



**South Pasadena Public Library
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
May 12, 2022**

CONVENE:

Vice President Bianca Richards called the regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees of the South Pasadena Public Library to order in the Library Conference Room on May 12, 2022 at 7:02 p.m. Members of the public attended virtually, via Zoom, as part of the City's in-person/hybrid resumption of in-person meetings.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Trustees Present

Kenneth Gross
Annie Chang Long
Bianca Richards

Also Present

Cathy Billings, Library Director
Diana Mahmud, Council Liaison
Ellen Torres, Friends Board President
Brendan Durrett, Former Measure L Committee
Chair
Sally Kilby, Member of the Public
Sean Faye, Administrative Secretary

EXCUSED: President Dean Serwin
Trustee F.J. Pratt

PRESENTATIONS:

1. None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

2. None

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

3. Review and approve draft minutes of the regular meeting held April 14, 2022

Motion by Library Board Trustee Kenneth Gross, seconded by Library Board Secretary Annie Chang Long, to approve the minutes as written for the regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees held April 14, 2022.

AYES:	Gross, Long, Richards
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Pratt, Serwin
ABSTAIN:	None

4. Parcel Tax Renewal

The Board discussed whether they should recommend to City Council that the Parcel Tax be renewed in perpetuity (until terminated by the voters), or for a set amount of time. Staff made the recommendation that the Board consider recommending a term of 5-7 years. This more conservative approach reflects the concern that voters might have reservations about a “permanent” tax given the rising inflation rates, the likelihood of recession in the coming years, and the economic uncertainties due to the pandemic and the socio-political situation. Director Billings explained that a suggestion was made by the City Attorney to hire a firm to analyze how similar measures fare state-wide in the June 7, 2022 election, in order to use that analysis to inform our recommendation for the terms of renewal. Staff felt that what happens in other communities might not be indicative of how South Pasadena voters would vote on a question of funding library services. Other indicators that could help predict how the tax will fare are the fact that previous passage of this tax has always been very high, and the Library ranked as very popular in the City’s Strategic Plan.

Vice President Bianca Richards suggested the renewal should be framed as a cost-saving measure. Trustee Kenneth Gross thought the renewal was more likely to pass if it was for a limited time. There is a financial cost to put the measure on the ballot, as well as a tremendous effort from the committee. The Library relies on this revenue source.

Former Library Board Trustee and Measure L Committee Chair Brendan Durrett made a public comment. He expressed concern about the initiative to end evergreen taxes that may be on the ballot. It was his opinion to be cautious and recommend to renew the Parcel Tax for 7 years. The main objective is to get it passed.

Councilmember Diana Mahmud recommended adding a proviso to the measure that asks for the tax to be passed in perpetuity, but defaults to 8 years if the ban on evergreen taxes passes.

Friends Board Representative Sally Kilby appeared as a member of the public. She commented that she supports renewing the tax in perpetuity, but understands the complications created by the bill to end evergreen taxes. The tax is not a significant amount but the accumulation of demands for the City are taking money away from places like the Library.

A Special Meeting was proposed to focus on the Parcel Tax renewal.

Motion by Library Board Secretary Annie Chang Long, seconded by Library Board Vice President Bianca Richards, to continue the discussion of the Parcel Tax renewal at a Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees. All Approved.

[Brendan Durrett left the Library Board of Trustees meeting at 7:38 p.m.]

5. Strategic Planning Consultant

After a final round of interviews, the Strategic Plan Subcommittee chose BerryDunn to be the Library’s Strategic Plan Consultant. BerryDunn’s representative Susan Kent made a strong impression. Her ability to be physically present gave reassurance that she would be able to guide the process well. Library staff that reviewed proposals and participated in interviews appreciated BerryDunn’s emphasis on taking local needs into consideration and learning about the community, rather than focusing on comparisons to other libraries.

6. Library Operations Study/Strategic Plan 2017-2022 Status Update

The Board discussed the status of recommendations from the 2016 Library Operations Study and the 2017-2022 Library Strategic Plan. Some items were rejected by staff as not viable. Other recommendations are listed as stalled due to the lack of funds or physical space. More programming, including local history as well as

more diverse programming, is in process. This information will be reviewed as part of developing the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

7. LBT Accomplishments and Work Plan

The Library Board of Trustees' Work Plan will transition from a calendar year cycle to a fiscal year cycle in order to better align with the City's Strategic Plan. Many policies need to be updated.

This topic will also be discussed at the Special Meeting to prepare for the 6/22/22 Commissioner Congress.

Motion by Library Board Secretary Annie Chang Long, seconded by Library Board Trustee Kenneth Gross, to continue the discussion of the Library Board of Trustees Work Plan to be held at the same Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees where the Parcel Tax Renewal will be discussed. All Approved.

8. Library Operations Update

The Library did not receive the Tournament of Roses grant to review the Library's collection for diversity. The Library may pursue this on its own. Library Director Cathy Billings will review the grants offered from the Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts and the South Pasadena Rotary Club.

Staff are working on bookmarks or a handout that will provide tools for parents to broach conversations with their children about diversity issues in literature.

Digital Services Librarian Cynthia Mitchem has resigned for another opportunity. A recruitment for this position will be posted soon.

The Citywide Reading Program Selection Committee has been established.

The Library Open House is scheduled for 6/1/22 from 2-4 p.m.

A virtual author visit with Hazel Newlevant has been scheduled for Pride Month.

Attendance has increased since the Library expanded its hours, but is not near its pre-COVID levels. The in-person Summer Reading Program should provide a boost. Outdoor programming continues to attract large groups. Library cards have continued to be issued at an increased rate.

COMMUNICATIONS:

9. Board President (Dean Serwin): President Dean Serwin was not present.

10. Board Members: Secretary Annie Chang Long thanked Library Director Billings and Library staff for what was accomplished from the 2016 Library Operations Study and 2017-2022 Library Strategic Plan.

Trustee Kenneth Gross thought the process to select a Strategic Planning consultant went smoothly.

Vice President Richards replied to an earlier question about entrepreneurship by quoting the 2016 Library Operations Study.

11. Council Liaison (Councilmember Diana Mahmud): Councilmember Diana Mahmud had nothing to add.

12. Friends of the Library Representative (Friends Board President Ellen Torres): Yuki Cutcheon spoke to the Friends about the Library's co-partnership with the South Pasadena Chinese-American Club for the upcoming screening of the award-winning documentary "Far East Deep South."

Jericho Road accepted the Friends' application. Their first project will be updating the Friends website.

Friends Board President Ellen Torres submitted a grant application on behalf of the Friends to the Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts.

Four members of the Friends will attend the 5/19/22 Serving With a Purpose conference in Ontario, CA.

The Friends voted to give \$2K, 5% of their operating budget, to the Measure L campaign.

The Friends have 172 members. Last month yielded \$1,348. They have \$18,190 in membership fees. Reminder postcards will be sent to those that have not renewed yet. The Trustees were encouraged to join the Friends.

There has been good press coverage for all volunteer events.

Director Billings was honored as South Pasadena "Woman of the Year." The article on the Friends website generated a lot of attention.

The Communications team has been working to improve signage for the Last Chance books and the Friends Bookstore.

Sally Kilby has overseen many good articles about Friends events that have been covered in the local papers media.

The Friends monthly newsletter continues to do well, with a 54% open rate.

The Friends Bookstore will celebrate its 40th anniversary in July with an event on the Library grounds.

Book donations are down. Sally Kilby has reached out to the media for more donations.

It has been determined that the Steinway piano that belongs to the Restoration Concert Committee needs to be replaced. Another Steinway piano was rented for the Restoration Concerts on 5/8/22 and 5/22/22. Attendance for their concerts this season have gone down. The Restoration Committee will review its plans for the next season.

13. Trustee Liaison to Friends (Bianca Richards): Vice President Richards also encouraged the Trustees to join the Friends.

14. Library Director (Cathy Billings): Director Billings shared a memo from the City Clerk's office stating that Advisory Body meetings will return to being held in-person. The City will conduct hybrid meetings to allow for the public to participate, however all commissioners and board members must attend in person to participate. If an Advisory Body member wishes to attend remotely, they must abide by specific Brown Act teleconferencing requirements. A quorum of the Advisory Body must participate from the location within the City's jurisdiction. Each teleconference location must be listed in the agenda. Agendas must be posted at every teleconference location. Each teleconference location must be accessible to the public. Councilmember Mahmud said the City is still covered under the governor's emergency order, which is due to expire at the end of June. Director Billings will seek clarification.

NEW BUSINESS:

NEXT MEETING: There will be a Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees in the next two weeks. The date has not been decided yet. It will take place in the Ray Bradbury Conference Room.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees will be on Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Ray Bradbury Conference Room and by video conference for the public via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT: Vice President Bianca Richards adjourned the regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees on May 12, 2022 at 8:37 p.m.

Minutes approved _____ as written.

Minutes approved _____ as corrected.

DEAN SERWIN

President

5/26/2022

Date