

**Community & Library Services
Commission
Wednesday, April 10, 2024
6:00 PM – Regular Meeting
Minutes**



**City of Huntington Beach
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648
City Council Chambers**

STAFF:

ASHLEY WYSOCKI, Director

Community & Library Services

CHRIS COLE, Manager, Facilities & Dev.

Community & Library Services

CHARLENE GOMEZ, Sr. Admin. Assistant

Community & Library Services

AUSTIN EDELL, Chair

LOLLY MCHARDY, Vice-Chair

CEASON BAKER, Commissioner

LISA-LANE BARNES, Commissioner

LAURA COSTELLOE, Commissioner

DR. RICHARD HARRISON, Commissioner

TARYN PALUMBO, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Edsell called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm, at which time a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Commissioner Harrison

ROLL CALL

Baker, Barnes (excused), Costelloe, Edsell, Harrison, McHardy, Palumbo

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Diane Bentley, 23-year resident, spoke in opposition to the book review board and privatization of the City's libraries.

Barbara Snider, 40-year resident and former librarian, said she was opposed to privatization of the library system and the relocation of books. Ms. Snider provided background on who a librarian is and what they do.

Mark Currie is opposed to the library issues and the update of Measure C. Mr. Currie also announced that Edison Park would be turning 50 years old, and the neighbors were holding a celebratory event on April 27.

Tim Geddes, 40-year resident, spoke regarding the height of the new play equipment at Seely Park, saying that users of the equipment could peer into neighbor's homes.

Mary Ann Celinder spoke in opposition to privatization of the library and the Parent/Guardian Review Board, saying that she felt there were still too many questions to move forward.

Andrew Einhorn, 40-year resident, spoke in support of keeping the library system as is. Mr. Einhorn expressed his feeling of opposition on privatization and unqualified individuals reviewing books and concluded that there was a system already in place.

Barbara Shapiro, spoke in opposition to privatization. Ms. Shapiro felt that a local church was responsible for the proposed changes at the library.

Bethany Webb, 40-year resident, spoke regarding the definition of book banning, and expressed that guns were a bigger threat to children than books.

Cathey Rider, long-time resident, spoke of her use of the libraries. Additionally, she raised questions and concerns regarding the current library programs, the monthly newsletter, and the teen center, if privatized. Ms. Ryder asked how those items would be managed moving forward with the RFP.

Pablo Aspas, 50-year resident and user of the City's Library, spoke in opposition to changes at the libraries. Mr. Aspas expressed that only \$27 in taxes go to support the library, which he felt was hardly enough to buy a meal. Mr. Aspas listed some of the services that the public received for their \$27 in annual property tax.

Wendy Rincon stated that she sits outside of Central Library and reads banned books and was in support of professional librarians. Ms. Rincon asked how the City plans to pay for books distributed to the 21-member Parent/Guardian Board, and if the books are rejected, where would they go? Ms. Rincon continued her comments on the budget for the books, the stoppage of volunteerism at the libraries, and urged Commission to recommend that City Council not move forward with their proposed actions.

Faith Vogel, past Library Board Member and Community & Library Services Commissioner, spoke regarding her positive experience as a Library Board Member and Commissioner. She described the role of a Commissioner, which was to make recommendations to City Council as an advisory body. Ms. Vogel said citizens were concerned and needed the Commission to be their voice.

Lu Marock spoke in opposition to the library items and asked how Commission would stop what is happening.

Nora Pedersen spoke in opposition of privatizing the library and the implementation of a book review board.

Elaine Bauer Keeley, 60-year volunteer, offered Commission assistance with how to keep the libraries public. Mrs. Keeley spoke of Norma Gibbs and her mother, Charlene Bauer, as community pioneers and starters of the Friends of the Library. Mrs. Keeley offered to help educate Commission and Council on the history of the libraries and Huntington Beach governance.

Shammy D. spoke on the definition of "banning", saying it means restricting something. She expressed her feelings that cuts would be less than saving and suggested that the non-profit groups that support the library system, were not able to volunteer for a for-profit business.

Debra Jubinsky, 35-year resident, 24-year staff member, and Management Employee Organization President, provided her opinion on the library issues, stating that moving forward would cause a loss of quality in library staffing and services. Ms. Jubinsky urged Commission to advocate to keep the library public and in-house.

Christopher Rini spoke in opposition to the privatization of the library system and requested that Commission look into the Parent/Guardian Review Board resolution, which he felt had been poorly written.

Russell Neal spoke in support of the Parent/Guardian Review Board to remove books with sexual content from the libraries. Mr. Neal was in favor of and felt it was City Council's obligation to look at cost savings by issuing an RFP for privatization.

George Washington was in support of City Council direction.

Lindsay Klick, 20-year resident, agreed with the Mayor that parents were the best guardians, however, was opposed to removal of the teen section at the library. Ms. Klick felt that the library system was already very lean by utilizing volunteers, and therefore, was opposed to privatization.

Ned Lazaro spoke in opposition to privatization, specifically at Oak View Branch Library, where he acts as a literacy program volunteer. Mr. Lazaro said the branch runs with 2 full-time staff and 10 volunteers.

Libby provided the duties of the Commission as an advisory board to City Council, and stated that the community would lose services, programs, and expertise of the professional librarians. Libby asked why the library items were not discussed at Commission previously. She urged Commissioners to live up to their mission and ask Council to rescind the new ordinance and RFP.

Gretchen Erickson, long time resident, employee, and Chief Shop Steward for Huntington Beach Municipal Teamsters said that the union requested public records from City Council regarding the library issues on March 7, but has yet to receive anything. Ms. Erickson spoke in opposition of the RFP, privatizing, and in support of the customer service provided by current library staff. She asked Commission to support library staff during Library Week.

Natalie Moser, resident, and City Council Member, spoke in support of Library Week and the libraries in general. Ms. Moser is opposed to the Parent/Guardian Book Review Board and felt that privatizing was troubling for the community, and risked programs and services. As a City Council Member, Ms. Moser stated that Council should be focusing on improving infrastructure, budgeting, and homelessness. She asked Commissioners to consider sending an advisory letter to City Council in support the library.

Paula Schaefer, 30-year resident, library patron, and voter, asked why this item was being conducted as a study session after the fact. Ms. Schaefer commented on the approval process of the Book Review Board before issues could be addressed. Ms. Schaefer was also opposed to the privatization of the library system and asked Commissioners to please advise City Council on these matters.

David Rynerson spoke on books, parental oversight being unnecessary, and the award-winning services provided by the City's library system.

Harry McLachlan spoke against the privatization RFP and the Parent/Guardian Book Review Board and asked that City Council table the items in order to review them further. Mr. McLachlan stated that the community as a whole and some City Council Members are against the item, and asked Commissioners to do the right thing.

Michelle Roesner stated that she sent a supplemental communication to Commissioners with links to important information, data, and statistics regarding LS&S. She said that Council should review these links as well, as they go against everything the Mayor was attempting to address with the proposed changes.

Tom Ferk spoke in opposition to the library changes and asked why the City would give something away for free. Mr. Ferk felt that the proposed changes were morally and fiscally wrong.

Buzz McCord stated that he had sent a supplemental communication to Commission of cited facts regarding the library. Mr. McCord said he felt the library was fiscally sound, spending less than Newport Beach, a much smaller library system. Mr. McCord provided various statistics on visits, spending, standard operating practices for removal of books, and stated that the City's library system has only received 5 content complaints out of 5 million books.

Valentina Bankhead spoke in support of the Council's library items. Ms. Bankhead stated that librarians should be fired, and inappropriate books moved.

Gina Clayton-Tarvin provided her background with the school district, and spoke in support of qualified, professional librarians. Ms. Clayton-Tarvin felt that privatizing the library system was City Council's attempt to union bust and suggested that fire and police would be next. She further stated that the school districts would not ban books.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Request approval of the February 7, 2024, meeting minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Palumbo moved to approve the minutes as written with Vice Chair McHardy seconding the motion.

AYE: Costelloe, Edsell, Harrison, McHardy, Palumbo

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Baker

ABSENT: Barnes

PRESENTATION

Introduction of Dan Faltz, Sr. Supervisor, Huntington Beach Art Center – Wysocki introduced Dan Faltz providing his background. Wysocki said Faltz was currently working on his second master's degree. Faltz provided an Art Center presentation on why the arts are so importance and updates on recent events. Faltz provided statistics and programs

since he had taken the helm, in addition to information on the current exhibition, *Rasquachismo*, and read the artist's statement. The exhibition opening hosted 200+ visitors and runs through June 1, 2024. Art for Lunch is scheduled for April 25. He said there would also be an artist lecture associated with his exhibition. Upcoming this summer is Surf City Art Exhibit and Art Camp, followed by the 100 Years of Surrealism exhibition and Family Arts Day in the fall. Commissioner Baker asked what "resistance" meant in the *Rasquachismo* artist's statement. Faltz could not speak for the artist but said it may possibly refer to discrimination the artist had experienced.

STUDY SESSION

Summary of City Council Actions Related to Huntington Beach Public Library:

A. Resolution 2023-41 and Ordinance No. 4318 – Community Parent-Guardian Review

Board – Wysocki said that at the February Commission meeting, staff received a request for a study session on the library issues. She provided background on Resolution 2023-41, which was approved by City Council at the June 20, 2023, Council meeting, directing the City Manager to work with the City Attorney to return to Council at a study session in September 2023, with options to establish safeguards to prevent minor access to age-inappropriate, and/or sexually explicit materials in City libraries. Further, on September 4, 2023, City Council redirected staff to return to Council on October 17, 2023, with actionable policy options regarding City library materials and safeguards.

At the October 17, 2023 study session, items provided included research, data analysis, current and proposed library policies and card types, and updated marketing materials. At the Council meeting on that same date, City Council adopted Resolution 2023-41 establishing a policy for review and re-cataloging library material containing sexual content.

Wysocki said that on February 14, 2024, acting in good faith, staff re-cataloged/moved books with sexual content. Since that time, no other books have been moved.

Wysocki continued by providing background information on Ordinance 4381, relating to the Community Parent-Guardian Review Board, which would review procured children's library materials. This Ordinance was adopted on April 2, 2024, and is scheduled for codification on May 2, 2024. The Ordinance included information on definitions for children, children's books, community standards, sexual content and sexual reference, the Board's purpose, composition, funding and duties.

B. Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Managed Library Services –

The City received a proposal from a company to manage library services. Upon review of the proposal, the City saw that there were other such companies in the managed

services industry and felt it should issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) in fairness. Staff took the item to City Council at their March 19, 2024 meeting, requesting authorization to issue an RFP for managed library services and to meet and confer with affected labor associations, which City Council approved with a majority vote. Wysocki described the process issuing an RFP and proposal submittal process. Staff was currently working on developing the RFP.

Commissioner Costelloe thanked everyone who provided communication. Costelloe stated that she had requested the library item be agendaized for the March meeting, but no meeting was held in March. Commissioner Costelloe expressed her thoughts on the timing of the RFP and said it felt vengeful. She continued to speak on the needs of teens and expressed her concerns on the sensibility of the book review process, and others making decisions about what her children read. Commissioner Costelloe had questions on how much money in grants would be lost, the Friends of Library volunteers, the Makers Space, and other programming, She stated that the value of volunteers cannot be quantified, and she was confused on how money would be saved.

Palumbo provided concerns as well and provided her feelings on the parent-guardian review concept. Commissioner Palumbo had such questions as, who came up with standards, definitions, criteria for sexual content? Who are the people on the advisory committee and why would they be more qualified than she was as the child's parent? She stated that as a commissioner it was her duty to advise City Council on these types of matters. She also commented on the number of supplemental communications and public comments that had been received.

Chair Edsell asked if privatization was only for operations Yes - the RFP would cover library operations. Any 3rd party operations would remain under the 3rd party operator's purview.

He asked if donations could still be received if the library were outsourced. Discussion ensued on whether donations could be received by the contractor of the managed library services, whether volunteers could continue to support services at the library, education requirements for any third-party staffing, and if these types of specifications could be added to the RFP. Chair Edsell also asked if staff would be hired, and if so, would their pay remain the same. Wysocki said the City may be able to accept the donations and there are other opportunities for volunteers, and yes, specification could be added to the RFP for any items the City requires. Regarding staffing and pay, Wysocki was unsure.

Chair Edsell continued with questions about the newsletter and whether the private company would continue the practice of providing a newsletter. Wysocki said that the newsletter is 100% the library's public outreach. Additionally, he asked if the teen section

had been dismantled, Wysocki replied that the sign had been removed to discourage teens from going into the that section. Chair Edsell asked about the procurement of books and stated he would like to see how that is done. He asked if the books to be reviewed were only children's books and would library staff remain in charge of procuring the books, in addition to questions on the process. Wysocki said that children's books were what was in the code, and yes, library staff would continue to procure books. Edsell asked about the purchasing process. Wysocki said that staff was working to determine board functionality before the 30-day waiting period. Chair Edsell inquired about the library's annual budget increase. Wysocki responded that it had not been increased in the last 5 years.

Commissioner Palumbo respectfully asked to clarify that teens were discouraged from accessing the teen section. Wysocki said that the teen section was more text heavy, so the sign was removed in good faith. Unintended consequences were to discourage teens from using a section intended for their use.

Regarding the RFP, Commissioner Costelloe asked, if privatized, why would the City need a book review committee if the new company would determine what goes into the library. Wysocki replied that both processes were currently active through City Council direction. Commissioner Costelloe asked that the City include a 2-year opt-out into any privatized contract due to the experiences of other cities who had tried to terminate their contracts.

Questions and Commissioner comments continued. Some questions included: Would the committee create the standards and policies for the definition of a teen or child? Does the City Attorney create the criteria? How are library cards differentiated and what stops a child from using an older sibling's card?

Discussions ensued on the legality of donations to the city from a non-profit, whether the donation would have to go elsewhere or if it could go directly to the library. Discussion also included conversations about the vendor contracts within the Library, such as the Veterans' Resource Center and Orange County California Genealogical Society.

Commissioner Baker stated that she felt education did not matter for those on the book review committee, any more than it does for a Commissioner to sit on the Commission. Commissioner Baker felt that those who attended this meeting did not represent the majority of the community.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS - None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. **CIP Review & Project Updates:**

- a. **Trinidad Park** – Cole reported that Trinidad Park was next on the list for playground equipment replacement, which would take place on April 15, 2024, and should be completed by May 19. The upgrade would include replacing the sand with rubberized surfacing.
- b. **Seely Playground Re-opening recap** – A re-opening event took place on March 28, 2024, for the new playground equipment at Seely Park. The event was well attended.
- c. **Giesler Park Re-opening** – Cole reported that the re-opening of Giesler Park should take place by the end of April.

2. **Charter Section 612 (Measure C) Community Meeting Update** – Cole reported that the City was seeking input from citizens on Charter Section 612, also known as Measure C. The first meeting was held on March 18, 2024, with 46 people in attendance. The second meeting is scheduled for May 29, 2024. He also announced that a survey was currently active, and that a poster was on site with a QR code link.

3. **Calendar of Events**

a. Jubilee Events

- i. **Edison Park** – Cole said Edison Park would be celebrating its 50th anniversary with a display and a community clean up in the month of April. The event scheduled for April 27th is a neighborhood event, not a City sponsored event.
- ii. **Lake Park Log Cabin** – Would be celebrating its 100-year anniversary with a pancake breakfast event co-hosted by the Lions Club and Boy Scout Troop 1 on April 20th. The event would be a fundraiser to help with building repairs. Tours of the log cabin would take place from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.
- iii. **May Events** – Some events in Huntington Central Park include gardening events and activities at Shipley Nature Center.
- iv. **Huntington Central Park 50th Jubilee Celebration** – Cole announced that there would be a large celebration on June 15, 2024, at the Senior Center in Central Park. He said that the event would honor those who had help make Central Park the gem that it was today. Cole asked that if Commissioners knew of anyone that should be invited to the event, please send contact information to Gomez.

STAFF ITEMS – Not Agendized

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

COMMENTS – Not Agendized

Chair Edsell announced that April 20, 2024, as a day for volunteering and said there would be 40 locations throughout the City where volunteer projects would take place.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Edsell adjourned the meeting at 8:46 pm.