1) Call to Order/Roll Call

Given the absence of Chairperson Harrison, the Library Commission designated Commissioner Thomas Kaun as the Chairperson Pro Tem for this meeting. The regular meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Marcela Jaimes-Rodriguez, Risa King, and Chairperson Pro Tem Thomas Kaun

Absent: Chairperson Thomas Harrison, Jr.
Gayle McLaughlin, City Council Member Liaison

Staff: Kate Eppler, Deputy Director of Community Services - Library
Lisa Carter-Owens, Executive Assistant II

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

3) Agenda Review

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun requested that Item 9)a be moved up on the agenda to Item 7)f.

4) Public Comment

Executive Assistant Lisa Carter-Owens read the following public comment received by email from Cordell Hindler on November 13, 2023, into the record:

Hello Lisa. I am submitting the following comments into the record: 1. The Library Commission is invited to the Senior Winter Ball on December 16, 2023, 6:00 to 10:00 p.m., Richmond Auditorium, $45 per person. 2. Also to consider having a young adult to fill the remaining vacancy on the Commission. 3. Also to consider revisiting the Library Reorg Chart. Sincerely, Cordell.

Ms. Carter-Owens clarified that Mr. Hindler had previously submitted a Library Reorg Chart to the Commission for its review and that Chairperson Harrison had already addressed that comment with Mr. Hindler outside of the meeting.
5) **Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of September 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

   Motion by Commissioner King, seconded by Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2023 meeting, as submitted. Motion passed by a voice vote: Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, King, and Kaun. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Harrison.

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

In response to Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez, Library Director Kate Eppler described *Justice at Work in Public Libraries*, a diversity, equity and inclusion training that focuses on interpersonal relations and the history of libraries, discrimination in libraries, and helps library staff to understand how they could center the community and let go of some of the hierarchal, historical aspects of the profession.

Victoria Sawicki, Chairperson of the Human Rights and Human Relations Commission (HRHRC) expressed a desire to have someone from the Library speak on *Justice at Work in Public Libraries* at one of HRHRC’s upcoming meetings.

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun was pleased to see that an architect had been chosen for the renovation of the Library and pleased as well with the all-electric Bookmobile. He also expressed his appreciation for the reports from the individual Library staff.

Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez expressed her support for the proposed cookbook with the community.

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

a. INTRODUCTION of Guest Attendees

   There were no guest attendees other than Victoria Sawicki of the HRHRC.

b. PRESENTATION of Human Rights and Human Relations Commission on collaboration with the Library Commission

   Victoria Sawicki, Chairperson of the HRHRC, expressed the desire of the HRHRC to collaborate with the Library Commission. She referred to the image of an iconic design of stacked books, as shown on page 34 of the Commission packet, and requested that the image and text *RICHMOND IS WHERE KNOWLEDGE HAS FREEDOM TO THRIVE* be included on the City’s marquee. She commented that the Library Commission could request different text, if desired. She supported the HRHRC’s collaboration with the Library Commission to offer a stronger impact and to get more people involved, which would be good advertisement for the Library. She noted that details on how long the image could be displayed had yet to be discussed.
The Library Commission recommended that youth be included in the design that could be changed over time.

Commissioner King spoke to her long-standing hope for a mural for the Richmond Public Library and recommended a design contest.

The Library Commission offered its support for the proposal, and Ms. Sawicki thanked the Commission for its support and offered an open invitation and encouragement to the Library Commission and others in the City to remember the HRHRC and the services it could provide to the community. She added that the HRHRC was currently seeking new members.

c. DISCUSSION: Library Director’s Highlights

Library Director Eppler highlighted her report and advised that the City had contracted with the architectural firm of Noll & Tam for the Main Library Renovation Project, which would include some basic fixes to be funded by the California State Library Grant, such as an elevator accessible to the public, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible restrooms, HVAC, and the like. She explained that the process of community engagement was ongoing to determine what the community wanted in the building; that process was being led by Contigo Communications. She added that Contigo was publicizing a short survey to collect community feedback and general ideas for the renovation and help identify potential participants for focus groups and community visioning meetings. There would be two visioning meetings; one in person and one virtual and she asked Commissioners to attend.

Ms. Eppler reported that circulation at the Library had increased 10 percent and cardholders had increased by 3,000. When asked, she stated she could offer a comparison to pre-pandemic levels at a future date. She also reported that the Homework Help program had launched four days a week in every Library location and in two community centers, funded in large part by a grant from the Richmond Fund for Children and Youth, and staff was working with a professional tutoring organization that recruited and trained local tutors to help kids with their homework. She also highlighted the interesting Eclipse Program, thanked Angela Cox for her voter outreach drives, and referred to the LEAP report and the outreach being done at Nystrom and Michelle Obama Elementary Schools with parents where 58 new learners had been signed up during those outreach sessions.

Ms. Eppler also referred to BiblioCommons, an overlay to the existing Library catalogue that allows the community to review books in the catalogue and makes it easier for staff to create booklets and showcase them on the Library’s website.

Ms. Eppler identified upcoming programs of note including Cello Joe: The Beat Boxing Cellist on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., and Math Club on Saturday, November 18, 2023, from 12:15 to 1:00 p.m., both at the Main Library.

Commissioner King commended the Library’s incredible programs and given the plethora of authors in the Bay Area, recommended consideration of an Author’s Night every quarter.
Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez expressed her pleasure with the support of local artists. She referred to American Library Association’s (ALA’s) principle of the Freedom to Read, as mentioned in the Library staff reports, and Ms. Eppler stated it was a guiding light for Libraries to address decisions and challenges to books on the shelf.

Ms. Eppler noted that the Commission had previously approved policies of alignment with the ALA’s Freedom to Read statement.

d. DISCUSSION: Creation of Bylaws update

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun noted that he had reviewed the Bylaws again and had discovered that the City’s legislation setting up the Library Commission had included a statement that the Commission could set up its own rules. He referred to the generic set of Bylaws provided and noted the question of where the City Council Liaison fit in. He stated the Bylaws were available on line and he asked Commissioners for suggestions or comments and wanted to see the Bylaws in place to help guide the Commission in the future.

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun requested that the item be placed on the next meeting agenda for action.

e. DISCUSSION: Annual 2024 Literacy Festival planning update

Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez highlighted the subcommittee’s discussion related to the planning of the 2024 Literacy Festival and the debate of whether to have the festival indoors or outdoors where the discussion had identified the pros and cons of each, and how that would look in either case. The potential costs and how far the $5,000 in current funding would go had also been discussed as had tentatively scheduling the event for April 13, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A slogan of KNOWLEDGE IS FREEDOM or RICHMOND IS WHERE KNOWLEDGE HAS FREEDOM TO THRIVE had been recommended but had not yet been determined. Partnerships had been discussed, and it was noted there could be free food if the festival was indoors. She added that there had been a desire to invite more people to help plan for the festival and there had also been a desire to invite local authors.

The next meeting had been scheduled for November 11, 2023 on Zoom.

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun recommended a Library presence at the Literacy Festival to help promote the Library and allow program sign-ups.

f. Library Commission Report to City Council

Commissioner King highlighted a draft report to the City Council to identify what the Library Commission had accomplished, including the approval of a Policy Manual; recommended development of a Library Social Media Policy; received reports from staff of various Library programs such as LEAP and the Teen Library Programs as examples; began work on Commission Bylaws with input from the City Council Liaison; started to interact with other Library support organizations such as the RPL Foundation and Friends of the Richmond Public Library; received reports on ongoing
programs, staff updates, circulation and statistics and the like; initiated involvement in the Annual Literacy Festival; received updates on the funding and status of the upcoming Library Renovation; received effectiveness training on the role of library advisory commissions from outside consultants and participated in City-sponsored training on state laws and practices; discussed and settled on the Commission’s meeting schedule; discussed goal setting strategies; transitioned from remote to in-person meetings; attended various Library programs and events; visited each Library branch as individuals; and brainstormed Commission vacancies and recruitment strategies.

Commissioner King also noted the desire to acquire a list of budgets from comparable cities to Richmond to compare with the City of Richmond’s Library budget and present that comparison to the City Council.

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun recommended adding the hiring of two new Library Directors to the list.

Next steps were discussed to schedule the report on an upcoming City Council agenda.

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

a. SF Chronicle article by Jessica Flores about how West Oakland is lobbying to get a branch library returned to their community

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun referred to the article from the San Francisco Chronicle about how West Oakland had lobbied to get a branch library returned to its community. He raised the question of how to get the Richmond community involved in libraries and referred specifically to the Hilltop area in Richmond where there was no Branch Library. He had recently attended a public planning meeting for Hilltop Horizon and recommended being mindful of what could be done at Hilltop related to the potential for a Library branch.

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

a. Revisit FY 2023-24 Work Plan as Needed

Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun had nothing to add to this item but recommended that the subject be a placeholder on each meeting agenda.

10) **Adjournment**: Chairperson Pro Tem Kaun adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m. to a regular meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Madeline F. Whittlesey Community Room, 325 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, CA. Motion passed by Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, King and Kaun. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Chairperson Harrison.