

June 16, 2014, BLT Agenda Item Comments

Comments on the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees (BLT) agenda items, submitted by:

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Item 4. Approval of Minutes (May 19, 2014, Meeting)

Changes to the passages shown in *italics* are suggested in ~~strikeout~~ underline format.

Page 1, line 1: “*The agenda for the Regular Meeting was posted on **Wednesday, May 15**, 2014 ...*” [May 15 fell on a Thursday. I assume this was intended to read either “**Wednesday, May 15 14**” or “**Wednesday Thursday, May 15**”]

Page 1, Item 3, paragraph 1: “*Jim Mosher called attention to page eleven in the meeting packet and noted that the budget documents which were noted in the link on page 2 of the Library Activity Report deviated considerably from what was reported to the **City Council Trustees** in February 2014. He called attention to page 129 of the Performance Plan in this link, noting that the maintenance and operations budget for the Library is noted at \$2 million and that it was presented in February to **City Council the Trustees** as \$1.8 million.*”

Page 3, Item 3, sentence 3: “*She reviewed staffing changes, the Pitch ~~and an~~ Idea project, Passport Services ...*”

Page 3, line 5 from bottom: “*City Council approved the **Sculpture Garden** and the Arts Master Plan.*” [since future readers might assume the “*Sculpture Garden*” refers to a new feature proposed to be added to one of the libraries, a better descriptor might be what seems to be City staff’s more official name: “**Sculpture in the Newport Beach Civic Center Park Exhibition**” or “**Sculpture in the Park Exhibition**”]

Page 5, last sentence: “*He feels that it would be a good idea for the Newport Beach Independent to be made available in the **Public Giveaway newspaper stacks** area and was disappointed to see that the copies that had been in ~~this that~~ area **at Mariners Branch** had been removed.*”

Item 5.A.3. Expenditure Status Report

Assuming this report correctly discloses year-to-date library expenditures through May 31, one would expect 11/12^{ths} or 92% of the budgeted funds to be spent, as is close to the case with *Salaries and Benefits*. The *Operating Expenses*, however, appear to be about 4% (or roughly \$70,000) short of that goal. It would seem prudent to see that the remaining planned expenditures are made to bring the total to 100% before the end of the present fiscal year so that money allocated for library purposes does not need to be returned to the City’s General Fund.

However, there seems to be some question about the reliability of these reports. Although the *Salaries & Benefits* entries are consistent, the similar printout provided to the Board in May indicated an *Operating Expenses* budget of \$2,525,445.91 with \$1,722,688.48 of year-to-date expenses, and a \$213,492.30 *Capital Outlay* budget with \$172,809.46 spent year-to-date. That is difficult to reconcile with the current report, a month later, showing different budget goals and different year-to-date expenses in both categories: \$1,525,383.02 and \$14,347.63.

How can the year-to-date expenditures be *lower* than they were a month ago?

Was the May reporting of the *Operating Expenses* and *Capital Outlay* budget and expenses erroneous? If so, why do the May report's FY2013-14 budget amounts agree with the FY2013-14 budget amounts listed in the recently approved City-wide *Performance Plan* for FY2014-15?

And what is the significance of the **negative** \$25,992.25 entry for *Capital Outlay/Office Equipment* expenses in the current reporting month?

It seems to me there is a serious financial problem if the Council approved budget for library *Operating Expenses* and *Capital Outlay* in FY14 was \$2,525,445.91 + 213,492.30 = \$2,738,938.21 (as indicated in the *Performance Plan*) yet with just a month left in the budget year, only \$1,525,383.02 + 14,347.63 = \$1,539,730.65 has been spent. The library would be shortchanging itself by more than \$1 million.

Item 5.A.4. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List

1. The May 19 [draft minutes](#) (page 4) record a request for "Library Services Manager Dave Curtis to prepare a report for the June meeting noting ways to improve the Library's outreach." Has this been folded into the *Carlsbad Library Report* scheduled for August 18th?
2. It is good to see a *Review of Library Capital Improvements and/or Capital Outlay Needs* scheduled for October 20th. I continue to be puzzled how the \$2,000 requested of Council for the coming fiscal year can be adequate to meet the library's needs.
3. Since it was requested by the Trustees at the May meeting, it is disappointing to see a discussion of the tenant space across from Bistro 24 at the Central Library neither agendaized for discussion nor on the Monitoring List.
4. Although not requested by the Trustees, it is also disappointing not to see a discussion of the plans for the future of the Corona del Mar Branch scheduled for a future meeting.

Item 5.B.2. Internet Use Policy

1. If it has proved adequate for users and staff, the simplicity of the existing internet policy is admirable, but as previously indicated, I feel it might be helpful both to users and to staff to give some specific examples of the illegal or disruptive uses that are prohibited by the policy, rather than leaving it entirely to the imagination of the readers.
2. I also think it might be useful to include in this document a statement about the Library's policy regarding providing WiFi access to the internet – a service that may not have existed when the policy was last revised in October 2006 (note: it seems to me the child safety links were updated more recently than that).
3. Before making any changes, it is probably useful to reflect on what the intended purpose of Policy I-8 is, and how it is intended to fit in with the other library policies.
4. It might be noted that there are a very large number of library internet use policies accessible via the web with which the NBPL one might be compared. There is little uniformity in them. That for the [Orange County Public Libraries](#) includes specific rules lacking in ours, but similar to those recently included in the NBPL Media and Sound Lab

policies. The [Los Angeles Public Library](#) Internet Use Policy is similar to the OCPL one. The [San Francisco Public Library](#), by contrast, has a policy linking (at the end) to extensive rules, procedures and sub-policies on its [Computer Help & Rules pages](#).

Item 5.B.3. NBPL Sound Lab Policy and NBPL Media Center Use Policy

1. Although these policies promise the availability of a reservation system, they make no clear statement as to the hours available for reservations.
2. Several behaviors are prohibited, but the penalty for violating the prohibitions is not stated.

Item 5.B.4. Donor Wall

As the Trustees may recall, when the idea of donor recognition opportunities in the Central Library expansion area was first presented to them, the concept seemed to be one of finding donors who would fund naming the areas after notable figures from the world of literature and culture. I thought that was a great idea, although it was later clarified that the names of celebrated literary figures were being used only to illustrate what the lettering would look like.

Although I understand and appreciate Karen Clark's contributions to the City library system, the currently adopted naming scheme, where the only qualification for recognition is a dollar donation, gives the impression the person honored actually paid the cost of the item named after them.

I would be curious to know if the City has an estimate of the prorated construction cost of the library areas being named, and how that compares to the dollar size of the donations required for donor recognition in them.

As an earlier example, I suspect Donna and John Crean donated less than the full cost to construct the Mariners Branch Library, yet their names above the entry may give the impression they paid for it in full.

Item 7. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

The May 19 [draft minutes](#) say "*The next meeting will be held at the Corona del Mar Branch and **will give the Board an opportunity to look at the Corona del Mar branch library and Fire Station planning.** Library Services Director Hetherington noted that the next meeting would give those in attendance an opportunity to share their ideas for this branch, and look at what is working and what is not.*" [page 2, emphasis added]

In view of the promise highlighted in bold, it is disappointing that a discussion of the CdM Library/Fire Station planning does *not* appear on the present agenda, nor, as noted above (under Item 5.A.4) even on the Monitoring List for a future meeting. Although the public will indeed be able to express their thoughts about the branch, the Trustees ability to discuss them as they relate to future plans will be severely, and unnecessarily, limited.