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


Monday, August 18, 2014, at 5:15 p.m.

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

Absent: Marta Osterloh.

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 July Minutes

Draft minutes of the July meeting were distributed and reviewed. Alexandria moved to approve the minutes with the change listed below. Steven seconded:

- Item 2, ¶ 2, line 2, substitute “collaborated” for “corroborated”.

The motion was approved 5-0, with Marta Osterloh abstaining because she was not present and Sam Ware abstaining because he was not at July’s meeting.

2. Open Forum

No individuals other than Trustees and the Director were present and no matters were raised during the open forum period.

3. Financial Report

3.1 July’s Fiscal Report:

Jason presented the Library’s July Financial Statement. The unrestricted fund balance as of July 31, 2014 was $25,659.37. The income from Court filing fees was $16,919.18, $1,702.12 above that of August 2013. The Unrestricted Fund Balance on August 18, 2014 was $37,763.54, including the August filing fee deposit.
3.2 August Warrants

The Board reviewed a schedule of warrants for payments in August. After reviewing the schedule, Jason noted that an invoice for CIT was inadvertently listed twice and that the total amount proposed for payment was $482.49 less than that listed in the schedule.

Motion by Sam, seconded by Steven, that all warrants on the schedule be paid as suggested by the Director. Motion approved 6-0, with Marta Osterloh abstaining because she was not present.

4. Librarian’s Report

4.1 Discuss meeting with County Administrator’s Office Concerning ADR Funds

Jason reported that the County Administrator’s Office agreed to allow the Law Library to maintain $9,527 in account 2120053. The funds were required to be transferred to Dispute Resolution in FY 2008, but the previous director did not effectuate the transfer. Although DOF asked that the funds be returned to the County, the Administrator’s Office agreed that it would create a financial hardship if the Law Library were required to return them. Jason asked, and the County Administrator agreed, to allow the Law Library to utilize the funds.

4.2 Discuss meeting with Court Executive Officer Concerning Support for Law Library’s Future Strategic Plans

Alexandria discussed the Library’s recent meeting with Kim Turner, Court Executive Officer. Alexandria stated that the meeting went very well and that the Court is supportive of the Law Library’s recent changes and looks forward to our strategic initiatives. Kim agreed to help us obtain a portrait of the judges in time for the Law Library’s reopening and also stated that she would ask the Presiding Judge to provide remarks at the Open House. Kim also stated that her office is willing to assist us with our push for funding from the County. Jason agreed that the meeting was successful and thanked Alexandria for arranging it. He noted that the Court cordially agreed to sponsor the Law Library’s Open House and that Kim agreed to provide guidance in crafting our strategic plans.

5. Old Business

5.1 Approve 2013-2014 Report for Board of Supervisors

The Board reviewed the Law Library’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2013/2014. Steven stated that he and Jason made several minor changes to the report and that he thought it was ready to be presented to the Board of Supervisors. Elliot thanked Jason for the detail he put into the report and moved that it be approved.
subject to any further editorial changes made by Steven. Ben seconded. Motion approved 6-0, with Marta Osterloh abstaining because she was not present.

5.2 Law Library’s Open House in October

Ben noted that the Library is scheduled to return to 20 North San Pedro on September 8th with an anticipated opening date of September 18th. Jason agreed that the Library will be open and fully functional in time for the Board to host its grand reopening/open house on Thursday, October 9th, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Elliot stated that he was pleased with the Court’s sponsorship of our event and looked forward to the Presiding Judge’s remarks.

5.3 Law Library Fundraising Efforts

Addressing the Board about fundraising, Elliot stated that outreach efforts should be focused towards the Law Library’s stakeholders. This means that we must build financial support for the Library from the local community, legal professionals, and business owners alike. The best way to effectuate this is to create a friends group who can dedicate their time to activities that raise the visibility of the Law Library and provide a much needed, additional base of financial support. Bob concurred, adding that the Library should be able to solicit business lawyers from the community to establish and maintain a non-profit “Friends of the Law Library” group. Responding to Elliot’s question as to whether Trustees may personally solicit donations, Jason started that he previously read a county counsel opinion that suggested that law library trustees should refrain from solicitation as to avoid the appearance of impropriety. The opinion, however, was directed towards a law library board of judges. So the legal ramifications may entirely be different than those we are currently confronted with. Sam asked Jason to research this issue prior to the next meeting.

As for sponsorship, Jason stated that he recently received confirmation that Inland Business Systems, a Xerox company, agreed to sponsor a portion of the Law Library’s open house. While no precise figure was agreed upon, Jason hoped to have concrete information by the next meeting.

Sam stated that the Law Library should inquire with NOLO to see if they’d be willing to donate some of their more popular do-it-yourself products to not only help the Library but also get their brand name to the community. Jason agreed that the Library needs further NOLO publications for its users, but stated NOLO was recently acquired by a private equity firm and has been difficult to speak with since becoming a wholly owned subsidiary. Alexandria agreed, recounting how NOLO previously provided the Self-Help Center with free Do your own Divorce manuals but discontinued this practice once they were acquired.
Per Article 5, section 1, Ben appointed Elliot, Steven and Alexandria as the Law Library Open House subcommittee for the specific purpose of organizing the reception at the Library’s remodeled location. The committee shall be considered to be discharged upon the completion of the purpose for which it was appointed and after a final report is made to the Board.

6. **New Business:**

6.1 **Discuss Three-Year Strategic Plan for the Law Library**

A proposed outline for the Law Library’s Strategic Plan was circulated to the Trustees. The Board discussed the direction of the Law Library’s strategies and agreed on three new minimum standards: one addressing technology; one for technical support; and one for staffing levels. Elliot and Sam suggested, and the Board agreed, that the strategic design should start with the Library’s Mission Statement followed by the synopsis.

Ben supported the new strategic standards, but though that the plan should be prefaced with the underlying reason for the change in policy. More specifically, he stated that since the moratorium on the increase in filing fees was created in 2005 (Gov. Code § 70601), the Law Library, which receives $32 per filing, has not been able to seek an increase in funding. This has resulted in inflation eating away at the budget for the Library every fiscal year, and preventing the library from modernizing and updating the facilities. While the strategic plan takes this into consideration, it should expressly say so in its introduction. Bob agreed, stating that the users and patrons of the law library have changed and that the changing demographic is something that the library has not been able to (due to budgetary reasons) keep up with, and as such, is not as effective a research facility as it could be.

6.2 **Create an Online Card Catalog System**

Jason explained the process of upgrading our card catalog system to one that will support online public access via our website and asked that the Board appropriate $1,000.00 to begin the process of development and an additional $600.00 each year thereafter to maintain it. The new system will allow library patrons to survey the collection prior to physically coming in and will aid the Library in its document delivery service. After discussion, the Board authorized the creation of an online card system. The new system will have a completely different look, including pictures of book covers, a listing for new titles, better flexibility with searches, the ability for users to create their own reading list and the ability to access the card catalog remotely.
7. **Adjournment**

All business before the Board having been considered, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. The next Marin County Law Library Board of Trustees meeting is Monday, September 15, 2014 at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ben Gale, Chair                Jason Voelker, Ex-Officio Secretary