



# *San Francisco Public Library*

**DRAFT**

## **SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMISSION**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting of MARCH 16, 2023**

The San Francisco Public Library Commission held a regular meeting on **MARCH 16, 2023**, virtually and at the Koret Auditorium, Main Library.

The regular meeting of the San Francisco Library Commission was called to order at **4:30 PM.**

Commissioners Present: Wolf, Huang, Bolander, Lomax Ghirarduzzi, López, Mall and Ono.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mary Harris, President OMI In Action said she is lobbying for renewed support for a new Ocean View Library and investment in the community to have a new Library, it is a valuable resource that they desperately need as they have outgrown the current Library.

Anne Marie Nowach, Secretary OMI Neighbors in Action, said she wanted to stress how important the Ocean View Library is to its community and to let them have the Library as agreed.

Glenn Rogers said he is a Landscape Architect and the transportation is primarily the biggest problem with that site, Orizaba Street is too narrow for the Ocean View Branch project and the side street is too long, it will create a bottleneck.

Frederick Galton, said he would like to see the Ocean View branch be built as soon as possible, there are a lot of children in the neighborhood and they would like them to be served properly by the Library.

George Wooling, said he was here to talk about Brotherhood Way, which is owned by DPW and is a 4-lane promenade and is a Greenbelt. He said he was concerned once you build the library there would be additional new development. The Greenbelt should be kept, there should be some greenery and open space in that part of town.

Peter Warfield, Executive Director Library Users Association, [Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com](mailto:Libraryusers2004@yahoo.com) said he wants better libraries for

everyone, for people who visit and work at them. He said the Library could do more to make it better known all the excellent quality materials it has for news and other ideas.

EJ Jones said they were a 4<sup>th</sup> generation resident of Lakeview and a new library has been promised since they were a child, and a library is the cornerstone of community and the community wants to see it move forward.

Public Commenter said they support the library, which has to be big enough for people to come after school. They have seen all ages come to the library and it is a safe haven in a neighborhood, it also should have a community room.

Renard Munroe said they were an OMI homeowner and the Executive Director of Youth First and the President of Invest Black and the afterschool and summer program has utilized the small library for the past 20 plus years. They said the community is underserved and needs this library, which they are excited about.

Detje Boler said they are a longtime patron of the library, and it is the base of our community and civilization. She said she wanted to speak for the books because that is what the library is about and it is the Library's responsibility to take care of the books.

Keith Richardson said they support this Library, it was the pillar of their education and serves the community by bringing older and younger people together.

Public Commenter said they are a senior and they don't use the internet for library services and there are lapses in services provided to San Franciscans who are not internet users and until recently the library sent out paper overdue notices and hold notices, recently they had overdue items and did not receive a notice.

Ruth McGinnis worked for the library for 40 years and when they entered library service, staff had no way to convey needs and preferences about scheduling. She said Cathy Bremer was a librarian's librarian, she helped people and she was extraordinary, fun, and smart.

Al Harris, former Commissioner doesn't want to keep waiting for this library and asked that they get busy on the new library.

Richard, a member of Ingleside community, said the library is part of them and the neighborhood and he hopes they don't tear down the current library.

Johanna Lopez, co-founder We Are OMI, said like parks and green spaces libraries are public goods and they are strongly aligned with the need for a library like the one they have been promised, building this new library should be prioritized.

Laura Pea, speaking on behalf of their children asked what the holdup is and requested the library hold a meeting to update the community on its status of the new library being built.

Roberto said they support building a new library in the Lakeview OMI neighborhood and requests it be

made a priority.

Tiffany Eng, with the Chinese Press Association, expressed support for continued investment in OMI Library and that the Library Commission ensure it is a priority.

Della Fitzpatrick, Chair OMI Community Collaborative said they have been waiting for this a long time and doesn't understand what the hold-up is, the community needs more safe spaces.

Mary Evelyn Thomas said they have been in Lakeview since the second grade and the library was a refuge they need in their community.

Maurice Rivers said they live across from the original building and the community needs this library, they've been advocating for many years and library is like a church, it is a refuge.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2023**

#### Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the minutes are particularly political and the Library demonstrates its lack of ability to listen and report what people say and has omissions.

#### Commission Discussion

**Motion:** By Commissioner **Lopez** seconded by Commissioner **Mall** to approve the February 2, 2023 Minutes.

**Action:** AYES 7-0 (Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lomax Ghirarduzzi, López, and Bolander)

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 RESOLUTION DISCOVER and GO SKATE RINK**

Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Office said she is a City Representative Director on the Board of the Civic Center Community Benefit District and, based on the advice from the City Attorney, recused herself while this item is under consideration and a Commission vote.

Michelle Jeffers, Chief of Program and Partnerships gave background about the Library's Discover and Go program. SFPL started its own museum pass program in 2009, in partnership with the Department of Children Youth and Families. The Discover and Go system had more attractions and it was easier to check out passes, so SFPL closed its museum program and provided all of its attractions to Discover and Go to administer. Last fall, the Library was approached by the Mayor's Office, Civic Center and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to look at the idea of a Roller Skate Rink, which the Library could have tickets, at no charge, for Discover and Go families to attend for free instead of paying \$15 for adults and \$13 for youth tickets.

Mike Fernandez, Chief Financial Officer explained why the Library Commission needs to approve a retroactive resolution to grant funding to the Civic Center Benefit District for Discover and Go passes to the SanFran Disco

Civic Center Skate rink. Fernandez said the Library joined the Skate Rink pilot project after it started and it is set to end at the end of March. There is not enough time to go through a competitive bidding process, which would take several months and the Rink would be closed by that time. Fernandez said staff recommends Commission approval of the resolution to award a sole source grant of \$20,000 to the Civic Center Community Benefits District for up to 250 family passes per month for San Francisco Residents and families.

#### Public Comment

Peter Warfield said he did not want to stop anybody from enjoying roller skating but he does have problems. The Library's wonderful slogan starts out with key elements free and equal access, and the roller rink has a \$40 ticket, which could be used by two people in a family but it might just be one person who wants it and now it has a restriction, you have to be a San Francisco resident and the tickets the Library has through Event Bright and other ways favor technologically connected.

#### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Mall said this would have been a great project for The Friends to support and she is supportive of it.

Michelle Jeffers said the Friends pay for the Library's Discover and Go membership.

Commissioner Ono said she appreciates the Library being forthright about this and doing the right thing to be a part of it.

**Motion:** By Commissioner **Mall** seconded by Commissioner **Ono** to approve the Resolution.

**Action:** AYES 7-0 (Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lomax Ghirarduzzi, López, and Bolander)

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 PUBLIC SERVICES MIDYEAR TRENDS**

Randy McClure, Chief Analytics Officer, gave an overview on key Library public services trends and metrics. McClure said the first seven months of FY23 showed a 17% increase in library visits compared to FY22, circulation is over one million in five of the last seven months and programming has increased by 90% in FY23 compared to the last 6 months of FY22.

#### Public Comment

Peter Warfield said the hours are not restored to the pre-COVID hours, evening hours are chopped in basically all of the branches, you can't go to a branch after 8 and it has implications for programs and people to access books. He said he is concerned with how the Library measures circulation of electronic books.

## Commission Discussion

Commissioner Bolander thanked Library staff for the new Presentation PowerPoint template. Bolander said he was curious, from a historical point of view, does the Library see seasonality.

McClure said there is a lot of seasonality in the data and since the Library just got to full reopening in October 2022, year to year comparison is tricky. Now that we are five months into fully being reopened it will start to be more comparable.

Commissioner Lopez asked how the Library was doing in terms of new members joining and getting library cards, she said she would like that information in a future presentation.

McClure said the Library gathers new registrants and there was a bump out of the Night of Ideas event. McClure said they look at users over three years and, if we back up three years, we are at the beginning of COVID, shutting our doors and there was a drop in users, as many went away. Overall, it has narrowed a bit but the Library continues to be active in signing new people up and he will bring those statistics to a future commission meeting.

President Wolf asked what the goal is and what does success look like. Wolf said it would be interesting to know where the cardholders live and determine in what the card holder percentages are in the branches, how we might put resources towards those communities.

City Librarian Lambert said because the world has changed, and how people engage and consume information, people's behavior did change and the disruption that was already occurring in the Library Industry accelerated during COVID. Lambert said circulation was 2/3 physical and 1/3 Digital and it is now 50/50 and we recovered about 61% of foot traffic, because our staff worked hard to restore library services and hours of operation, the entire city is grappling with population loss and people now working remotely. The Library is making efforts to look at communities that did not come back as fully and doing outreach to them.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 CITY LIBRARIAN'S REPORT**

Shellie Cocking, Chief of Collections and Technical Services gave an overview of the installation of the new Treasure Island Book Kiosk. Cocking said the Kiosk is located in the Island Cove Market, which is a community Hub and the Kiosk expands service to the Island to seven days, it holds up to 200 books, for all ages, and is serviced by Bookmobile staff during its weekly visits to Treasure Island.

City Librarian Michael Lambert presented the Drumbeats, Heartbeats: Communities as One event, which was held in the Koret Auditorium to celebrate the intersection of Lunar New Year and Black History Month. Lambert said the Library partnered with the Human Rights Commission and the San Francisco Asian Pacific Foundation on this program, which Mayor Breed kicked off and he thanked The Friends for their generous funding of headliner Ruby Ibarra.

Michelle Jeffers and Kate Patterson gave a report on Night of Ideas 2023, which was back at the Main Library on March 4, 2023 from 7 PM-1 AM. Kate thanked partners KQED, the French Consulate & Villa Albertine, SFMOMA and Newcomer Circuit Network. Jeffers said this year's theme was More? and more than 100 presenters

participated and 4345 people attended. Poet Laureate Tongo Eisen-Martin and Assessor-Recorder Joaquin Torres keynote addresses were standing room only. A new Small Business Marketplace was introduced this year on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and was extremely busy.

City Librarian Michael Lambert introduced Dolly Goyal, who serves in the new role of Library Chief of Public Services, he said she brings more than fifteen years of experience working in some of the Bay Area's most innovative Libraries, most recently she served as the assistant City Librarian for the Santa Clara City Library and served as California Library Association President.

Dolly Goyal, Chief of Public Services thanked Michael for the introduction and the Commission for supporting her appointment. Goyal said the leadership team has been very welcoming and she is excited to be part of this fantastic and dynamic institution.

#### Public Comment

Peter Warfield said it is always good know what sorts of programs are happening and how they are working. He asked if the Treasure Island Book Kiosk books are what people requested, 200 books are not a lot of selection and Night of Ideas publicity was almost exclusively online and that was disappointing.

Marie Ciepiela, Executive Director of Friends of the San Francisco Library, welcomed Dolly and thanked everyone for the Night of Ideas. Ciepiela said it was a total blast and they were really happy to be there, she reiterated how amazing Library staff was and that there has not been a major event in the Library in so long and she appreciated all the effort and staff's calm support.

Public Commenter asked how the Treasure Island Book Kiosk worked and is it possible for people to have a choice and access to the entire collection.

#### Commission Discussion

Commissioner Lopez asked how the Kiosk works, how people return books, can they take them back to the Library or does the Kiosk take them back and how many books can you take out.

Cocking said you can put books back in the Kiosk and it will check it in or return it to any one of the branches. The limit of books you can check out is like any other location, 100 books at time, and if that was the case, she would get a notice and be able to replenish quickly. The Bookmobile goes out and restocks the Kiosk but you cannot put a hold on a book in this type of Kiosk.

Commissioner Lopez asked if programs like Drumbeats Heartbeats Community As One can be travelling programs.

City Librarian Lambert said that is great feedback and something the Library will explore.

Maureen Singleton acknowledged the IT and AV staff for the amazing support and work they did for Night of Ideas.

President Wolf said she attended all of the events presented and that it was an incredible gift to participate, and although she was an early skeptic of the Kiosk, she attended the Kiosk opening and was happy to be proven wrong about it. Wolf asked for a follow-up report with data on how the Kiosk is working. Wolf said Night of Ideas was a brilliant evening and hoped Drumbeats would stay at the Main because it's wonderful when people come here.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 ADJOURNMENT OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2023 COMMISSION MEETING**

City Librarian Lambert gave a remembrance of Cathy Bremer, former SFPL Library Manager, noting her 31-year service to the Library, which started in 1980. Lambert said that among her many accomplishments she was recognized for Excellence in 1987, with then Mayor Dianne Feinstein and her support for Library workers as a Labor Activist was exceptional and was beloved by her colleagues.

#### **Public Comment**

Betty Williams said she was a former staff member of the San Francisco Public Library, and happily retired, and worked with Cathy in her capacity as a Union Representative and Cathy really helped her find her voice. Williams said she used to marvel at Cathy and making sure we had everything we needed and everything we deserved. Cathy was relentless and she was a hoot. She said she really enjoyed being around her and appreciated Cathy being recognized this evening.

Peter Warfield said he knew Cathy Bremer for a fair amount of her stay here and everything everyone has said is true from his experience. She had a spirt and the value and importance of the Library and having it run well for everybody involved, whether it was patrons or anyone that worked here, she cared about management and she was spirited. She brought in a gang of Library workers with wooden spoons which they waved at Library Commission Meetings after a Library Commission President complained about Library workers being pot-stirrers.

Eileen said she is a retired Librarian and proud to be a spoon carrying pot stirrer with Cathy and several other people in the room. She said Cathy was her role model and she has fond memories of her and thanked the Commission for recognizing her.

Marciel said that she started at the Library in 2004 and that is when she met Cathy, who was a force to be reckoned with. Cathy cared so much about the Library and Library staff. Marciel said Cathy was a mentor, what she did for Labor was inspiring and she is the reason Marciel became an officer with SEIU 1021. Marciel said Cathy was a great colleague and an all-around lovely person.

Public Commenter said she was not a close friend of Cathy's but came because she was so remarkable. When Cathy was a Librarian at the Presidio Branch, she was a presence and she admired her.

Andrea Grimes, said she was a colleague and a friend of the wonderful Cathy Bremer, who was a remarkable human being. Cathy was part of the San Francisco Library system since 1980 serving in Main Library and Branches and was their valiant leader, involved in the many efforts to improve working conditions at SFPL. She was the bright light in so much of their lives and work, at every turn standing up and speaking the truth to power

wherever whenever it was needed. Cathy reminded the Library Commission of the importance and worth of Library workers and brought about a stronger SFPL and Union Chapter. She said Cathy was a character and had strength of character, it is painful and joyful to remember their escapades and all of the good times.

#### Commission Discussion

President Wolf thanked the people who spoke on behalf of Cathy Bremer, she said it was inspiring and the Commission is delighted to know about her legacy and that it continues and the work she did really still remains a foundation of how staff is treated and the work ethic they bring to their job each and every day.

Commissioner Ono said she met Cathy Bremer and she was an amazing force, a good leader and she had a good heart.

Commissioner Lomax-Ghirarduzzi said it was good to see some of the members that have retired and it is really beautiful to acknowledge a colleague in the way they have.

**Motion:** By Commissioner **Lomax Ghirarduzzi**, seconded by **Commissioner Ono** to adjourn the meeting in memory of Cathy Bremer.

**Action:** AYES 7-0 (Wolf, Huang, Ono, Mall, Lomax Ghirarduzzi, López, and Bolander)

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 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, 6<sup>th</sup> 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-notices/agendas](http://sfpl.org/library-commission/public-notices/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).



**From:** [San Francisco Public Library](#)  
**To:** [Commission.info](#)  
**Subject:** Webform submission from: Contact Library Commission  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 15, 2023 10:10:49 AM

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Submitted on Wed, 03/15/2023 - 10:10

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**Name**

Sadako Kashiwagi

**Subject**

Commission Meeting March 16, 2023

**Email**

Privacy

**Comments**

Regretfully, I am unable to attend tomorrow's meeting to honor the memory of Cathy Bremer in person. She was a staunch supporter of library staff. She was loyal, fair, hard-working, caring and compassionate. It is fitting that we acknowledge her many contributions to San Francisco Public Library by adjourning this meeting in her memory.

THOMAS I HAVEY

Privacy

SAN FRANCISCO, Privacy

February 5, 2023

Mr. Michael Lambert  
City Librarian  
San Francisco Public Library  
100 Larkin Street  
San Francisco CA 94102-4733

Hello Mr. Lambert:

This is to contact you about a matter I believe to be relevant to public safety in addition to being obviously relevant to library rules for patrons to follow.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of an email message sent to me by one of your staff members at the North Beach branch of the SFPL. It should seem straightforward to you on the face of it. However, I know otherwise, i.e. that it omits even more important information. Please let me explain.

This email concerns an incident taking place during the afternoon of Sunday, January 15, between about 4:35pm and about 4:40pm. I arrived at about 4:30 pm in hope of using one of the public computers before the automatic shut-off at 4:45pm. I saw a couple of open seats in the row along the opposite side of the long wall facing the staff counter area on the first floor. These spaces were on either side of a patron already seated at the second station from the left, so I sat at the first station on the left, thus with no one sitting to my left and with a clear path to the printer on the other side of the wall.

After signing into the computer and finding on my flash drive several documents I wanted to print, the patron sitting to my immediate right began a phone call using his cell/smart phone. With the relatively tight seating between computer stations, I found this rather annoying especially with the sound of his voice so close to my right ear. I waived my hand and got his attention then said that this was distracting to me. I do not remember what little he said before going back to his call, so I thought it best to avoid a possible altercation and instead went to ask library staff if using such a phone in the library was permitted.

The actual response I got was that using such a phone is permitted but talking on it is not. Then I explained the situation but the response I got from one of two staff members hearing my question was a question as to whether the call was bothering me. I thought surprising that she would ask such a question, as if I would complain about something only for the sake of such, but thought it best to say only that yes it was bothersome. Then finally one of them followed me back to where I was sitting and witnessed for herself what, fortunately for me, was some continued conversation by the patron in question. Therefore, this served as proof of my complaint yet, on the other hand, she took no action and walked away, apparently only when the patron had finished his call.

Then, after she left, the patron turned to me called me a 'punk ass \_\_\_' and told me to go sit elsewhere. My immediate instinct was that he might strike me so I got up and immediately walked back to the staff counter area without noticing if he said anything else.

I considered this to be some kind of threat that might lead to violence so I reported it to the same staff member who had witnessed the phone call and asked to speak to the manager. Her response was that the manager was not in so I asked to speak with whoever was in charge (as an aside: how the SFPL be open

to the public and not have one person, even if not a 'manager', in charge?). It seemed that she was trying to brush off my follow up complaint. Then she walked to a back room and started talking with someone else. So I waived my hand to get this other person's attention and she came out and listened to what I had to say. But she did not walk over to the computer area to speak with the patron in question.

Then I went back to where I had been sitting and continued with what I was trying to do all along, in the remaining minutes before computer shut down. I got to thinking that maybe she had judged the matter to be potentially dangerous to her and co-workers. However, in such case then should she not have made a discreet call to SFPD? I think so; although I also am aware that incoming calls there are prioritized as to importance and thus police officers may not have been able to respond quickly enough before the patron departed. Still, could not a police report be made at the earliest practical opportunity, perhaps the next day of library open hours (the next day was the Martin Luther King holiday).

It also was surprising that the patron in question stayed as long as he did, even passing in front of me on his way to the restroom as I waited to use the printer. Then I mentioned this to the staff member who earlier had come out from the back room to speak with me (Elise Hochhalter, Adult Services Librarian) who responded that she had not seen the earlier incident but would make out an incident report as soon as time permitted, as she had to attend to closing procedures. She also gave me her card and, in response my question, offered to provide the ID #s (note: never did so) of the two other staff members I had contacted earlier. I in turn wrote down my name on a sheet of paper she gave me, added my library card #, and returned such to another staff member. The way I left it with her was that I would wait to receive the incident report, with the other staff ID #s, in the mail. Then I exited the building, by then about 4:55pm.

FYI, this is the first incident of threatening behavior I have experienced at this particular branch although I remember a worse situation at the New Main branch where I have gone many times over the years although not much in recent years after the new North Beach branch opened. I was surprised to become a victim of actual battery while again using a public computer (lower level) when a disturbed person at a table somewhere behind me, entirely unprovoked, threw a book that hit me in the head before departing quickly. I reported the matter to police on duty there who unfortunately were too late to stop him but at least took a report. I trust that, if of interest to you, the report is available from SFPD upon your request.

Anyway, by now the mere annoyance of the other patron's phone call seems less important in relation to the subsequent verbal response and the minimal responses on the part of library staff. It seems to me that, all too often, matters that actually result in violent outbursts often follow some kind of clues if not actual warnings given in advance. And such should alert someone to intervene, whether or not using formal 'de-escalation techniques'. This latest incident might not have escalated to violence of some kind, in any case. But, on the other hand, I have not forgotten the advice given by a police officer at Central Station many years ago - that threats made from strangers should be taken seriously, not brushed off as bluffs.

While I do not pretend to understand well the causes of violence, or what realistically will reduce it significantly, I do think that a situation like that I am reporting now should have been taken seriously by library staff even if actually the patron in question was bluffing. And, in any case, a staff member witnessed a patron breaking a rule yet did not intervene at all. Instead, staff seemed to view all of this as just another nuisance on just another day at SFPL. So now, I am referring the matter to you with a suggestion to request a copy of the incident report and compare the details of such with those in this letter.

Sincerely,

*Thomas J. Gray*

**Privacy**

**From:** [San Francisco Public Library](#)  
**To:** [Commission.info](#)  
**Subject:** Webform submission from: Contact Commission form  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 3:47:38 PM

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Submitted on Mon, 03/13/2023 - 15:47

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**Name**

Judy Beck

**Subject**

Tribute to Cathy Bremer

# Privacy

Just sending a message in remembrance of and tribute to Cathy Bremer, the witty warrior for justice and equity both in the Library's interface with the San Francisco community and internally, fighting for and alongside her Library coworker sisters and brothers for workplace fairness and high institutional standards.

Judy Beck - SFPL retiree

**From:** [San Francisco Public Library](#)  
**To:** [Commission.info](#)  
**Subject:** Webform submission from: Contact Library Commission  
**Date:** Saturday, March 11, 2023 8:50:13 PM

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Submitted on Sat, 03/11/2023 - 20:49

Submitted by: Anonymous

Submitted values are:

**Name**

Deetje Boler

**Subject**

Cathy Bremer

**Address**

Privacy

**Email**

Privacy

**Comments**

Who am I to say that Cathy was a treasure in the holds of our San Francisco Public Library and a very special human being? She filled a special place in my heart which will now be empty. We can only say thanks for all that she has done for us all with her work and for her too-short presence among us. She will be missed.