

Minutes of the Solano County Law Library Board of Trustees (May 22, 2023)

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting of the Law Library Board of Trustees was called into order by Judge Christine Carringer (Acting Chairperson) at 4:11 p.m. at the Jury Assembly Room (located at the Old Solano Courthouse, 580 Texas Street—Lower Level, Fairfield, CA 94533).

ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

PRESENT: Judge Christine Carringer (Acting Chairperson); Judge Wendy Getty; Judge Amyra Cobb-Hampton; JoAnn I. Parker, Esq.; Suzanne Olawski, Director of Library Services for Solano County Library; Lisa Lin, Admin Services Manager for Solano County Library; Jonathan Watson, Law Librarian for Solano County Law Library

ABSENT Judge Daniel J. Healy; Supervisor John M. Vasquez

CORRECTIONS TO MINUTES:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Moved: Ms. Parker moved that the minutes from the meeting of September 26, 2022, be accepted.

Seconded: Judge Cobb-Hampton seconded the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously, and the minutes of the meeting were approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Moved: Ms. Parker moved that the agenda be accepted.

Seconded: Judge Cobb-Hampton seconded the motion.

The motion was carried unanimously, and the agenda was approved.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Review and reaffirmation of agreement for services between the Law Library Board of Trustees and the County Library per contract—**ACTION:** Judge Carringer moved for a motion to reaffirm the agreement and its first amendment, and Ms. Parker seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously. Ms. Parker requested that the creation of a new agreement be considered, as the existing one is twenty-five years old. Judge Carringer requested that it be an action item for the next meeting.

- b. Developing a vision for Solano County Law Library's Services: Ms. Olawski stated that Mr. Watson and Mike Eitner, Assistant Director of Library Services for Solano County Library, have compiled recommendations for future law library services. Mr. Eitner, who was unable to attend the meeting, wanted to provide board members the opportunity to provide input prior to sharing the library's report. The following feedback was offered by the board members:
 - The Law Library is considered a county program and will not be eligible to be housed in the anticipated new state-run courthouse. If there is space available within the County Administration Center (CAC), it could be an ideal new location for the Law Library. The building will still be near the courthouses and available during the workweek (Monday-Friday). Thus, the board encouraged Ms. Olawski to speak with the person who oversees the CAC about this possibility.
 - Install legal reference kiosks at certain public library branches and have the Law Library be the specialized hub for more in-depth research. Ms. Olawski stated that the library already provides self-help legal materials for public use and librarians provide basic assistance, referring more in-depth needs to the law librarian. Ms. Olawski stated that a pilot project could be developed to install a kiosk -dedicated computer with legal resources- at a branch, though she believed that such funding may have to come out of Solano County Library's budget rather than the Law Library's.
 - Provide a teleconference reference service (e.g., Zoom appointments) to customers who cannot visit the Law Library in person.
 - Determine who the main user population is to better determine future law library location and services: attorneys or laypersons?
 - Refine the Law Library's website to better guide laypersons on finding forms or instructional materials online. Additionally, in similarity to Alameda County Law Library, make resources (e.g., MCLE accredited materials) available online for customers to access.
 - Gather feedback from Mr. Watson as to what he envisions the Law Library's services might look like in the next 3-5 years. In keeping with the notion that the Law Library should be within the vicinity of the courthouses, Mr. Watson mentioned that numerous customers are referred to the Law Library by Solano County Library staff, local legal self-help organizations and even the clerk divisions. To better serve customers who cannot make it in person to the Law Library, Mr. Watson has determined what areas of

law the legal organizations do not assist with and has bulked up the amount of electronic legal self-help materials that he and staff can email to customers.

- c. Appointment of New Trustee: The board welcomed newest member Judge Cobb-Hampton. It was discussed as to whether a seventh member should be appointed, which would be possible under California Business & Professions Code §6301. The requirement must be that they are a county resident and registered with the State Bar of California. Judge Cobb-Hampton will be meeting with Julie Hilt, the Executive Director of the Solano County Bar Association this week and will bring up discussions about a seventh member with her. Mr. Watson will also investigate as to how often the Law Library Board of Trustees is mandated to meet per California law.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Adoption of the FY 2023-24 budget—ACTION:
- FY 2022-2023 ACTUALS THROUGH April 30, 2023: Ms. Olawski provided the report to ensure that the Board has the actual figures as of late April 2023.
 - FY 2023-2024 Budget: Ms. Olawski provided a breakdown of the following items—
 - Item #2250—*Other Prof. Expenses*: The **FY 23/24 PROPOSED** amount is \$247,105.00, which reflects the anticipated cost of living adjustment (COLA) for next year.
 - Item #2261—*Software Licenses*: The **FY 23/24 PROPOSED** amount of \$80,000.00 is the same figure as the prior fiscal year.
 - Item #8101—*Contingency*: Ms. Olawski stated that the amount of \$422,272.00 reflects a slight decrease due to the fund balance. Ms. Lin clarified that the fund balance is the amount of savings left over at the end of a fiscal year and is typically placed in the contingency budget item. Ms. Olawski stated that the fund balance helped supply the contingency amount, and the figure can be revised if one-time funding for California county law libraries is added to the State Budget.
 - Item 9301: *Reserves*: Although not shown on the report, Law Library currently has approximately \$11,000.00. The amount is currently not earmarked for any anticipated projects but could be utilized for any relocation projects associated with Law Library.
 - Item #9613—*Court Fees*: Ms. Olawski stated that the **FY 23/24 PROPOSED** amount is \$291,210.00, as it is anticipated that there will be a slight increase in such fees. Judge Getty confirmed that filing fees are currently up for unlawful detainers, but those monetary amounts are expected to stabilize.

Although the Council of California County Law Librarians (CCCLL) is still making legislative efforts to secure one-time funding for county law libraries, Ms. Olawski noted that state funding is not included in the proposed FY23/24 law library budget. Judge Getty believes that the effort to raise the small claims filing amount might be realized. However, she believes that collection companies typically veer towards limited civil jurisdiction, so perhaps the raising of the small claims amount may not have a major impact on the Law Library's funding. Should any future budgetary constraints arise, Ms. Olawski stated that changes could be made to the staffing levels and materials budget.

Ms. Parker moved for a motion to adopt the proposed budget, and Judge Carringer seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

- b. Election of Chairperson—**ACTION:** Judge Getty moved for a motion to instate Judge Carringer as the Chairperson and Ms. Parker seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously. Judge Getty also moved for a motion to instate Judge Healy as the Vice-Chairperson and Judge Cobb-Hampton seconded it. The motion was carried unanimously.

LIBRARIAN’S REPORT:

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on June 26, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by Judge Carringer at 5:15 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
Jonathan Watson

**JONATHAN WATSON, SECRETARY,
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
LAW LIBRARY**