

September 18, 2017, BLT Agenda Item Comments

Comments on the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees (BLT) [agenda](#) items submitted by:
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Item 1. Minutes of the August 21, 2017 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

The following very minor changes are suggested:

Handwritten **page 4** (= page 1 of minutes): Item II. ROLL CALL, under Staff Present, last line:
“Senior IT Analyst Avery **Meglinti Maglinti**” [see [staff directory](#) and Item 6 on page 3]

Handwritten **page 6** (= page 3 of minutes): Item 7, paragraph 1, sentence 2: “*Staff is reimagining spaces at Central **Branch Library** to increase capacity.*”

Item 4. Expenditure Status Report

The draft minutes for August 21 indicated a promise was made to present the final expenditure report for FY17 at the present meeting (see minutes for Item 4 on draft minutes page 2, handwritten page 5 of the present agenda packet). The present report does not appear to be the fulfillment of that promise.

In the absence of such a report, or simply as a matter of general interest, the Trustees may wish to explore the City’s new [Open Budget Portal](#), which provides an alternate and independent way to view the Department’s actual expenditures (and revenues) compared to budget. To see last year’s expenses, go to the Operating Budget and select [2017](#). To see “year-to-date” (although it’s not immediately obvious how current they are) expenses against the current budget, original or revised, select [2018](#). Clicking on the resulting histogram bars breaks them down to a finer level. For example, clicking on [Branch Operations](#) shows CdM and Balboa expenses were a little over budget in 2017, while Central and Mariners were under. Clicking on the latter bars will pinpoint the exact line items that were over budget. The Open Budget Portal also allows the Library operating budget, expenses and [revenues](#) to be downloaded in spreadsheet form for further study and manipulation.

Item 8. Facility Needs for Central Library and the Mariners and Balboa Branch Libraries

The idea of creating room for library expansion at Mariners Branch by moving the Recreation and Senior Services activities from the present **Jorgensen (note spelling) Room** to a new free-standing community room built near the Jorgensen Room’s original location by the park restrooms is brilliant. The chance of immediate funding seems slim, but it’s a goal to work toward and it might be sold as a kind of substitute for the now-shelved proposal to build a full-sized West Newport Community Center. It seems more doable than getting approval for expanding the current library footprint into the park.

It might be noted that policies [B-5](#) and [I-7](#) for use of the present Jorgensen Room are among the few library policies the City Council has chosen to retain control of (see non-agenda comment at end of this document).

Item 9. Corona del Mar Project Update

While the report on the status of the short-term improvements is good, it misses the obvious question the public is most interested in: What has become of the plans for rebuilding? Apparently sufficient money is allocated in the budget, but has any progress been made toward awarding construction contracts?

Item 10. Review of Request to Close Libraries for Staff Training

This sounds like a better plan than rather arbitrarily closing for the whole day on December 7 for the [Clifton StrengthsFinder](#) exercise. However, after the installation of a new Integrated Library System, I thought staff needed at least a half day to train on the new system and confirm it is truly functional and working as expected before reopening. Is it thought staff can complete the ILS switch-over and career training in a single day?

Item 11. Newport Beach Public Library Staffing

The report is helpful for disclosing the array of people required to make the Library Services Department work.

Since the hours worked by the many part-time employees are difficult to guess, the following numbers derived from “Full Time Equivalent employees” by Division, taken from the current year’s City [Budget Detail](#), are probably closer to the number of people required to actually operate the various facilities on a given day (recognizing the FTE’s are presumably based on a 40 hour work week, so the numbers working at a given time need to be corrected for operations running a different number of hours, by correcting by a factor equal to 40 divided by the actual hours open, as shown -- although the hours shown are the [public ones](#), only, and hence underestimate the correct ones for staffing).

**FY2017-2018 City Budget for Library Services
Full Time Equivalent positions by division**

| Division | FTE's | Hours open | Average number working at one time |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Admin | 8.45 | 40 | 8.45 |
| Tech | 3.00 | 40 | 3.00 |
| Balboa | 3.63 | 63 | 2.30 |
| CdM | 2.48 | 51 | 1.95 |
| Mariners | 11.77 | 71 | 6.63 |
| Central | 28.00 | 71 | 15.77 |
| Literacy | 0.50 | 40 | 0.50 |
| total: | 57.83 | total working at peak: | 38.61 |

It would be interesting to know if these numbers match the Department's staffing estimates, and also who pays the personnel costs for the staff manning the three [conciierge locations](#).

The Trustees may also wish clarification of their role in setting the staffing levels, in particular, their ability to add or remove positions. Staffing is presumably integral to the library budget, which, under City Charter [Section 708](#), requires Council approval. And additionally, even if changes were cost neutral, under Charter [Section 601](#), it is the City Council which "*shall provide for the number, titles, qualifications, powers, duties and compensation of all officers and employees.*"

Item VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

In view of the City Council's actions on August 8, 2017, (agenda [Item 18](#)) to modify one and repeal most library policies, I continue to think the Trustees have an obligation to go over the full array of library policies and explicitly re-enact those former "Council policies" that it wishes to continue in force.

For example, the former [Library Service Policy](#), which, although apparently not featured on the library website, served since 1984 as a kind of mission statement for the library department, has been reduced to a quite different [Council Policy I-1](#). One might think the Trustees would want to reassert their vision and post it on the library website.

Meanwhile, those policies posted on the library's [policy page](#), to the extent they copied Council-adopted policies as reflected in the revision dates and policy numbers, have been repealed as far as the City Council is concerned. One might think the Trustees would want to review and re-enact those policies, as well, if it is the Board's intention they remain active.

Incidentally, for those interested in the history of the City's policies, the City Clerk has recently created a portal for posting [past \(and current\) versions](#) of policies in the [Council Policy Manual](#). As implied above, due to the Council's action on August 8, most of those relevant to the Library Board are now found in the [Policy Repealed/Ended/No Longer in Use](#) folder.

My understanding is these repeals are not really an attempt to abolish the policies, but rather part of an effort to ensure the City's Boards and Commissions are given their proper latitude.

As a side note to this effort by the Council to restore to the Library Board the power to independently set library administrative policy that was given to it at its creation (by [Ordinance No. 166](#) on June 6, 1920, pursuant to the 1901/1909 California Library Act) and continued under City Charter [Section 708](#), there remains uncertainty over the shared responsibility not just for personnel, but for financing in general. A particularly puzzling example is that while the Council has been pursuing an agenda of moving the City's many fees and charges (such as sewer rates) out of the Municipal Code and into a consolidated Master Fee Schedule that could be adjusted by resolution, when the Board last presented a schedule of Library Fees to the Council for their review, the Council took the opposite tack and "ratified" the schedule as part of [Ordinance No. 2016-14](#) (see Section 4 on page 7). Since that predated the Council's current move to divest itself of dicker with library policy, it is unclear if this means the Library Board cannot alter any of the ratified fees without asking the Council to pass a new ordinance.