’s Literacy Program Manager who had a presentation on the meeting agenda.

   b. **DISCUSSION Library Director’s Highlights**

      Kate Eppler, the new Library Director, introduced herself, summarized her biography, and highlighted her work experience most recently with the San Francisco Public Library as Digital Equity Manager working to produce and coordinate programming around technology. She had also managed the Literacy Program at that time which was similar to Richmond’s LEAP program. Some of her other Library employment sites were in Alameda, Fremont, Sunnyvale, and Los Angeles where she had experience with big and small public libraries.

      Ms. Eppler identified some of the progress on the City’s Library Renovation Grant where a Request for Proposal (RFP) had been distributed with a good response. The Library was currently in process to secure contracts for approval. She noted that community outreach would soon occur to find out what the public wanted to see in a renovated Library. She urged the Commission to become involved in the public outreach, which she commented would be intense, fast and to happen very soon. As part of the renovation process, service would be closed at the Main Library and the Library would move to a temporary location during the renovation.

      Ms. Eppler also stated there had been close to a thousand people using the Library on Saturdays since the reopening of Saturday hours on July 13, 2023. She commented that in July and August, 667 people had used the Library during storytimes at the Main Library and another storytime would be added on Tuesdays for infants to eighteen months to provide a high-quality experience for families. She added that the adult Librarians at the Library had been doing a lot of work with grownups to tap into their creativity and she described the types of activities involved.
Ms. Eppler also highlighted other programs at the Library, noted that in October there would be fall-themed crafts every Friday afternoon, Bayview Branch Library did tech help on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:00 p.m., and numerous other programs were currently being offered.

c. **PRESENTATION of Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP)**

Abigail Sims-Evelyn, Literacy Program Manager, Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP), explained that she was getting ready to celebrate the 40th year of LEAP service. She described how LEAP had been developed, expanded and evolved through the years to meet the needs of the people it served. She stated that LEAP had incredible ebbs and flows and had a voice in the community. She identified the sites where the program was being applied and noted that LEAP also provided much-needed English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. She spoke to the Literacy Festival that had been produced, and explained that LEAP worked with a group of service providers in the area that worked in partnership to provide services. She stated that LEAP was doing what it had always done to reach people who may have been marginalized and who still managed to hold on to hope and allow the program to make a difference in their lives.

Ms. Sims-Evelyn emphasized the importance of being responsible in the use of LEAP funds. She described the interaction with the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) through the Michelle Obama and Nystrom Elementary Schools, where classes were taking place, and anticipated that the expenditure of funds would respond to a real need to consider other languages, especially Spanish. She urged the Commission to keep in mind that the LEAP program was moving into the community with educational resources and working with the community to be true team players. LEAP had also partnered with Richmond Works and the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and had taught a math class for those taking the plumbers test, teaching them math, special thinking and geometry. She was proud to note that one of her former students had taught the class.

Council Liaison McLaughlin strongly supported LEAP and sought input from the Library Commission as to its willingness to help with the Literacy Festival next year. She also expressed a desire to be invited to this year’s LEAP graduations.

Ms. Sims-Evelyn invited the Commission and the Council Liaison to LEAP’s next graduation when it was set up, stated that LEAP was now fully staffed, and included a former LEAP student. She expressed great enthusiasm for the continuing program.

Ms. Sims-Evelyn also responded to questions from the Commission and explained that LEAP offices were located at 440 Civic Center Plaza; she was involved in the collection of materials used for LEAP services; there was a good online program called Essential Ed that helped with LEAP services; and she used the various reading systems that were available to provide LEAP services. She added that she was eclectic in nature and brought what she could to the table to make it real.

With respect to public relations, Ms. Sims-Evelyn stated that she believed in taking the education to the street and recruitment was through word of mouth. She relied on those who had succeeded with LEAP and used social platforms including the City’s website. She also reported that LEAP now had ESL classes on weekends and evenings, online and in-person on Saturdays, and General Educational Development classes online in the evenings, on Saturdays and in person. Services had been
expanded to some pre-pandemic levels, and she embraced a hybrid program.

d. **DISCUSSION Creation of Bylaws**

Commissioner Kaun referred to the Draft Bylaws included in the Commission packet, stated that he had reviewed bylaws from other libraries and had primarily used the Santa Clara County Library Commission Bylaws as a basic outline. He presented the draft for information purposes and suggested the document could be reviewed, finetuned and redrafted as needed. He asked that the item be continued on the agenda during the review process.

Commissioner King commented that the draft appeared to represent the Commission’s practice. She did not see any departure other than the section on a Vice Chairperson.

e. **DISCUSSION Library Commission attendance at next Council Meeting and introduction of new Library Director as suggested by Council Liaison McLaughlin**

Library Director Eppler suggested the Commission could identify what it had been doing as a report to the City Council and stated that in the next six months the Commission would be able to report on the proposed Library renovations and the progress in that regard.

Commissioner Kaun noted that in the discussion of the Work Plan over the last year, the Commission had discovered that it was required, pursuant to the Richmond Municipal Code (RMC), to present a report to the City Council on an annual basis. Some research had found that there were no print records available that any report to the City Council had ever been done other than one report from the 1960s. He wanted to start a tradition to comply with the RMC and provide a regular report to the City Council.

Commissioner King asked what information the City Council currently received about the Library Commission.

Deputy City Manager White advised that the City Council received information about community programs through the weekly report from the Community Services Department, and if something major was happening, it would be an agenda item submitted to the City Council. She added that oftentimes during the budget cycle high-level updates of what had occurred during the year would be presented to the Council.

Commissioner Kaun expressed a desire for the Library Commission to raise the profile of the Library and promote itself to the City Council to describe what it was trying to achieve.

Council Liaison McLaughlin commented that during the planning for the Literary Festival, the Commission might need to meet once a month and that would be a good time to promote the Library while also promoting the Literacy Festival.

f. **DISCUSSION Annual 2024 Literacy Festival Planning Subcommittee Formation**

Council Liaison McLaughlin described the history of the Literacy Festival, noted those involved in the development of the Festival last year, and suggested that a Commission subcommittee be established to work on next year’s Literacy Festival. She was happy
to remain involved as well and she noted later that planning for the event should start in November.

Commissioner King stated she had attended the last meeting of the Friends of the Richmond Public Library and had asked if they were interested in partnering for the Literacy Festival. She had been told that co-tabling might be possible. She noted the main focus of the Friends was the nook inside the Library, which was an unstaffed concern with voluntary donations. She added that the Friends were interested in the Literary Festival.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Chairperson Harrison to designate a subcommittee comprised of Commissioners Jaimes-Rodriguez and King to help with the 2024 Literacy Festival. Motion passed by a voice vote: Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, Kaun, King, and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

g. DISCUSSION Revisit FY 2023-24 Work Plan as needed

Commissioner Kaun reported that progress was being made.

h. DISCUSSION confirm Library Commissioners availability on November 16th; possible reschedule if quorum not met

A straw poll found that although Chairperson Harrison would not be available on November 16, 2023, the remainder of the Commission would be available at that time.

8) Items of Interest to the Commission and Announcements

Commissioner Kaun stated he had reported at the last meeting that he had met the President of the Richmond Public Library Foundation. He recommended a connection between the Library Commission and the Foundation, and verified that the Foundation met the first Thursday of each month from 5:15 to 5:45 p.m. online.

Commissioner Kaun commented that he had printed out every employee position that connected to the Library through the Human Resources Department because he was curious and he wanted to know about the qualifications for those positions. He commented that there were two different descriptions of Librarians: Library and Community Services Director and Library and Cultural Services Director and he asked about the difference between the two.

Deputy City Manager White explained that the Library and Cultural Services Director position was outdated and should be cleaned up as part of the City’s new Reorganization Chart.

Commissioner Kaun noted that eventually the City needed to consider a branch library in the area of Hilltop Mall.

Library Director Eppler commented that she would support as many libraries in the City as possible, especially where people did not have geographic access to libraries. She reported that the shape and style of the Bookmobile was being reevaluated, which was expected to happen soon. An extension on the grant for the Bookmobile was being sought and an update was expected at the next meeting.
9) **Agenda Setting for Next Meeting and Future Topics**

a. **Library Commission Report to City Council**

Commissioner Kaun commented that he had started to track what the Commission had done over the last year and a half and a report to the City Council would be drafted for Commission consideration.

10) **Adjournment**: Chairperson Harrison adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m. to a regular meeting on Thursday, November 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Madeline F. Whittlesey Community Room, 325 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA. Motion passed by Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, Kaun, King and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.