

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH
MINUTES OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING**

Monday, January 12, 2026

4:00 PM

Location: City Council Chamber, City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue and Zoom
Teleconference by Commissioner Levitt (public Café Cornell University Tech Campus, 2
West Loop Rd, New York, New York)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Braitman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

B. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

C. ROLL CALL

Present (6): Commissioners Crabtree-Kampe, Doll, Ferris, Levitt (remote), Vice Chair Chou, Chair Braitman

Absent: (1) Commissioner Cullen

Others Present: Parks and Recreation Director Mark Leyman, Acting Senior Recreation Supervisor Michelle Ami; Senior Management Analyst (SMA) Linda Robb, Recording Secretary Rosemary Lackow

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 10, 2025

It was moved and seconded (Crabtree-Kampe/Chou) to approve as submitted. Motion carried by roll-call vote: Ayes: 6 total: Doll, Crabtree-Kampe, Ferris, Levitt (remote), Vice Chair Chou, Chair Braitman; Absent: 1: Cullen

E. LIBRARIAN’S REPORT

Library Manager Cassandra Sargent presented library statistics for all of 2025, and as compared to 2024, via a PowerPoint.

Summary: 2025	
Total program attendance	10,508
Total circulation (check-outs)	209, 401
Most visitor – door count	15,706 (March)
Most active - programming	July (37 programs/1,523 attendees)

Compared to 2024 there were increases in most categories: number of programs, circulation (highest increase, 10.8 %) and study room bookings and decreases in two categories: door count (- 3.4%) and library cards issued (-8.2 %).

Manager Sargent highlighted: March '25 had most visitors (door count), while July was busiest for programs (37). The second half of the year typically sees drops in the door count due to vacations, school schedules, and holidays. While the door count in 2025 was a little less, the number of items circulated increased. Notably in 2025 there were a number of closures, including one week in September due to an HVAC problem, and in December a couple of days when new furniture was installed and Christmas Eve due to heavy rain.

Manager Sargent emphasized the robust level and highlighted creative programming for all age

levels (author events, several crafts, and several others. Upcoming programs can be reviewed on the library website: <https://lacountylibrary.org/location/manhattan-beach-library/>

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Braitman invited public comments; none received either in person or remote.

G. GENERAL BUSINESS

2. 2024/2025 Work Plan Discussion

a. Library Needs Assessment (Braitman, Doll, Levitt) Chair Braitman updated that a Design Workshop #2 follow-up “brainstorming” meeting was held December 3 and related materials have been emailed to all commissioners. He also noted that in November the community survey was re-opened for two weeks for the school district community and the results have confirmed earlier survey results.

The Commission discussed; Commissioner Levitt pointed out that much benchmarking information was provided but she found that some data was misleading i.e. the cost to run the Manhattan Beach branch compared to other county libraries appeared very high because the annual \$800,000 bond payment was included, and when this was taken out, the Manhattan Beach operating costs were more or less in line with other libraries. As to assessing community needs, she felt the consensus from the community was that more library programming was desired and to accomplish this, more staff, more space, and more parking is needed. Towards more space, the suggestion was to explore ways to better use existing space, both indoors and outdoors (perhaps a pergola can be erected in the outdoor area?). It was suggested that the city explore if the surplus can be used to fund more structured parking. It was confirmed that an east side new library facility is no longer a consideration.

Commissioner Doll expressed concern as to whether the community, in stating more programming is needed, is actually not aware of the high level of programming already occurring.

Commissioner Chou agreed, with concern that the survey was not structured in a way to gain understanding as to identifying the gap that the surplus should fill. For example: should “x” more programs be added, or should more funding go towards advertising the existing programs? Commissioner Doll emphasized her primary concern is for accurate survey results that will inform funding decisions.

Commissioner Levitt pointed out that while the needs assessment project is a work in progress, at this point the community brainstorming input phase is ending and concerns of the Commission will need to be communicated to city council. The Commission discussed current outreach methods and brainstormed further regarding ways to further “get the word out” about library programs and resources to the community. Commissioner Ferris confirmed parents regularly receive Peachjar flyers sent by the library but she has not noticed library information included. A suggestion was made to email a link to upcoming programs to all attendees who have made reservations for a speaker event.

Commissioner Levitt shared a page from the needs assessment draft report (from a meeting slide deck) graphically showing amount of programming per age category (adults, teens, children) from 2014 to 2025. Manager Sargent commented that the library staff feels there is a discrepancy with the data for number of programs run which needs further review.

b. Speaker Series (Commissioners Braitman, Chou, Levitt) Chair Braitman confirmed that the County has chosen Julia Quinn (*Bridgerton* book/Netflix series) for the spring Manhattan Beach speaker series. The date is May 23 in the Mira Costa auditorium. It was discussed that more teen attendance is desired; this can be encouraged through routine communications between the library and school district and, with school approval, possibly through announcements at Mira Costa and library promotional events. Manager Sargent stated that the library is in contact with both Commissioner Cullen and school district's Public Information Officer.

c. Library Appreciation Events (Commissioners Cullen, Ferris) Commissioner Ferris noted that Commissioner Cullen is reaching out to obtain dates. Commissioner Ferris will reach out to Chair Braitman and Commissioner Levitt for guidance. The City will look into whether certificates will be given to the school librarians; it was suggested that signed copies of the spring author speaker (Julia Quinn) could be given to librarians (purchased by the city from pages bookstore), as was done last year following the Roy Choi event.

d. StoryWalk (Commissioners Chou, Cullen, Crabtree-Kampe) Commissioner Chou updated that the new book "Another Word for Neighbor" by Angela Pham Krans was just installed with assistance from local girl scout Troop 4665 (participants earned a community badge). The Plexiglas frames have been replaced and cleaned up. One issue to be kept in mind in the future when the next book is chosen is that, because there are a fixed number of 16 stanchions and the book chosen must fit into those, including counting the title page. This install was one frame short, but they were able to combine book pages to fit.

The Commission discussed advertising the new book (which is about having elderly neighbors) by informing pre-schools, mentioning in city weekly newsletters, in the Older Adults newsletter (check with staff liaison Mary McCabe) and through the city Instagram account, with a tag linking to the Library (and the library in turn can repost). In promoting, it was suggested that Troop 4665 be acknowledged.

H. STAFF ITEMS

SMA Robb announced: 1) The 2026 Commission meeting calendar has been sent out, and please note the meeting on Monday October 12, 2026, will be held Tuesday, October 13th in recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day; and 2) All official communications to the Commissioners from staff will now be through a new city email address: parksandrecreationcommissions@manhattanbeach.gov

Director Leyman updated regarding the library commission work plan. Regarding the surplus needs assessment - once the assessment is completed, a report with findings will go to city council, who will provide direction to the Library Commission, identifying tasks and funding. The process will take a few months before landing on a Commission agenda. Commissioner Levitt pointed out that the amount allocated goes towards not only speaker fees, but all staffing costs needed to support the event; if the city wants to have an additional "premier" speaker event, the amount of \$75k will need to be increased.

Commissioner Doll suggested and it was agreed that the city needs to have a recap from the County summarizing the two 2025 speaker events – Roy Choi and Nic Stone – looking at attendance, costs etc. in order to determine the scope of the next speaker series.

Manager Sargent pointed out that having three events would allow the program to target all three demographic audiences (adult, teen, children) and endorses having a book giveaway at the event for a limited number of attendees.

Director Leyman clarified that the Commission is envisioning not one but two “marquee” speaker events, with perhaps a smaller cost third event. suggested at a minimum requesting again \$75k but this can be increased to as much as \$150,000 to allow for up to three speakers, figuring between \$30k to \$50k per speaker and staffing costs.

I. COMMISSION ITEMS

Responding to Chair Braitman: Library Manager Sargent provided updates on library improvements: the furniture replacement for the adults and teens areas are completed but the children’s area will not be completed until April/May. The improvement to the HVAC system is still being handled by county library admin and Manager Sargent does not have a update of that project.

J. ADJOURNMENT

At 4:48 it was moved and seconded (Chou/Crabtree-Kampe) to adjourn the meeting; motion passed unanimously 6-0 (Cullen absent).