



CITY OF RICHMOND  
LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAIN LIBRARY  
via Zoom  
July 1, 2021  
6:30 p.m.

**CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) ADVISORY**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Contra Costa County and Governor Gavin Newsom had issued multiple orders requiring sheltering in place, social distancing, and reduction of person-to-person contact. Accordingly, Governor Newsom had issued executive orders that allowed cities to hold public meetings via teleconferencing (Executive Order N-29-20). Due to the shelter in place orders, participation in the Library Commission was by teleconference only. Public comment was confined to items appearing on the agenda and was limited to the method provided in the agenda.

**Library Commission Members:**

David Duer, Chairperson; Cordell Hindler; Adrian Ratcliff; and Mimi Vitetta (w/one vacancy)  
Eduardo Martinez, City Council Member Liaison

- 1) **Call to Order:** Chairperson David Duer called the regular meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
  
- 2) **Roll Call**  
  
**Present:** David Duer, Chairperson; Cordell Hindler, and Mimi Vitetta  
**Absent:** Adrian Ratcliff  
  
**Staff:** LaShonda White, Interim Library and Community Services Director  
Jane Pratt, Interim Library Director  
Lisa Carter, Executive Secretary, Richmond Public Library Administration  
Christopher Larsen, Adult Services Librarian
  
- 3) **Welcome and Meeting Procedures:** Chairperson Duer identified the meeting procedures.
  
- 4) **Agenda Review**  
  
Chairperson Duer advised of his desire to make some comments about the Department Reports later on the agenda.
  
- 5) **Open Forum**  
  
Commissioner Hindler expressed his pleasure that the Library had now been able to reopen after being closed for over a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6) **Approval of Minutes**

a. Approval of March 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Hindler, seconded by Commissioner Vitetta to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021 meeting, as submitted. Motion passed by Duer, Hindler, and Vitetta. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Ratcliff.

7) **Department Reports For Information:** The following reports were received and filed.

- a. Library Services
- b. Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP)
- c. Circulation Statistics
- d. RPL Newsletters

Chairperson Duer referred to the Library Highlights from May and June from Wylendia Eastman, Administrative Librarian, and characterized what the Library had been able to accomplish during the last two months as incredible. In particular, he commended the community engagement activities guided by Catherine Ortiz, Adult Services Librarian; the Infopeople course attended by Christopher Larsen, Adult Services Librarian on cultivating civility in libraries, and working with Susan White and Deborah Bonet, Children Services Librarians' on two grant proposals for the Richmond Department of Children and Youth; Janelle Van Hook, Mobile Services Librarian's creation and launch of the Children's Summer Reading Challenge on Beanstack; Angela Cox, Teen Services Librarian on the video series *Your Future, Your Choice: Life after High School*, and the connections with the Friends of the Richmond Public Library and the *Dollars for Scholars* scholarship program.

Chairperson Duer also commended Sheila Dickinson, Children Services Librarian's on-line summer reading program, and Susan White, Children Services Librarian's work to find community partners and programs to take advantage of the generous grants offered by the Department of Children and Youth, and her statement that Library staff had been so pleased that the Library had reopened on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to allow more direct interaction with the patrons of the Library.

Chairperson Duer also pointed out a number of upcoming events and added that Abigail Sims-Evelyn, Literacy Program Manager's report on the LEAP program had identified in-person GED testing and other community engagement, including working with the Economic Justice Action Team to explore ways to support each other, and that LEAP had collaborated with the Richmond Rescue Mission to provide literacy services to the homeless currently living at the mission. He described everything that had been accomplished as breathtaking and wanted to make the City Council more aware of the value the Library offered to the diverse Richmond community from children to seniors. He thanked all those involved for all that was being done to make the Library a more vibrant and engaging place moving out of the pandemic.

8) **Presentations, Discussions and Action Items**

a. **INTRODUCTION of Interim Library and Community Services Director**

Interim Library Director Jane Pratt introduced LaShonda White, the new Interim Library and Community Services Director.

LaShonda White, a Richmond native, stated it was an honor to serve in the position and to work with the Library and LEAP staff as well as those of the other departments under the Community Services Department umbrella. She too commended Library staff for all the work that had been accomplished during a difficult period of time.

Commissioner Hindler asked whether additional positions would be added to the Library and Ms. White explained that the Department would continue to work with the resources the City Council had recently adopted.

The Library Commission welcomed Ms. White.

b. **INTRODUCTION of Guest Attendees**

Chairperson Duer introduced the guests attending the current meeting who were being considered as potential candidates for the Library Commission. He introduced Marcela Jaimes, Oliver Pollak, and Risa King. Each introduced themselves and their interest in the Richmond Public Library and the Library Commission.

c. **DISCUSSION: Role of Library Commissioners – Continued**

Chairperson Duer referred to what had been included in the meeting packet related to reviews of other Library Commissions and recommended that the Library look more broadly at how the Commission could interact. He expressed his desire to engage more with the Friends of the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Public Library Foundation, and stated the Library Commission could do more to engage and benefit the community.

Commissioner Vitetta referred to the Richmond Grows Seeds Lending Library and the fact the Richmond Public Library was a seed give-away location as an example of a way to engage the community. She wanted to encourage similar programs.

Commissioner Hindler noted that the Library Commission was to advise the City Council on things that pertained to the Library, and offered examples of what the Commission could do in that regard. He suggested that the condition of the Library and the Library meeting room could be updated and improved to better engage the public and the public's use of the facilities.

Ms. Pratt agreed that the Library was underutilized and there should be ways to better promote the Library and engage the Library Commission in that process.

d. **DISCUSSION: Upcoming changes in Commission membership/interim plans if Council appointments not made by July 1<sup>st</sup> - Continued**

Chairperson Duer noted that he and Commissioners Hindler and Ratcliff would be terming off the Library Commission and four new Commissioners were expected to replace them.

Ms. Pratt described the membership process and noted the City Council would be in recess during the month of August. As such, she suggested it might be September before new Commissioners could be appointed.

Chairperson Duer commented that the current members of the Commission due to term out could remain on the Commission for 90 days or until replaced.

e. **DISCUSSION/ACTION: Rescheduling Meeting Dates**

Ms. Pratt explained that the new recommended meeting day, the first Thursday of every month, conflicted with the meetings of the Richmond Public Library Foundation and she expressed a desire to change the day of the week as a result, which would be further discussed.

9) **Items of Interest to the Commission and Announcements**

a. **Director's Report**

Ms. Pratt presented her Director's Report and stated the Library had reopened for in-person services, initially with limited hours, and the reopening had gone extremely well since people had missed the Library and Library staff had missed the people. Hiring for part-time positions was ongoing and until some of the part-time positions had been filled it would be difficult to expand the hours of operation. Patrons were still required to wear masks inside the Library and with few exceptions there had been no problems associated with that mandate. The Tableside service program had been terminated given that the Library was again open to the public.

Ms. Pratt highlighted the Wi-Fi Hotspots and Laptop Lending programs and the donation from the California State Library where 10 Chromebooks and seven more hotspots had been added to the Library's electronic lending collection, which were regularly checked out. She reported that the Library Foundation's speaker series would be included on the Library's website. She added that two applications had been written for Department of Children and Youth grants related to an onsite tutoring program and a series of enrichment programs.

Commissioner Hindler announced the Contra Costa Mayors Conference on August 5<sup>th</sup>, in person, with the location yet to be determined; the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Labor Workers Union dinner on September 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Craneway Pavilion; and reported he had attended over 20 conference calls in the last two months.

10) **Agenda Setting for Next Meeting and Future Topics**

The next meeting of the Library Commission would be on Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Commissioner Hindler identified possible topics for the next meeting, to continue the discussion related to the City's reorganization chart, an update on the elimination of library fines, and his intent to invite the Chair of the Youth Council to that meeting.

Chairperson Duer thanked the three potential Library Commission candidates for attending the meeting.

11) **Adjournment:** Chairperson Duer adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:35 p.m. Motion passed by Duer, Hindler, and Vitetta. Noes: None. Absent: Ratcliff.