

**DRAFT Record of Action for Internal Operations Committee,  
Item 5, June 16, 2022 Special Meeting**

County Librarian Alison McKee presented the staff report, providing background on how the concept of establishing a county library foundation came about and referencing a 2016 report called "Promoting Excellence in Library Service in Contra Costa County", which included such a recommendation. Since 2016, several involved people have come and gone but the current organizing committee still has members who worked on the 2016 report.

Alison introduced Nicole Gemmer, Danville Library Commissioner and Foundation Organizing Committee Chair; Peter Wilson, District V Library Commissioner; Rachel Rosekind, District I Library Commissioner; Kathy Gilcrest, San Ramon resident and main author of the 2016 report; Angela Lowrey, Friends of the Oakley Library; and Michael Fisher, El Cerrito Library Foundation and El Cerrito Library Commissioner. The Foundation Organizing Committee has been meeting regularly to plan, meeting with and researching best practices of other library foundations, meeting with local library foundations, County supervisors, the East Bay Leadership Council, and the County Hospital Foundation to obtain input and feedback on foundation formation. The Organizing Committee met with many potential nonprofit fiscal sponsors and entered into an agreement with Ed Fund West that will allow the Organizing Committee to operate with the benefits of a nonprofit organization while navigating the process of becoming a tax-exempt nonprofit foundation. Under fiscal sponsorship, the Organizing Committee will be able to fundraise.

The County intends to enter into its own financial agreement with Ed Fund West to provide for disbursement of the Measure X funding allocation for expenses related to the Organizing Committee's efforts to establish the tax-exempt nonprofit foundation. The County also intends to enter into a nonfinancial agreement with the Organizing Committee outlining parameters for use of the Measure X funds, process for accessing the funds, and reporting/documentation requirements.

Once the Foundation is established, it is envisioned to function as an autonomous, non-County entity but will work closely with the Board of Supervisors and County Librarian to align goals. The County Librarian asked for the Internal Operations Committee's and Board's input on formation elements including:

- number of directors (usually a range)
- criteria for selection of initial and future board members (e.g., geographic, ex-officio, voting/non-voting, stakeholder or socio-economic designations)
- potential initial board members
- potential community partners, and
- future projects of interest.

Vice Chair Andersen acknowledged the challenge of achieving representation across the County, having so many cities. She is inclined towards a smaller board but with geographic representation. She suggested that the Organizing Committee consult each County Supervisor to obtain input on how the foundation board should be constituted both in size and composition. She would like to see the foundation direct its resources to library services that are provided countywide and would like to see partnerships with other County departments. She

believes the library can serve as youth or afterschool centers to provide safe environments for unsupervised youths.

Chair Burgis explained that she had appointed, early in her County tenure, Don McCormick, who served on the Alameda County Library Foundation, because she believed a foundation should be established for East County library services or countywide to help communities that had less robust library services. Originally, she envisioned such a foundation as addressing some of the inequities that exist across the library system but also appreciates the opportunity to address services that are can be offered countywide. She views the \$50,000 Measure X allocation as seed money to grow a foundation that would not necessarily continue to be reliant on Measure X funds but would become capable of raising its own funds through philanthropy, grants, grant leveraging and investments. She prefers to see a foundation board of no more than seven members who can demonstrate what can be done with \$50,000, not just in terms of generating money but also developing leadership. She prefers the foundation board to be composed of people with expertise in fund building and also by members of those communities that need to be built up.

Vice Chair Andersen expressed a preference that the foundation not be a County-appointed entity so that it can operate freely without the constraints that are placed on governmental bodies. Staff verified that a private nonprofit corporation would not be subject to the Brown Act. Staff shared that upon review of the library foundations of several other California counties, most had boards reviewed comprised 8-10 members and there appeared to be at least two distinctive models: one weighing heavily on library and community stakeholder representation and another (Alameda County specifically) weighing heavily on industry leaders/financiers with connections to wealth and potential endowments.

Chair Burgis would like to see a foundation that can attract new funding and expertise to help address the needs of library stakeholders, so she is inclined towards a foundation board that is business-oriented in terms of generating financing, mentoring leadership and connecting people to funders. Staff mentioned that the Alameda County Library Foundation has its own advisory board composed of community stakeholders and that the County Library Commission could possibly serve in such a capacity.

Vice Chair Andersen is inclined to recommend that the foundation be independent of the County, be composed primarily of business leaders who can attract funding for library needs and include representation of other local library foundations. She is not opposed to the Library continuing to apply for future Measure X dollars independent of the future foundation.

At this point in the meeting, the Committee learned that an unidentified caller was attempting but being prevented from joining the meeting by telephone, and wished to participate and comment. Since staff was unable to identify and resolve the source of the technical problem while the meeting was in progress, staff provided Caller 1 access to the meeting through a desktop telephone and Caller 1 was then able to listen to and, later, comment on the matter being discussed.

Chair Burgis invited public comment:

- Peter Wilson commented that the objective of the library foundation is to raise funds to address library needs identified by the County Librarian. He has raised upwards of \$30 million in his university work and has found that the most successful fundraising is designed around major gifts that support specific programs and facilities rather than operations expenses, which he expects the County to fund. He believes the guideline for selection of foundation board members should be "can they raise money or do they have money?" He recognizes the Alameda County model as an appropriate model and believes such a model can be achieved while still recognizing diversity, but the foundation's primary mission of fund development should be paramount.
- Nicole Gemmer concurred with Mr. Wilson's comments and said that foundation board members should be passionate about the mission. She believes that the foundation's independence and autonomy will help to attract board members and will give donors confidence that the money will go where it will do the most good. For transparency and accountability, she said it will be important to seat individuals that do not have conflicts of interest. She said that there is no money for staff, therefore everyone involved will have to work, and expectations about what can be accomplished with no staff must be realistic. She said there is good energy on the Organizing Committee and group synergy should also be a consideration for seating members on the foundation board.
- Michael Fischer thanked the County for the Measure X funding and offered whatever support he could to the foundation effort.
- Kathy Gilcrest commented that she spent most of her 40-year career as a grant maker for a large Los Angeles foundation and for grant-seeking organizations such as universities and small nonprofits. As a grantmaker, she funded public-private partnerships and witnessed their power to transform. The new foundation hopes to do that same thing. She did fund startup nonprofits and, so, has an awareness of what is needed to grow a foundation into a robust and sustainable organization. As a major gifts fundraiser for universities, she participated in capital campaigns that raised billions of dollars over the years using a peer-to-peer model that relied on leadership of a private board of directors and their allies in the private sector to raise funds. She believes the model being considered is consistent with that, i.e., "people give to people". She acknowledged a need to build a foundation board that is as representative of our community as we can make it and that has the capacity, given that they will have little or no staff, to do the job that needs to be done.
- Caller 1 explained that she missed much of the discussion because she could not gain access to the meeting through her telephone and was now being connected through staff's speakerphone. She said that Measure X money is hard-earned money and hopes that the money is being allocated to the Library with the intention to strengthen the educational strengths of those communities that need academic intervention rather than using public money to further certain public activists or politicians to move their pet agendas disguised as charity or literacy. She said it would be wrong to indoctrinate young children sexually and, as a public and a parent, she does not support use of her tax money for such purposes. She hopes this money will be used for academic intervention only.
- Angela Lowrey commented that she was asked to participate in the countywide library foundation Organizing Committee a few months ago and observed that the group is dedicated, focused, and committed to getting this foundation set up in a way that is viable long-term, that honors hard-earned public funds, and is centered on going the

distance. People donate to foundations because of the trust and confidence that is established. She expressed appreciation for both the Organizing Committee and the opportunity to participate in it.

- Susan Hildreth offered written public comment that is attached to these minutes.

Vice Chair Andersen said the Organizing Committee seems very capable and the Internal Operations Committee does not want to be an impediment to the Organizing Committee's efforts if they have a true vision. Chair Burgis concluded that she would like to see reports back to the County about how the Measure X allocation is being used and suggested the possibility that additional Measure X funds might be made available.