

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

*1025 ESCOBAR STREET
MARTINEZ, CA 94553*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2025

6:00 PM

**1025 Escobar St., Room 110
Martinez, CA**

**2229 Ptarmigan Dr. #1
Walnut Creek, CA**

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/99019817954?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/99019817954?pwd=Ig6i65bDmwMeoIR8SsAS9lAaG9I1nH.1)
[pwd=Ig6i65bDmwMeoIR8SsAS9lAaG9I1nH.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/99019817954?pwd=Ig6i65bDmwMeoIR8SsAS9lAaG9I1nH.1)**

Webinar ID: 990 1981 7954

Passcode: 228815

Library Commission

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Library Commissioners, please call Library Administration at (925) 608-7700 by 5 p.m. Wednesday, November 19th if you will NOT be at the meeting. A quorum must be established in-person before a meeting can be held. A record is maintained of Commissioners' attendance.

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Chair Nicole Gemmer called the meeting to order at. Amy Brunson took roll and with 18 voting members present, a quorum was established.

Present

Matt DeFraga, Julia Dozier, Tim Fares, Nicole Gemmer, Sue Hamill, Susan Hildreth, Marina Hsieh, Anne Kingsley, Zelda LeFrak-Belleci, Heather Lurvey, Amit Prayag, Donna Rennie, Rachel Rosekind, Robert Sanguedolce, Linda Sendig, Tommy Smith, Michael Swernoff, Bryan Thomas, Bethany Woods, Lorie Tinfow, Arnold Fitzpatrick, Kevin Armonio, Michael Fischer, Sarah Blumenfeld, and Stuart Robinson

Excused

Robin Eckert, Stacie Hinton, Amenda Kung, and Dennisha Marsh

Absent

Jim Dexter, Vivian Faye, Shrikant Garde, Lynn Mackey, Robert Mason, Richard Means, Frederick Page, George Pursley, and John Huh

2. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

There were no visitors and no self-introductions.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present at this meeting.

4.

Attachments: [July 2025 Minutes](#)

With 13 "Aye" votes and one abstention, the motion to accept the July 17, 2025 meeting minutes as they were presented was passed.

Motion: Marina Hsieh

Second: Donna Rennie

Abstentions: Julia Dozier, Linda Sendig, Matt DeFraga, Michael Fischer, Stuart Robinson

5.

Attachments: [Co Librarian Report Nov 2025](#)

From her attached report, County Librarian Alison McKee highlighted Read Contra Costa event with Percival Everett. Over 800 people attended both in person and online. She also spoke about attending a fundraiser for the new Oakley Library in which Commissioner Fitzpatrick was honored with a certificate of appreciation by the Friends of the Library for his many years of service and support.

6.

Attachments: [LC-CCCLC Annual Report 2025](#)

Commissioner Smith highlighted the four goals of the 2026 work plan, which is attached to these minutes. He also stated that the main challenge going forward is maintaining the momentum of advocacy and fundraising now that the advocacy ad hoc committee has sunsetted.

Commissioner Tinfow asked how the working group (which consisted of Tommy Smith, Anne Kingsley, and Tim Fares) would characterize the changes they made to the goals from 2025 to 2026. Answer: The group tightened up the language so that it wasn't so broad.

Commissioner Hsieh asked to add page numbers to the report, which is reflected in the attachment to these minutes.

Michael Swernoff made a motion to accept the 2025 Annual Report and 2026 work Plan. Michael Fischer seconded the motion.

The Library Commission voted unanimously to accept the 2025 Annual Report and 2026 Work Plan.

7. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF 2026 LIBRARY COMMISSION

Committee Chair Kevin Armonio explained the Nominating Committee's process for selecting the candidates for the Library Commission Chair & Vice-Chair.

The slate presented was Tommy Smith for Chair and Heather Lurvey for Vice-Chair.

The floor was opened for additional nominations. No additional nominations were made.

Motion: Julia Dozier
Second: Linda Sendig

The Library Commission voted unanimously to accept Tommy as Chair and Heather as Vice-Chair of the Library Commission for 2026.

Motion to dissolve committee: Kevin Armonio
Second: Matt DeFraga

The Library Commission voted unanimously to dissolve the Nominating Committee.

8. AGENDA SETTING FOR NEXT MEETING and FUTURE TOPICS

Rachel Rosekind: Provide commissioners with overview of innovative and impactful programming services and partnerships that the County Library has spearheaded, and even maybe some of the partnerships and services, too.

Zelda LeFrak-Belleci: Presentation about the Library's intellectual freedom.

Tommy Smith: Twice a year update on the Sunday Self-service hours

Amit Prayag: For later in 2026, any updates on strategic marketing plan

Anne Kingsley: What are libraries doing for technology access and digital literacy

9.

Attachments: [2025 Facility Projects November 2025 Commission](#)

The presentation slides are attached to these minutes. Q&A was as follows:

Michael Swernoff asked about backup generators and earthquake retrofit in the new projects. For the deferred maintenance projects, there will be no earthquake retrofits. For the new builds, and at this point only speaking for the Bay Point Library, the plan is to have a backup generator there. The idea is for that library to be used as a resilience center, for periods of extreme weather and smoke.

Michael Swernoff also asked about the possibility of relocating staff during the projects to another location that could open Sundays. Alison responded by saying the Library can't add an additional day of service. The three options laid out in the MOU are: 1. Relocate to another location during its regular operational hours 2. Use accruals 3. Opt for absence without pay.

Nicole Gemmer asked if the Library has ever had so many closures at the same time. The answer is no. There will be processes in place for messaging to the public, as well as accounting for any fluctuation in statistics when it's time for the strategic plan progress report.

Julia Dozier asked if there are temp spaces to open during the closures. The answer is no, temp spaces are only for very extended closures. Julia also asked if any of the projects included getting solar panels. The answer is no due to lack of funding.

10. WORKING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Kevin Armonio met with assemblymember Lori Wilson to discuss an increase in funding for CLSA. She was immediately on board and suggested asking for \$10 million. She offered to circulate a coalition letter to increase CLSA funding among her colleagues in the assembly, and the California

Library Association provided her with a template, which she's currently circulating.

Nicole Gemmer and Dennisha Marsh met with Senator Gray who suggested a joint legislative coalition letter. They also advocated for additional funding for the ESL program and for the Lunch in the Library program.

Heather Lurvey met with Assemblymember Farias who said she would also sign on to Wilson's letter. She may also be willing to introduce a bill about at least one of the funding requests.

Michael Fischer asked how the Library's process for funding requests has changed. Alison McKee said that the change is mainly in the timing, that waiting for the release of the Governor's annual budget is too late. Legislators recommended talking to them in the fall for a better chance to get something included in the budget.

11.

Attachments: Proposed Dates for 2026 Library Commission Meetings

There was a quick discussion about changing the start time of the meetings in 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., but there were no proposals for a change.

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Thursday, July 16, 2026

Thursday, September 17, 2026

Thursday, November 19, 2026

Marina Hsieh made a motion to accept the above dates as the official meeting dates for 2026. Julia Dozier seconded the motion.

The Library Commission voted unanimously to accept the 2026 Library Commission meeting dates.

12. **CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence was received.

13. **COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Michael Fischer spoke about the citizens initiative to get funding for new library in El Cerrito. They need 1,770 valid signatures from registered voters, and they submitted 2,471 signatures (unclear how many of those were valid). They are hoping for an item on the June 2026 ballot.

Kevin Armonio reported on the progress of the new Oakley Library planning. He met with some of the architects who asked if there were interesting or unique features he would like to see in the new library. Kevin polled the groups and some of the suggestions included: cafe, bookshop, 3d printing station, cross ventilation to cut down on HVAC, event space that can serve different purposes, e. g. a lounge or community center, and low furniture on castors for children.

Linda Sendig reported that Brentwood mayor Susannah Meyer is making a proclamation for a Friends of the Library Week at the December 9 City Council meeting.

Stuart Robinson reported that Lafayette Library had 120 people in attendance for the Fratello marionettes program. The Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation staff hosted a table at the annual Lafayette Trick or Treat Shoot event, and there were over a thousand pieces of candy handed out. There's also been an influx of food bank donations due to potential lapse in SNAP benefits.

Rachel Rosekind reported that Kensington Library is having a program on January 20 titled In Depth on County Sustainability. County staff will present on the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. She also thanked the County Library for its donation of bilingual and Spanish books that she was able to hand out at a fundraiser for the Immigrant Resource Fund for Monument Impact in Concord.

Amit Prayag reported that the Clayton Community Foundation had its biennial book sale on October 17 and sold about \$6,600 worth of books.

Matt DeFraga reported on the spruced up community room at Martinez Library, located outside of the Friends Bookstore. They added a wood railing around the wall to prevent scuff marks from chairs. He also mentioned that the Martinez Friends have a new president who has been getting a lot done, including discovering archival documents in the storage room.

Anne Kingsley reported on the ribbon cutting for a new student lounge area at DVC, which also included the unveiling of commissioned portraits of active library users.

Bob Sanguedolce asked about the recent Carnegie Library Foundation grants. The County Library has three former Carnegie Library buildings (the original Antioch, Concord, and Walnut Creek Libraries) that were built from funds from Andrew Carnegie in the early 20th century.

14. ADJOURNMENT to the Thursday, January 15, 2026 LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING.