

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF LAW LIBRARY TRUSTEES OF
LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

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

June 25, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Law Library Trustees of Los Angeles County was held on Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 12:15 p.m., at the Los Angeles County Law Library Mildred L. Lillie Main Library Building at 301 West First Street, Los Angeles, California 90012 for the purposes of considering reports of the affairs to the Library, and transacting such other business as might properly come before the Board of Trustees.

ROLL CALL/ QUORUM

Trustees Present: Judge Mark Juhas
Judge Laura Seigle
Judge Rosa Fregoso
Judge Susan DeWitt
Judge Cherol Nellon

Trustees Absent: Susan Steinhauser, Esquire

Senior Staff Present: Katherine Chew, Executive Director

Also Present: Marcelino Juarez, Finance Director

President Juhas determined a quorum to be present, convened the meeting at 12:16 pm and thereafter presided. Executive Director, Katherine Chew, recorded the Minutes.

1.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Library employee, Paul, addressed the Board regarding the retirement of Kathleen O'Laughlin. He discussed how much of a privilege it had been for him to work with Katie, and gave her his best wishes regarding her retirement.

Library employee, Channa, also spoke about Katie. She wanted to congratulate Katie, and to let her know how much the staff love and appreciate her. She stated that the staff and patrons will miss Katie, and wished her luck in the next phase of her life.

Library employees, Sharon and Mary, then addressed the Board. Mary stated that they were there to show their support of the staff recommendations laid out in Items 4.3 and 4.4. Mary discussed how the entire mission of the library boils down to the phrase access to information equals access to justice. The library is neutral. Mary has worked in the library's branches and witnessed first hand people's hesitancy to enter a courthouse for information. People do not feel safe going through security. She believes that is important for the library to remain in its current location. Here patrons do not have to be afraid, especially in the current political climate, when it comes to the justice system. Patrons have contacted us in various languages reenforcing this idea. Sharon then added that we do not want people visiting our main branch to have the same fears they have about visiting a courthouse.

Joe Edmiston then addressed the Board. Mr. Edmiston began by stating that he first came to the library in 1965 when he was a senior in high school. He let the Board know that he wants to increase public support for keeping the library where it is. He let the Board know that he has created a website at savethelawlibrary.org. The organization is not a 501C3. They are an advocacy organization. Accepting donations to help get the website going. He stated that the organization will likely be at every Board Meeting moving forward to give a report on the organization's activities. He finished by also paying his respects to Katie O'Laughlin.

2.0 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

3.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

- 3.1 Approval of Minutes of the May 28, 2025 Regular Board Meeting
- 3.2 Review of May Financials and List of April Checks and Warrants
- 3.3 Approval of Revisions to Job Description, Senior Librarian
- 3.4 Approval of FY2026 Property & Liability Insurance Estimates

President Juhas asked the Board if anyone would like an item removed from the Consent Calendar. Trustee DeWitt requested that Items 3.1 and 3.2 be removed. President Juhas requested a motion to approve Items 3.3 and 3.4. So moved by Vice President Seigle, seconded by Trustee Fregoso. The motion was approved unanimously 5 – 0.

3.1 Trustee DeWitt requested a correction to the minutes from the May 2025 Board Meeting. The minutes stated that Trustee DeWitt said that the Budget Committee was coming up with a plan to reduce budgetary dependency on reserves. She wished to clarify that she actually stated that the library should come up with a plan so that the Budget Committee could approve it.

Trustee DeWitt then asked that the minutes also clarify a statement regarding Gensler and possible conflicts of interest. In the May minutes, Trustee DeWitt raised the concern that the library having Gensler inspect the library facilities may possibly be a conflict of interest. She requested that the response in the minutes clarify that the discussion of conflicts of interest were only referring to the library allowing Gensler to inspect the library facilities, not to other possible conflicts of interest relating to the library Board. E.D. Chew responded that we would revise the minutes and have the Board review them at the next meeting.

3.2 Trustee DeWitt then asked for clarification of a check for \$1,240 for employee and staff meals from page one of the May checks. Finance Director, Marcelino Juarez, informed her that this was an expense from and all staff training day, and that this was not a recurring expense.

4.0 Discussion Items

- 4.1 Recognition of Kathleen O'Laughlin with thanks for years of service and best wishes for her planned retirement on June 30, 2025 from LA Law Library

Ryan Metheny, Director of Reference & Collections, presented Katie with a trophy commemorating her retirement. He then went on to discuss how Katie was the first person he met when he began working at the library. He stated how much she had helped him, as well as other staff members and patrons. She lead with empathy and warmth.

Katie O'Laughlin then addressed the Board. She began by thanking E.D. Chew and the Board for the opportunity to work for LALL. She stated that she thought she would never be happy again after leaving the bookstore she used to work at. However, she fell in love with the library. She discussed how much she would miss the staff, the building, the patrons, and the opportunity to help people.



4.2 Approval of Operating and Capital Expenditures Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Finance Director, Marcelino Juarez addressed the Board. He stated that the Board had briefly touched on the budget at last month's meeting, and that some refinements had been highlighted in the staff report this month. He then asked if any of the Board Members had any questions.

Vice President Seigle asked why there was a 50% reduction in the Friends of the Los Angeles County Law Library contribution. E.D. Chew stated that the previous policy was for the Friends to pledge a certain amount. This time around, the Gala was held, the Friends covered the expenses, and the library is supposed to receive the remainder of the donations. Trustee DeWitt asked if we know the amount of the contribution at this point. E.D. Chew responded that the Friends are paying \$50,000 from the 2024 Gala, and \$50,000 from the 2025 Gala, and will contribute over the course of the year. Trustee DeWitt then asked if we know how much money was donated to the Friends for the 2025 Gala. E.D. Chew responded that they collected \$285,000 in donations. Trustee Fregoso then stated that the Friends were still working on collecting promised donations.

Vice President Seigle then stated that the refinements contain pretty big numbers. She asked if we hired a grant writer if they would be a consultant or an employee. President Juhas responded that they would be a consultant. Vice President Seigle then stated that she did not believe that the idea of hiring a consultant grant writer had been discussed in detail previously. E.D. Chew confirmed that this had not been raised before, however, while budgeting we decided to put some money aside for a consultant. This issue will require further discussion. It seems like additional grants will not be a priority for the Friends. We have set aside the market value for a grant writer.

E.D. Chew then discussed the \$10,000 increase in supplies for the library's conservatorship classes which are growing quickly. The library has never budgeted for this before. The library is planning ahead to set aside money for expected costs of photocopying, toner, etc. She then moved on to the \$24,000 for fire life safety. Mark Rangel, Facilities Supervisor, added that the library is due for five year and annual testing which has not been completed since 2022. E.D. Chew then moved on to the \$385,000 for capitol expenditures which include seismic retrofitting. There is an ordinance from the city which requires buildings be brought up to code. As an independent agency, we have not yet received an official notice of the ordinance like other county and city agencies. However, the library is taking a proactive approach and has already begun the process of seeing how much it will cost to retrofit the building to bring it up to code. This will be important in determining the most cost-effective approach in regards to demolishing the building versus retrofitting it. Trustee DeWitt asked if the \$385,000 is just for analysis. Mark responded that it would cover both analysis and design. Vice President Seigle asked for a timeline. Mark responded that the analysis and design would take 3-6 months. President Juhas requested a motion to approve Item 4.2. So moved by Vice President Seigle, seconded by Trustee DeWitt. The motion was approved unanimously 5 – 0.

Trustee DeWitt then requested that the library come up with a plan to deal with the library's deficit so that the Budget Committee could look it over. Trustee Nellon then inquired about the status of the parking structure. E.D. Chew responded that our consultant is in the second phase of testing the concrete. Mark Rangel stated that the process had been impeded due to scheduling conflicts. Trustee DeWitt asked to clarify if the repairs would cost roughly \$500,000. Mark responded that yes, to reinforce the structure would cost roughly \$500,000. Trustee DeWitt then asked if the parking structure, once completed, was expected to collect about \$500,000 per year in revenue. E.D. Chew responded that \$500,000 per year is what was collected when the parking structure was still operational during daytime weekday business hours several years ago. However, with expected development of entertainment venues in the civic center area, there is an opportunity to possibly keep the parking structure operating in the evenings or weekends to target that market and possibly generate even more than \$500,000 per year.



4.3 Discussion of Los Angeles Superior Court Request to Delay Nomination of National Historic Landmark Designation for Los Angeles County Law Library

Ken Bernstein, Principal City Planner and Manager of the Office of Historic Resources, and Andrew Salimian, Director of Advocacy at the Los Angeles Conservancy, addressed the Board regarding the Library's pending historical landmark designation. E.D. Chew explained that the approval of the library's designation is on the August 8, 2025 Board agenda of the State Historical Resources Commission. This designation would formally recognize and celebrate what was determined in 2009-- that the library is eligible for California designation and national historic designation because it is part of the Los Angeles Civic Center Historic District. She believes that this designation would provide options to increase exposure to the public, outreach, funding, and increased media attention. This would also solidify the Board's bargaining power should it become necessary to sell the library's parcel. The designation adds extra value to the parcel itself. The library is already part of a historic district. The designation will not shorten the process, or make development plans for Stanley Mosk less complicated because Stanley Mosk courthouse is also already part of the historic district. Both the library and the court are already subject to CEQA historic preservation laws. The designation will also not prevent us from demolishing the building, selling the building, or improving the building. Procedurally, this issue is on the consent calendar for August 8, 2025. The State Historical Resources Commission is subject to the to open meeting rules of the Bagley-Keene Act. If there is a request from the public or a board member to remove this item from the consent calendar, it will get put on the discussion calendar which is open to the public to give testimony or offer evidence on the item.

Vice President Seigle stated that her courtroom is at the Spring Street Courthouse which is a national historic landmark. They are not allowed to make any alterations at this courthouse. She cannot hammer a nail into the wall to hang a picture. Rules are very strict because of historic designation. Trustee DeWitt inquired if that designation is different from the one the library is pursuing. Ken Bernstein stated that he believes that the federal courthouse is individually listed in the national register. The fact that there may be limitations on what can be done internally to that building may be operational issues. If it is GSA, or a federal agency that oversees this, it may be their regulations. The library already has historic status. It is formally determined eligible for the national register of historic places listed in the California register of historic resources. Vice President Seigle stated that she has heard that when a building gets designated as historical, it is harder to sell it because it is harder to make alterations. She has heard that the LA Times Building is sitting empty because they cannot convert it to apartments or something else because of all of the landmark status around it. Mr. Bernstein responded that that is inaccurate. His offices work closely with the owners of the building. They have approved adaptive reuse plans for the building that are in keeping with its historic status. It is more of an issue of financing when it comes to altering that particular building.

Mr. Bernstein stated that he saw some references in the minutes from the last Board Meeting that appeared to be inaccurate based on what we know about the Civic Center Historic District. Trustee DeWitt inquired which statements he believed to be inaccurate. Mr. Bernstein responded that there was a statement indicating that none of the county buildings had any kind of historic status. E.D. Chew clarified that the statement was made by David Slayton in regards to the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. Mr. Salimian clarified that Stanley Mosk is not formally designated, but is part of the district. To tear down Stanley Mosk, they will have to do a full EIR. They will have to go through the CEQA process, say this is a historic resource listed on the California Register. There is an impact in CEQA. This is an impact on a cultural resource that has been determined eligible, and is on the California Register. To demolish it is an impact, and there will be an EIR.

Vice President Seigle stated that she is concerned about if we decide we have to retrofit the building for earthquake safety, and if it is determined that it makes more sense to demolish the building and rebuild for various reasons. Trustee Fregoso stated that cost is one of the factors.





Vice President Seigle agreed, and stated that efficiency is another factor. We could build a building that is more energy efficient, and has all kinds of advantages that did not exist when the current building was built. She wants to make sure that by having this designation we are not adding to the timeline, and we are not adding costs if the designation did not exist. Mr. Salimian responded that it would not because those requirements are already in place due to the building's historic status today. President Juhas asked if we decide to tear down the building, he knows that we will have to go through CEQA, will this designation prevent a wrecking ball? Mr. Salimian responded no. It is the same designation we currently have in terms of CEQA.

Vice President Seigle then asked what benefits the proposed designation would grant the library on top of our current designation. E.D. Chew responded that the proposed designation is honorific. It could help us as far as promoting the library, getting grants, getting the media's attention. It will not be a negative. Mr. Salimian stated that to be listed on the national register is much simpler than being listed on the California Register through the Section 106 process. A national register site has cache. He works in advocacy. Some people say that designations hurt property value, but when a nationally registered house is listed on Zillow, it is the first thing on the listing. Vice President Seigle asked if a house is designated as a national historic landmark, can someone just buy it and tear it down? Mr. Salimian responded yes, but you will still have to go through CEQA because it is listed in the national register.

Trustee Nellon asked why this historic designation was initiated last year. E.D. Chew responded that she felt like it would be a good opportunity to get grants, the cache that comes with the designation, and understanding that there are a lot of redevelopments being planned in the corridor. She believes that it would be important to protect the historical cache of the library. It has not been made public where the courts are planning to move buildings. Because we are an independent agency, we cannot depend on bond money or state money. We are an independent agency that has to deal with trying not to draw on reserves. We hope that our elected officials will come up with more money, but if that does not happen, we have to come up with a plan. Everyone else has other funding. We have to think about our parking lot, salary raises, safety requirements. In addition, with a national historic landmark designation, you can get consultation on how to retrofit the building which could potentially save us a lot of money. She has been told that the designation adds value, and it is often cheaper to retrofit a historic building than demolishing and rebuilding it.

Trustee Nellon stated that what gives her pause is that Mr. Bernstein and Salimian are advocates. She would like another opinion from a neutral party. Mr. Salimian responded that Mr. Bernstein is a neutral party. He is from a city agency, he is here to tell us what the law is. Mr. Bernstein clarified that he is not there to advocate, but to explain that the building already has historic status. The added step of national register designation will not change the city's review process. Trustee Fregoso asked if E.D. Chew, Mr. Bernstein, or Mr. Salimian are aware of another entity who is similarly situated like the library, who has this designation, has been able to capitalize on using the designation to raise money that we could talk to in order to confirm that this is financially advantageous. Mr. Salimian responded that he does not know of any other structure as convoluted as the library. He worked for a non-profit in New York where they designated sites. They received grant money to work on those sites through FEMA, and the National Trust. The National Trust has grants available to things listed on the national register. Trustee Fregoso asked if the National Trust is federally funded. Mr. Salimian responded that no, the National Trust is independent. Mr. Bernstein stated that he thinks it is important to be realistic that the funding sources for historic preservation and historic rehabilitation are generally not robust. Many of those organizations have received cuts in the last few years. Designated historic status generally helps to receive funding. He does not want to overpromise positives, and believes there may be overblown fears about potential negatives. He believes that it is true that having a building listed in the national register opens up some of those avenues. There are also historic preservation incentives specific to designated historic properties. Since the building has been determined eligible for national register, there is the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit that is a 20% tax credit for qualified expenditures in rehabilitating a historic property. E.D. Chew stated that that would not be an advantage to us because we do not pay taxes. Mr. Bernstein responded that those tax credits can

actually be syndicated or sold to investors that can offset income. There are ways that organizations akin to this one have used the historic tax credit at the federal level. There is also a state historical building code which provides code relief and greater flexibility for designated historic properties. The state historic building code provides greater flexibility to stewards of historic property.

E.D. Chew stated that we would like to look into this. We are currently looking for a grant to replace current fluorescent lights with LED's. Our bill needs to be 25% higher to qualify, but with a historic designation maybe they would make an exception for us.

President Juhas believes we need to think about how we fit physically in the world, as well as how we intellectually fit in the world. Trustee DeWitt asked if there are any other buildings in the civic center historic district that is also historically designated. Mr. Salimian responded that City Hall got its designation. The GWP building is a city historical monument.

Trustee DeWitt inquired about who asked us to delay the historic designation. President Juhas stated that the court has never asked us, but then said that that is not entirely true. Trustee Fregoso stated that the court made a presentation, but she believes the request is coming from us to discuss a possible delay. Trustee DeWitt stated that the Agenda item is entitled "Discussion of the Los Angeles Superior Court request to delay the nomination." Trustee Nellon stated that that is not what happened. Trustee Fregoso stated that they gave us the information to consider. President Juhas stated that through discussions the court has expressed concern about a designation. They did not call up and say to put this on the agenda. This was an internal discussion. Trustee DeWitt stated that that was news to her, because she was not involved in those internal discussions. President Juhas stated that this item got on the agenda because he received a request from a couple of Board Members requesting to put this on the agenda.

President Juhas stated that we must decide whether to delay the historic designation, or to let it go on the August 8th meeting. Vice President Seigle asked when the next meeting would be if we did decide to delay it. E.D. Chew reiterated that this is already on the consent calendar on the agenda. According to the Bagley Keene Act you can request that it be removed from the consent calendar, but it would be moved to the discussion calendar. Vice President Seigle asked why can't we just say we do not want this right now, we want to put a hold on it and we will get back to you in "x" number of months. E.D. Chew responded because it is already a noticed public meeting. It would go off of the consent calendar, onto the discussion calendar. The same discussion would happen then and they would decide to vote about it. Trustee Fregoso replied so you're saying that it could potentially be put on the September agenda. E.D. Chew responded that it would just go on the discussion calendar.

Trustee DeWitt stated that it has been suggested in the memo that was prepared that it would be perceived as weakening the library's position in future negotiations, and a possible conflict of interest, and a breach of fiduciary duty to essentially ask for a delay in the designation by the Board Members. That is how she interpreted the memo. Delaying designation at the request of the potential buyer of the court could be perceived as weakening the library's position in any future negotiations, and a possible conflict of interest, and breach of fiduciary duty. Trustee Fregoso inquired which page Trustee DeWitt was looking at. Trustee DeWitt responded page 4. She went on to say that she personally is not concerned about her fiduciary duty, or her conflict of interest, because she has faith in herself to act as a fiduciary in the best interest and in compliance with her fiduciary duty. She stated that she does not pretend to know what the FPPC conflict of interest rules are, she is not an expert on that, but she would find it difficult to believe that there could be a conflict of interest because that basically means the Board could never do anything. The Trustees could never do anything that affects the courts, maybe because it's a very specific entanglement with the court could be contrary that makes it different, but that's basically true of any vote we take. She commented, "But maybe there is something I don't understand, and I confess I don't know how the FPPC rules would work out. But separate from that, I'm not concerned about a conflict of interest because I believe that I can act as a fiduciary, consistent with my fiduciary



duties.” E.D. Chew stated that the conflicts issues were addressed in an attorney/client memorandum prepared by the Library’s Special Counsel in response to an inquiry from the Library’s former ED and forward to the Board. Trustee DeWitt responded those did not address the Fair Political Practices Commission opinion on the topics. ED Chew agreed that the memorandum did not address the FPPC opinion concerning immunity for the Trustees. She stated that while it was certain the Board intended to abide by their fiduciary duty, conflicts issues are raised depending on who the Board decides to contract with –the state, county, or city--in future negotiations concerning the building. She recommended that time be allowed to seek a formal opinion from the FPPC before the Board decided to enter into any contract. Trustee DeWitt stated that she believes that we are conflating some things again. She has a question about if E.D. Chew is saying that she believes there is a possible conflict of interest under the FPPC for even voting on whether or not to delay the historic designation. And then there is a separate issue about whether or not there is a fiduciary duty and or a FPPC issue for Gensler. That is a different issue. She wants to keep them separate because she believes the analysis is different. She has some different issues with the Gensler analysis because she does not believe that we are contracting with that consulting firm, so to her that does not rise to the level of being a problem. Again, she is not an expert on the FPPC. President Juhas then stated that we should be able to stop this without a conflict. He is with Trustee DeWitt in his belief that there is not an ethical problem. Vice President Seigle stated that she does not see anything happening in the next three to six months where we are waiting for a grant to come in, but we have to have this designation in order for the grant to come in. She does not see how a delay would make us lose money because of the delay. Trustee DeWitt inquired that a delay is not a conflict, but voting on going forward is? Vice President Seigle responded that she does not see how. President Juhas called the question. The staff recommendation is the nomination of the library to the national register of historic places scheduled on August 8 move forward. Trustee Fregoso then asked what exactly we can do if we cannot delay it. If they take it off of the consent calendar there is a discussion. Can that result in a delay? Do we even have the ability to do that? Vice President Seigle responded that it seems like if we showed up at the discussion and said we would like to postpone this for three months that they would say okay. Trustee DeWitt asked if we need to or should do anything at this point. President Juhas responded that if we do nothing then it will proceed. He inquired who would oppose or delay this going forward. Trustee Fregoso then suggested tabling this until the next Board Meeting so that the Trustees can think it over.

The Board decided to carry over Items 4.3, 4.4, and 5.1 to the July Board Meeting.

The Board also wanted to clarify that in Item 4.3, it was not the Court who requested to discuss the delay of the nomination. It was, in fact, members of the LA Law Library Board.

4.4 Update: Superior Court Offer for Gensler Firm to Assess LA Law Library

5.0 CLOSED SESSION

- 5.1 Conference with Labor Negotiator (G.C. 54957.6). Library Negotiator:
Executive Director Katherine H. Chew, with Finance Director Marcelino Juarez;
Employee Organization: SEIU Local 721

6.0 RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION/ CLOSED SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT (Pursuant to Government Code §54957.1)-Katherine H. Chew

7.0 AGENDA BUILDING

Items not on the posted agenda may be presented by a Trustee and, if requested, may be referred to staff or placed on the agenda for consideration at a future meeting of the Board.

8.0 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT



9.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 1:38pm. The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Law Library Trustees is scheduled for Monday, July 14, 2025 at 12:15pm.



Katherine Chew, Executive Director and Secretary
Los Angeles County Law Library Board of Trustees

