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

   [The recording of the meeting did not start until item 8.c.) Presentations, Discussions and Action Items.]

   The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

   **Absent:** None

   **Staff:** Kate Eppler, Deputy Director of Community Services - Library
   LaShonda White, Deputy City Manager of Community Services
   Gayle McLaughlin, City Council Member Liaison

2) **Library Commission Chairperson Election**

   Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner King to elect

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

4) **Agenda Review:** There were no changes to the meeting agenda.

5) **Public Comment:** There were no public comments made at the meeting.
6) **Approval of Minutes**

a. **Approval of January 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

   Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner King to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting, as submitted. Motion passed by a voice vote: Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, Kaun, King, Santos and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

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

a. Library Services Reports from Librarians
b. Circulation Statistics
c. Director’s Report

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

a. **INTRODUCTION of Guest Attendees and New Commissioner Member Santos**

   Evelyn Santos, Executive Director of Richmond Museum of History & Culture, presented a short bio to describe her background as one who had been raised in the City of Richmond and who had been nurtured by a wealth of community resources available as a youth, including the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Art Center. She described her current role as Executive Director of the Richmond Museum of History & Culture to create lasting moments of inspiration and discovery and foster a deep appreciation for the City’s rich cultural heritage and instil resiliency among youth. Library Commission members welcomed her as the newest member of the Commission.

b. **PRESENTATION on the Math Club at the Richmond Public Library**

   (Children’s Librarian Deborah Bonet, and Emmanuel Katz, Captain of the Math Team at The Branson School)

   Deborah Bonet, Children’s Librarian introduced Emmanuel Katz and thanked him for bringing his passion to the Main Library.

   Emmanuel Katz, Captain of the Math Team at The Branson School thanked Bonet for her support and described how his inspiration for the Math Club at the Richmond Public Main Library came when he looked at post-Covid math proficiency figures for Contra Costa County, particularly the difference between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students. The Math Club, for children grades 3rd to 6th, meets almost every Saturday at the Main Library. Katz shared that the goal for the club was to teach logic and ‘outside-the-box’ thinking. Katz presented a series of logic problems like the ones used during math club. He noted that more than 40 students have attended 17 math club sessions so far. Katz shared that future plans include starting an online version of math club so that more young people can attend. Katz answered a series of questions from the commissioners, including about his sources for logic puzzles (logic books from around the world) and his personal inspiration for loving math (his own 5th grade math club).
**DISCUSSION: Library Director’s Highlights** (Eppler)

Kate Eppler, Deputy Director of Community Services – Library, reported that this would be LEAP’s (Literacy for Every Adult Program’s) 40th Anniversary and an open house on May 17, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. had been scheduled to identify the wonderful work going on and to promote the program.

Deputy Director Eppler also reported that new “hotspots” were available to check out for 28 days at the Main Library. Fifty hotspots with unlimited wireless access were available and Library staff is experimenting with a new platform to turn off the Wi-Fi when overdue, with a “Return to Library” message on the device. National Library Week would be from April 7th through the 13th, and she urged following the Richmond Public Library on social media where local programs would be highlighted and where special events such as a program for the eclipse, a new embroidery program for adults, and other programs including the Literacy Festival would be identified. There is hope to feature library stories from users and from Library staff.

Deputy Director Eppler presented the latest plan for the Library Renovations to identify the amenities that did not currently exist at the Library, including a dedicated space for the Richmond Collection (the historical items), more meeting and event rooms for the community, individual study rooms for people to check out and have a private space for Zoom calls and study, many more areas to sit down and relax, more comfortable seating and places to look out a window and enjoy a book along with a dedicated storytime space for the Children’s Services area, and other amenities such as a teen area. Other items under discussion included gender-neutral restrooms, which were increasingly being used by cities and other venues, and other spaces, and which may provide efficiencies for safety. A survey running on the website reported 60 percent in favor of the current plans for the bathrooms. Staff had been surveyed on the issue and there were 10 in favor and six against. Based on the feedback the design was being supported.

When asked if the plans were able to be adapted for potential future changes, Deputy Director Eppler stated that the plan could be flexible for the future. She verified that there would be two family restrooms off the Children’s Room.

Deputy City Manager of Community Services LaShonda White noted that Richmond might be one of the first urban cities to have a gender-neutral restroom in a library but there could be a wall put back in to create a gender-specific restroom, if needed.

Ms. Eppler also responded, when asked, that there would be basement access for technical issues, although it would not be usable space. She responded to other questions and stated that the largest public meeting rooms would be in the area of 1,000 square feet. The design was not yet finalized and the process of schematics was being started. The hope was that construction would be started in the spring of 2025. As to the dependability of the California State Budget and the state portion of the funding for the renovation, she noted that staff was nervous but it was good that the $9.7 million from the California State Library funding would come from Round 1, which was more stable. She commented that now was a great time to promote the value of library services, especially those programs funded by the State Library. She added that the City was being diligent at this time and was very aware of the situation with respect to
funding. There was no reason for panic at this point.

Deputy Director Eppler stated that all Richmond Library locations had storytimes at least once a week, had been featuring the Skidmore Art Exhibit in the Children’s Room and the West Side Branch, and the Puzzle Swap last month had been a huge hit.

With respect to the development of the new building, it was clarified that there would be opportunities for local businesses and individuals to work on the new library through the City’s policies, ordinances and Requests for Proposal (RFP) to include local trades, local workers and local businesses in the construction of the Library Renovation.

d. **DISCUSSION: Correlation Between Planning Commission and Library Commission Meetings held at the same time; possible collaboration (Harrison)**

Chairperson Harrison noted that a correlation between the Planning Commission and the Library Commission had been recommended by Cordell Hindler. He asked if the issue of the Library Commission working with the Planning Commission made sense.

Council Liaison Gayle McLaughlin questioned the correlation in that the Planning Commission reviewed land use issues and development projects and its role was regimented. She suggested there would be a better collaboration with a different Commission such as Human Rights and Human Relations or the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioners agreed that there was not a strong connection between the Library Commission and the Planning Commission and another commission might be a better fit.

Commissioner King suggested there would be a better connection between the Library Commission and the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission (RACC) with regard to the City’s One Percent for Public Art requirement.

Deputy City Manager of Community Services LaShonda White explained that the Library Commission would automatically collaborate with the RACC due to the requirement for public art in the Library Renovation Project.

e. **DISCUSSION: Creation of Bylaws update (Kaun)**

Commissioner Kaun noted that after the discussion at the last meeting he had made changes to the Draft Bylaws, which had later been submitted by staff to the City Attorney’s Office.

Deputy Director Eppler explained that the City Attorney’s Office had highlighted suggested additions or changes and had submitted that document to the Commission for review. There had been updates to the highlights after the Commission packets had been produced and she identified those highlights, some of which had been recommended for removal.
Commissioner Kaun read the recommended changes from the City Attorney’s Office and the Commission accepted most but had questions related to the references to “ad-hoc standing” committees with respect to the definition of “standing.” The Commission recommended the elimination of “standing” and agreed to seek clarification from the City Attorney’s Office.

Motion by Commissioner Kaun, seconded by Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez to adopt the Bylaws with the understanding that certain phrases or words related to “ad-hoc standing” committees would be revised and otherwise accepted the recommendations from the City Attorney’s Office. Motion passed by a Roll Call vote: Ayes: Jaimes-Rodriguez, Kaun, King, Santos and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

f. **DISCUSSION: Annual 2024 Literacy Festival planning update** (subcommittee Jaimes-Rodriguez, King)

Council Liaison McLaughlin passed out flyers in both English and Spanish for the 2024 Literacy Festival that is scheduled for April 13, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The Literacy Festival would include book giveaways; an author panel; free food (for 200); a performance from Cascada de Flores, a dance, music and storytime group; youth leaders from the Practice Space to give speeches on empowerment; and a Library Renovation update from Ms. Eppler, among others. The theme of the 2024 Literacy Festival was *RICHMOND IS WHERE KNOWLEDGE HAS FREEDOM TO THRIVE*.

Commissioner Jaimes-Rodriguez stated it was exciting to see all the women work together and offer ideas. Abigail Sims-Evelyn from LEAP will be the emcee and will present and receive awards in recognition of the 40th Anniversary of LEAP. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Council Liaison McLaughlin identified another connection with the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission, which designated a City Poet Laureate who will offer comments and a poem.

Deputy Director Eppler noted that there was a slight chance to arrange promotion from a morning show on KMEL, and if it worked out, the event would be mentioned and the DJs might even show up.

Council Liaison McLaughlin clarified that the venue would be packed and if the DJs did show up there would be little to no stage time. She noted that she had added the Library Commission to the list of vendors (tablers) with Lisa Carter-Owens as the contact person. She also referred to the book giveaway that had been proposed and noted that West County Reads would attend and bring boxes of books. She explained that there were two people who had expressed an interest in offering books, not necessarily all free books.

The Commission expressed a preference that the books to be offered be in good condition and the volume of books involved be identified. Books to be donated for the giveaway were preferred. It was noted that not only West County Reads but Friends of the Richmond Public Library would offer a table and could potentially have books along with the group known as the Book Fairies. The local author panels might also
involve books for signing and potential selling.

Whether or not the Library Commission would have a table and what it would offer was discussed and Commissioner Jaime-Rodriguez recommended that Richmond Grows (the Seed Lending Library) and the Tool Lending Library should also be included.

It was reported that there was a competing event on the day of the Literacy Festival in that the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) was having a parent conference to discuss programs citywide.

Commissioner Santos expressed a desire to volunteer as much as possible but noted that the Richmond Museum of History & Culture would also hold an event on the same day but that event would occur after 2:00 p.m. She identified a number of exciting things that would be coming up at the Museum. While a table would not be possible for this year’s event due to the time constraint, she would provide flyers about the Museum event and consider a table for next year’s Literary Festival.

(i)  **SUBDISCUSSION: Library Commission Tabling at Literacy Festival**

(King): This item had already been discussed.

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

Commissioner Kaun referred to a discussion at the last meeting about having another social with the Friends of the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Public Library Foundation. He stated the last social had been nice but there had been little contact since then. At that time, the Friends had provided refreshments and each person brought their own drinks. He expressed a desire to repeat the social on a regular basis and he recommended something on the next agenda to discuss that possibility. He also referred to Rotary Club events at the Richmond Country Club and the cost of that event reportedly $25 to eat and $5 to attend. The Rotary Club met every Friday from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. and presentations could be made. He would be willing to attend as long as another member of the Commission accompanied him.

Commissioner Kaun also referred to United for Libraries, an American Library Association (ALA) organization that served as an umbrella for Friends, trustees, commissions and foundations that supported libraries. He encouraged Commissioners to participate in some of the webinars, events, and conferences that Mrs. Carter-Owens identified to keep the Commission informed and referred to AI and libraries and the need to understand what was currently going on in libraries and potentially what was coming next so that if issues arose the Commission would know enough to offer information that made sense. He encouraged everyone to take advantage of those resources.

Deputy City Manager White reported that the Marina Bay Farmers Market would open on Sunday, April 7, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the parking lot at 24th and Barrett, and the City Council had just approved the Farmers Market in front of the Library on Fridays. There would be music, recreation, and some lawn activities.

The Deputy City Manager announced that community budget meetings had also been scheduled for April 8th at 7:00 p.m., in collaboration with the Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council, the Police and Fire Departments and others. Additional community budget meetings would occur on April 11th at 1:00 p.m., and April 24th at 5:30 p.m. in-person
and online and all at 440 Civic Center Plaza, allowing an opportunity to hear about the budget and ask questions. The City Council would talk about the budget in May.

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

a. **Library Commission Report to City Council** (Subcommittee Kaun and King)

Commissioners Kaun and King wanted to set up a time to discuss the report to the City Council given the desire to make a presentation to the City Council but had nothing to report at this time. Commissioner Kaun noted he would not be present at the next meeting in May.

b. **Revisit FY 2023-24 Work Plan as Needed**: Chairperson Harrison clarified that this would be an ongoing item.

11) **Adjournment**: Chairperson Harrison adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m. to a regular meeting on Thursday, May 16, 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, Kaun, King, Santos and Harrison. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.