

Annual Report, Contra Costa County Library Commission (September 2021 through October 2022)

The Contra Costa Library Commission is a diverse group of people who are appointed by and report to a variety of sources (County Supervisors, city and town councils, as well as the Contra Costa County Community College District, the Central Labor Council, and the Office of Education.

The Commission exists as an advisory board to the Board of Supervisors and the County Library. The purposes of the Commission, according to its bylaws, are to:

- “Serve in an advisory capacity to the Board and County Librarian;
- “Provide community linkage to the County Library including, but not limited to, providing regular reports of the activities of the Commission to appointing authorities;
- “Serve as a forum for the community to express its views regarding the goals and operations of the County Library;
- “Assist the Board and the County Librarian in providing library services based on assessed public need; and
- “Develop and recommend proposals to the Board and the County Librarian for the betterment of the County Library, including, but not limited to, such efforts as insuring a stable and adequate funding level for the libraries of the County.”

The bylaws also set forth specific advisory functions, denominated as duties:

- “Participate in the planning process, including the Library element of the County General Plan and the Library Strategic Plan;
- “Assist in the review of County Library policies that the Commission and the County Librarian determine will improve the operations of the County Library and service to the public;
- “Perform such other tasks and undertake such other assignments as may from time to time be referred to the Commission by the Board or the County Librarian;
- “Provide reports to the Board and the County Librarian when the Commission deems such reports to be timely and appropriate.”

The list of duties emphasizes the advisory nature of the Commission in the following language:

“The Library Commission is an advisory body and as such is specifically prohibited from (i) undertaking any inquiry or investigation into the personnel policies and practices of the County Library or the day-to-day administrative operations of the County Library, and, (ii) from taking any action that would imply the County's support or opposition to legislation, in the absence of, or that is inconsistent with, adopted Board positions. *Only the Board of Supervisors can send letters on a particular piece of legislation.*”

Each position can have two people — a commissioner and an alternate commissioner. Both the commissioner and alternate can participate in local community activities and attend and participate in meetings of the Commission. The sole difference between the two positions is that if the commissioner is present at a meeting of the Commission, they possess the vote and the alternate is not permitted to vote.

Each year the Commission submits an annual report to the Board of Supervisors, city and town councils, and other appointing authorities of its activities for that year. The report last year had a cut-off date for activities of August 30 with the remainder of the year's items put forward to the next annual report. Upon reflection it was decided that a cut-off date for activities of October 31 was workable and would make the annual report more timely. Thus, beginning with this annual report, the cut-off for activities is October 31. Because the activities for last year were cut off as of August 31, this year's report will cover the period from September 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022.

The Commission functions both as a group that meets together six times a year and through the activities of the individual commissioners. The activities are listed in this annual report under that portion of the Commission's work plan that was submitted as part of last year's annual report. Some of the activities are part of the Commission's overall purview of library issues generally. Those matters are listed under Goal 4-C.

Consistent with the policy established by last year's annual report, activities of individual commissioners are listed by how they are in furtherance of the work plan of the Commission and not with regard to the specific commissioner performing the action.

Much of the activity of the Commission consists of hearing reports on matters involving the library system or libraries general that are presented or organized by the library administration staff. The Commission will then discuss the matter. County staff receive valuable feedback on these issues from the Commission's questions and comments.

Goal 1: Help establish sustainable funding and support for previously existing library programs and services and new needs raised by the economic downturn associated with the coronavirus pandemic. In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

Goal 1-A: Support the creation of a centrally organized private, not-for-profit, fund raising approach for funding countywide and local community library needs, complimentary to locally organized friends and foundation efforts, for the purpose of meeting service standards and objectives of the Library's strategic plan.

Under the guidance of the Library Foundation of Contra Costa Organizing Committee, composed principally of specific commissioners, efforts have been undertaken to obtain seeding funding from the Board of Supervisors using Measure X funds to help in the establishment of the 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation. The Organizing Committee has entered into an agreement with EdFund West to permit solicitation of funding prior to the establishment of the Foundation. Through the efforts of a member of the Board of Supervisors, pro bono legal counsel was provided to aid in the legal steps for creation of the Foundation. It is anticipated that filing of the papers necessary for the creation of the Foundation will be completed shortly.

As part of this activity, the Commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors allocate Measure X funds of \$300,000 one time to help establish the Library Foundation of Contra Costa based on the request from the Library Foundation of Contra Costa Organizing Committee. The Board of Supervisors, pursuant to this request, allocated \$50,000 for this purpose. (January 2022 meeting)

Goal 1-B: Encourage collaboration between community library friends and foundation groups and interchange with commissioners through the Friends Council and the annual forum.

While the continuation of the pandemic has prevented much of this effort, on a regional basis commissioners appointed by members of the Board of Supervisors have coordinated activities of the city and town commissioners, librarians, and Friends and Foundations within each district.

Various members of the boards of the local Friends and Foundations groups attended the racial equity training offered by the Library to them and to Commissioners.

Goal 1-C: Explore ways of ensuring stable, equitable and adequate public and private funding for the county library and its various branches.

Commissioners serve their local Friends and Foundations in their role of providing private funding for the branch library through such means as helping in the solicitation of grants and participating in fund-raising activities such as book sales.

Goal 1-D: Work cooperatively with branch libraries to seek sustainable funding in service of their local communities.

Commissioners take a significant role serving on the boards of local Friends and Foundations.

Goal 1-E: Review and if in agreement with it, support the annual budget proposal prepared by the County Library for submission to the Board of Supervisors.

A budget overview report was heard by the Commission. This report discussed the budget sources and expenditures for the county library system and the process for its adoption. It noted that the library is deemed a “special district” for property tax allocation and this means that a specific percentage of county property tax revenue is allocated for library purposes each year. This amount constitutes over 91.5% of the total library budget and is based on one percent of the county’s share of property tax revenue. (November 2021 meeting)

The information about the budget proved invaluable for this year in that the issue arose several times involving allocation of Measure X funds. Several Supervisors have expressed interest in looking at the advisability of solely relying on this allocation going forward.

Goal 2: Liaise with elected officials, community groups, and residents to engender broad support for the Library system.

In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

Goal 2-A: Increase Legislative outreach at the local, state and federal levels to advocate for libraries, the services they provide and the allocation of appropriate resources to them.

The Commission recommended, based on a report from the Legislative Working Group, that the Board of Supervisors:

Support the Governor’s proposed 2022/2023 budget items involving libraries including a \$5 million ongoing increase for the Lunch at the Library program, an \$8.8 million increase for online job training and workforce development (one time);

Allocate Measure X funds as requested by the County Librarian of \$200,000 ongoing for staffing the library's new early literacy outreach van and \$8.1 million one time for deferred maintenance on county-owned library facilities. (January 2022 meeting)

Support of \$750 million for library construction grants in the California State budget (June 2022);

Commissioners keep their appointing authority informed of library related legislative issues, usually through the public meeting process, Commissioners help ensure that issues involving libraries get the appropriate input of the local community and government. In an election year, commissioners also reach out to the candidates for city and town councils offering information about library needs.

Goal 2-B: Have the Commission take an increasingly active role in the ALA and CLA lobbying efforts.

The recommendations reported under Goal 2-A were also in furtherance of this goal.

Commissioners reported on these matters to their appointing authority and those city and town councils, and individuals members thereof, could, on their own initiative, support the ALA and CLA lobbying efforts

Goal 2-C: Report back to the appropriate appointing authority (city/town council, Supervisor, board or agency) on a periodic basis to bring it abreast of Commission activities, initiatives, and identified library needs.

Commissioners generally report that, on a regular basis, they make reports to their appointing authority about library issues that should be of concern to the appointing authority. The commissioners view at least a part of their ongoing role as serving as the eyes and ears of their appointing authority within the greater library community. In the case of city and town councils this reporting can take place during a meeting of the council, which results in further dissemination of the information, or via communication with the city or town manager.

Goal 2-D: Develop a system of sharing appropriate stories about our library with public officials at the federal, state, and local level.

The Legislative Working Group of the Commission continues to work on developing this system which should increase the visibility and importance of library related issues

with our public officials. This year this activity also included the testimony at the county level of various commissioners involving seeking of Measure X funds for library equity, diversity, and inclusion matters.

Goal 2-E: Seek support from the appropriate appointing authority when appropriate to meeting needs of the library system.

Commissioners in various cities and towns worked on increasing local funding for libraries involving the issues of increased hours for the local library beyond the 40 hours provided by the county and repair, renovation, or replacement of local facilities that are the responsibility of the city or town

Goal 2-F: Bring information back to the Commission at its regular meetings on local needs, issues and support.

A portion of each Commission meeting is devoted to reports from individual commissioners. Information provided by these informal reports can result in either library administration action or suggestions, suggestions by other commissioners, or a future agenda item for the Commission.

Goal 2-G: Make every effort to solicit feedback on our respective libraries, become familiar with their operations, successes and challenges, and advocate for them in their communities and at the county level.

The Commission heard a report on the Orange Boy Survey of library patrons. This is a periodic survey of patrons of our library system and provides valuable information, both to the library administration and the Commission about what issues our patrons consider important and what awareness they have of various library services. This information helps drive decisions as to what programs and services will be offered by the library and how patrons will be informed of this information. In addition, the survey provides information about the satisfaction level of patrons with various services and programs and thus lets the library system know what things are working and what things need further work. (March 2022 meeting)

Commissioners meet on a periodic basis with the local community librarians under their purview and keep abreast of developments.

Commissioners provide community outreach through social media postings and other methods of communicating with the local library community. This year the activity

included providing information to the community of a library that was being reopened after having served as a Covid test site.

Commissioners participate in various community events bringing greater visibility to the libraries.

Goal 2-H: Continue, consistent with public health requirements engendered by the coronavirus pandemic, to conduct Commission meetings at the branches, and seek to involve the local communities in these meetings.

During the entire time for this report, the emergency orders for public meetings during the pandemic were in effect. Thus, all meetings of the Commission were conducted online via Zoom. The desire to hold meetings at branches and involve the local communities in these meetings remains an important goal of the Commission.

Goal 2-I: Reach out to organizations in the County (e.g. First 5, schools, PTAs, etc.) with common interests for the purpose of building supporting networks and programs.

The commission heard a report on the Contra Costa County General Plan and the role of the county library in that process. In doing so, the Commission became more aware of the common interests among various parts of the county government and groups that interact with them. The commission provided input into suggested changes to the plan related to libraries as part of the Envision Contra Costa 2040 general plan update. (January 2022 meeting)

Goal 3: Work on those important global and national issues that affect the library system or that can be assisted by the resources that the library system can provide to the community. In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

Goal 3-A: Work with the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee of the Library Administration to address those issues.

The Commission heard a report on the racial equity training that library staff has engaged in and the opportunity for commissioners and officers of various library friends and foundation groups to participate in that training for the coming year. During the year a number of commissioners participated in this training, and the issue was discussed at several commission meetings. (January 2022 meeting)

The Commission heard a report on Sunday hours. For the last 2 years the nine libraries within the system that had been open on Sundays have not been open on that day. The County Librarian presented a report on this issue which noted the difficulty of providing staffing for those hours, the incomplete reimbursement by the cities and towns that had libraries open on Sundays, and the additional problem caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, the existing model for Sunday hours resulted in an uneven distribution of locations open on Sunday, both on the basis of community income and geography. A lively discussion ensued and it was understood that the County Librarian would discuss this issue in the future with the Commission together with input on a plan that would bring back library hours but on a more stable and equitable basis than what had been in effect. (May 2022 meeting)

The Commission had a report and discussion on partnering to support people experiencing homelessness. Our libraries serve as one of the points where services can be provided to the unhoused in our county. The report was provided by the county's Community Engagement Specialist in Health Housing and Homeless Services and the Senior Community Library Manager of the Concord Library. Among the information received was general information about the unhoused, the services available for this community, and the role of our libraries in providing these services. Information was also provided as to what is being done in other systems in our country. The commission will be exploring more about this issue in the future and providing recommendations after further study. (July 2022 meeting)

Goal 3-B: Seek, with appropriate private, county and state partners, methods to help overcome the digital divide including providing space to students needing undisturbed access to distance learning or reserved space for homework.

A report was also presented concerning the printing fees charged by the library for patrons printing material on the library printers. Since near the beginning of the pandemic, the library stopped charging patrons for the first 10 pages of black and white printing. The library administration proposed making this change permanent, once approved by the Board of Supervisors, and requested a Commission vote on the proposal. The Commission unanimously voted to support the recommendation. (November 2021 meeting)

Goal 3-C: Work to foster civic discussion in our body politic.

The Commission heard a report on and discussed the collection maintenance and reconsideration policy and process. From time to time one or more of our library patrons objects to one or more items in the library collection. The policy of what items

belong in our collection is based on a 1999 resolution of the Board of Supervisors that the library provide “a variety of library resources” “to meet the informational, education, recreational, and cultural needs of the community.” The criteria to be used “include community interest and input, use of the collection, critical merit, relevance to diverse populations, usefulness, currency of information, and appropriateness for intended audience.” In addition the policy notes, “An item will not be excluded simply because it is frank or controversial.”

The report also noted that the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights provides that all libraries are “forums for information and ideas.” Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to them. A variety of material that presents all points of view should be made available irrespective of doctrine or partisan disapproval. In addition libraries should challenge censorship, permit usage by all people, and protect the privacy and confidentiality of their patrons.

The information presented detailed the various parts of the process to be followed when a library patron objects to an item. It was indicated that few objections are made to materials. (September 2022 meeting)

Goal 3-D: Work to highlight the role of libraries in disseminating factual information.

Commissioners take an active role in communicating with their general communities though postings on social media and support local library postings as well highlight the activities and role of libraries.

Commissioners keep informed on issues involving library censorship.

Goal 4: Serve as an advisory committee to the County on library issues. In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

Goal 4-A: Provide thoughtful, consistent, sound and prompt advice and counsel to the County Librarian in regard to the annual budget, the strategic plan, changes in policy impacting service and programs, and any other matters raised.

The Commission joined with library administration in presenting awards to volunteers and staff in regard to their work in Project Second Chance. This is a program run by the library which tutors adults who need assistance in attaining literacy. The program is found in every library in our system. One story from the program involves a man in his

60s who when asked why he participated in the program replied that he wanted to be able to read to his grandchildren. Literacy is also needed for both researching and applying for most jobs in our economy. (September 2011 meeting)

The Commission heard a progress report on the library's strategic plan noting especially what has been done in this regard in the face of the pandemic. It was noted that some library sites became COVID testing sites, library staff served as Disaster Service Workers, and lunch in the library expanded to a broader food distribution program. Greater use of the digital collection of the library occurred and online tutoring was expanded. It was also noted that the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Program was established to help ensure our services reflected the needs of our diverse population. Library fines were also eliminated and base library hours rose from 35 hours a week to 40 hour a week. (September 2011 meeting)

The Commission heard a report on library department priorities. These items resulted from the strategic planning process. The priorities included:

- Bringing in the new library service managers;
- Filing vacancies (especially librarians);
- Streamlining the budget process;
- Working on the Pleasant Hill and Bay Point library facilities;
- Applying for a State Library Infrastructure Grant;
- Improving the library system's information technology;
- Restarting in-person programs;
- Providing librarian training for those without MLIS degrees;
- Providing a career pathway for library aides; and
- Work on racial equity issues including a collection diversity audit, staff training, and offering training to friends and foundation groups. (May 2022 meeting)

The library Public Information Officer reported on the email campaigns that the library systems use to inform the community and library patrons about library services and offerings. The information provided is based on the status of the patrons and there are divided into five classes:

- New cardholders;
- Inactive cardholders;
- "Digitarians" or people who primarily borrow digital files;
- "Occasionals" or people who haven't used there cards at least 12 weeks for a year; and
- Cardholder anniversary or birthday emails. (July 2022 meeting)

The Commission heard a report on the library's Summer Reading and Lunch at the Library programs. (September 2022 meeting)

Work Plan, Contra Costa County Library Commission (November 2022 through October 2023)

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The list of duties emphasizes the advisory nature of the Commission in the following language:

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Each year the Commission submits a work plan for the upcoming year to the Board of Supervisors, city and town councils, and other appointing authorities of its planned activities for the upcoming year.

Goal 1: Help establish sustainable funding and support for library programs and services to better serve all segments of our patrons.

In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

- Continue the creation and initial operation of the Library Foundation of Contra Costa, a non-profit foundation to raise funds for countywide and local community library needs for the purpose of meeting service standards and objectives of the Library's strategic plan.
- Explore and support ways of ensuring stable, equitable and adequate public and private funding for the county library and its various branches.
- Advocate for additional funding for branch libraries for increased resources to better serve their local communities.
- Provide input to the county and county librarian on budgetary issues and items.

Goal 2: Collaborate with elected officials, community groups, and residents to engender broad support for the Library. In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

- Legislative outreach at the local, state and federal levels to advocate for libraries, the services they provide and the allocation of appropriate resources to them. When possible, meet with legislative leaders in conjunction with other appropriate library districts.
- Take a more active role in the ALA and CLA lobbying efforts.

- Report back to the appointing authority (city/town council, Supervisor, board or agency) on a periodic basis to bring keep it abreast of Commission activities, initiatives, and identified library needs and, when appropriate, seek the advocacy of the appointing authority on such issues and needs.
- Collaborate with library staff to collect appropriate stories about the library to share with public officials at the federal, state, and local level.
- Provide information to the Commission on local, regional, or national library needs, issues and support.
- Become familiar with the Library's operations, successes and challenges in order to educate organizations and individuals at the local, county, state and national level about the value and services offered by the library.
- Seek to involve the local communities in these Library Commission meetings.
- Encourage collaboration between the Library Foundation of Contra Costa, community library friends and foundation groups and commissioners by convening the Friends and Foundation Council, holding the annual Friends and Foundations Forum, and other appropriate events.

Goal 3: Work on important issues that affect the library system or that can be assisted by the resources that the library system can provide to the community.

In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

- Work with the Library to understand and address issues of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Recommend methods to overcome barriers to library services for various patrons.
- Work to foster civic discussion in our body politic.
- Work to highlight the role of libraries in disseminating factual information and to identify misinformation and disinformation.

Goal 4: Serve as an advisory committee to the County on library issues.

In order to accomplish this goal, we will:

- Assist new local library staff in becoming familiar with the needs, resources and organizations of the local community.
- Provide thoughtful, consistent, sound and prompt advice and counsel to the County Librarian regarding the Library's budget, the strategic plan, changes in policy impacting service and programs, and any other matters raised.

Adopted by the Commission November ##, 2022

Library Commission Attendance: January 2022– December 2022

Library Commission Attendance January 2022 – December 2022

signed BROWN ACT &
Ethics Orientation
video viewing
certification
Received

COMMISSIONERS	REPRESENTING	Meetings	Absent	Present	Excused	Received
Huh, John M., Ph.D.	City of Antioch	6	0	6	0	x
Vacant	City of Antioch (Alternate)					
Sendig, Linda	City of Brentwood	6	0	6	0	x
Faye, Vivian	City of Brentwood (Alternate)	6	1	5	0	x
Feree, Jacalyn	City of Clayton	6	0	6	0	x
Vacant	City of Clayton (Alternate)					
Smith, Tommy	City of Concord	6	0	5	1	x
Vacant	City of Concord (Alternate)					
Gemmer, Nicole	Town of Danville	6	0	5	1	x
Sanguedolce, Bob	Town of Danville (Alternate)	6	0	3	0	x
Fischer, Michael	City of El Cerrito	6	0	6	0	x
Koops, J Barry	City of El Cerrito (Alternate)	6	0	5	1	x
Jo Ellen Marcotte	City of Hercules	1	0	3	0	x
	City of Hercules (Alternate)					
Hoisington, Mary Ann	City of Lafayette	6	0	6	0	x
Walker, Dorothy	City of Lafayette (Alternate)	3	0	3	0	x
DeFraga, Matthew	City of Martinez	6	0	4	2	x
Dexter, Jim	City of Martinez (Alternate)	6	1	5	0	x
Morgan, Sarah	Town of Moraga	3	0	5	1	x
Maher, Janette	Town of Moraga (Alternate)	6	4	0	2	x
Peña-Mendrek, Yolanda	City of Oakley	6	2	4	0	x
Fitzpatrick, Arnold	City of Oakley (Alternate)	6	0	6	0	x
Garde, Shrikant	City of Orinda	6	0	6	0	x
Vacant	City of Orinda (Alternate)					
Pursley, George	City of Pinole	6	0	6	0	x
Vacant	City of Pinole (Alternate)					
LeFrak-Bellici, Zeld	City of Pittsburg	6	1	5	0	x
Vacant	City of Pittsburg (Alternate)					
Dozier, Julia	City of Pleasant Hill	6	0	5	1	x
Means, Richard	City of Pleasant Hill (Alternate)	1	0	1	0	Pending
Medrano, Antonio	City of San Pablo	6	5	1	0	x
Vacant	City of San Pablo (Alternate)					
Mac, Ly	City of San Ramon	6	0	6	0	x
Masuda-Nash, Michel	City of San Ramon (Alternate)	6	1	2	0	x
Molinelli, Jasun	City of Walnut Creek	6	0	5	1	x
Lurvey, Heather	City of Walnut Creek (Alternate)	5	0	5	0	x
Rosekind, Rachel, Ph.D.	District 1	6	0	6	0	x
Wysinger, Carolyn	District 1 (Alternate)	3	1	2	0	x
Hildreth, Susan	District 2	6	6	0	0	x
Swernoff, Michael	District 2 (Alternate)	6	0	5	1	x
Alura, Claire	District 3	3	1	2	0	x
Louie, Clifton	District 3 (Alternate)	1	0	1	0	Pending
Smith, Alan B.	District 4	6	0	4	2	x
Vacant	District 4 (Alternate)					
Wilson, Peter, Ph.D.	District 5	6	0	5	1	x
Vacant	District 5 (Alternate)					
Mackey, Lynn	Office of Education	6	0	4	2	x
Thomas, Bryan	Contra Costa Central Labor Council	6	4	2	0	x
Hinton, Stacie	Contra Costa Central Labor (Alternate)	6	6	0	0	x
Robison, Rich	Contra Costa Community College District	6	6	0	0	x