

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION  
AD-HOC REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE REPORT  
November 17, 2016 FINAL**

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2012, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors (Board) instituted a triennial review process of all county boards and commissions. The review for the Contra Costa County Library Commission (Commission) was delayed from 2014 as the county librarian was new to that position.

A report was written in Q4 2015 (approximately November as the report is undated). It was provided to the Commission at its March 24, 2016 meeting. It was then discussed at the County Internal Operations Committee (IOC) at its March 28, 2016 meeting.

In response to the Triennial Report (Report), the Commission established an Ad Hoc Revitalization Committee. The Committee met three times on June 9, June 30 and August 18, 2016. The Committee members include: Alan B. Smith Chair, Kathy Gilcrest, Laura Canciamilla, Mary Ann Hoisington, Katherine Bracken, Brian Miller, and Peter Wilson.

This report provides background on the Commission, results of the Committee's deliberations including changes to the standard agenda and bylaws. Note: Bylaw changes must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Commission, with the concurrence of the Board. The Commission can discuss revisions at this meeting. However, the Commission must wait at least one meeting before approving them.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED CHANGES**

This report focuses on the following recommendations:

Agendas:

- Eliminate Commission Bookshelf
- "Items from the public" should be "Public Comment".
- Show on the agenda if an item is for "Action", "Discussion" etc.

Bylaws:

- Commission to be "reinstated" (reauthorized)
- Revise membership and voting
- Continue six meetings per year
- Retain alternates
- Add new purpose to provide community level support and advocacy for Library services
- Technical revisions including revising duties
- Streamline minutes

## **“REINSTATEMENT”**

The Commission’s term was set to expire June 30, 2016. At the March 28 IOC meeting, library staff was requested to prepare a Board Order extending the Commission to December 31, 2016 pending the Commission’s work on revising its bylaws etc. The full Board approved the extension in May. The Contra Costa Mayors Conference concurred at its June 2 meeting. The IOC received a report from library staff at its September 26 meeting.

## **COMMISSION BACKGROUND**

The Commission was established in March 1991 for a two-year period. It has been “reinstated” (reauthorized) continuously since then. Originally, the Commission had 28 positions:

- One for each of the 18 cities including Richmond
- One for each of five Board of Supervisory districts
- Special representatives from the Friends Council, Central Labor Council, Office of Education, Contra Costa Council, and the Countywide Youth Commission
- Oakley was added after its July 1, 1999 incorporation, thus bringing the total positions to its present 29
- The Countywide Youth Commission was sunsetted in 2010 and was replaced in 2012 by the Contra Costa Community College District
- The Contra Costa Council changed its name to the East Bay Leadership Council

## **RECOMMENDED CHANGES**

Agenda Revisions:

The following are the three agenda revisions the Committee recommends. They can be approved immediately by the Commission.

- Eliminate “The Commission Bookshelf”. This item has been on the agenda for at least 19 years. It was intended as an “ice breaker” for any commissioners who were shy about talking; as well as using time until a quorum was reached. Due to present meeting rules, it has outlived its purpose.
- “Items from the Public” will be renamed “Public Comment”. This is the term used by most other agencies (e.g. cities and the Board of Supervisors). By showing public comment, the public will more clearly understand their input is welcomed.
- Mark all agenda items as “Action”, Discussion” etc. on the agenda. Presently the word “action” is only shown on the green pages between the attachments. Not all know to look there, and the green page can be hard to read on-line. With this change, both commissioners and the public will know which items are for action.

## Responses to Report (Bylaws)

The Report made several recommendations as follows:

1. Sunset the Commission

The Commission voted at its January 29, 2016 meeting that it wanted to continue in existence. The IOC at its March 28 meeting did not concur with sunsetting the Commission and instructed library staff to proceed with a reinstatement board order as outlined above.

2. Bylaws Changes

The Report states that library staff did not recommend any changes to the bylaws. The IOC and the Ad Hoc Committee recommend the following bylaws revisions.

3. Membership Reduction and Voting

Both IOC and library staff recommended reducing membership. Thus, a letter was written toward that end by the Interim County Librarian and the Commission Chair and signed by the Chair. The letters were sent to the Special Representatives and the mayor of Richmond. They were mailed the week of June 20. They were asked if they wanted to 1) retain a voting membership, 2) be an ex-officio member without voting rights, or 3) no membership. The results are:

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Regular Membership</b>	<b>Ex-officio Membership</b>	<b>No Membership</b>
City of Richmond			<b>X</b>
College District		<b>X</b>	
East Bay Leadership Council		<b>X</b>	
Friends Council		<b>X</b>	
Office of Education		<b>X</b>	
Central Labor Council	<b>X</b>		

These changes will bring regular membership to 24. As a result the number of commissioners needed for a quorum will be 13. The Central Labor Council will be the only remaining Special Representative with a vote. When and if the Friends' Council is reconstituted, the by-laws can be revised to also include them with a vote. However, since the Friends' Council does not presently exist, it is not possible to include them as a voting member.

It is recommended that voting be by simple majority of all commissioners present when a quorum is achieved. The current method of voting by those representing city representatives and county representatives has never made any difference in the results.

4. Number of Meetings per Year

The present bylaws state the Commission is to meet at least quarterly. The Committee recommends the number be retained at six. The Committee believes with a proper focus, there is adequate work for the Commission to continue as is.

5. Alternate Commissioners

The Report stated that on average 35-40 Commissioners are at each meeting. The following shows the number of Commissioners attending the past nine meetings averages 27 including alternates.

Meeting Date	# Vacant	# Alternates	# Reg. Comm. Present	# Alt. Present	# Total Comm.
11/14	4	13	24	7	31
1/15	3	13	21	9	30
3/15	5	13	19	7	26
5/15	2	14	19	7	26
7/15	3	14	21	8	29
9/15	3	14	16	8	24
11/15	3	13	18	7	25
1/16	5	14	22	8	30
3/16	5	12	15	5	20

Source: Commission attendance roster from the minutes.

Observations:

- At no point has the number attending been as high as shown in the Report.
- About half of the positions have alternates.
- About half of the alternates usually attend.

The Committee voted to continue the practice of having alternates. It observed that some alternates are as active, or are more active than the regular commissioner. Also, by having alternates attend meetings the alternate is in a position to assume the regular voting position when required. Alternates also assist in achieving a quorum if the appointed commissioner is not present. It was noted, however, that given the smaller meeting room in the new location, alternates may need to sit in the audience.

## Commission Purpose

The Report states: “The Library Commission...provides community level support and advocacy for Library services.” It is proposed that this become “Purpose F.”

## Technical Revisions

Duties have been grouped under five topics as shown below.

### IV. DUTIES

The Commission shall perform the following advisory functions:

#### A. Planning

1. Participate in short and long range planning activities for libraries.
2. Monitor progress made in achieving goals set forth in plans adopted by the Board. Report and make recommendations to the Board and the County Librarian in this regard.

#### B. Policy Review

1. Assist in the development of policies that the Commission and the County Librarian determine will improve the operations of, and services available, through the County Library.
2. Discuss and make recommendations on major policy issues.

#### C. Finance

1. If the Commission has concerns or questions regarding the library budget, the Commission may make recommendations to the Board and the County Librarian.
2. Advocate and recommend the funding necessary to provide each level of service (e.g. hours of operation, check-out laptops, or other resources) proposed by the Commission, the Board, or the County Librarian, as the case may be.
3. Explore alternative methods of establishing stable and adequate funding for each level of service. Report the Commission’s findings, along with any related recommendations, to the Board or County Librarian.

#### D. Community Outreach

1. Hold meetings that encourage the expression of community views on matters related to the County Library.
2. Participate in community activities supporting the library, such as friends of the library and library foundations, or city/town library advisory groups.
3. Provide community feedback to the County Librarian and Board of Supervisors.

#### E. Other

1. Oversee the actions of committees of the Commission.
2. Submit reports to the Board and County Librarian when the Commission deems such reports to be timely and appropriate.
3. Performs other tasks and assignments that are referred to the Commission by the Board or County Librarian.

Note: The Library Commission is specifically prohibited from undertaking any inquiry or investigation into the (i) personnel policies and practices, and (ii) day-to-day administrative operations of the County Library.

#### Agenda Packets

- Current bylaws state that Commission packets are to be mailed. This will change to: "Commission packets will be provided electronically unless otherwise requested."

#### Elections

- Whenever the chair and/or vice chair position becomes vacant, an election to fill the vacancy shall occur at the next regularly scheduled commission meeting.

#### Streamline Minutes

- The minutes will become shorter with the elimination of the Commission Bookshelf.
- Presently each time a commissioner is named in the minutes, the entity they represent is repeated. Since their entity represented is shown in the roster section, the entity does not need to be repeated throughout the minutes
- Minutes can use bullet points

#### Commissioner Communications with Staff

- It is recognized staff time is limited. So as to help staff be as efficient as possible, communications for information shall be routed through the chair or a committee chair to the county librarian or designated staff.

#### Commission Work Plan and Annual Report

- This document will be aligned with the Commission's Purpose and Duties.

#### Reinstatement

- During the Triennial Review of the Library Commission, when the term is extended, it is said to be "Reinstated." The word "Reinstated" sounds as though the term has lapsed. It is proposed the word be changed to "Reauthorized."

## **CONCLUSION**

The Contra Costa County Library Commission is the only entity in the county whose sole purpose is to advise, advocate and support the County Librarian and the Board of Supervisors to provide library services.

Adoption of the above revisions will facilitate a strong Commission and improve its ability to fulfill its Purposes and Duties.

Note: This report including all revisions was approved by the Library Commission at its meeting of November 17, 2016.

*“NEVER TAKE YOUR LIBRARY FOR GRANTED” (anonymous)*

Report prepared by Alan B. Smith, with valuable assistance from Kathy Gilcrest and Peter Wilson.