

December 15, 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. Draft November 17, 2014 Minutes

Possible changes to the passages shown in *italics* are suggested in **strikeout underline** format.

Page 1, Item 4: “**Motion** made by Trustee King and seconded by Vice Chair Prichard and carried (3-0-2-0) to approve the minutes of Monday, October 20, 2014 **with revisions as noted.**” [?, the meaning of this is unclear since no revisions are noted in the present minutes]

Page 3, Item 1, sentence 1: “Director Hetherton attended the Newport Beach Author’s Workshop and Book Fair where he spoke to the audience on the topic, ~~the state of the book~~ **The State of the Book.**” [?, is there some reason the title of the talk is in lower case italics?]

Item 5.A.1. Customer Comments

Comment 1: “*On the right side of the screen there is a link to "Get a library card" under the large letters MY ACCOUNT. This registration will allow you to use the catalog and place holds, but you will need to come into one of the Libraries to complete the application and get the physical card to check out materials.*” Does completing the on-line application/registration form provide access to the library’s on-line databases and eBooks? Or does that require a physical visit to the library to validate the process?

Comment 3: “[Young Champions](#)” (an organization requesting advertising in a library newsletter) appears to be a for-profit company. If it were a non-profit should the new public handout policy (Agenda Item 5.B.3) allow the organization to advertise its call for volunteers by placing material on the display shelves?

Item 5.A.2. Library Activities

It would be helpful for the reports to be more explicit as to the period they cover. When the BLT met on the first Monday of the month, the Director reported orally on the period just ended while the written reports on the Consent Calendar gave a more permanent and detailed account of activities in the calendar month prior to that (much of which had been touched on in the previous meeting’s oral report). Now that the BLT meets on the third Monday of the month, the period being reported on in writing seems uncertain.

Director’s report

Bullet point 2: “*We resumed public training with Tuesdays at 2.*” The Library Calendar suggests the program is on hiatus again. Is it expected to return next year?

Bullet point 10: "*Patrons now get 7 days to pick up their hold items.*" When there are multiple holds on the same item, does this lengthen the wait time for patrons further down the queue? Or is a delayed pickup subtracted from the circulation time?

Bullet point 16: "*We resumed our Secret Shopper program*" What is the Secret Shopper program?

Bullet point 17: "*The Library now has a YouTube account.*" This YouTube "channel" seems to have been used so far only for posting a Rex Brandt painting [demonstration film](#) (digitally transferred in the Media Lab?) supporting [a program](#) offered in coordination with the City Arts Commission. Are there plans to use YouTube in the future, for example for explaining Library services? In the case of the preceding post, its cultural significance could have been enhanced by providing a few words about how the Library came to be in possession of the film, its origin and the context within which it was produced, including when and by whom – not to mention a link to the exhibit and lecture the posting supplemented.

Page 2, "*Here are some quick facts from fiscal year 2013/14*"

- It is interesting to see how the "program attendance" figure breaks down between children's and adult programs (children's being by far the largest part). Is the circulation number also reported in categories that distinguish children's from adult items?
- The number of computer and WiFi sessions seems surprisingly small compared to the reported number of visitors. If the numbers are to be believed, less than one visitor in six (even less if some have multiple sessions) makes use of those electronic services during their visit. I would have guessed the number to be much higher. Could it be the number of visitors is being overstated?

Item 5.A.3. Expenditure Status Report

The Library Services Department probably has no control over it, but the labeling of the various classes of salaries as "MISC", "PART TIME" and "SEASONAL" (in budgets prior to Fiscal Year 2014-15, "MISC", "PERM PART TIME" and "TEMPORARY") seems confusing to the uninitiated. I believe "MISC" means "miscellaneous" as a labor/benefits category different from "safety" (as opposed to "miscellaneous" in the sense of not otherwise listed) and refers to the fulltime library staff. Who are the "Seasonal" employees in a library context and what season is being referred to (from the charts at the end of the previous item, the Activities Report, library activity doesn't seem particularly seasonal)? Why have they become the dominant non-fulltime salary category in the budget but not so far in the expenditures?

Item 5.B.2. Additional Space for Expressive Use – Amended Policy

I applaud Library staff for bringing this item forward.

- The location suggested seems a good one, especially if it is covered. If it is regarded as too obtrusive, a location just to the left of the word “ENTRANCE” in the final diagram might be suggested.
- Clause 1 in the policy could be clearer as to whether any advance registration is required to use the areas and under what circumstances the “Director or designee” could deny use. Since the content of free speech uses can’t be censored, I believe the intent of that clause is primarily to ensure that users of the areas be given a copy of the rules.
- The second sentence of Clause 7 of the policy might be clarified if the expressive use areas are intended to be usable for fundraising activities such as cookie or other sales.
- The revision date of “February 6, 2012” at the bottom of the written policy would seem to need to be updated.
- Does anyone know what the expressive use policy is for the non-library parts of the Civic Center?

Item 5.B.3. Display and Distribution of Materials in Library Policy

The change in name from “*Pubic Give Away*” to “*Display and Distribution of Materials in Library*” Policy is good!

- Preamble: my recollection is the extensive shelving that once existed at the Central Library has largely been replaced by free-standing display kiosks, and that there is an area for City/Library distribution separate from that for public giveaways.
- Clause A: I believe that some of the materials that have historically been available on library giveaway shelves, such as the private school news publication, may be larger than 8.5x11”.
- Clauses B:
 - “*free of charge public events*” would be easier to read if it were punctuated as “***free-of-charge public events***”
 - I thought the Board had asked for “*held in Newport Beach*” to be expanded to “*held in Newport Beach or nearby areas*”?
 - Should this be limited to announcements of free **events**, or might it include free **services**?
- Clauses B & C:
 - There seems to be a considerable gray area between what is allowed on the shelves and what is prohibited. For example, would brochures describing an

organization or soliciting membership in it be acceptable if they did not announce a specific event or service?

- Is the intention that materials *must* be mentioned in Clause B, or be similar to the materials mentioned, but even if they are they will *still* be banned if they include any of the material mentioned in, or similar to that mentioned in Clause C? If so, this could be clarified with an introductory phrase such as “C. *Otherwise acceptable materials will not be allowed if they contain ...*”
- I thought there was an intent to say materials would be accepted on a space-available basis with priority given to certain categories of materials.
- The revision dates at the end of the policy need to be updated. The current dates look suspicious, with an “update” occurring after the last “adoption.” Was the update approved? I also thought the restriction to government-only publications was more recent than 2005, or did it just start to get enforced in recent years?
- Has the present revision been reviewed by the City Attorney?

Item 5.B.4. Retail Space in 2nd Floor Expansion

However useful it may be to some patrons, a competitive private commercial operation of a type that could, and does, exist elsewhere, such as the proposed private travel agency office, seems to me an inappropriate use in a governmental building since it gives the impression the tenant has somehow been officially endorsed.

There is also still seems to be the unresolved policy question of what rent the City (or BLT?) expects to charge, and how heavily the rent might be subsidized for a non-commercial use or for a use providing a public service.

Of the options suggested, the Plein Air Painters use seems to me closest to the Library’s cultural mission. A post office branch / mailing station would also seem good although the layout may not be ideal in terms of access and storage of packages, etc..

Item 5.B.5. Review 2015 Holidays - Meeting Schedule

In the absence of more verbiage, the staff report is a bit difficult to follow but it seems to be calling attention in red to the fact that the normal BLT meeting date coincides with two 2015 holidays, [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day](#) and [President’s Day](#), on which, according to the City Calendar, City Hall will be closed. I assume this means the libraries will be operating with weekend/holiday staffing and non-essential weekday library staff has the day off? Article IV, Section 1 of the [BLT Bylaws](#) would seem to suggest that the BLT meeting date automatically defaults to the following business day (Tuesday). This seems reasonable and proper to me since it would seem vaguely improper to perform routine City/governmental business on a day that has been officially declared to be a holiday from such business.

Item 5.B.6. Arts Master Plan

This does not seem the place to critique what Arts OC calls the “*Newport Beach Master Arts and Culture Plan*” but the plan, however it may evolve, does seem intimately connected to the Library Board’s mission since the library serves as a hub for the City government’s involvement in arts and culture, providing materials, venues and programming. In addition, although the distinction between BLT-supported activities, City Arts Commission-supported activities, Recreation and Senior Services-supported activities (theoretically overseen by the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission) and City Manager initiated grants is historically blurred, the City Council sees the Arts and Cultural Services expenses as a category within the Library Services budget.

A former Arts Commissioner and at least one member of the public speaking at the City Council’s November 25 Study Session suggested the taxpayer’s money might be better spent informing the public of the opportunities that already exist rather than contemplating the construction of still more “brick and mortar” facilities. I agree. As an example involving the BLT, the Board provides space in the Central Library ground floor lobby for continuing exhibitions of visual art, but short of calling the Library and hoping to be connected with someone knowledgeable about it, I think the public, and especially members of the public from outside Newport Beach, would find it quite challenging to determine what’s currently showing, or what will be showing in coming months.

Finally, although the staff report undoubtedly correctly indicates that staff is “*awaiting Council direction in regard to revisions of the plan,*” I don’t think it’s clear, at least to the public, in what form staff expects that direction to come. Will another Study Session be held? Should the BLT be communicating its views to the Arts Commission or City Council?

Item 5.B.7. Corona del Mar Branch Project Update

It might have been helpful to remind the Board, and public how the proposed 2,500 + 1,200 square feet of “usable public space” + “restrooms & mechanical space” compares to the current facility’s “usable public space” + “restrooms & mechanical space.”

It might also have been helpful to explain if the completed and attached survey form has any special significance, or is simply one more in a continuing series.

Item 7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Consolidating electronic resources into a new “[eBranch page](#)” on the library website seems a useful organizing tool, but I would suggest that under “eBooks” it link to the existing [Downloadable Library](#) page (found through a link under [Books & Media](#)) rather than attempting to invent a new page. In addition to linking to OverDrive and Axis 360, that older eBooks page provided a very helpful staff-prepared sub-page giving tips on how to find [Public Domain eBooks](#), which is now much harder to find. But even the latest version of the older eBooks page failed to call attention to *all* the eBooks available with a NBPL card, including those found through database gateways such as the Gale Virtual Reference Library or TumbleBooks.