

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Thursday, August 20, 2026 · 4:30 p.m.

Main Library, Koret Auditorium | Zoom ID: 935-703-2751 | Toll-free: 1-877-853-5247

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by President Calhoun. Margot Shaub, Commission Affairs Analyst, opened the meeting and announced the Zoom dial-in information. The Ramaytush Ohlone Land Acknowledgement was read into the record.

Commissioners Present: President Sean Calhoun; Vice President Jones; Commissioner Huang; Commissioner Lopez; Commissioner Bolander; Commissioner Menon.

Staff Present (partial list): Michael Lambert, City Librarian; Margot Shaub, Commission Affairs Analyst; Shellie Cocking, Chief of Collections and Technical Services; Alice Chan, Manager, Collection Development Office; Lori Talarico, Adult Engagement Coordinator; Mike Fernandez, Library CFO; Julianne Randolph, Small Business Librarian; Ileana Pulu, System-wide Youth Services Manager; Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Officer (departing); Michelle Jeffers, Chief of Community Programs and Partnerships (departing). Additional staff named by Michelle Jeffers in her remarks: Alejandro Gallegos, Maricela Leon Barrera (Digital Equity Manager), and others.

AGENDA

- Item 1 — General Public Comment
 - Item 2 — Discussion of Library Collections and Utilization Trends
 - Item 3 — Discussion of Library Book Clubs and Reading Programs
 - Item 4 — City Librarian's Report
 - Item 5 — Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the July 16, 2026 Commission Meeting Minutes
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ITEM 1 — GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

An Anonymous speaker opened with a statement opposing funding to or from the Friends of the Library and recited Percy Bysshe Shelley's 1818 sonnet "Ozymandias" and offered commentary on the poem's significance and spoke about "kindergarten wisdom": if you are nice to others, they will be nice to you; and you only win when everyone wins.

Peter Warfield, Library Users Association, P.O. Box 170544, San Francisco, CA 94117-0544; libraryusers2004@protonmail.com, said when he arrived at approximately 4:30 p.m., the meeting materials stated to be available at the back of the room were not present. He referenced a lawsuit filed by multiple state attorneys general, including California, against Meta. He cited a headline from the San Jose Mercury News: "Meta Hid the Truth," describing opening statements in which California accused Meta of studying "vulnerabilities in teens' brains" to hook children on Facebook and Instagram while concealing the harm.

Emily Garvey, Executive Director, Friends of the San Francisco Public Library provided a brief organizational update. She reported that Friends continues to raise funds for the Chinatown Branch renovation and has welcomed two new board members whom she looks forward to introducing to the Commission in coming months.

ITEM 2 — DISCUSSION OF LIBRARY COLLECTIONS AND UTILIZATION TRENDS

President Calhoun turned the meeting over to City Librarian Lambert, who reported that this fiscal year represents the fourth consecutive year the library set an all-time record for circulation. He introduced Shelly Cocking, Chief of Collections and Technical Services, joined by Alice Chan, Manager of the Collection Development Office. The two co-presented an overview of the library's collections workflow, circulation trends, digital collections strategy, cataloging and processing projects, collection maintenance, and preservation work.

Shellie Cocking described the division's selection-to-shelf process, noting its primary goal is to get materials onto shelves as close to publication date as possible. She highlighted the closure of longtime vendor Baker & Taylor in late 2025 as a significant operational challenge. SFPL is now beta-testing Collection HQ. Ms. Cocking reported that total library circulation has grown to nearly 15 million in FY26, with physical circulation nearly back to pre-pandemic levels and e-material demand nearly doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Alice Chan reported on digital collection initiatives. Following the closure of Baker & Taylor's eBook platform Boundless, the library migrated the entire Boundless collection to Hoopla and developed a new checkout model called Flex to reduce wait times, and partnered with Hoopla on a purchasing model called Instant Bundles, which allows bulk purchase of title checkouts at a discounted price.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said he appreciated the presentation and expressed concern that the "right-sizing" language used throughout the presentation implies a reduction in print materials and stated that he has not heard the library affirmatively confirm that reducing print is not a goal. He argued that the strong showing of print circulation over the past three to five years suggests print deserves at least as much investment as e-materials.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Menon asked how staff respond when trends spike quickly.

Cocking explained that staff runs Monday purchase alerts, generating a list of physical titles with more than three holds per copy owned; staff then evaluates how many additional copies to purchase. For

digital materials, automated carts are sent from various platforms and evaluates how many copies to purchase.

Menon asked how programs like the seed library and the radon detector collection originate and how the library publicizes its e-collections, including newspaper and database subscriptions.

Staff said the seed library arose from an individual librarian's personal passion at a branch and once it proved popular, it spread to other branches. The radon detector program originated when a notice came in from an employee at the California Department of Public Health's Indoor Radon Program, who approached the library and offered to supply detectors and programming

Cocking said new databases receive a major promotional push when they launch, and that the e-collections committee, run by Alice Chan, produces a monthly article in the library's newsletter featuring a specific database, timed to relevant programming.

Vice President Jones congratulated and thanked the staff for their work and asked what the exact circulation increase figure for Disney picture books following the series relabeling project.

Chan said the figure is 105%.

Jones said the result "was incredible" and characterized the relabeling work as a heroic staff effort aligned with the Vision 2030 goal of being patron-focused, particularly for young readers, and praised it as exemplary wayfinding and asked whether the GN format change planned for 2027 extends the same philosophy to other graphic novel categories beyond children's materials.

Cocking explained that fiction graphic novels had already been moved to a GN call number in the adult collection, and that the library already uses genre-based shelving for adults. The new approach will treat graphic novel as a format designation, applying GN to all graphic novels regardless of whether their content is fiction or nonfiction, so that all graphic novels can be shelved together.

Commissioner Lopez asked whether the children's circulation data can be broken down by age group, particularly curious whether audiobooks are checked out more by toddlers or older children.

Cocking explained that the catalog does not break circulation down by patron age, but that materials are cataloged in age-based categories: BB (board books for infants), GPS (picture books), Easy Readers, Decodable Readers (for beginning readers), JF (juvenile fiction/chapter books), and Teen, allowing some inference about age-group usage by looking at circulation within those categories.

President Calhoun asked if there are collection policies governing alternative format decisions.

Cocking said its based on what is available and in place and collection composition is relative to circulation, specifically whether the share of children's material in the physical collection corresponds to its share of circulation.

difficult.

ITEM 3 — DISCUSSION OF LIBRARY BOOK CLUBS AND READING PROGRAMS

City Librarian Lambert announced that the meeting includes the public reveal of the 2026 One City, One Book selection and introduced Lori Tallarico, Adult Engagement Coordinator, who presented an overview of SFPL's adult book club programming for the past fiscal year and concluded with the One City, One Book announcement. City Librarian Lambert noted that Commissioner Menon served on the 2026 One City, One Book selection committee.

Lori Tallarico said that while reading is often viewed as a solitary activity, SFPL has found that some of the most meaningful reading experiences happen in community through book clubs. She cited a 2025 Pew Research Center survey showing that 75% of U.S. adults read at least part of a book in the past year, but only 7% participated in a book club, a major opportunity for libraries. SFPL ran 334 individual book club programs this past fiscal year, including 31 active recurring book clubs across 22 locations, with a total attendance of 2,682 people. She said a Public Health article reported that 88% of adults surveyed agreed that libraries can help people experiencing isolation or loneliness, and that 75% identified reading groups as a way libraries can promote health and well-being. Tallarico described the range of formats SFPL offers: Virtual Book Clubs (53), accessible for people with mobility limitations or busy schedules; Silent Book Clubs (51), where members bring whatever they are currently reading, read together in community, and then have the option to discuss informally; International Language Book Clubs, which give patrons opportunities to discuss literature in their native or heritage language; Accessible Book Clubs (18), which use selections from the National Library Service and the Talking Book Library to give patrons who are blind, have low vision, or have print disabilities access to shared reading experiences; and Long-Form Article Clubs (6). SFPL participates on three citywide reading initiatives: One City, One Book (Dr. Fei-Fei Li's *The Worlds I See*; One Book, One Coast, a new regional partnership with libraries in California, Washington, and Oregon reading George Takei's *They Called Us Enemy*; and On the Same Page, SFPL's bi-monthly citywide read with approximately 5 titles per year chosen by a Reader's Advisory Committee.

Tallarico identified lessons learned from the past year including reading does not have to be solitary, and book clubs offer a low-barrier recurring reason to connect; recurring book clubs build sustained community more effectively than one-off events; different formats draw different patron groups and remove different barriers; and reaching underserved communities requires deliberate, targeted outreach beyond offering programs.

Tallarico concluded with the One City, One Book announcement for 2026: *Awake in the Floating City* by Susanna Kwan.

Public Comment

Peter Warfield said he appreciated the presentation, noting it encourages reading in various forms. He referenced the Surgeon General's report on the loneliness epidemic and noted that the Surgeon General's view is that heavy internet use is one of its causes, which is relevant to the discussion of book clubs as an antidote to isolation. Warfield said he has attended some events that he later understood may have been part of a library book club series, but that the Silent Book Club programs he has seen listed appeared to be at different locations on different dates, giving the impression of one-off events rather than a regular recurring series.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Bolander thanked Tallarico and asked about the Long-Form Article Club and if there are ideas for extending the format beyond general-interest long-form articles to technical papers.

Tallarico said the Long-Form Article Club originated with the librarian at the Magazine and Newspaper Center, and each month selects articles of approximately 1,000 words or more from publications like *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic*, and uses a specific question framework called Shared Inquiry to discuss the article.

Commissioner Menon said the experience of being on the selection committee for One City One Book was more intense than anticipated but it was rewarding. Menon asked how the library simplifies its

many offerings, communicates to the public what is available, and how staff decides what to keep and what to cull.

Tallarico said the key priorities are helping librarians categorize programs in ways that make them discoverable and giving programs clear, explanatory titles.

Commissioner Lopez thanked Tallarico, expressing particular appreciation for the attention being given to language book clubs, and noted the importance of growing those programs given the loneliness statistics cited in the presentation. Lopez said she hopes the library develops stronger ways to engage adults in those communities, citing the value of these programs as community-building venues for people.

President Calhoun said the presentation was adult-oriented and asked whether there is a world in which book club programming could extend earlier in the reading journey to teens or families and whether there are opportunities to align with work around the Youth Poet Laureate program.

Tallarico clarified that her presentation covered only adult community engagement and that additional programs exist beyond the data she presented, confirming the library does have a teen book clubs, including a middle grade graphic novel and a family book club.

ITEM 4 — DISCUSSION CITY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

FY27-28 Budget Update

Mike Fernandez, Library CFO, presented an update on the approved FY27 and FY28 budgets, describing the full two-year budget cycle from development through Board of Supervisors approval and trailing legislation. He reported that the library operates on a rolling two-year budget and is largely self-funded through the Library Preservation Fund (99% of total revenue, split between the general fund and property tax). The approved FY27 budget is approximately \$198 million; FY28 is the library's first official budget over \$200 million. Fernandez reported that labor makes up approximately two-thirds of the library's total budget, and approximately 11% is dedicated to collections, placing SFPL on par with peer urban libraries.

San Francisco Small Business Week

Julianne Randolph, Small Business Librarian, presented on the library's participation in San Francisco Small Business Week 2026. She said Small Business Week was established in 2004 by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and SFPL's Small Business Center has contributed programming to the week for five years and has served on the citywide planning committee for the past three years, giving the library a role in shaping the week's theme and direction. In 2026 the Library's contributed: 10 programs, 486 attendees, 10 community partners, 13 small business owners featured in panels and on the Small Business Stroll, and one small business owner engaged to lead a workshop for peer-to-peer learning.

Junior Giants Festival

Ileana Pulu, System-wide Youth Services Manager, reported on the library's participation in the San Francisco Junior Giants Festival at Oracle Park, the summer program is a free, non-competitive baseball and softball program for youth ages 5 to 18, hosted by the Giants Community Fund. Participants take

part in the Round the Bases Reading Program, which uses baseball as a motivational tool to encourage reading and build confidence. At the end of the summer, the festival is held at Oracle Park to celebrate achievements and SFPL participates by sharing books, signing up new library card holders, and distributing a curated book selection. In 2026, SFPL distributed over 7,000 books, signed up 250 new SFPL patrons, and participated in an event with a total reported attendance of 10,490.

Personnel Update: Maureen Singleton and Michelle Jeffers

City Librarian Lambert announced the simultaneous departure of two senior leaders at month's end. Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Officer, is leaving to accept the position of Deputy Director of Support Services at the San Francisco Department of Public Works. Michelle Jeffers, Chief of Community Programs and Partnerships, is retiring.

City Librarian Lambert described Maureen Singleton's contributions. She joined the library in 2005 as budget manager, later serving as CFO, and returned in 2011 after a period at Public Works, for a total of 19 years in three roles at SFPL. He said she took on the role of Acting Chief Operating Officer in spring 2018 at his request, during a pivotal leadership transition following the retirement of longtime City Librarian Luis Herrera and has since delivered through major challenges. He highlighted her leadership of support services divisions through the COVID-19 pandemic overseeing PPE procurement, deployment of staff as disaster service workers, and facilities operations and her instrumental role in building the business case for renewal of the Library Preservation Fund. He described her greatest accomplishment as elevating the support divisions, HR, Finance, IT, Facilities, Research, Strategy, and Analytics, as collaborative partners with the public-facing side of the library.

Maureen Singleton then offered brief remarks, sharing that she grew up as a latchkey kid using the West Portal Branch Library as a safe haven, that her mother was a hospice nurse whose example of service to others shaped her career choice, and that in 19 years across three roles she feels her soul has been fed by the work and the people.

City Librarian Lambert said Michelle Jeffers' joined SFPL 18 years ago as Public Relations Officer, a role she entered as a former journalist, and rose to lead the newly created division of Community Programs and Partnerships bringing together youth services and adult programming, which had previously been organizationally siloed. Under her leadership, programming volume increased by 59% and now draws approximately half a million visitors annually to library programs. Career highlights cited include the first Drag Queen Storytime in a public library (2015), multiple John Cotton Dana Awards, multiple California Library Association PR Excellence Awards, National Library of the Year honors in 2018, elevating the Jail and Reentry Services Unit as a national model, the Night of Ideas, Summer Stride, One City One Book, and coordinating the city's first-ever citywide day of service in partnership with the Mayor's Office.

Michelle Jeffers thanked commissioners for their leadership, their insightful questions, and their bravery on issues such as intellectual freedom and banned books; she also thanked City Librarian Lambert, Dolly Goyal, Maureen Singleton, and her broader team.

Public Comment

Marciel Gamino offered remarks praising Maureen Singleton and described meeting Maureen at a budget presentation in the early 2000s and forming an immediate impression of sharpness and attention to detail, she also described their current experience scheduling for the City Librarian as a window into Maureen's demanding schedule. The speaker praised Maureen's work ethic, pragmatism, and calm demeanor under pressure, and said Public Works is gaining an incredible leader. Gamino described Michelle Jeffers as a "five-foot-tall powerhouse" and when first paired with Michelle in a

leadership cohort had initially planned to mentor the newer employee, only to find the roles completely reversed as Michelle became the mentor. The speaker described Michelle as having made SFPL warm, vibrant, and welcoming, and for having a gift for seeing people's strengths before they recognize them in themselves.

Peter Warfield thanked Maureen Singleton and Michelle Jeffers personally for the good and helpful times, and for their willingness to share their deep knowledge of how the library works. He wished both well in their next chapters. He asked if the next budget planning cycle includes specific efforts and resources aimed at improving public access to the library's assets.

Alejandro Gallegos said Michelle Jeffers impact on the team and their spirit is immeasurable. He praised her for bringing joy into the busiest days, for creativity that shaped projects, programs, spaces, and thinking, and for guiding the team through challenging times, including the beginning of COVID, with a steady hand. He praised her for holding a balance of deep knowledge and genuine curiosity, always encouraging the team to learn more and try new things, and for decision-making rooted in compassion, clarity, and commitment to community with a huge dose of city know-how. He concluded by wishing Michelle joy in her next chapter and expressing that she will be deeply missed.

Maricela Leon Barrera, Digital Equity Manager at the Bridge at Main Library said she is a San Francisco native for whom the library's contributions to the city feel personal. She thanked Maureen Singleton for her fiscal leadership and her presentation skills, which have consistently given a clear and positive picture of where the library stands. She thanked Michelle Jeffers for her role in inspiring Leon Barrera to join CPP in 2016 because of the division's culture of innovation and willingness to explore new ideas about what library service can be. She expressed gratitude for Michelle's trust in her colleagues' professionalism and for being an advocate for the team even during difficult times.

Ileana Pulu expressed awe at Maureen's ability to make budget figures comprehensible and recalled attending coffee chats when Maureen was head of Finance and expressed appreciation for the time Maureen made available. Ileana described an early experience as a teen services librarian, in which a call from a reporter prompted a panic call to Michelle, who was then the PR officer, to talk her through how to handle the interview. Pulu described this as an very small point of Michelle's day that she nevertheless addressed with full care, giving her the courage to call the reporter back, do the interview, and earn a small blurb in the San Francisco Examiner about their first public program and that Michelle's compassion shaped the team and countless individuals at the library.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Lopez described both Maureen and Michelle as her Wonder Women of the Library and expressed that becoming a commissioner during the pandemic, when all meetings were on Zoom, made Maureen's patient explanations of the budget particularly valuable, it took several conversations with Maureen to understand the budget and that she feels she is finally getting it. She thanked Michelle for making everything at Night of Ideas and other events seem easy, and that Michelle's reports always included humor that made them memorable, expressed feeling honored to have worked with both for her six years as a commissioner, and thanked Michelle for involving her in the Poet Laureate selection and wished both the best on their new paths.

Commissioner Huang, said serving on the Commission, and the one line that captures his experience is that it has been a genuine pleasure to watch both Maureen and Michelle do their work over those eight years. He credited Maureen with providing the organizational stability and diligence that has allowed

the library to continue doing good things even in an increasingly difficult and expensive fiscal environment. He said Michelle has continuously found ways to redefine what a library is — even as fiscal flexibility narrows — and that if someone had named the types of things SFPL does ten years ago and today, the lists would look completely different, entirely because of the creativity and resourcefulness Michelle brought to community partnerships and programming. Huang said he is looking forward to discovering what the next version of SFPL will look like.

Commissioner Menon described feeling honored to have known both Maureen and Michelle for only a short time yet feeling profoundly changed by their work and their example. The Commissioner praised Maureen for her operational excellence, saying it is reflected in every part of all the branches. Menon said, saying they have always been astounded, both as a San Francisco resident and as a commissioner by what the library can be and do, and described meeting Michelle as the person behind it all. The commissioner expressed gratitude for everything Michelle has done to create community and joy.

Vice President Jones said Michelle is magnetic and that quality transcends into her work and Maureen as an intelligent powerhouse, quieter than Michelle but with enormous intellectual horsepower and loved the dynamic conversations they have been able to have with her. Jones expressed appreciation for the stability Maureen has brought to the organization and noted that long careers of the kind both women have had at SFPL are increasingly rare and reflect genuine commitment and loyalty. In the spirit of books, the commissioner said the current chapter has been amazing and expressed excitement to see what the next chapter holds for both of them.

Commissioner Bolander said they do not know how to follow what everyone else has said but expressed that working with both Michelle and Maureen has been an honor. The commissioner said he was a tech professional who came onto the Commission with no background in government, and both Maureen and Michelle fundamentally opened their eyes to what service means. The commissioner said they now defend the library and the city whenever anyone is critical of government and expressed gratitude for that shift in perspective. The commissioner asked both not to be strangers.

President Calhoun said this is why they became a librarian and expressed pride in what Maureen and Michelle have accomplished, everything they have done is in service of the city and the people who live here. The commissioner reflected that it is rare to spend a relatively short amount of time with two people and yet be so deeply and profoundly changed by their example and their work. The commissioner closed by thanking both and saying the library has been very lucky.

ITEM 5 — DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE JULY 16, 2026 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Public Comment

Anonymous Citizen opened with an anti-Friends-of-the-Library statement. The speaker raised four specific objections to the July 16, 2026 draft minutes saying the introduction read by the Commission Affairs Analyst informing the public that it is illegal for commissioners to respond to public comment, which the speaker argued history should record, that the minutes represent only a distorted account of Peter Warfield's public comment, and represent only a portion of Jason Gibbs' comment, and that AI scrambled the commissioners' discussion section for the social services presentation, and raised an

objection about a separate addendum document attached to the minutes containing speaker summaries the speaker had submitted.

Peter Warfield said agreed with the previous speaker's observations. He raised the specific issue that every time he speaks, he provides contact information for the Library Users Association and that the draft minutes, where previously they had included that contact information once, now include it zero times. He argued that omitting it is contrary to the library's stated purpose of connecting people and communities, and limits the ability of people not present to learn how to reach the association. He also stated he had said more in his general public comment than the draft minutes reflect, including more about what he characterized as the minutes' role in suppressing public criticism and censoring information. He said New York Governor paused construction of AI-focused data centers, and is an example of serious problems with AI that the Commission does not appear willing to discuss or mention in the context of library internet access and computing services.

Commission Discussion and Action

Motion: Commissioner **Huang** moved to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2026, Commission meeting. Commissioner **Lopez** seconded the motion.

AYES: President Calhoun; Vice President Jones; Commissioner Huang; Commissioner Lopez; Commissioner Bolander; Commissioner Menon

The July 16, 2026 Commission meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

7:14 PM the meeting was adjourned.

ADDENDUM FOLLOWS

Minutes prepared from the official audio recording transcript (WEBVTT format). Where a speaker's name and role were not stated in the transcript, the speaker is described as "Unidentified Commissioner" or "Unidentified Staff Member." The minutes reflect only information that is expressly stated or clearly identifiable in the transcript. Where the transcript was unclear or a word was unintelligible, the relevant passage is omitted.

ADDENDUM

Under Administrative Code section 67.16 of the Sunshine Ordinance, any person who spoke during public comment at a meeting of a Charter board or commission may supply a brief written summary of the comments to be included in the minutes if it is 150 words or less. The summary is not part of the Commission's official minutes, and the Commission does not vouch for its accuracy.

Anonymous Public Comment Submission

Item 1: General Public Comment

Stop the Hate, Stop the Ignorance - Don't give money to the Friends of the Library. Don't accept money from the Friends of the Library. I hope to make two points today, presented in reverse from the natural order to provide context. First, a justly famous poem, a sonnet, progressing from the quotidian to a profound perspective on the human condition via a quotation within a quotation. . . . Two vast and trunkless legs of stone Stand in the desert. ... "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" ... Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away. There are two principles of "kindergarten wisdom." First, "If you are nice to others, they will be nice to you." And "You only really win when everyone wins."

Item 4: Approval of Minutes of July 16, 2016

Stop the Hate, Stop the Ignorance - Don't give money to Friends of the Library. Don't accept money from Friends of the Library. That you allowed your Affairs Analyst to tell you it's illegal to respond to public comment should be noted for history. Mr. Warfield and Dr. Gibbs spoke for three minutes and these minutes distort the first one minute, 10 seconds. Artificial Intelligence scrambled Commissioners' discussion of Social Services presentation. Bolander's statement is completely omitted, subsequent comments are mistakenly ascribed. No human looked at these minutes. Did you decide a separate document entitled "Addendum" containing speaker's summaries is legal? Should we assume you have illegal secret meetings, or that you are mute zombies, passively accepting anything? You exercise no judgment because you don't want to be aware of your blatantly illegal actions. You have no opinions, competence, or professionalism, because you pay no attention to what you are doing.