

December 17, 2018, BLT Agenda Comments

These comments on Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees (BLT) agenda items are submitted by:
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Item 1. Minutes of the November 13, 2018 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

1. **Page 6** (handwritten 9), Item 15, paragraph 1: “~~The~~ Orange Coast magazine will interview Ms. Rosin. ... The Committee is exploring the Lido ~~Hotel~~ House hotel as housing for lecturers; searching for a couple of new members; and considering creating an advisory board.”
2. **Page 6** (handwritten 9), Item 15, paragraph 2: “Chair Ray expressed surprise that the Committee had not released promotions ~~with~~ for the first lecture in January.” [?]

Item 2. Customer Comments

Comment 3: Although no contact information was provided, I would think the Trustees would be interested to know what library staff’s response is to the purported need for more signage pointing to library facilities in neighboring areas. Also, does staff know what “B-O-T” stands for?

Comment 7: I know from a visit to the Redondo Beach Library earlier this year that they use a system in which print jobs are sent as email attachments to a specified library printer email address. This avoids the need for installing special software on devices.

Item 3. Library Activities

The **25th anniversary** of the opening of the Central Library is certainly an occasion to note and celebrate. It would also seem an occasion on which the BLT may wish to reflect not just on the facility’s past, but also on its future.

In coastal planning, 75 years is typically quoted as the “useful economic life” of a building. The City’s own [Facilities Financing Plan](#) places an even shorter 50 expected life on most City buildings, including the Central Library, for which it sees an anticipated need for replacement in 2052 (based on an incorrect construction date of “1997”) at an estimated cost, in today’s dollars, of \$37 million. By either measure, the Central Library is one-third to half way through its useful life, raising the question of whether the current Board has a clear vision for its future? Does the BLT expect the existing building to be demolished and replaced with something new? Or does the Board envision a process of continual incremental renewal, avoiding, forever, the need for complete replacement? In either scenario, discussion and planning probably needs to start soon. The next 25+ years will pass quickly and in some schemes funds that could be used for repair and maintenance of an aging building might better be saved for its planned replacement. The BLT’s vision for the future of the Central facility also affects more immediate decisions such as the location and design life of the proposed lecture hall (agenda Item 8) which, it would seem, need to be integrated with plans for the future of the main building.

Regarding the Admin Retreat, under “Weaknesses,” it is unclear if the Admin Team regards “*becoming a “beta test site” for new technologies*” as something NBPL currently suffers from, or as a possible threat to its future operations. If this is seen as a current failing, what current activities does the Admin Team see as falling in this category?

Regarding the All Staff Meeting, did the Admin Team present the conclusions of its SWOT assessment to the library staff? Were they invited to comment on it, and if so, did they have any comments? Does the BLT find the analysis accurate?

In connection with major anniversaries, as the Trustees may know from their Trustee Manual, the year following the Central Library’s 25th anniversary, 2020, will mark the **100th anniversary** of Newport Beach’s formal commitment to providing the public with a municipal library. As the Manual indicates, that commitment was made official on June 7, 1920, when the City’s five-member Board of Trustees (the forerunner of today’s City Council) adopted, at final reading, Ordinance No. 166, establishing a separate five-member Board of Library Trustees empowered, [like many others](#), to manage, maintain and control library facilities pursuant to the State’s [Library Act of 1901](#) and its successors. In anticipation of the BLT’s passing the 100 year milestone in 2020 (the first BLT was appointed on [October 11, 1920](#)), the current Board may wish to ask current library staff to try to fill in the early history of our municipal library a bit more clearly than is presently available on the [library website](#). The current BLT might also wish to seek clarification of how its legal standing (its powers and duties under its creating ordinance) were affected by the BLT’s re-acknowledgment, 34 years later, in the City Charter ([Section 102](#) of the Charter continued all ordinances not in conflict with it).

Item 5. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List

The list of policies continues to include Council Policy I-7 (Library Meeting Rooms) but omits a periodic review of the mysterious [City Council Policy I-1](#) (Library Service Policy), which was revised to its current form in 2017 without consulting the BLT. Policy I-1 is definitely not a “Service Policy,” and taken literally would appear to advise the BLT against amending any policies without advice from the Council (based on a power the Council would not seem to have under the Charter). It would seem some discussion with the Council about the content and intent of I-1 is needed.

Item 6. Proposed use of the retail space located on the Central Library 2nd floor entrance.

In keeping with one of the opportunities identified by library staff at the Admin Retreat (as described under agenda Item 3), this could alternatively be used as a space to connect homeless patrons with services available to them.

With regard to the “self-service copier/scanner/fax machine,” since the hours of availability would apparently be more limited than those of the library in general, I hope this is not seen as replacing the services currently available near the reference desk.

Item VII. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

1. NBPL's print charge of \$0.15 per page in black and white and \$0.75 in color (which does not appear to have been approved by the BLT, at least in Circulation [Policy NBPL 12](#)) remains excessive, especially when compared to the Council established full cost of service of \$0.03 per page in black and white and \$0.10 in color as set in the City's [Schedule of Rents, Fines, and Fees](#) (see lines 5 and 6 on the first page of the [Detailed SRF](#)).
2. I believe the NBPL WiFi system, both at Central and the branches, remains "on" at all hours. However, access to it at the branches is blocked the instant they close. I do not believe blocking access to a functioning system at any hour is consistent with a library's mission as a provider of public access to information, but the practice of blocking access at the instant of closing is inconsistent with the practice at the Central Library (where access is allowed for at least an additional hour) and seems a completely arbitrary inconvenience to patrons at the branches who may be close to completing a project on a personal device close to the closing hour. There must be better ways to encourage people to leave a building.
3. Item IV in the *BLT Manual* is a copy of the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding between the BLT and the City Manager. Section B of that document placed important duties on both parties with regard to the management of the library, the BLT hearing employee concerns, and other matters. In the nine or so years that I have been paying attention to the BLT, I cannot recall any evidence of Section B being followed as agreed to.