Regular Meeting of the Board of
Law Library Trustees of Marin County

A California Independent Public Agency Under
Business & Professions Code Section 6300 et seq.

Thursday, March 20, 2014, at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Ben Gale, Marta Osterloh, Sam Ware Alexandria Quam, Bob Begley, Elliot Bien and Jason Voelker, Ex-Officio Secretary.

Absent: Steven Schoonover

Call to Order

Ben Gale determined that there were sufficient members to constitute a quorum, convened the meeting at 5:19 p.m., and thereafter presided.

1. Approval of February Minutes

Draft minutes of the February meeting were distributed and reviewed. Bob moved to approve the minutes as written. Marta seconded. The motion was approved 5-0, with Sam abstaining because he was no present for February’s meeting, and Steven abstaining as he was not present.

2. Open Forum

Bill Hale circulated a preprinted statement and asked that the Board consider four separate items contained therein. First, Bill stated that he would like to see the Marin Community Foundation provide the Library with emergency funding in the short term and subsequent funding for legislative initiatives in the long term. He feels that a statewide legislative change in law library funding is required. Second, he expressed concern about the Library’s visibility in the community. He asserted that a small, letter-sized sign containing the Law Library’s address and hours should be posted at each of the County’s surrounding libraries. Third, Bill stated that Jason is an excellent talent, and that the Board should do what it can to ensure that he is not lured away by other opportunities. Finally, Bill noted that he had several ideas for a “Friend’s Group” that he would like to share at a later time.

The Board thanked Bill for his comments, including his recognition of the need for an alternative funding source for county law libraries.
3. Financial Report

3.1 February’s Fiscal Report:

Jason presented the Library’s Financial Statement. The unrestricted fund balance as of February 31, 2014 was $24,446.99. The income from Court filing fees was $14,836.86, $323.70 below that of February 2013. The Unrestricted Fund Balance on March 20, 2014 was $35,760.76, including the February filing fee deposit.

3.2 March Warrants

The Board reviewed a schedule of warrants for payments. In presenting the schedule, Jason noted that Thomson West did not receive payments for Westlaw Next online services in September and October of 2013. In pulling September and October’s bookkeeping documents, it was determined that September and October’s payments were mistakenly paid to West Publishing Services, not West Online Services. Jason recommended that September and October’s Online Service invoices be held in abeyance pending the resolution of the overpayments made to West Publishing.

Sam stated that he was pleased with the amount of arrears the Library had paid down in past few months, and, at the current rate in which arrears have been satisfied, he expects the Library to become current on its debts by the end of the fiscal year.

Ben inquired into the status of the Library’s application for Community Service Funds, explaining to the new board members that the Library sought these funds from the Board of Supervisors to meet the Library’s fiscal deficit and to avoid further cuts to public services. Marta stated that she had not heard anything concerning our application, but that we should check on its status with Mathew Hymel, the County Administrator.

Motion by Sam, seconded by Elliot, that all warrants on the schedule should be paid as suggested. Motion approved 6-0, with Steven abstaining as he was not present.

4. Librarian’s Report

4.1 Phone Services

Jason informed the Board that he had received a new pricing schedule on our Calnet Contract with AT&T. AT&T’s Calnet Contract, which will allow the Library to maintain phone lines at $8.31 per line, has an initial setup cost of $125 per line. For five lines the total initial setup cost will be $625, $500 more than initially projected. Ben asked if the contract with Calnet was still a better deal in the long
run, and, if so, how long would it take to realize a financial benefit from the switch in providers. Jason stated that the Library will see a financial benefit five to six months out – the County charges $187.50 a month for phone services whereas the monthly charge through Calnet will be $41.55 (plus $3-$4 in surcharges and taxes per line).

4.2 Council of California County Law Librarians (CCCLL) Spring Meeting

Jason informed the Trustees that CCCLL’s Executive Board issued the Law Library a $250 grant so that he may attend their Spring Meeting at the State Capital. CCCLL has scheduled an informative program about Law Library revenue and Brown Act requirements. The trip also involves meeting various legislators, speaking with them about law library funding, and addressing legislation we are behind. Sam stated that he supported Jason’s trip to the Capital and that it would be invaluable for our Library to gain CCCLL’s support.

4.3 Trustees Questions and Comments

Marta suggested the need for a statewide law library catalog that would provide a concise, yet inclusive cataloging reference tool, designed to provide all Californians with the ability to browse each county’s law library collection. She asked Jason to discuss this with CCCLL as such a system would provide reliable access to the vast information resources contained within the collections of all California law libraries.

Commenting on funding sources, Elliot discussed the possibility of providing patrons with a fee-based legal research service. This service could provide legislative histories, annotations of statutes, excerpts from research guides and other legal resources. Elliot emphasized the importance of having such a service available for practicing attorneys, recalling the usefulness of the research services provided by Mill’s Law Library when he had a small firm. Ben stated that Jason was in the process of exploring a document delivery service. Jason confirmed that he has been working on a document delivery system but that it did not encompass legal research services. However, he really liked the idea of providing research services. Elliot provided a contact at Mills Law Library and asked Jason to explore the idea.

Inquiring into fundraising efforts, Bob asked whether the Marin County Bar Association continues to raise money on behalf of the Law Library. He stated that the Law Library supplements many of Marin’s solo practitioners and that the Bar should do what it can to support the Law Library during these tough economic times. Ben stated that it has been a few years since the Bar last fundraised on the Library’s behalf. However, the Bar has been very supportive and its current president, Elizabeth Brekhus, helped the Library successfully lobby the Board of Supervisors for a $25,000 allocation for operating costs.
5. **Old Business**

No old Business to report.

6. **New Business**

6.1 **Amend Article 6, section 1 of the Bylaws: Reschedule Regular Meeting Date and Time**

No vote was taken to amend the Board’s regular meeting date and time. However, members of the Board agreed to reschedule the next regular meeting to Monday, April 21, 2014 at 5:15 p.m. Jason is directed to provide proper notice in accordance with the Brown Act.

6.2 **Approval of 2014/2015 Budget for Department of Finance**

Jason presented the Board with a Proposed Budget for 2014-2015, which is attached hereto as Schedule A. Jason noted that much of the work involving the budget had already been accomplished in the preceding months. However, the Library’s anticipated filing fee revenue and the prospect of adding additional staff hours required a few modifications. As for projected revenue, Jason spoke with the executive leadership at CCCLL, who advised that it was reasonable to expect a further decline of 4 to 7 percent in filing fee income during fiscal year 2014/2015. Based upon these figures, the proposed budget assumes an 8 percent reduction in civil filing fee revenue with the option to revise our budget pursuant to any plan the Board may adopt in the next fiscal year. As for additional staff hours, the budget contemplates hiring a part-time library assistant to work 8 hours a week at $15 an hour. The assistant will be available to provide coverage in the event of staff sickness, vacation or any other emergency. The cost associated with this position is $6,240 for FY 2014/2015. The proposed budget also contemplates $5,000 for a reserve in case there are any debts to suppliers that carry over into 2014-15.

Motion by Sam, seconded by Marta, that the Proposed Budget for 2014-2015 hereby be adopted and submitted to the Department of Finance. Motion approved 6-0, with Steven Schoonover abstaining as he was not present.

6.3 **Approval of 2014/2015 Report to Board of Supervisors**

The Board reviewed and finalized its annual report per Resolution No. 2006-112, which requires each advisory board and commission to update the Board of Supervisors on the status of the Board’s activities for the current fiscal year.

After careful consideration, Sam moved to approve the 2014/2015 Report with the option to amend or otherwise revise any portion thereof by March 31, 2014.
Bob seconded. Motion approved 6-0, with Steven Schoonover abstaining as he was not present.

7. **Closed Session (Gov. Code §§ 54950-54963):**

   7.1 **Public Employment (Gov. Code § 54957), Title: Assistant Librarian**

   At 6:22 p.m. Ben announced that the Board would go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

   7.2 **Reconvene Open Session**

   At 6:47 p.m. the Board reconvened in open session. The Board announced that it had reluctantly accepted Suzan Shapley’s retirement notice and had authorized Jason to find a suitable replacement.

8. **Adjournment**

   All business before the Board having been considered, the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m. The next Marin County Law Library Board of Trustees meeting is Monday, April 21, 2014 at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ben Gale, Chair                Jason Voelker, Ex-Officio Secretary