

October 19, 2015, BLT Agenda Item Comments

Comments on the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees (BLT) agenda items submitted by:
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Item V.B. Minutes of the September 21, 2015, Board of Library Trustees Meeting

Page 3: last line: "*~~Mari~~ Mary Lou Hergel reiterated her recommendation to allow more time to study the item.*"

Page 4: paragraph 2, last line: "*Additionally, she noted her willingness to engage in fundraising and that she would be willing to donate \$10,000 towards ~~to~~ the children's area.*"

Item V.A.1. Customer Comments

Regarding Comment 4, doesn't the [current policy](#) of a three week (21 day) initial checkout with two renewals make a total of **nine** weeks continuous checkout possible, rather than the **twelve** weeks stated in the response?

Item V.A.2. Library Activities

Regarding "*Welcome aboard Janet Ray!*" and her husband's family's involvement in the building of past City libraries: Does Ms. Ray's membership on the Board preclude her husband's company from bidding on the new CdM Library construction?

Item V.A.3. Expenditure Status Report

It is disappointing that the City's new accounting software seems, at least for the moment, to be making *less* financial information readily available than before. The numbers are even difficult to compare with those [posted](#) by the Finance Department since they are grouped and consolidated differently.

Regarding specific changes, the column that previously came at the end showing the expenditures to date as a fraction of the budgeted amount seemed helpful. Hopefully it will return?

Also, in a table showing "*FY 2015-2016 Year **To Date***" it would seem helpful to indicate exactly what **date** it is "**to**."

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

It is unclear why a planned date for the final item ("*Election of Board of Library Trustees Officers/Trustee Liaisons*") is not listed. Normally the election of officers takes place at the first meeting in July. It was delayed this year only because the City Council (perhaps realizing too late that there was a truly "open" seat) failed to follow its own [policy](#) and make an appointment based on the many applications it had available in June.

Item VII.A.5. Mariners Branch Update

It is good to see the Board continuing its commitment to visit the branches, which I think was at one time a more frequent occurrence (when it held “study sessions” between its monthly meetings).

I find interesting the references to Senior Clerks,” “Clerk IIs,” “part time clerks,” “assistants” and various other positions. I do not recall the Trustees ever having been briefed on the various job descriptions within the library’s administrative structure, what they do and how they differ.

Under “*Public Service*” I am curious what the reference to “*our service population*” of 17,043 refers to. Who determines the “service population” for a branch, and how? What are the service populations of the other branches?

Also under that category, I am pleased to see mice are being offered with the laptop checkouts, and hope they will be offered at all branches. I can testify that to those unfamiliar with laptops, the absence of a conventional mouse as a pointing device can be very daunting and sharply limit the pleasure of their use.

Under “*Class Visits*” it might be noted that this mentions visits by **third** grade classes. Is this different from the Friends-supported “**First Grade Class Visits**” program described in the following report?

Item VII.A.6. Youth Services Update

This is an exceptionally excellent and thoughtfully prepared report, which was a pleasure to read. Its primary defect is that it, like the other reports in the present agenda packet, lacks page numbers for easy reference.

That said, with regard to the pie chart on the next to last page, it might have been helpful to clarify if in preparing the chart each item in the juvenile collection was assigned to a single mutually exclusive category. For example, paperbacks could be fiction or nonfiction, but I assume that if an item is counted as a “paperback” it is not counted in one of the other categories as well? Likewise, I assume a “biography” (which I think is a very important category for young readers to be exposed to) is not also counted as a “non-fiction” item?

It would also have been useful to have listed, and possibly illustrated, the volume of circulation for each category. As alluded to in the paragraph preceding the chart, circulation activity evidently varies widely among categories.

Regarding the children’s programming, I am a bit puzzled by the implementation of the Foundation-funded “*Making Memories*.” Without having read their articles of incorporation or by-laws, I would have assumed the Newport Beach Library Foundation was a pass-through organization whose *sole* purpose was collecting donations in support of *library* activities. While I can see how that might involve hosting a certain number of fundraising events, having the Foundation designing, providing and paying for its *own* series of library-like programming, direct to the public and possibly in competition with that put on by the Library, seems to me at cross-purposes with what I would have assumed was the Foundation’s original purpose.

I guess I have the same problem with their Distinguished Lectures Series, unless that is seen solely as a fundraising venture, which I'm not at all sure it is (are the tickets promoted as donations to fund City library services?).

Item VII.A.7. Review of Library Capital Improvements and/or Capital Outlay Needs

If staff has a list of items already under consideration, it would have been useful to make it available prior to the meeting as a starting point for discussion.

Item VII.A.8. Corona del Mar Branch Library Project Interior Layout and Exterior Design

The architect's proposed Option D-4 looks like a distinct improvement over the previously proposed interior layouts.

It still, however, appears to be missing the requested interior dimensions as well as a rendering showing what the interior space might look like to its occupants.

In addition, the renderings of the three exterior options do not appear to have been updated to reflect the new interior layout. In particular, I am unable to see what the windows in the rear wall might look like.

I am also unsure where or how, if that is still the plan, the Rex Brandt mural would be incorporated into either the interior or exterior design.

Regarding windows, it was suggested by some at previous Board meetings that the opportunities for windows in a library are extremely limited since all the walls will be lined with bookshelves, making it difficult for the two to coexist. I hope those visiting the Mariners Branch will note it has both windows *and* books, making it a much more pleasant and inviting place to use than the old Mariners Branch was. The vast majority of books are placed near interior walls; so the books don't block the windows, and it all works well.

Item VII.A.9. Placement of Rex Brandt and Joan Irving Brandt Paintings in the Central Library

I assume the "*RECOMMENDATION*" in the staff report is for a Trustee to "*recommend*" (to the full Board), rather than "*approve*," the placement of the pictures -- as it already seems to say in the paragraph at the top of the second page. Empowering a joint committee of the Library Board and Arts Commission to make a private decision out of public view and without public comment is probably a violation of the Brown Act. Speaking of which, the "*NOTICING*" at the end of the report should say "*Board of Library Trustees*" rather than "*City Arts Commission*." Finally I might suggest the Joan Irving Brandt work looks so bland and unassuming that finding a place where it will not be overwhelmed by its surroundings may be difficult.