



San Francisco Public Library

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of MARCH 21, 2024

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a regular meeting MARCH 21, 2024, at the Koret Auditorium, Main Library and able to view virtually on Zoom.

The SFPL Commission meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

Commissioners Present: Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lopez and Bolander.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Carrie Blanding, Interim Executive Director Friends of the San Francisco Public Library said their hearts go out to those affected by the accident outside the West Portal Branch Library and gave updates on the Friends activities, which included welcoming three new Board Members and they are still engaged in their Executive Search.

Peter Warfield, Executive Director of Library Users Association Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com, PO Box 170544, San Francisco California 94117-0544, said the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council had been meeting monthly for more than 20-years at the Park Branch Library, but during COVID that ended and because the library closes at 6 PM they were not allowed to meet there any longer, and with the intervention of Supervisor Dean Preston, the City Librarian now allows the group to meet at the branch.

Miriam Wrobel, said she is a Sustainability Consultant and one of three new Board Members at Friends of the Library, and is looking forward to continuing to support the library in this role. She said she grew up in San Francisco, with this Library and her daughter is a library power user. During the Friends last meeting they passed the annual gift to the Library, which they expect to be over one million dollars next year.

A Public Commenter congratulated the Commission on its service to the people who live here and has concerns about the change in the Mission statement from the San Francisco Public Library is dedicated to free and equal access to information, knowledge, independent learning, and the joys of reading for our diverse community and believes it should stay in the mission statement. There may be some legal ramifications if that statement is removed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2024

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the minutes tend to downplay or cover over and make incomprehensible some of the comments he has made. He said he has mentioned the toxicity of social media and the Library is touting it in its publicity for no reason including the monthly publication At The Library.

Commission Discussion

Motion: By Commissioner **MALL** seconded by Commissioner **BOLANDER** to approve the **FEBRUARY 2024** Commission Minutes.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, Mall, Ono, Lopez and Bolander)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 STRATEGIC PLANNING FINAL REPORT/REVISED BYLAWS

Midori Mizuhara, Gensler Project Manager, shared the final Strategic Plan, which covers the next six years, and reviewed the 15-month planning process, the new Vision (A democratic, equitable and vibrant San Francisco for everyone), the new Mission (Connect our diverse communities to learning, opportunities and each other) and Values (Well-being, Community, Equity, Collaboration, and Exploration). Midori said the Strategic Priorities of Literacy Champion, Cultural Amplifier, Community Catalyzer, Thoughtful Navigator and Resource Provider were based on community and staff feedback. The Library will internally shift to realize the Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Priorities.

Public Comment

Miriam Wrobel, on behalf of Friends of the Library, congratulated the Library on the final plan and thanked all the members involved in crafting the vision for the Library and appreciated Friends were included in adding their voices to the planning process. She said The Friends will have its own strategic planning process in the next year and will consider the Library goals and strategies as they look ahead to their work in partnership with the Public Library.

Peter Warfield said to put two major issues into one agenda item is wrong, those are two significant things, so significant that bylaws change by a law has to have a different notification time. There is a difference in what the old and the new mission statements says, and he thinks it is a catastrophe for the Library as a library.

A Public Commenter said he was a journalist and a writer, shared similar concerns about the absence of emphasis on reading, printed matters, such as books and magazines it is discouraging to hear anyone pretend that literacy is going on when there is not an emphasis on reading books and literary paper material. He would like to see a budget analysis of this plan.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Mall asked where were the measurable outcomes and how are we to judge what is happening and if it is successful?

City Librarian Lambert said the implementation phase begins and gets a defined after today, what is included in the plan is a roadmap for three phases and it is up to SFPL how success is measured on all of these in the next phase of work, and the overriding outcome that the Library currently strives to achieve will remain the same, which is resident satisfaction with Library services.

Mall asked if that was different than before the strategic plan, the partnerships with the School District.

Lambert said it is different in that the Library has never put it down on paper with intention and with the plan to allocate future resources, and staff capacity to affect better outcomes for SF students.

Commissioner Bolander said in the plan, there are outcomes of what and how these will be measured and there are different levels of how things get implemented, most people understand the tactical, this is a higher level NorthStar vision and the promised land. Were going to get there in six years and you can't change a plan you don't have. Not everyone is going to agree with this, but the intent is to make the organization better, the plan is flexible, thoughtful and it meets the needs of today and in the future, it is directionally where the Library needs to go.

Vice President Huang asked what went into shaping the phases and would like to see more specifics on the execution timeline over the next six years.

Lambert said for the Strategic Plan 2030, takes the Library through the remainder of this decade and positions us to think beyond this decade and a forward-looking evolution of the San Francisco Public Library into the next. Thinking about a phased approach, could interpret each as two-year increments, some of the plan will take longer, and some of these initiatives are already in flight. In many ways this is the beginning of the team getting organized. We will have a deeper level of planning work that will enable us to set timelines for activities and better understand how we want to measure success.

Huang asked for the Commission to get a regular update of what exactly is the latest refresh of the plan, what is the current priority, so they have that level of understanding.

President Wolf said there are going to be certain things in this plan that are low hanging fruit and can have a shorter timeframe. Using literacy and readiness in Kindergarten, the Library may not reach that in six years, because it requires an incredible kind of citywide partnership that the Library can't do on its own but making the effort to dive in and create that infrastructure to allow that to grow. The team needs to distinguish between the things that take a lot of prep to even start, versus those that can readily dive into.

Commissioner Lopez thanked the consulting team, San Francisco Public Library staff, and everyone that collaborated on the Strategic Planning process, and said the Commission gave a lot of feedback and concerns, which was listened to. The Library has its NorthStar, a mission that will hold the Commission accountable and to make sure that all this work gets delivered, take ownership and support Michael and his team. In terms of the mission statement, this mission statement is concise,

learning is reading, learning is writing and learning how to use a computer.

Commissioner Ono thanked everyone and said this has been a long process and she hopes everyone appreciates what everyone has done to try to get the Library to this place and agrees that six years is a good ending. Ono thanked Pete, and said he is a volunteer, and he brings the young ideas, which she appreciates.

Commissioner Mall said she remembers when Pete was sitting out in the audience, and ask very good questions and we all thought, maybe that guy should be on the Commission, sitting on this side and said she thinks it is wonderful he is sitting here and not out there and that the Commission has your expertise.

Motion: By Commissioner **ONO** seconded by Commissioner **LOPEZ** to approve the amended **Bylaws**.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, Mall, Ono, Lopez and Bolander)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 MIDDLE GROUND FUNDING RESOLUTION

Katrin Reimuller, Assistant Chief of the Main, introduced Shawn Lani from the Exploratorium, lead for the Middle Ground Exhibition.

Shawn Lani said the Middle Ground Exhibit is a blend of place making and inquiry-based learning, a rare blend because it is in the real world, where people come to the Library. He said Urban Alchemy makes people feel safe and feel welcome and they found 86 % of the people who interact with practitioners on site walk away with increased respect from people who are different from them, 84% of those people walk away with increased sense of connection to people who are not like them and 80 % of people feeling increased compassion.

Chief Financial Officer, Mike Fernandez said they are recommending the Commission approve a sole-source grant pursuant to Chapter 21 G, which governs how the government can grant to third-party partners such as Urban Alchemy and said there are instances where it is impractical or infeasible, to do a competitive bid and when a sole-source is warranted, as in this case, because competitive solicitation is infeasible. He said this grant would allow continued operation through end of June 2024 and it is retroactive.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said he does not have any objections to this project, it is nice to have something interesting outside the library that can attract some attention, and when he initially saw those nice chairs way up high, he wondered how he could get to sit down in them, but unfortunately there wasn't any cherry picker or anything else that enabled him to sit on it and it. He asked about the funding of for 2.6 people for 4 months, which is approximately \$30,000 a month for less than three people. How does that work out.

Commission Discussion

President Wolf noted the amount was listed both as \$111,000 and \$113,000 in the Resolution.

Fernandez confirmed it was \$111,000

Vice President Huang asked if the rates stayed the same as before.

Lani said the rates are the same.

Motion: By Vice President **HUANG** seconded by Commissioner **ONO** to amend and approve the Middle Ground Funding Resolution in the amount of #111,831.

Action: AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, Mall, Ono, Lopez and Bolander)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 CITY LIBRARIANS REPORT

Kate Patterson, Director of Communications, gave an overview of the 5th Annual Night of Ideas (NOI), which is an initiative of the French government. It started several years ago and has ballooned to more than a hundred cities around the globe. 20 cities in the United States participated this year, and the San Francisco program is administered by the artist in residency program run out of the French Consulate. Partners in the NOI this year were KQED and Circuit Network. Every year the French come up with a theme and this year's theme was Fault Lines and SFPL adds its spirit to that and because this earthquake country they thought fault lines as shaking things up. They added a new family program component to the NOI, which was called the Afternoon of Ideas and from 4 to 6 p.m. Many families, including a number who had never been to the Library before attended and enjoyed a dance class from the San Francisco Ballet, henna tattoos, workshops with award-winning authors, and a cookie demonstration. Patterson said each year the Night of Ideas tackles very important and pressing issues of the day and this year they wanted to infuse the evening with joy, specifically to celebrate San Francisco.

Michelle Jeffers, Chief Community Programs and Partnerships, said they had several performances, which Circuit Network helped with, and Friends of the Library brought in great performers that strolled throughout the building, everyone could enjoy them. They had several panel discussions, many more this year, for the first time they had standup comedy, every room ended up being a standing room only, which the beauty of this event is that people come. The fourth floor was a small business marketplace, and it was bustling, with more than eight local businesses. The Friends hosted a Dance Party and a lounge. NOI is a complement to the strategic plan, which a survey of attendees found that 73% felt more informed and 79% said they felt more connected to the community. There were about 6800 youth, family, and adults in attendance that night, far exceeding past attendance of the previous three years it has been at the Library.

Michelle Jeffers, CPP Chief, presented the March Book Club, Poverty by America by Pulitzer prize-winning author, Matthew Desmond, which The New Yorker describes as urgent and accessible. Jeffers said the US has more poverty than any other advanced democracy, the book outlines the system is set up to subsidize the wealthy over the alleviation of poverty and change only starts by being aware, which is why they picked this book. The event will be next week at the Sydney Goldstein Theater and through Friends of the Library Anonymous Donor the event will be free to attend.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said he gave his information in 15 seconds and there are some serious issues and serious problems with these programs in particular Night of Ideas. This is the first time the library was closed on Saturday so no one could do normal library business of any kind and there was no notice within the Main Library until possibly a day or two before and no notice on the phones. There is no publicity or indication in the branches that this is going on. He said he had to go online to register and provide them with personal information, which are privacy issues.

Commission Discussion

President Wolf thanked Kate and Michelle for their presentations and extended her gratitude to the entire team at the San Francisco Public Library. Commissioner Lopez, Commissioner Mall and she attended NOI, and it was extraordinary, the team knocked it out of the park.

Commissioner Lopez said she attended last year, and this year was great, she was very impressed with the quality of workshops, and attended one on Artificial Intelligence, it was standing room only and it was worth standing for. She appreciates, the custodial service, it was amazing, with the large number of people, the Library looked nice and clean. Everyone was welcoming.

Commissioner Mall said based on other Nights of Ideas, she thought this was just far and away the best. In other years, nothing grabbed her the way so many of the programs did this year. Unfortunately, they were programmed against each other, but that's a beauty of the night. She said she could have stayed for hours because there were so many great programs.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 ADJOURNMENT OF THE MARCH 21, 2024 COMMISSION MEETING

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the Commission should not adjourn until they insist that the Commission has an item on the agenda at the end for Commissioners to say what they would like to see on future agenda items.

Commission Discussion

Motion: By Vice President **HUANG** seconded by Commissioner **MALL** to adjourn the meeting

Action: AYES 6-0 (Wolf, Huang, Mall, Ono, Lopez and Bolander)

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 PM
Margot Shaub, Commission Affairs Analyst

To access **Commission Meeting recordings** please visit: [Library Commission Meeting Recording](#)

Please note: These are draft minutes subject to revision by the San Francisco Public Library

Commission. Copies of the minutes and handouts are available in the office of the Library Commission Affairs Analyst, 6th floor, Main Library, 100 Larking Street, San Francisco, CA 94102-4733.

Explanatory documents: Copies of listed explanatory documents are available as follows: (1) from the Commission Liaison Affairs Analyst/Custodian of Records, 6th floor, Main Library; (2) in the rear of Koret Auditorium immediately prior to, and during, the meeting; and (3), to the extent possible, on the Public Library Commission webpage: sfpl.org/library-commission/public-notice/agendas. Additional materials not listed as explanatory documents on this agenda, if any, that are distributed to Library Commissioners prior to or during the meeting in connection with any agenda item will be available to the public for inspection and copying in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.1 and Sunshine Ordinance Sections 67.9, 67.28(b), and 67.28(d).