

MEETING MINUTES

San Francisco Public Library Commission

Regular Meeting — May 21, 2026

Date	Thursday, May 21, 2026
Time	4:30 PM
Location	Main Library, Koret Auditorium (in-person); Zoom available via library event calendar (Zoom ID: 938-4498-1036)
Presiding Officer	President Calhoun
Commission Affairs Analyst	Margot Shaub

Attendance

Commissioners Present

President	Calhoun
Vice President	Jones
Commissioner	Bolander
Commissioner	Menon
Commissioner	Kenaston

Staff Present

- Michael Lambert — City Librarian
- Margot Shaub — Commission Affairs Analyst
- Maureen Singleton — Chief Operating Officer
- Dolly Goyal — Chief of Public Services
- Allison Wyckoff — Director of Exhibitions (co-presenter, Item 2)
- Megan Merritt — Senior Curator (presenter, Item 2)
- Jen Wu — Family Engagement Coordinator (co-presenter, Item 2)
- John Cunha — Director of Facilities (presenter, Item 3)
- Lisa Valerio — Capital Projects Manager
- Maria Mastro-Kiriakos — Employee Learning and Development Manager (presenter, Item 3)
- Jamie Wong — Director of Communications
- Ruben Balderas — Early Learning Coordinator (presenter, Item 3)
- Brian Haug — Chief Stationary Engineer, new hire (introduced, Item 3)

Department of Public Works Representatives Present

- Andrew Stone — Bureau of Architects
- Massoud Vafeii — Project Managers Division
- Scott Anderson — Deputy Director for Project Delivery

Meeting Agenda

Item	Description
1	General Public Comment
2	Discussion — Programming and Exhibition Highlights
3	Discussion — City Librarian's Report: Capital Projects Update; Employee Excellence Awards; Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros; Library Day at the Giants
4	Discussion and Possible Action — Approval of April 18, 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes

Land Acknowledgement

The meeting opened with the Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement, recognizing the San Francisco Peninsula as the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, affirming their sovereign rights as First Peoples, and paying respects to the ancestors, elders, and relatives of the Ramaytush community.

Item 1 — General Public Comment

Summary

Seven members of the public provided comment on topics not listed on today's agenda. A dominant theme was a racial slur used at the April 16 Commission meeting: three speakers — a librarian, a library staffer, and a circulation supervisor — addressed the harm caused and asked for clearer procedures for responding to hate speech in a public forum. Other comments covered the history of public comment rights at the Commission, concerns about the library's uncritical promotion of social media, a patron suspension appeal, a tribute to veterans' services, and advocacy for better promotion of library collections.

Public Comment

Anonymous Citizen: Delivered the second part of a two-part commentary on the historical struggle to establish public comment rights at the Library Commission, describing early experiences of being denied access and blocked from speaking, and a lawsuit that ultimately compelled the Commission to place general public comment first on its agenda and guarantee it at every meeting.

Natalie Enright (San Francisco Public Librarian, speaking in personal capacity): Speaking as a Black librarian, described the harm caused when the April 16 meeting returned to normal after a speaker used a racial slur without acknowledgment or recognition of its impact on Black staff,

patrons, and commissioners. She asked the Commission to develop responses that do more than restore procedure and instead acknowledge harm, affirming that racist language is not treated as business as usual.

Peter Warfield Executive Director, Library Users Association: libraryusers2004@protonmail.com; P.O. Box 170544, San Francisco, CA 94117-0544): Urged the Commission to do more to promote and make visible the library's physical collections — books, databases, newspapers, and periodicals — and to stop uncritically steering patrons to social media platforms given widely documented harms, citing the March 2026 Wall Street Journal headline reporting that Meta and YouTube were found addictive and harmful to adolescents in a landmark jury verdict.

Unidentified Patron: Reported being wrongly suspended from a library branch after a security guard misidentified him as another patron based on a photograph. Despite going to the accused branch and having the branch librarian confirm the mistaken identity, the original branch's security guard suspended him for one day anyway, citing alleged aggression, and the patron asked the Commission or City Librarian to meet with him to properly investigate the matter.

Shauna Sherman: Staff, General Collections and Humanities Reference Desks and African American Center Program Manager: Read Patron Code of Conduct Violation 6 aloud — which covers obscene, threatening, or hateful language including racist slurs — and noted the annotated code's first-offense penalty of a 3-month suspension. She stated that hearing the recording of the April meeting was jarring, that she felt unwelcome in her own workplace, and asked for clear procedural guidance on how such incidents in the Commission forum should be handled.

Ruben Juarez: Circulation Supervisor, Union Officer; name consistent with prior meetings): Speaking as a supervisor trained in the patron code of conduct, endorsed the concerns raised by Natalie Enright and Shauna Sherman, noting that he was in the room when the slur was used and would normally address such behavior directly. He used the moment to underscore that branch staff without on-site security routinely deal with hate speech, making the April incident representative of a broader, ongoing challenge, and called for clear guidance on how to respond going forward.

Manali Javari Weeks: Board Member, Friends of the San Francisco Public Library): Announced the launch of the Friends' end-of-fiscal-year fundraising campaign themed "Your Next Chapter Begins at the Library," featuring artwork by local artist Angela Chu. Highlighted the fourth annual Friends Book Sale Block Party on Saturday, June 6, 12–5 PM (member preview at 11 AM), featuring over 20,000 books and media, the SFPL bookmobile, and community readings. Also thanked the library and City Arts and Lectures for a recent free event with actor/author Jeff Hiller at the Sidney Goldstein Theater.

Jason Gibbs: Used AI tool Grok to summarize Mayor Lurie's library vision as supportive stewardship rather than transformation, noting that survey data and ballot results confirm strong public support for the library. Provided personal context on the 1996 book-disposal controversy at the New Main Library, including his own nuanced view shared in a 2019 "99% Invisible" podcast. Raised a new concern that the City Librarian plans to dismantle 13 ranges of open

shelving and potentially discard up to 20,000 books to create a new Latinx affinity center — calling this a potential new round of book dumping.

Nicholas Rusinov: Veterans Affairs Commissioner for San Francisco: Extended gratitude to the San Francisco Public Library for its services to veterans through The Bridge on the 5th floor, in recognition of the approaching Memorial Day holiday.

Item 2 — Programming and Exhibition Highlights

Presenters

- Allison Wyckoff, Director of Exhibitions — 2025 Exhibitions Data & 2026 Calendar
- Megan Merritt, Senior Curator — Hamburger Eyes Exhibition
- Jen Wu, Family Engagement Coordinator — AANHPI Heritage Month (Weaving Stories)

Summary of Presentation

Allison Wyckoff presented 2025 exhibition data showing record Jewett Gallery attendance: 10,764 visitors for "Skateboarding San Francisco" and 12,278 for "Living Tattoo Traditions." The library worked with 96 artists, commissioned 3 original works, presented 19 exhibition-related programs, and partnered with 25+ collaborators. The current Jewett Gallery exhibition, "The Continuing Story of Life on Earth: 25 Years of Hamburger Eyes," opened recently to over 1,200 people at its reception — a record for exhibition openings — with a companion hoodie that sold out immediately.

Megan Merritt described the Hamburger Eyes retrospective, a black-and-white photography magazine founded in 2001 by Ray Potez showing work by over 80 photographers and displaying all 57 issues of the magazine for the first time. Four satellite displays complement the show: "We Have Hamburger Eyes for SFPL's Magazines and Periodicals" (5th floor, open now); "This Must Be the Place: Photography in Print Media" and "Sidewalk Stories: San Francisco from the 1970s Through 1980s" (6th floor, opened day of meeting); and a 4th display opening in August. Related programming includes a June 20 street photography walking tour with the Harvey Milk Photo Center, a July 2 zine-making workshop, and an August 6 film festival.

Jen Woo presented Weaving Stories, the library's AANHPI Heritage Month campaign (theme: "Power and Unity"), noting that AANHPI residents make up approximately 35% of San Francisco's population with roughly half being newcomers. As of the meeting date, 94 of 148 planned programs had taken place across the city, with at least 1,270 attendees. Highlights included a Drumbeats Heartbeats panel, the APIA Bio Project with SF State University, a screening of "From Archive to Art," an author event on May 28 with journalist Dion Lim discussing "Amplify: My Fight for Asian America," and a sneak preview that the June Commission meeting will feature programming on May 17 Bruce Lee Day, including a limited-edition Bruce Lee library card.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield (Library Users Association): Praised the presentations and expressed appreciation for the Hamburger Eyes programs listing specific dates, which he said helps library commission attendees learn about upcoming programs. He suggested every library location

post visible day-of and upcoming program schedules for walk-in visitors, and asked whether exhibition catalogs or reading lists of related library materials could be made available to help patrons explore exhibit themes further.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Jones asked how the exhibitions team is thinking about positioning the library as a destination within the broader San Francisco and Bay Area arts scene, not just within its own walls; Director Wyckoff confirmed this is an active focus, noting that as traditional spaces close (CCA, Contemporary Jewish Museum), the library's free and open access makes it uniquely positioned to sustain the arts ecosystem. The Commission also learned that SFPL will be one of the venues for the inaugural Further Triennial next year, a Bay Area-wide celebration of artistic achievement. Commissioner Jones additionally encouraged the team to fast-track Hamburger Eyes merchandise given the remaining 3-month exhibition run, and Wyckoff committed to working with Friends partner Michael Vinson on that.

Item 3 — City Librarian's Report

3A — Capital Projects Update - Presenter: John Cunha, Director of Facilities

John Cunha presented updates across completed, in-progress, and upcoming capital projects.

Completed / Substantially Complete:

- Main Library Safety Barriers: Substantially complete; one section near a stairway mural requires a later return. Project was completed ahead of schedule for the Night of Ideas deadline and under budget. Project Manager: Lisa Valerio.
- Park Branch Waterproofing: Complete; second branch waterproofing project in 4 years. Final financial closeout underway; project came in under budget with remaining funds to be applied to future branch waterproofing efforts.

Small Capital Projects — Main Library:

- Main Library Roof Replacement: Budget \$6.1M total (\$3.1M from Building Forward grant; \$3M library funds). Scope: full roof replacement plus flashing and sealant renewal. Schedule: construction start late summer 2026.
- Seismic Moat Rebuild: Budget \$7.3M total (\$3.2M from Building Forward grant). The seismic moat enables the building's seismic isolation system to function. Estimated start: early 2027.

Large Capital Projects — LIFT Program:

- Mission Branch Library Renovation: Budget \$40.7M (\$5.3M from Building Forward grant, Phase 1). Construction is approximately 90%+ complete. Substantial completion target: August 2026. Grand opening target: October 2026. All furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) are on order and ready to install. Temporary location: currently open at Valencia Street storefront.
- Chinatown Branch Library Renovation: Currently in bidding process. Four qualified bids received (6–7 submitted; 4 qualified). Sealed bids to be opened early-to-mid June 2026. Public Works Commission approval sought before August recess. Notice to Proceed (NTP) target: approximately September 2026. Projected completion: Summer 2028.

Temporary library location: 950 Grant Street (in the heart of Chinatown); ready to open within 30 days of branch closure. Architect: Andrew Sohn (Bureau of Architects). Design goal: restore the grandeur of the Carnegie building's reading room, add an art gallery space, open the roof for seniors, and expand the community room.

- Ocean View Branch Library (New Construction): Original site at Orizaba/Brotherhood Way (30,000 sq ft) estimated at up to \$81M — far exceeding the \$47M budgeted — and deemed infeasible. The adjacent site at 333 Randolph is off the table due to above-fair-market-value purchase requirements. The current lead candidate is 400 Randolph (across the street; current home of Pilgrim Community Church and IT Bookman Community Center), whose owners have expressed interest in selling. A validation study from Public Works was recently completed and aligns with the library's programmatic needs. A CEQA study, feasibility study, and massing study are underway via MOU with Public Works. A co-location with the Department of Early Childhood Development is under exploration. Library currently has \$41.5M set aside (\$42M committed; \$500K spent on a prior feasibility study). Total budget ceiling: approximately \$47M.

New Hire Introduction:

- Brian Haug, newly hired Chief Stationary Engineer (joined approximately 4 weeks prior), was introduced by Cunha. Haug brings experience from Con Edison in New York and SF General Hospital (DPH). He is leading a shift from reactive to preventative maintenance, including new programs for painting, roofing, and flooring across all branch locations, with the goal of ensuring every branch always appears fresh and inviting to patrons.

3B — Employee Excellence Awards - Presenter: Maria Mastro-Kiriakos, Employee Learning and Development Manager

The 2026 Employee Excellence Awards ceremony was held on May 8 in the Main Library atrium with over 300 staff in attendance. The library presented 12 awards: 2 City Librarian Awards and 10 awards aligned with the library's five core values and five strategic priorities. Nominations increased 43% year-over-year (team nominations up 30%; individual nominations up 45%), with 28 job classifications represented among recipients. The library also highlighted its "Why I Work Here" campaign, led by Director of Communications Jamie Wong, which shared authentic staff stories during National Library Week. The three annual recognition events are: Employee Excellence Awards (May), Service Pin Event (fall), and Winter Wonderland of Wins holiday event (December).

3C — Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros - Presenter: Ruben Balderas, Early Learning Coordinator

The 27th annual Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros celebration was held on Sunday, April 26 at Parque Niños Unidos in the Mission, with an estimated 2,000 attendees. SFPL chaired a workgroup with six organizing committee partners — KQED, SF Department of Early Learning, Felton Institute, Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, Tandem Partners in Early Learning, and Wu Yi Children's Centers — and hosted over 30 tabling organizations, the largest collection in the event's history. New participants included Open Door Legal (immigration/legal services) and Magic Tooth Bus (free oral exams). Performances included Danza Azteca Sitlali Zolo, Emilia Lopez-Yanez of Malinki Music, and a capoeira demonstration by Jarrell Phillips and students from Capoeira Ijeksha. SFPL provided the bookmobile, distributed multilingual books, offered library card sign-ups, and operated with staff from Mission Branch, Community Programs and Partnerships, The Bridge (Fog Readers/literacy program), The Mix, and Media

Services. To date, the annual celebration has distributed over 25,000 multilingual books into the community.

3D — Library Day at the Giants - Presented by City Librarian Michael Lambert

For the second consecutive year, SFPL organized Library Day at the Giants, coinciding with Little League Day at Oracle Park (sellout Sunday game). Thirteen library systems from the Bay Area participated (Benicia, Berkeley, Burlingame, Oakland, Palo Alto, Redwood City, Richmond, San Bruno, San Jose, San Mateo, San Rafael, Santa Clara City, and San Leandro), with pre-game activities at Mission Rock Park. SFPL signed up approximately 50 new library card holders at the event. City Librarian Lambert conducted an on-field interview with Giants announcer Therese Vanal, highlighting library programs and promoting the One Coast One Book selection, George Takei's graphic novel "They Called Us Enemy."

Public Comment on Item 3

Anonymous Citizen: Commended employee recognition as long overdue but questioned whether it is shaped by Vision 2030 priorities. Raised concerns about a May 2 library-sponsored music event at Spreckels Temple of Music — noting library tables were set up but only band promotional materials were distributed — and questioned whether the library considered it a success; similarly questioned a Tech Week event that seemed to primarily promote the hosting outside organization rather than the library.

Katherine Scher (Chinatown/North Beach resident, library volunteer, and longtime Chinatown Branch patron): Expressed strong support for the Chinatown Branch renovation, noting that the delay in moving to the temporary location had pushed the timeline from summer/fall 2025 to late summer 2026. She urged the Commission to continue prioritizing the renovation, expedite it, and protect the originally proposed improvements despite rising costs, emphasizing the branch's importance as a community gathering space and its potential to serve teens, new families, and seniors more effectively.

Peter Warfield (Library Users Association): Noted that the Ocean View budget has grown dramatically — from roughly \$20M to 4–5 times that amount — and asked for clarity on why the Greenbelt site was abandoned and what community input drove each site decision. He also reiterated concern about interim service quality, citing the Mission Branch temporary location as inadequately small in staffing and materials, including the absence of walk-up computers.

Ruben Juarez (Circulation Supervisor): Asked specific questions about the seismic moat project's impact on staff during construction, expressed disappointment that the Orizaba/Brotherhood Way site is effectively dead after years of anticipation, and asked for clarity on the cost differential and the co-location partnership with the Department of Early Childhood Development, noting that branch staff will need to explain these developments to patrons.

Darcellio Montoya (SEIU Local 1021 Union Field Representative for Library Workers): Acknowledged library workers' contributions highlighted in the presentations, particularly Día de los Niños. Stated that labor is looking forward to meeting with management to discuss the transition from Valencia Street to the Mission Branch, and to address worker concerns from Chinatown staff regarding the Chinatown Branch renovation project.

Commission Discussion on Item 3

Commissioner Bolander asked whether 400 Randolph is the only remaining option for Ocean View if it falls through; Cunha clarified that renovating the existing branch or waiting for another site are the only theoretical fallbacks, but that 400 Randolph is the best and current active prospect, with \$41.5M set aside and the goal of building a new library commensurate with the equity needs of an underserved community. Commissioner Menon (referred to as Jones in the Chair's call) asked how Chinatown's design accounts for the library being 2 years away in a rapidly changing cultural landscape; Cunha emphasized flexibility as the key principle and described investments the team has made in visiting peer systems (Columbus, Ohio and Calgary Central Library) and attending Library Designs of the Future at Harvard. City Librarian Lambert added that the Chinatown Carnegie's historic character will be respected while expanding the community room, adding a rooftop space, and creating an art gallery — and that Ocean View will be the project to set a new standard for innovative library services. Commissioner Kennison asked Cunha directly where Commission support can make the greatest difference; Lambert responded that the most critical step is closing the 400 Randolph site acquisition, and that the Commission has already done its part by approving the budget. A notable announcement was made: Commissioner Jones arranged for Gensler (a world-renowned design firm) to assign its 15 summer interns to an SFPL project over 10 weeks, envisioning the future of the library — with a presentation to library leadership at the end. Commissioner Kennison suggested broadening the audience for that presentation.

Item 4 — Approval of April 18, 2026, Commission Meeting Minutes

Summary

Two members of the public commented on the April minutes, raising concerns about the characterization of a speaker's use of a racial slur and the adequacy and placement of citizen-written summaries required under San Francisco Administrative Code 67.16. Following public comment, the Commission voted to approve the minutes.

Corrections Requested

- Anonymous Citizen: Disputed the minutes' description of his April 16 comment as using "a racial epithet," insisting he was quoting an aphorism to make a contextual point, not using a slur. He also reiterated a long-standing dispute over the placement of his four citizen-written comment summaries (required under SF Admin Code 67.16), asserting they must be "included" in the minutes at the point of their utterance — not attached as disconnected addenda — and cited the word "shall" in the ordinance as mandatory.
- Peter Warfield (Library Users Association): Noted that the format of the April minutes had improved but remained insufficiently detailed, particularly in summarizing public comment. He cited April 2016 minutes as a better historical model and requested that his specific points — including court rulings on addictive social media design, examples of problematic library publicity practices, and concerns about patron privacy — be more accurately and completely captured.

Vote — Approval of April 18, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion from Commissioner Jones and second from Commissioner Bolander to approve the Minutes

Commissioner	Vote
President Calhoun	Aye
Vice President Jones	Aye
Commissioner Bolander	Aye
Commissioner Menon	Aye
Commissioner Kenaston	Aye

Result: Motion passed unanimously (5–0). April 18, 2026 meeting minutes approved.

Next Meeting

The next Commission meeting is June 18, 2026.

Adjournment

President Calhoun adjourned the meeting at 6:49 PM.

Addendum:

Public Comment submitted:

Hello,

I am unable to attend the meeting, but I would like to submit the following comment regarding the renovation of the Mission Branch Library. As a Mission resident, I understand that capital projects can face complications and delays. However, the branch has now been closed for nearly seven years, which seems like an extraordinarily long timeline for a renovation project, even accounting for pandemic-related disruptions. I appreciate the temporary branch location on Valencia, but the prolonged closure has limited access to an important neighborhood resource. In addition, project updates shared with the public have provided limited detail about the causes of the delays, and the anticipated reopening date has shifted multiple times over the past couple of years. Most recently, I understand reopening may not occur until fall of this year. I encourage the Library and City to do everything possible to complete the project promptly and to provide the community with clear updates on the remaining timeline and outstanding issues. Thank you for your consideration.

Michael LaBriola

Minutes prepared from recorded transcript. Subject to Commission approval.