MEETING OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION

Minutes

DATE: Thursday, March 23, 2017

1. Orientation of New Commissioners

2. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER
Chair, Alan B. Smith, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

3. 

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Total Commission positions: 24
Commission positions filled: 18
Commission positions vacant: 6
Commission quorum: 13

With thirteen commissioners present, a quorum was established.
4. **INTRODUCTIONS**
The Chair requested everyone introduce themselves, and asked if new commissioners would identify themselves as such for the benefit of all present.

5. **ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**
There were no speakers from the public.

6. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**
Corrections to the minutes included the following corrections:
   - The Chair: Several positions listed as “Vacant” in the roll call grid no longer hold seats on the commission and should be deleted, and the current number of Total Commission Positions should be changed to 24.
   - Commissioner Bracken: Misquoted in item 11 A. Changed to read: “The president of the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library would volunteer to reestablish the Friends Council as a Friend’s operation rather than leave it as a Library Commission operation, which might change the discussion somewhat.”

Motion to accept minutes of the January 26, 2017 meeting, with corrections, by Commissioner Bracken. Second by Commissioner Kelly. Commissioners unanimously adopted the minutes of the January 26, 2017 meeting with the above corrections as amended.

*Recorded votes –

**AYES:** Joyce Atkinson; Katherine Bracken; Vivian Faye; Arnold Fitzpatrick; Michael Fischer; Kathy Gilcrest; Mary Ann Hoisington; John M. Huh, Ph.D.; Juan Kelly; Lynn A. Meisch; Sandra Menichelli; Brian Miller; Diane Riise; Alan B. Smith; Margie Valdez.

**VACANT:** City of Concord; City of Martinez; City of Pinole; City of San Pablo; District 3; District 5.

**NOT PRESENT:** Patty Wernet; Don Woodrow.

7. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
No Changes were made to the agenda as presented.

Item was approved by consensus.

8. **ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
   - A flyer for the Lafayette and Learning Center Library Foundation Distinguished Speaker Series featuring Erik Larson (author of Dead Wake) was passed out to everyone by Commissioner Hoisington.
   - Commissioner Kelly shared that a contribution to the Orinda Friends of the Library would get you a gift card for a free cup of coffee in the gift shop.
   - Commissioner Faye shared that the Brentwood Library building has been demolished. Part of that process included the building being used for fire prevention practice. The library has been temporarily moved to the nearby community center. The demolition even made the newspaper. So far there has been no groundbreaking for the new library (hopefully this will happen in May). Commissioner Faye also mentioned that she had made a contribution for the art mural that will adorn the 3rd Street exterior wall of the library.
   - Chair Smith shared that. Concord has hired a master developer for developing the Concord Naval Weapons Station and a series of workshops to decide what should be included in the project has begun. A basic plan is in place and the workshops are to decide what should be included in the first five hundred acres of development. A new Concord Library is included.
Chair Smith shared that he would be in Sacramento on May 16 as part of the Braille and Talking Book Library User Advisory Council to meet with legislators. They have tried in the past to get the legislators to come to them to no avail, so this time they are taking over room 125 in the State Capitol for four hours, providing food and a closer proximity, in the hope that this will bring the legislators (and any other interested parties) to them. Chair Smith will follow up with a full report at the May Commissioner’s meeting.

9. CORRESPONDENCE
No correspondence was received.

10. COUNTY LIBRARIAN REPORT
County Librarian Cervantes reported on library activities.

- The New Commissioners orientation was held this evening prior to the meeting. Four new commissioners were invited to go to the library’s website and to refer to their new commissioner binders to learn more about the Commission, library policies, etc. An invitation was extended to meet one on one with any of the commissioners that cared to do so.

- Regarding Library personnel, the Library is making great progress filling a number of vacant positions. The current new employee training class has nine new employees in it, and another group of a similar size is set to attend training in April. County Librarian Cervantes invited the commissioners to stop in to their local libraries and see all the new faces.

- One reason mentioned regarding the difficulty filling some positions is that the compensation is not competitive with other areas. Vice Chair Gilcrest inquired if the compensation being offered was tied to a specific salary schedule. Someone else asked if the salary classes were fixed. County Librarian Cervantes replied that the library has some of its own job classifications and that it is possible to review and make minor adjustments to the pay grades, but a salary study would be required to make major changes to the salary structure.

- The San Ramon Library will be opening on April 15th. The Brentwood library is now operating out of the local Brentwood Community Center. The San Pablo Library is projected to open this summer (July). It will be moving into a former Walgreens building.

- County Librarian Cervantes mentioned attending the launch of the Earn and Learn East Bay Awards with Deputy County Librarian, Alison McKee where Contra Costa Library was awarded a Champions On The Rise award for youth participation in summer programs at ten sites throughout the county. The library also received Certificates of Recognition from Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (2) and Congressman Jerry McNerney.

- County Librarian Cervantes announced that the Library would be hosting an open house in their new offices on April 5th from 2 to 4pm. Many esteemed individuals have been invited, including many local elected and appointed officials as well as county personnel. This is a chance for the commissioners to meet and speak with a number of local officials in one location.

- County Librarian Cervantes has been very active in the community, meeting with many school officials, superintendents, principals and so forth. She will be presenting at the Mayor’s Conference in May and also the Public Managers Association.

- There has been a concerted effort by the California State Library (CSL) and the Governor to funnel money into support of library workforce development activities. Contra Costa County Library offers the Career Online High School, and access to courses on resume writing, interviewing, job searching, etc. CCCL has
been asked by the state library to provide photos, letters, testimonials and anything else along those lines in support of these efforts to help make the case for this funding as the governor’s budget moves through the budget process. Chair Smith pointed out that for the first time the governor’s budget mentions libraries as a factor in workforce development, suggesting that the Governor has been listening to State Librarian Greg Lucas.

- The by-laws as presented at the previous meeting have been making their way through the approval process. The changes are being reviewed by the County Counsel’s office before being voted on by the Board of Supervisors. It has been pointed out that some of the suggested changes might need to happen differently. The 1991 document that outlined the formation of the Commission and defined its role and duties may need revision. County Librarian Cervantes has been working with County Counsel to determine if issues need revisiting and perhaps another vote.

- The next topic was regarding the seating at Commission meetings, specifically as it pertains to the alternates sitting around the perimeter of the room. County Librarian Cervantes noted that this is not meant to offend anyone but is more of a logistical problem. The current table set-up in the room makes it difficult to seat twenty-four people at the table, so seats there need to be limited to the primary commissioners and any alternates who are acting in place of the primary. It also makes the job of the person taking the minutes easier if the primary commissioners are seated at the table. This being said, it was mentioned that the alternates should be able to participate in the discussions and feel free to voice opinions. Feedback from around the table was requested and a number of commissioners and alternates voiced opinions that the participation of the alternates was valued and appreciated, and also that it made it easier for the alternates to step in when needed if they attended regularly. County Librarian Cervantes stated that some of the commission work could possibly be done in sub-committees or ad-hoc committees, but cautioned that serial meetings need to be avoided. Serial meetings are defined, for example, as when an ad-hoc committee meeting ends and each participant then calls three more members, then the next thing you know you’ve established a quorum. This needs to be addressed in the by-laws and clearly defined. Commissioner Miller, said that while he welcomed the participation of the alternates, he had a problem with the idea that a small community like his effectively has less of a voice on the Commission because of the lack of an alternate when compared to the larger communities that do have alternates at the meetings. Lafayette alternate Laurie Phillips mentioned that attending meetings is a learning process, and if she were put into the position of having to vote and had not been regularly attending meetings, she would most likely recuse herself from the vote for not being adequately prepared to step in and would probably resign. County Librarian Cervantes ended the discussion with the thought that, going forward, the process of seating would be handled informally and re-evaluated in the future if necessary.

11. OLD BUSINESS
STATE LIBRARY FUNDING ISSUES AND LEGISLATION
Chair Smith updated the Commission on the status of the state budget process.

State Budget: The May revise to the Governor’s budget has not been released yet (around May 15th). The California Library Association (CLA) is operating a little differently this year because of SCA-3. Their effort is going into this instead of their standard “ASK”, which is the amount of increased funding they seek on an annual basis for literacy and other programs. This is an annual effort that brought in $70,000 to the CCCL last year, but also provided funds for smaller libraries, enabling them to offer similar types of literacy programs. Chair Smith has had multiple conversations with Jennifer Addington, the Chair of the CLA’s Legislative & Advocacy Committee, asking about making an effort to seek this increased literacy funding and was told to “go do it.” The 2017/18 budget cycle will be a difficult environment given what is going on in Washington, so it is
important to get this issue in front of legislators and keep a dialogue going so Sacramento understands the importance of this funding. Federal Glover, Chair of the Board of Supervisors and Laura Hoffmeister, Mayor of Concord have both written letters in support of the increased funding.

Budget Cuts/IMLS: The budget message out of Washington this year has a number of entities whose budgets are set to be cut. One item on the chopping block of particular importance to the library is the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This is not the first time the IMLS has needed rescuing. In 2012 the CCCL was one of the ten libraries recognized with the National Medal of Honor Award as well as being the recipient of several hundred thousand dollars in grants for innovation. At the last commission meeting approval was given to Chair Smith to draft a letter from Chair of the Board of Supervisors supporting restoration of the IMLS. Chair Smith will be working with Vice Chair Gilcrest to get the letters written.

Chair Smith then asked if there were any questions/comments after his presentation. Employees cannot write in in their capacity as library employees, yet can express their opinions as private citizens. The same goes for members of the Commission. Commissioner Hoisington had wanted the Friends group to write letters but was told their status as a 501 (c) 3 organization prohibited it. It was mentioned again that writing in as Joe Citizen actually carries more weight, and the more letters the better as the weight of the stack of letters, not who they’re from, carries the most weight. Commissioner Fischer mentioned that 501 (c) 3 organizations are able to support issues but not candidates.

12. NEW BUSINESS
SENATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3
In 2013, Senator Lois Wolk put forth SCA-7, which sought to lower the passing threshold for all local library measures to 55%. A number of similar measures soon followed: Sen. Corbett from Castro Valley had one for transportation issues, Sen. Hancock from Oakland had an omnibus measure for everything. Apparently these were not embraced by the Governor’s office, as polls said they weren’t very popular with voters, so SCA-7 and all the rest just faded away. So now it’s being tried again, the rationale being that in 2000, schools got down to the 55% threshold for local measures so other interest groups would like to do the same thing. In 2000, it was not passed by the legislature but through the initiative process.

The current version, SCA-3, is narrower in scope, as it only pertains to library new construction and renovation bonds. SCA-3 is on next week’s senate agenda, which runs three to four pages. Bill Dodd will come in and speak for the amendment. Once the floor is opened up for comments, citizen Alan Smith will speak in favor of the amendment. There will likely be some Howard Jarvis people there, people from the State Chamber of Commerce and from the Orange County Apartment Owners Association. Commissioner Kelly asked how SCA-3 gets around the two-thirds vote threshold requirement of Prop. 13? Chair Smith explained that first the amendment has to make it through the Legislature then the people have to vote for it. SCA-3 is slated to be on the November 2018 ballot.

In that the County Board of Supervisors have already stated their support of SCA-3, the next step required would be for the Commission to endorse SCA-3. Chair Smith asked if anyone would care to make a motion along those lines. Commissioner Miller made a motion that the Library Commission endorse SCA-3. Commissioner Kelly seconded the motion.

*Recorded votes –

AYES: Joyce Atkinson; Katherine Bracken; Vivian Faye; Arnold Fitzpatrick; Michael Fischer; Kathy Gilcrest; Mary Ann Hoisington; John M. Huh, Ph.D.; Juan Kelly; Lynn A. Meisch; Brian Miller; Diane Riise; Alan B. Smith; Margie Valdez.
VACANT: City of Concord; City of Martinez; City of Pinole; City of San Pablo; District 3; District 5.

Abstain: Sandra Menichelli

NOT PRESENT: Patty Wernet; Don Woodrow.

Chair Smith reminded the Commission that if SCA-3 is placed on the ballot, no campaign activity nor discussion of the campaign will be part of a Commission meeting. County facilities/resources cannot be used for any campaign.

The letters written in support had to be done quickly, as the deadline for them to be on record was March 22. Next Wednesday we should know if we’ll be moving on to the next step in the process.

12.B 2017 DAY IN THE DISTRICT
County Librarian Cervantes updated the Commission on Day In The District activities. County Librarian Cervantes began by stating that the CLA has done these Day in the District campaigns a number of ways. This year they are asking for participants to reach out to legislators and make appointments to see them in their district offices. Walter has been making those calls and has had some success setting up meetings. Here is the schedule so far:

March 23, Assemblymember, Tony Thurmond.
April 7, Senator Steve Glazer
April 14, Assemblywoman Catharine Baker

If any of the commissioners would like to attend then let Walter know this evening or tomorrow and you’ll be given the details.

12.C FISCAL YEAR 2017-18 LIBRARY BUDGET
Linda Martinez provided a general overview of the fiscal 2017-18 library budget. Linda began by sharing some important dates with the Commission. April 18th begins the public comment on the budget when it is presented to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS will officially adopt the county’s Fiscal 2017-18 budget on May 9.

This year the library’s budget will increase by 5%, the projected increase in property tax revenue. There is a negotiated 3% cost of living allowance (COLA) built into that number. Additionally, the library added eleven new positions and increased the hours at seven facilities. There is also an 11% increase in the materials budget (5% for adult materials, 5% for youth, 58% for electronic databases). There were also a number of one-time costs, most associated with the new positions.

As far as the source of the revenue, the breakdown looks like this: 87% of the library’s budget comes from property taxes. 10% comes from intergovernmental transfers (for example, the money cities pay for their library’s additional hours of operation), and the remaining balance comes from fees, fines and grants the library is awarded, such as the $70,000 grant for Project Second Chance (PSC).

The breakdown of how the library’s budget is used is as follows: 74% goes to employees (salaries and benefits), 11% is the materials budget. Facilities and maintenance costs went up this year, as did
interdepartmental costs (costs for services from other county departments). Communications was
another area that increased significantly this year.

Vice Chair Gilcrest inquired about PSC and how they are funded. They do raise some private funds, and
have people who make donations annually. It was asked if the state funds went directly to PSC. PSC, Inc. is a separate organization, like a Friends group. The library does fund staff positions and provides
facilities but does not administer the PSC budget. The State sends the money to the county library
which, in turn, funnels it along to PSC.

Commissioner Kelly inquired about the 5% increase and if the 3% COLA came from the 5%, which it
does. The follow up question had to do with where the rest of the increase would be used. Linda
responded that the materials/collection budget in FY 16/17 was $2.775 million, which in FY 17/18
increased to $3.084 million. Another increase was the electronic database budget which increased from
$321,000 to $570,000 in FY 17/18. This increase included increasing bandwidth throughout the library
system as well as a new phone system.

Commissioner Hoisington asked why all the county budget information was included in the meeting
packet. County Librarian Cervantes stated that these were the only materials available at the time the
packet was assembled, plus she was trying to provide the same information that the speakers at the
January 9 BOS meeting were using as the basis of their presentation. At that meeting were a futurist
and an economist, and while they weren’t there necessarily to predict the future, they were invited to
speak to give some guidance to the BOS in different scenarios (if X happens, then the economy will react
in this way). Commissioner Miller asked who these speakers were and what sort of things were they
speaking about. The Commission was told that the January 9 meeting was online and available for
viewing. One portion of their presentation had to do with people coming into the workforce, and how
to attract people to working for the government instead of the private sector. There are currently four
generations of workers in the workforce, and what besides salary and benefits would be necessary to
get people interested? Many people don’t want to work somewhere for thirty years, or even ten or five.

Chair Smith asked when the library was required to send a draft of the budget to the county and was
told that all county departments were required to submit their budgets by February 23 in order for the
BOS to have time to review them all prior to the April 18 public comment meeting. Chair Smith stated
his desire to write a letter of support and wanted to know when the Commission could see what the
BOS sees and was told it would be available when the agenda for the April 18 BOS meeting was posted.

Commissioner Hoisington mentioned that it would be a good idea to look forward to next year and try
to have a look at the numbers before they are submitted to the BOS. County Librarian Cervantes then
explained that the budget is submitted first to the Board of Supervisors after which the Library
Commission may comment, not before. Another suggestion was offered that maybe the Commission
begin thinking about the budget earlier, such as in November, and gather comments then to be used to
guide the decisions being made. Commissioner Fischer suggested starting even earlier, such as in
September when the first look at year end numbers becomes available. County Librarian Cervantes then
mentioned that this year’s budget is more of a maintenance budget.

At this point, Chair Smith summed up the budget discussion by saying that this year there would be no
letter, but next September we would begin looking at the budget earlier in order to offer comments to
the BOS in February. County Librarian Cervantes then explained that if the suggestions were written so
as to offer what the Commission hoped the budget would be able to achieve, even absent final numbers,
that that would be an acceptable way to proceed. This could be done so as to provide comments in February or March when budget numbers are available. County Librarian Cervantes then mentioned that she meets regularly with Chair Smith and Vice Chair Gilcrest to discuss agenda building and this could be added to the list of topics they maintain for future meetings.

12.D DISCUSSION OF FORMATION OF A FRIENDS COUNCIL
Katherine Bracken updates the Commission on the (re)formation of a Friends Council. Commissioner Bracken began by mentioning the previous existence of a Friends Council that used to meet on a regular basis. Between Commission meetings Alan put Commissioner Bracken in touch with Catherine Stenbeck, who provided a number of good suggestions. She also spoke with Charlie Reed. The best place to begin to restart a Friends Council would be with gathering the contact information for the members of the various library’s friends groups since it is not currently in a single location. Commissioner Menichelli mentioned that in her discussions with members of the Danville Friends, there is not much interest in a monthly meeting, however one or two meetings per year would be acceptable. County Librarian Cervantes mentioned trying to put together an annual Friends gathering like she used to do in Santa Clara County, perhaps a half day event. The meetings from the past would have between fifty and sixty attendees and they were an excellent chance to gather and share ideas on best practices, strategic planning and focus groups for any important library issues. This would most likely be in the Fall. Chair Smith mentioned that the Santa Clara Friends events were not to be missed, so this should be something to look forward to. Commissioner Fischer inquired if we were speaking about just friends only, or friends and foundations, and was told both friends and the foundations. Commissioner Miller mentioned being in favor of the idea of a Friends Council but was concerned that such a friends group could become a miniature version of the Library Commission and was assured that would not happen. A Friends Council would be separate from the Library Commission, however it was mentioned that the Friends Council does hold an ex-officio seat on the Library Commission. Chair Smith thanked Commissioner Bracken for her work on this subject.

13. AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING and FUTURE TOPICS
Chair Smith called for agenda items for the May 25, 2017 meeting:

- Policy Revisions: Patron Conduct, Suspension, Trespassing
- Fine Policies/ a one-time fine amnesty
- More music & art in the libraries
- Workforce development information
- Hiring & Training / Use that part of the budget for pay increases instead

14. ADJOURNMENT TO THE May 25, 2017 LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING

________________________________________________________________________
Submitted by Walter Beveridge
Administrative Aide, Contra Costa County Library