

# LA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION



"Enriching Lives"

Wednesday, November 20, 2024  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Norwalk Library**  
12350 Imperial Hwy  
Norwalk, CA 90650



As members of the Library Commission have requested this meeting be made accessible via video conference, the following satellite locations will be also available to the public:

**Sunkist Library**  
840 N. Puente Ave  
La Puente, CA 91746

**West Hollywood Library**  
625 N. San Vicente Blvd  
West Hollywood, CA 90069

## AGENDA

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **New Commissioners**  
Welcome new Library Commissioners Dean Francois, Marianne Riggins, and Vilma Cuellar Stallings.
3. **Roll Call**
4. **Minutes**  
Approval of minutes from the regular meeting on September 18, 2024.
5. **LA County Library Report**  
Yolanda Pina, LA County Library Chief Deputy & COO, will provide a brief update on Library activity.
6. **LA County Library Presentation**
  - a. Deborah Anderson, Assistant Director, Education & Engagement, and Heather Firchow, Library Administrator, Youth Services, will present on the Library's Summer Stars Tutoring Program and programs for LGBTQ+ families.
  - b. Grace Reyes, Administrative Deputy, will provide a fiscal overview of the Library's funding structure.
7. **Bylaws/Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee Update**  
Jim Allen, Chair of the Bylaws and Ordinance Revision Ad Hoc Committee, will provide an update on the committee's efforts to revise the Library Commission bylaws and put forth an ordinance.

**8. 2024-25 Commission Goals and Objectives**

Subcommittee Chairs will provide an update on their respective subcommittees' efforts toward their goals and objectives:

- a. Commission Benchmarking
- b. Education & Community Needs
- c. Legislative Advocacy
- d. Philanthropy

**9. Public Comment** *(Limited to 3 minutes per speaker.)*

Opportunity for members of the public to address the Library Commission items of interest within the jurisdiction of the Library Commission.

Those who wish to provide public comment, may also provide written public comment via email to [librarycommission@library.lacounty.gov](mailto:librarycommission@library.lacounty.gov). Deadline to submit written public comment is Tuesday, November 19, 2024, by 5:00 pm. Please include the agenda item and meeting date in your correspondence. All correspondence received shall become part of the official record.

**10. Commissioner Comments, Announcements, or New Business**

Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested), placed on the agenda for action at a future Commission meeting, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency or when need to act arose after posting the agenda.

**11. Adjournment*****Upcoming Meetings:***

***Wednesday, January 15, 2025***

***10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.***

***Locations TBD***

**Accommodations:** For ADA accommodations, such as a sign language interpreter or materials in an alternative format, call (562) 940-8462 (voice) or (562) 940-8477 (TTY), Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, at least six days prior to the meeting date.

**Supporting Documentation:** Documents distributed to the Commission for this meeting will be made available for public inspection at the meeting location and satellite locations. Supporting documentation is available by appointment at Lawndale Library located at 14615 Burin Ave, Lawndale, California 90260, and may also be accessible on the LA County Library Commission website at [LACountyLibrary.org/Library-Commission](https://LACountyLibrary.org/Library-Commission). To make arrangements, please contact [librarycommission@library.lacounty.gov](mailto:librarycommission@library.lacounty.gov).



## LA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Primary Location:** Norwalk Library  
**Satellite Locations:** Sunkist Library and  
West Hollywood Library



### REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

#### **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Corey Calaycay called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was initiated, and quorum was met.

**Commissioners in Attendance: (14)** Angie Medina, Corey Calaycay, David Lesser, Dean Francois, James Allen, Kim Ting Yu, Lisa Cleri Reale, Marianne Riggins, Mary Mendoza, Nicole Payton, Rick Crosby, Ruth Low, Steve Croft, Vilma Cuellar Stallings

**Library Staff in Attendance: (9)** Yolanda Pina, Deborah Anderson, Grace Reyes, Jesse Walker-Lanz, Heather Firchow, Samangi Skinner, Sara Keating, Patricia Rivera, Cheryl Gilera

#### **Chair Announcements**

Chair Calaycay welcomed new Library Commissioners Dean Francois, Marianne Riggins, and Vilma Cuellar Stallings. He stated that it has been a great honor to serve as Chair of the Library Commission over the recent calendar year. Calaycay congratulated former Commissioners Jose Luis Solache and Celeste Rodriguez, who are both soon to be California State Assemblymembers, and he congratulated Commissioner Emmanuel Estrada who was re-elected as Mayor of Baldwin Park. Lastly, Calaycay added that he had won re-election to the Claremont City Council.

At this point, the three new Commissioners made brief comments. All expressed enthusiasm about serving on the Commission and all expressed recognition of LA County Library's work and value to their communities. Commissioner Francois is the Mayor of Hermosa Beach and has been on that City Council for two years. Paramount Councilmember Stallings is an appointee of Fourth District Supervisor Janice Hahn and represents four generations in the City of Paramount. Commissioner Riggins, Mayor Pro Tem for City of Malibu, appointed by the City Selection Committee to represent the Third District, commented on Malibu's strong relationship with the Library.

Calaycay introduced Patricia Rivera, Regional Administrator over the Library's South Region, and Cheryl Gilera, Community Library Manager of Norwalk Library, who welcomed the Commissioners and invited them for a tour of the library after the meeting.

Calaycay ended his announcements reminding Commissioners that the May meeting is usually held at the Hall of Administration to allow the Commission to interact with Board members or deputies. Over the last couple of years, the Commission has not been able to meet there but will return in 2025. There are two possible dates to allow for this: Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 p.m. or Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Calaycay asked everyone to hold both dates until staff checks which date will result in better attendance from the Board Offices.

### **Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on September 18, 2024, was made by Vice Chair Allen and seconded by Commissioner Medina. The Motion was approved along with three abstentions from new Commissioners Francois, Riggins and Stallings who did not attend the September meeting.

### **LA County Library Report**

Yolanda Pina, LA County Library Chief Deputy Librarian & COO, provided a brief update on Library activity. She stated that County Librarian & CEO Skye Patrick could not attend, and she welcomed the new Commissioners. Her presentation is briefly summarized below:

**LA County Public Defender Expungement Partnership:** LA County Library hosted expungement clinics across various communities to help residents eliminate criminal records and unlock career, housing and educational opportunities. Round 3 of this initiative, which began in November 2024 and will run through January 2025, will reach additional communities including Norwalk, Lennox, Claremont, and others. The goal is to serve 14 total locations by year-end. At select locations, the program also offers the expertise of immigration attorneys. Pina stated that the series symbolizes hope, equity and inclusion. It's not just erasing records but opening doors to help people rebuild their lives.

**Books Unbanned Initiative:** Pina reported that from September 2023 to September 2024, there were a total of 1,791 users of this digital card program with the largest usage (407) among 16-year-olds. 560 users identify as female and 330 as male, and others represented other categories or preferred not to disclose their gender. Participants represented 339 cities among 53 counties. Over 10,000 items were checked out or are currently on hold.

**Banned Book Week 2024:** Pina reported that there was a great lineup of programs in September and October that highlighted the issue of banning books. The culminating event was a Community Day of Action, which was held on October 19<sup>th</sup> at Grand Park. Throughout the week, workshops were held and anybody could visit any library and leave their thoughts on interactive displays. A Books Unbanned Reading Challenge for Teens was held during September/October and Pina thanked the Library Foundation for their support of Kindles as prizes.

**Safety & Security at the Library:** Pina quoted from a New York Times article that focused on security and safety as a pressing issue in the library profession with librarians facing a mental health crisis due to alarming trends across the country. Pina reported that LA County Library has increased security camera installations, alarm systems, and improved public access to PA systems. As of mid-November, work had been completed at 44 library locations. All work is

expected to be completed by early 2026. The Library is also currently augmenting its security contracts to allow for in-house security at high incident locations.

**Homelessness and Mental Health:** Pina reported that LA County Library is collaborating with multiple County departments on a proposal to reinstate social workers in libraries following on the successful pilot. There are currently two important reports for the Board of Supervisors: a 90-day report back where the Library will identify 10 high-need locations and a 120-day report back to work with LA County’s Department of Mental Health, Public Health, and the Chief Executive Office to explore and develop an implementation plan to reinstate the social worker program. Library leadership has also identified the need to hire a social worker consultant. Additionally, LA County Library hosts quarterly events called The Source at five locations: East LA, Florence, San Fernando, Norwalk and Lancaster. These events are designed to connect unhoused and housing insecure individuals to resources. 156 neighbors have been served at the fall 2024 events. Subsequent events will be held in January and February of 2025.

**Naloxone Distribution:** In partnership with LA County Department of Public Health and the CA Department of Health Care Services, the Library continues to distribute free doses of Naloxone along with clinics that provide the public training on how to administer the drug. This pilot began in October 2023 with five library locations, and it has expanded to thirteen locations. A total of 500 distribution events has resulted in 5,500 does to 2,400 of our community members. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, the Library also began to distribute Fentanyl Test Strips.

**Productivity & Quality Awards:** Pina announced that in October, LA County Library was recognized with a Top Ten award for its diaper and hygiene kits distribution program. Pina expressed kudos to the team who coordinated these programs. She also announced that County Librarian and CEO Skye Patrick received the Commission Chair’s Leadership Award given annually to one County Leader who leads by example. Pina stated that if Patrick were at the meeting she would say it’s not just her but the entire employee base of 800 full-time and 400 part-time staff who deserve this award.

**2025 Commission meetings:** Pina provided the 2025 dates for LA County Library Commission meetings:

- January 15
- March 19
- May 21 or May 19
- July 16
- September 17
- November 19

The January meeting will be held at West Covina Library and staff is finalizing sites for the other meetings.

### **Questions/Comments:**

- Commissioner Lesser asked about the strategy for advertising the banned book initiative as the new year brings a sensitive new national culture. Pina replied that much of the marketing is done in collaboration with Brooklyn Public Library and Seattle Public Library. Locally, there is a marketing and communications team to help promote this and other library programs. Regarding political questions, Pina stated that librarians stand by their belief that people are entitled to read **any** books they wish. She added that Skye Patrick is on the Urban Libraries Council.
- Vice Chair Allen asked about federal funding and its impact on LA County Library. Pina replied that LA County Library does receive county and state grants that come from the federal government and that staff must be mindful of this issue. The finance team works with the County CEO's Legislative Office. Grace Reyes commented that County funds may be curtailed and could impact library operations. Library partnerships with other departments could also be impacted.
- Chair Calaycay reminded everyone that the Commission intentionally schedules its meetings around the County trying to visit every Supervisorial District each year.

### **LA County Library Presentation**

Deborah Anderson, Assistant Director, Education & Engagement, and Heather Firchow, Library Administrator, Youth Services, presented on the Library's Summer Stars Tutoring Program and programs for LGBTQ+ families.

Firchow presented slides which were sent out to the Commission after the meeting. The presentation reflected the power of these programs in helping vulnerable students show academic progress.

- Commissioner Medina asked about whether state funding was exhausted or whether it could be used for the Summer Stars program. Anderson replied that the challenge is between having a finite number of resources and many libraries and building projects that require state funding. She added that the bulk of funding for the program still comes from ARPA federal funding.
- Commissioner Cleri Reale commented that ARPA funding is expiring at the end of the year and asked about the plan to replace it. Anderson replied that staff is "turning over rocks" including philanthropic dollars. They are also working with the Legislative Subcommittee to create requests for state funding.
- Commissioner Medina asked if tutors are students. Firchow replied that there is a contracted vendor that provides tutors who are teachers, students and other professionals, all of whom go through a training program.
- Vice Chair Allen thanked staff for their efforts and asked for the dates of the Rainbow programming events. Firchow did not have the dates on hand but said they are listed on the website.
- Commissioner Payton suggested potential partners for the Rainbow programming including Extraordinary Families, First 5, daycare providers and other age 0-5 providers.

Grace Reyes, Administrative Deputy, provided a fiscal overview of the Library's funding structure. She provided a handout and slides to the Commission. The breakdown of revenue is as follows and Reyes provided details for each category.

- Property Tax (60%)
- County Funds (14.3%)
- Special Tax (6.7%)
- User Utility Tax (6.5%)
- One time revenue (7.6%)
- Miscellaneous Revenue (4.9%)

Reyes shared a chart that detailed expenditures with a subtotal of \$184.7 million and \$23 million from the operating reserve for total expenditures of \$207.7 million. She reminded the Commissioners that operating hours have been standardized over the years along with reduction of part-time staff and other tools to sustain operations. There is currently a robust, unrestricted reserve that is expected to cover projected deficits through 2031, but Reyes did caution that reserves will be impacted by changes in federal funding, AB218, future curtailments, revenue forecast instability and changes or reductions in property tax revenue.

- Commissioner Lesser commented that the chart Reyes shared is very helpful when talking to potential funders and requested a copy.
- Commissioner Cleri Reale commented that the large reserve is due to the Library staff's efforts to reduce expenses and their ability to secure partnerships and one time funding; however, it does not solve the long-term potential structural deficit.
- Commissioner Lowe asked about the amount of legal fees. Reyes replied that County Counsel looks at all contracts, requests for proposals (RFPs) and other documents that relate to the Library resulting in the legal fees. Examples she shared were security, transportation, asbestos removal and others. These reviews cost money and there are also occasional lawsuits by members of the public.
- Chair Calaycay asked a series of questions related to cities currently experiencing deficits and unincorporated areas and how funding is allocated. It was decided to defer this issue for the next Commission meeting so that County Librarian & CEO Patrick can respond.

### **Bylaws/Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee Update**

Vice Chair Allen, who also chairs the Bylaws and Ordinance Revision Ad Hoc Committee, provided an update on the committee's efforts to revise the Library Commission bylaws and put forth an ordinance. Allen thanked Commissioners Medina and Cleri Reale for serving on the Ad Hoc Committee. Allen and Chair Calaycay provided some background to this work stating that this has been an agenda item for some time and that other Commissions have ordinances, but the Library Commission was never granted one. While the process is nearing completion, Allen stated that County Counsel identified a potential conflict: that the Library Commission composition is unusual because half of the members are appointed by Supervisors and half of the members are appointed by an outside agency (City Selection Committee.) They have suggested the following solution:

- City Selection would nominate members, but the Board would take final action and approve the recommendations.

Allen and Calaycay opened it up for discussion.

- Commissioner Crosby asked what happens when the Board grows to nine supervisors. Allen replied that nobody knows right now.
- Commissioner Croft asked if there are any dates for the December City Selection Committee meeting. Calaycay replied that it will probably be on December 17<sup>th</sup>, but he encouraged all City Selection members to push on this issue.
- Commissioner Cleri Reale suggested that everyone go to their Board Office and encourage expediting the ordinance and bylaw changes before anything else interferes with its approval. Chief Deputy Librarian Pina asked for a couple of months to work with County Counsel to finalize the content.
- Commissioner Lowe asked, if a recommendation from City Selection goes to the Board, is it mandatory approval or discretionary approval? Allen replied that they are not at that level yet with language as they want to hear comments/concerns first.
- Commissioner Francois stated that it will get worse when there are more supervisors. He also said that he doesn't see the same conflict of interest as County Counsel as the Library Commission is an advisory board and does not have decision making authority. He stated that he would not endorse this suggested change.
- Samangi Skinner also raised the issue of City Selection not meeting for months and the subsequent vacancies impacting the ability to meet quorum. She suggested raising this issue with County Counsel. Sara Keating suggested that the Commission flag potential vacancies in advance. She cited that there will be five seats expiring in April 2025. Skinner will engage Commission Services staff and keep Chair Calaycay in the loop.

Vice Chair Allen thanked everyone for their comments and stated that he would bring comments back to County Counsel as they oversee creating the board letter and moving this through approval.

### **2024-25 Commission Goals and Objectives**

Subcommittee Chairs provided brief updates on their respective subcommittees' efforts toward their goals and objectives. Chair Calaycay provided background around how the subcommittees evolved and asked each new Commissioner to engage on one or more of the subcommittees.

- Commission Benchmarking: Vice Chair Allen reported that subcommittee members are still looking at statistical information and that a meeting will be scheduled.
- Education & Community Needs: Commissioner Crosby stated that a meeting is being scheduled to discuss how to best support library programs with effective outreach efforts.
- Legislative Advocacy: Commissioner Medina stated that the subcommittee is looking to identify unfunded needs/communities and legislators that could provide potential funding. She added that with a couple of former Library Commissioners now serving in the State Assembly, it would be a good place to start.
- Philanthropy: Commissioner Cleri Reale reiterated that all commissioners should advocate for LA County Library, serve as ambassadors and raise awareness and funds. She stated that no donation is too little as long as 100% of commissioners are giving something. She reminded everyone that Giving Tuesday and the end of year appeal are around the corner and provide a final chance to ask friends, family and colleagues to give. She stated that Library Foundation Executive Director Andrea Carroll was unable



to attend the Commission meeting but has all the tools needed to communicate with potential donors.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Commissioner Comments, Announcements, or New Business**

- Commissioner Cuellar Stallings stated that it was a great meeting, and she plans to be a strong advocate for LA County Library.
- Commissioner Lesser thanked the staff for putting together a speaker series at Manhattan Beach Library that was oversubscribed and so successful.
- Commissioner Crosby thanked staff for their reports as it helps City Selection members pass on information to their City Council colleagues about LA County Library's great resources.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Calaycay reminded Commissioners to let him know about their interest in subcommittee work. He promised an update on the bylaws at the January meeting. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025. He then adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.