MEETING OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION
Minutes

DATE: Thursday, May 24, 2018

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Chair, Brian Campbell-Miller, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

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Total Commission positions: 24
Commission positions filled: 20
Commission positions vacant: 4
Commission quorum: 13

With fifteen commissioners present, a quorum was established.
2. INTRODUCTIONS
The Chair requested everyone introduce themselves and explained to any members of the public that this was not required. No audience members came forward.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT
No members of the public came forward to comment.

4.A. CONTINUED BUSINESS/REPORT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT & WORK PLAN WORKING COMMITTEE
Vice-Chair Wilson informed everyone that he’d been in email contact with Commissioners T. Smith and Kelly and the result of their discussions is the information in the first attachment in the meeting packet. Included there are a form for all to fill out and return to Walter by June first and a copy of the work plan for this year. The form is similar to the one used last year to capture the work the commissioners have been doing out in their communities as it pertains to the work plan goals and objectives. The committee thought it might be more efficient for everyone to fill out the form now for the first half of the year, then in September ask for any updates. The annual report is supposed to be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in December, so the committee is trying to avoid the time crunch at year end.

The committee will provide a summary of the information received at the meeting in July, followed in September by a request for an update. Please turn those forms in to Walter by the first.

Commissioner Gilcrest stated that the 2018 goals in the current work plan may not line up directly with the stated goals of the Commission as reflected in the newly revised bylaws. For example, goal one uses the word monitor, which is not in the revised bylaws. Her suggestion in these cases is to look at the goal then look at the bylaws section “Purpose and Duties” and align your responses accordingly.

Vice-Chair Wilson said that what the committee is looking for is that the commissioners are out in the community participating in library-related events, at the library or elsewhere, that relate to the goals in the work plan that the commission is charged with for this year. Next year the committee will be more specific about this, but for now, the goals stated in the current work plan should be your guide when selecting what activities to participate in.

4.B. REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE WORKING COMMITTEE
Commissioner A. Smith began by stating his disappointment with the fact that for the first time in his twenty one years on the commission, through eleven election cycles and this is the first time that no time was spent out in the communities meeting with legislators. Last year there were meetings with six out of the seven. There has been an unfortunate decline in emphasis from the CLA on meeting with legislators. Included in the meeting packet is an email from the CLA dated April 30. In the past the CLA would begin talking about these meetings in January and February, and groups of librarians and commissioners would head to Sacramento in April to meet with legislators in their offices there. The last time this commission participated in this effort was in 2009. It does cost money to make it to Sacramento, and to rent out a room at the convention center as has been done in the past. The newer generation of library directors has begun to question the need to meet with the legislators. They didn’t think it was worthwhile so they stopped going after 2009.

Next, Commissioner Smith expressed his disappointment with the email he received from the CLA in April. In years past there would have been a message from the president or the head of the legislative advocacy committee explaining why it is important and exhorting everyone to get out there and meet
with your legislators. There was a sense of urgency to it. Now, they come out a couple of weeks prior to the May revise being released, saying only to go meet your legislators. There is no time urgency there. There have also been far fewer “News of the Capitol” emails from the CLA as well where they would say “The vote is in two weeks...the committees are meeting, here are the people to call. Do it now!” Now we are informed after the committees are meeting, so the legislator effort is being downplayed. Also, the CLA must have just dredged up what they sent last year because they are asking folks to support an issue that is dead for the year (SCA-3) and handing out postcards to send to legislators. This just makes them look like they have no idea what they’re doing. As a result we’ve ended up with no meetings for the year.

In 2013, Commissioner Smith had former state senator Joe Simitian as a speaker at a library conference. He is a strong supporter of libraries and when asked how important it was to meet with the legislators face to face, his response was that in the first few years it probably isn’t that important, but after a while when the budget crunch comes and there is only a little bit of money left to divvy up between the last few groups, the legislators then recall who they’ve met with. Those groups that made the effort are usually the ones that are rewarded for their effort. This was made evident in 2014 when State Assemblyman Mike Gatto from southern California introduced a bill to give an extra $10mm to libraries. A number of legislators signed on to support it, but when it came time for budget reconciliation, $10mm became $2mm, partially due to the fact that no one was in Sacramento banging on doors and explaining how important this was. During Schwarzenegger’s last year in office, even with a $20bn deficit, libraries were still awarded $30mm, three times what we’re getting this year when there is a $20bn surplus and everyone is wondering how to spend it all. This is the result we are witnessing from not getting out there. There is a great opportunity coming in December, however. All the newly elected legislators are in the capitol to take their oath of office and around 11:30 or so you can walk into any of their offices and speak about libraries. They are all there, they’re all in a great mood and if everyone makes the effort to get up there and divide and conquer, we can really have an effect.

Vice-Chair Wilson concurred that there is nothing that compares with getting out and meeting with your legislators. He felt that next year we could improve efforts to do this. Commissioner Gilcrest asked if it were possible to make those trips absent any direction from the CLA to do so and the answer was yes, and the best time to go is between when the budget is presented and when they’re all tied up in hearings, usually between February and March. The window of opportunity for this year has been lost.

Commissioner Fischer asked if it might be wise to add this item to the agenda in November as a reminder so that the opportunity mentioned with regard to December is not lost. Commissioner Smith said that as part of the regular report from this committee he would be sure to bring it up again. Next the question was asked how important it was to go to Sacramento vs. meeting them in their local offices and the response was that the more face time, the better. Plus, you get to meet with different staff members, who are very important in terms of getting information into the hands of the legislators. In many instances meetings will be with staff members. Commissioner Hoisington then asked if the Dillons were employed by the CLA as lobbyists and might it be possible for them to track when it would be important to make these visits? County Librarian Cervantes responded that the Dillons have merged their independent office with a larger firm and CLA’s contract with them is now less than what it was previously, having to do with declining membership dues among other things. They did push out the most recent report, though, showing $10.5mm for CENIC and for literacy.
Vice-Chair Wilson then asked if it was possible if this committee could provide a list of legislators to the commission that they should be speaking with and a time frame within which to contact them so that those who live within their districts could participate? This was affirmed. Visits to legislators who support libraries, even if outside the commissioners’ districts, are encouraged as well.

5.A. **NEW BUSINESS / LIBRARY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**
(Deputy County Librarian Alison McKee gave a powerpoint presentation at this time which has been appended to these minutes. Below is the Q&A that followed.)

Commissioner Gilcrest asked how the library provided the sign language interpreters...did they employ contractors? Alison responded that they did indeed use a list of approved contractors and the reason for the 72 hour notice if this service is needed is so that the staff have the time to work through their list to find someone who is available for the time requested. Commissioner McCormick suggested a firm called Esight as one to keep on the library’s radar. It’s a Canadian company that now has an office in Los Angeles. They provide a service that helps legally blind persons to see by projecting magnified images in hi-def color onto a set of special goggles. It doesn’t work for everyone but is pretty interesting. It was initially very expensive as well, starting at over $20,000. It’s now below $10,000 and within a few years will probably be less than $1000. Commissioner T. Smith referred to the chart showing which libraries had which of the assistive devices the library can provide at each branch and asked why the Kurzweil software and video scanners were sparsely populated. Alison replied that the scanners are bulky to store, expensive and rarely get used and the Kurzweil software is fairly expensive and also rarely gets used. It is mostly used by Project Second Chance tutors.

5.B. **STRATEGIC PLAN ASSESSMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION**
County Librarian Cervantes passed around a pamphlet and mentioned that it was the end result of the effort of quite a few people. It as an assessment of the current strategic plan. The pamphlet is not quite in its final form as there is still some editing that needs to happen but she’d had a few dozen printed up for the meeting. Much of the information included had been presented at the recent Forum during a presentation by Sandy Swanson from OrangeBoy. Her hope is that it contains information that can be useful when going out into the community as there is a real hunger for information from the previous participants of town halls and one-on-one interviews. Part of what she hopes to accomplish this evening is to open a discussion about how this brochure can be used and who the audience for the information might be.

Commissioner McCormick began by complimenting the effort. He suggested that a few appropriate audiences would be local councils, mayors, economic development agencies and school district folks. Commissioner Gilcrest suggested delivering them personally to the mayors and supervisors. VC Wilson thought that the brochure, combined with the information included in the annual report would be an excellent gateway to conversations about the library and he was hoping to use them for a city council meeting in Pittsburg. He thought the information would be useful for any of the commissioners to use in this way as it shows the span of the library in the county. Commissioner A. Smith shared that it could also be shared with each of the seven legislators as well as the county supervisors. His thought was that sharing it with them in person would have more impact than simply mailing it to them. Commissioner Hoisington inquired when more might be available in their final form. County Librarian Cervantes thought they could be available by the next meeting in July. VC Wilson then stated that several years back there’d been quite an effort by the commission to get some feedback on progress related to this strategic plan. He was quite pleased to see this effort
by Melinda and her staff as it’s the first time in years that there has been any feedback given about the 2014-2017 strategic plan. It will be helpful for looking into the future and he is quite pleased with it. County Librarian Cervantes thanked the commission and reflected that it was the result of the effort of quite a few staff members. She directed the commissioners’ attention to the diagram on the back page which shows the reader’s initiative elevated above the rest. This is done to show that the library views reading as the cornerstone of what we do. Even though the computers and the electronics all involve some reading, it’s the reading we are trying to emphasize in this diagram. This specific graphic will appear in many places and forms as the library moves forward. County Librarian Cervantes’ final thought was that there is some new thinking these days about strategic plans and the time horizons of them, specifically why three years, or five years? Some current schools of thought fall along the lines that there should just be one long term view with smaller steps along the way until something comes along that more or less forces a change of direction. In any event, she is pleased to have this information to share and looks forward to working with OrangeBoy.

5.C. ORANGEBOY DATA/ANALYTICS
Deputy County Librarian McPartland reminded the commission about the presentation at the recent forum and thanked those who attended and provided feedback during the event. Since that time much effort has gone into creating the brochure that was just handed out and discussed as well as solidifying the library’s goals as we move forward, evidenced by the diagram on the back page. There are several meetings planned for next week for library staff to bring them in on this data and get them all up to speed on what it means and how to access it. Effort has also gone into building out the analytics on the Savannah platform that gives us real-time data on library usage. One example of a practical application is when looking at putting a library in a particular location, how does that affect the libraries around it? By spending half an hour working with Savannah we can see how those other libraries are likely to be affected. County Librarian Cervantes referred to a recent library closure to redo some bathrooms and that, even on a small scale, it was possible to see how nearby libraries would be affected so this could be planned for. The software is already making a difference as a planning tool.

Next, Deputy County Librarian McPartland wanted to open the floor to the commissioners to ask questions and to discuss what they’d seen at the forum. The library is very data driven these days and tools like this Savannah software are the wave of the future, so she wanted to give the commission the opportunity to talk about what they’d seen and heard.

Commissioner McCormick began by stating he thought the data was great. He managed to obtain the local Antioch data and thought the ability to marry that with the census and local economic data was incredible. He did notice, however, that in the areas where there was less participation in the survey that the data was skewed from being under-represented. This throws off answers to things like services folks would like to see, and what services they think are available, yet it does highlight the need to get more cards into the hands of the people in these parts of the county. Deputy County Librarian McPartland did agree that some of these results were anticipated, but part of what came to light was that the library has a great story to tell and needs to get it out there. VC Wilson seconded Commissioner McCormick’s thought that the information was relevant and good to have and that he though it clearly showed what everyone has known for a while, which is the differences across the county in terms of service levels and numbers of people served. And,
where you find inequities in service levels, you find other inequities as well. This points us in a good direction to have some conversations about this.

Deputy County Librarian McPartland stated that as the commissioners are out in the community, meeting with various groups and speaking about the library, they are in effect acting as marketing agents for the library and helping to get the story out there. County Librarian Cervantes then mentioned that as the commissioners are preparing for these sorts of meetings that it would be a very simple effort to provide them with information to prepare them to be in front of a crowd. To this point, Commissioner McCormick asked if it would be possible to acquire the information for each commissioner’s area of responsibility, perhaps to use in a powerpoint? Deputy County Librarian McPartland said that they had already been provided pdf’s of the presentation from the Forum and that Walter could send out the links to the specific area survey results as well. Each link is for a specific library and each library manager should be able to provide this information as well.

5.D.

BYLAWS / APPROVED APRIL 24, 2018

County Librarian Cervantes began by stating that she felt it was important to circle back and provide the commissioners with a final, approved copy of the bylaws given the enormous effort by quite a few people required to push it over the finish line. The Board of Supervisors meeting where the bylaws were approved was also the meeting where the cannabis issue was discussed, so it was quite an interesting crowd present and a very full house. No final approval is necessary as the commission approved the bylaws in their current form at the previous meeting and they have now been approved by the BOS. She did want to mention that bylaws do occasionally need revising, so it is a topic that might come up again, either to address something that was missed or to deal with something new. It will be helpful for the commissioners to have a copy handy as they fill out the work plan document that was referenced earlier.

Commissioner McCormick asked whether the Supervisors and city officials had all been brought up to speed on the Transition Terms and the different classes associated with them. She stated that they had all been informed and that the information was stated again in the board order associated with the bylaws approval. When the process began and she and Walter were trying to sort out how to go about balancing the terms so that not so many members of the commission would be going off all at the same time, the County Administrator’s Office (CAO), who deals with a number of boards and commissions, said they would do it. They look to achieve balance, both in terms of when terms end but also geographically so that one particular area of the county doesn’t lose all its representation at the same time. So, the supervisors have all been made aware and as term ending dates come along and new appointments are made, Walter is very carefully working with the cities to explain the transition terms and what the desired result will be as far as staggering the terms and why. If anyone on the commission runs up against any concerns please let us know and they will be addressed.

Commissioner Hoisington then stated that the commission never talks about the alternates and where they fit into things. Under the section COMPOSITION in the bylaws, it is stated that there will be no fewer than twenty-four voting members and no more than twenty-eight total members (the other four being the non-voting, special district seats) but the alternates are not referred to. Commissioner Fischer then read from the end of the same section on the following page: “An appointing authority may appoint an alternate member to participate as a Member when the
primary Member is absent.” County Librarian Cervantes mentioned that the point being that there would be no more than twenty-four voting members seated at any one time, be they primary or alternate members. She thought that it would be possible that things like this that need further wordsmithing could pop up from time to time and when there is a need to go back and amend then that will happen.

6. **ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES**

No changes were suggested for the minutes from the March 22, 2018 Commission meeting. Commissioner A. Smith made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Gilcrest seconded the motion.

*Recorded votes –*

AYES: Vivian Faye; Michael Fischer; Mary Ann Holsington; John Huh, Ph.D.; Yvonne LaLanne; Brian Campbell-Miller; Don McCormick; Alan B. Smith; Tommy Smith; Peter Wilson; Kathy Gilcrest; Margie Valdez; Yolanda Pena-Mendrek; Arnold Fitzpatrick;

NAYS: None

Abstentions: Katherine Bracken

VACANT: City of San Pablo; City of Clayton; City of Martinez; District II

NOT PRESENT: Laura Canzianilla; George Pursley; Patty Wernet; Don Woodrow; Cindy Wright

With 14 AYES, Zero NAYS and 1 Abstention, the motion to accept the minutes of the March 22, 2018 Library Commission meeting carried.

7. **ITEMS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION AND ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Commissioner Fischer:** April 2nd was the beginning of the new 50 hour/week schedule for the El Cerrito Library. On April 4th, the library had an event called “First Wednesday”, since it was the first time the branch had been open on that day in quite some time. Melinda attended, as did the mayor and most of the city council members. Thanks to Walter for very quickly providing some statistics that were shared with the city council. One example: during the first week of April in 2017, attendance for the week was 2100. The first week of April this year with the new hours, it jumped to 4200. This is a one hundred percent increase in attendance without a corresponding increase in hours, so increased open hours does mean increased attendance!

**Commissioner Gilcrest:** The San Ramon Library, as many others do, puts a particular emphasis on art in the library and they sponsor exhibits in certain areas of the library and invite artists to display their work. Some years ago the hardware was mounted so that art could be displayed and a few weeks back a friend of her family held an exhibit there. While she was unable to attend, a number of her family members traveled from out of the county to attend the exhibit and she wanted to mention it as one way that art brings people into the library.

**Commissioner LaLanne:** The Walnut Creek Foundation recently held their annual fundraiser and it was a big success. It’s their single biggest fund raising event of the year and is held at the library.

**Commissioner T. Smith:** The Concord library is currently closed, but when it reopens there should be some bathrooms that work! The bathrooms are actually completed and the library reopens on Tuesday.

**Commissioner Bracken:** On June 2nd the Friends/Foundations group will meet at the Concord Library. Jessica Lawler, the president of the Concord Friends will be leading the discussion. Everyone who attended the previous meeting enjoyed themselves. A save-the-date email has been sent and an agenda will be sent out shortly.
**Commissioner Faye:** Brentwood is having some exciting times. They are working on bylaws for the friends group there and have increased the number of officers from four to nine. There was a volunteer appreciation luncheon on Wednesday that was enjoyed by all. She brought brochures for a keystone opportunity and let everyone know they could make a significant donation.

**Commissioner McCormick:** Wanted to acknowledge Commissioner Huh from Antioch for putting on a nice 50th anniversary event at Antioch back in March. City Council members, lots of families, people involved in the original construction. It was a very nice event.

**Commissioner Hoisington:** The Lafayette Foundation is also holding their big fundraiser. It’s June 2nd at the library in the evening and there may be a few tickets left. The Lafayette friends had a meeting last week and Ginny Golden came and shared with the group the same presentation she’d given at the last commission meeting about the mural out in Bay Point. The presentation was well received and Ginny, who used to be the children’s librarian there, was terrific. It’s also time for the annual bookmark contest. Kids from grades K through 8 from schools all over Lafayette, and even kids who are homeschooled, can participate. This year there were over 500 kids who participated, so choosing the winners was quite a task. One winner is chosen from each grade level, with a special award given to anyone who has been a previous winner. Each winner is given a $25 gift certificate to a bookstore as well as a gift certificate to use at the used book shop at the library. The winning bookmarks are printed on hard stock to make them last, and the library hours are printed on the back.

**Commissioner A. Smith:** San Benito County has sent out a letter (it will be forwarded to the commissioners) detailing their recent fundraising efforts. This is a small, 58,000 person county with a $700,000 annual budget and yet the friends were able to raise tens of thousands of dollars for their library. It make interesting reading and maybe there are some ideas in there that can be applied here as well. Also, the Marrakesh Treaty (which has been discussed here previously) went to the Judiciary Committee in April. The hearing took only a record 45 minutes then received unanimous approval, and on Tuesday it went to the Foreign Relations Committee and the same thing happened! The enabling legislation passed as well, so now it will go to the senate for approval within the next 2/3 weeks, then on to congress. Within the next two to three months this could be a done deal, making it one of the fastest things to ever make it through the process.

**Vice-Chair Wilson:** At a recent meeting with Supervisor Glover to update him on various commission and library goings-on, VC Wilson mentioned his intention to attend a meeting that Melinda was having with the city to discuss the plans to develop the land behind the Pittsburg Library. Supervisor Glover told Peter when he was there to remind the developer (Garaventa) of their promise to put a new library in that building. So, at the meeting it was brought up and after some shuffling and staring at feet, it was admitted that at the time it was mentioned the plans had been for a larger building and the current plans do not have room for a library. Apart from that, VC Wilson expressed concerns at a recent town hall meeting with the city about the library during construction, specifically the issue of parking and access to the library. The city manager expressed his concern over the same issues. VC Wilson also inquired about seeing a schematic of the proposed building instead of the overhead new that was presented. Prior to this meeting he had spoken with Melinda, asking her how far he could press on these issues. What she told him was that as a citizen of Pittsburg he was free to raise any concerns he had, so his intention is to do so as he is very worried that the plans will interrupt access to the library.

One other thing he wanted to mention was that at the Forum, a member of the Richmond friends was in attendance and their group has apparently been rethinking the decision to leave the commission. They have corresponded back and forth, and VC Wilson put them in touch with Chair Campbell-Miller to discuss potentially coming to one of the Hercules Friends’ meetings. He doesn’t think anything will come of it quickly, but he did express his view to them that they should reconsider their decision.
Being a member of the commission is a way everyone can share ideas and learn from each other, and they are paying taxes for county services they are not receiving.

Chair Campbell-Miller: The Hercules friends had a recent visitor from Richmond at one of their meetings. She was a recent new member of their friends group and she came with questions about best practices and getting established as a self-standing, non-profit organization with their own bank account and so forth. There was also a “May the Fourth Be With You” event at the library for all the Star Wars fans out there. There was a green screen there so people could get there photo made with various Star Wars characters. There was also a button maker available, too (that Brian has issues with!) and the first Star Wars movie was shown in the park with Star Wars characters there for photos as well. It was a great event and everyone had a good time.

8. COUNTY LIBRARIAN REPORT

County Librarian Cervantes began by stating that there was a significant amount of information in her written report to the commission but that there were several items she wanted to call specific attention to at this meeting:

Bathrooms at Concord: This was mentioned earlier in the meeting, but the ageing facility at Concord really needed to have the bathrooms redone and they are turning out quite nicely.

Kensington: The Kensington Library will be closing on June 4th for ten days to undergo some extensive renovation there as well.

Fine Elimination: Acting Deputy County Librarian Nancy Kreiser has been putting a lot of effort into this project. It’s one of the areas that our OrangeBoy data is being helpful, as the users of the library who need it most and can afford it the least are being shut out due to fines imposed, resulting in cards being suspended and therefore unusable. Staff are working on a proposal to eliminate all fines for all ages on all materials. We know that fines are not what bring back materials. She worked previously at a library with no fines and 85% of late materials were returned within two days of the due date so there’s really no correlation other than it’s a small revenue stream, however that revenue gets made up by more people checking out books and, unfortunately, paying for lost or damaged books. Fines mostly punish school age children (who have no transportation to return items on time) and often this happens in areas where the fines cannot be afforded so people just stop coming to the library. This is the reason for the low cardholder numbers in these areas. Nancy has put a lot of time and effort into this project so we look forward to moving this issue forward.

National Library Legislative Day: County Librarian Cervantes began by stating that as unsuccessful as the effort was to schedule appointments with legislators here in California at least we now know we’re on our own here and will act accordingly and set our own schedules and appointments. There is nothing like being in D.C., however, and having the opportunity to meet with the legislators staff people there. There were nineteen delegates from California for this event and fifty-five legislators to connect with. Those where appointments could be scheduled were scheduled and for the others the group split up and just went ahead to the offices and most of the time the group was able to meet with a staff member for five minutes for an impromptu meeting. A lot gets accomplished in an outer office hallway. This was an ALA-sponsored event, with a lot of library related information prepackaged in folders to deliver to the legislators. Northern California had much more representation than southern California, since the cooperative no longer pays for them to attend. Yolanda Pena-Mendrek was the recipient of the ALA scholarship to attend the event and was appropriately honored and recognized at the event and she was a real pro, like she’d been going for years. Her school board experience really paid off and it was nice to have someone else from our organization in attendance.

Pittsburg/Bay Point Mural Event: The mural project at Shore Acres Elementary school was very well attended. The author was there along with a number of staff to help and a large turnout from the
community. A shout out to Ginny Golden (who did a presentation about the event at the last commission meeting) for organizing and hosting the event. The wall where the mural now resides is about twenty feet high and the outline of the mural was very precisely drawn on the building then the children signed up four or five at a time to fill in the spaces with colors that were already chosen until the mural was completed. This took most of the day.

9. **AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE TOPICS**
The following topics were suggested for inclusion at the next meeting of the Commission:
- Fine Elimination
- Staff presentation: Summer Reading and Lunch At The Library
- Foundation Report
- Tour of the San Ramon Library

10. **ADJOURNMENT TO THE July 26, 2018 LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING AT THE SAN RAMON LIBRARY**
Chair Campbell-Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Submitted by Walter Beveridge
Administrative Aide, Contra Costa County Library