

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Board of Library Trustees
Newport Beach Central Library
1000 Avocado Avenue, Newport Beach, CA 92660
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 20, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.

I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Chair Watkins called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

II. **ROLL CALL** – Roll Call by Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist

Trustees Present: Chair Paul Watkins, Vice Chair Kurt Kost, Trustee Douglas Coulter,
Trustee Janet Ray

Trustees Absent: Secretary Barbara Glabman (excused)

Staff Present: Tim Hetherton, Library Services Director
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist
Rebecca Lightfoot, Adult Services Coordinator
Melissa Hartson, Circulation & Technical Processing Coordinator
Cherall Weiss, Literacy Coordinator

Staff Absent: Debbie Walker, Youth & Branch Services Coordinator/
Acting Library Services Manager

III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Led by Trustee Ray

IV. **NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC**

V. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. **Consent Calendar Items**

1. **Minutes of the August 23, 2021, Board of Library Trustees Meetings**

Chair Watkins noted necessary changes to the minutes as follows:

- Page 10, from “Chair Watkins said” change to “Chair Watkins the fine policy made common sense and should be continued in place but that he appreciated Library Services Director Heatherton’s moderation or discretion where needed.”
- Page 11, change Newport Beach Public Library Foundation (NBPLF) “Board Member” to “CEO.”

2. **Patron Comments**

Monthly review of evaluations of library services through suggestions and requests received from patrons.

3. **Library Activities**

Monthly update of library events, services, and statistics.

4. Expenditure Status Report

Monthly expenditure status of the library's operating expenses, services, salaries, and benefits by department.

Chair Watkins noted that the Board of Library Trustees (BLT) is about 2% over budget at 17% of the way through the Fiscal Year. This is acceptable based on the typical BLT spending pattern.

Library Services Tim Director Hetherington agreed with Chair Watkins' assessment.

5. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List

List of agenda items and dates for monthly review of projects by the Board of Library Trustees.

Motion made by Vice Chair Kost, seconded by Trustee Coulter, and carried (3-0-1-1) to approve the Consent Calendar with edits to the minutes of August 23, 2021.

AYES: Watkins, Coulter, Kost

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS: Ray

ABSENCES: Glabman

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review

6. Resolution Honoring Assistant City Manager Carol Jacobs

The Board of Library Trustees will honor Carol Jacobs for her contributions to the Library and the City prior to her retirement on October 8, 2021.

Chair Watkins read aloud a resolution written by Library Services Director Hetherington for retiring Assistant City Manager Carol Jacobs. He then presented the resolution and flowers to Assistant City Manager Jacobs.

Assistant City Manager Jacobs thanked the BLT for the resolution and praised the Library staff, Library Services Director Hetherington, and the BLT. In retirement, she has accepted a position in a private consulting firm as an Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Trustee Ray stated she met Assistant City Manager Jacobs through the Library Lecture Hall project. They took several trips together and noticed Ms. Jacobs' willingness to go above and beyond. She stated it was nice getting to know her personally.

Library Services Director Hetherington said the resolution was accurate and that she had been a great help to him in running the Library and wished her the best.

7. Literacy Services Update

Literacy Coordinator Cherall Weiss will give an oral report on the Literacy program and events.

Literacy Coordinator Cherall Weiss reported on an article from *Corona del Mar Life Magazine* which highlighted one of the program's tutors. She also provided the BLT with copies of *In Our Own Words*, the annual anthology of learners' writings.

Chair Watkins said that *In Our Own Words* contained many touching and well written stories.

Literacy Coordinator Weiss stated that learners were very excited to see their work in print, and the publication is a good example of what learners and tutors do together. During the pandemic, Literacy offered online classes and tutoring and resumed in-person classes when the Library reopened. Some learners preferred to continue on Zoom, but this format is no longer offered. Last week, they held International Literacy Day with a crowd of about 75 people. International Literacy Day is an annual event that honors the learners and tutors, but 2020 was skipped due to COVID. Over the past year they held three successful virtual Happy Hours and a live Happy Hour is scheduled for October 9 featuring local author Maggie Shipstead. All BLT members are invited to attend.

Chair Watkins inquired if *Great Circle* was available in the library and learned that there is a waiting list for the book.

Literacy Coordinator Weiss explained that the book would be available for sale at the event.

Literacy Coordinator Weiss explained that over the past year during the pandemic they had lost many tutors and learners because of the switch to the online format and noted that other literacy programs saw similar decline. They are being proactive and trying to recruit more learners and tutors. Generally, there are about 200 learners per year, but the number dropped in 2020 to approximately 130. They are advertising on local radio and are developing collaborations with other Orange County organizations such as Share Our Selves (SOS) in Costa Mesa and the parent groups from Newport Mesa Unified School District. She reported she had a scheduled meeting with the adult school from Huntington Beach as they are trying to make inroads into Newport Beach as well. She showed the BLT a flyer that contained information on the services offered. She reminded the BLT that the name of the program has changed to Project Adult Literacy, which is a name that better reflects what the program does and showed a cellphone card holder to the group. Marketing Specialist Maria Nicklin assisted with the cellphone card holder and the new logo. Programmatically, they have had four online high school graduates, five new U.S. citizens, and learners who met 266 personal goals. Sixty-one percent of the learners that set a goal in 2021 to improve their working ability as well as parenting skills, believed they had met the goal. The first in-person new learner orientation will be at the end of September, and there is a live tutor training in October. She indicated she was happy to answer questions.

Trustee Ray inquired if Amazon and other reward programs were automatically updated with the new name or if patrons needed to update their information.

Literacy Coordinator Weiss explained the 501c3 name of Newport/Mesa ProLiteracy had not changed.

Chair Watkins called for further comments and questions.

Trustee Coulter congratulated Literacy Coordinator Weiss on a good job.

Chair Watkins stated that Literacy Coordinator Weiss had put together a wonderful advisory board that is fun to meet with and committed to the cause. He called for public comment, but there was none so the BLT received and filed the report.

8. Lecture Hall Update

Trustee Ray will report on activities related to the Library Lecture Hall project.

Trustee Ray reported that the Lecture Hall was moving forward. On September 28, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. there would be a City Council Study Session on the topic. BLT attendance would be appreciated and ideally they wanted 100% support.

Chair Watkins thought there was unanimous support from the BLT for the Library Lecture Hall. He asked the Trustees to be present for the Study Session. Library Services Director Hetherington and senior staff will be present. He did not believe there would be much opposition, although there are a few people who do not support the Lecture Hall who might be there or may send letters. Larry Tucker will report on the financial needs of the Lecture Hall, and Library Lecture Hall Committee Chair Jill Johnson-Tucker will open the Study Session with a progress report on the project and will provide a report from the BLT's perspective. He expected the conversation to focus on the financial aspect of the project.

In response to Trustee Coulter's question about increased construction costs, Chair Watkins explained that all construction costs had increased and continue to increase. The real issue is the additional infrastructure necessary to tie utilities into the Lecture Hall.

Trustee Ray noted that Mr. Tucker would have more information related to the finances.

Chair Watkins again asked for BLT presence on September 28. He called for further questions of Trustee Ray, but there were none. He called for the public comment.

Ronnie Watkins, Newport Beach resident, shared that Speak Up Newport was hoping to have a program on the Library Lecture Hall.

Chair Watkins stated that the NBPLF should be advised of the Council Study Session so members can be present. The BLT received and filed the report.

9. Balboa Branch Replacement Update

Trustee Ray will report on activities related to the Balboa Branch Replacement project.

Trustee Ray reported she met with Library Services Director Hetherington, Secretary Glabman, Melissa Hartson, Rebecca Lightfoot, and Annika Helmuth last week on the Balboa Branch Replacement.

The committee understands the need for careful planning and noted that the Fire Department's needs would be considered. They will be sensitive about the building's placement on the land. This was the City's first library branch, so there is a historical component to the facility. She asked Library Services Director Hetherington to show the committee what the building looked like in 1929 when it was originally built. It had an adobe look with a courtyard and was a "little masterpiece." Librarian Annika Helmuth will complete a branch needs assessment to identify the community demographics, statistics, and how the building will be used. The building has different uses during different points of the year with tourists and traffic in the summer. There may be public meetings at Marina Park.

Library Services Director Hetherington stated the Balboa Branch would be an excellent place to house the Nautical Collection and Local and Street Collections because it was the first library building in the City. Special collections can draw patrons from other areas of the City. He noted the partnership with the Sherman Library. The first building in the City is an appropriate place to house the special materials and should be part of the plan from the onset.

Trustee Coulter asked if there was any progress on the tree problem.

Trustee Ray said that the issue was still there and that it was a problem. The trees are there and birds nest in them and create huge messes.

Trustee Coulter explained the bird mess drips on cars.

Trustee Ray said the trees were magnificent in some ways and would be considered in the new plan.

Trustee Coulter asked if the community liked the trees the way they are.

Trustee Ray said that it does and that there are also people who are passionate about protecting the birds.

Vice Chair Kost stated the birds were a big attraction to those in the neighborhood.

Chair Watkins stated the bird issue would be determined by a more senior level of the City than the BLT. Policy makers will make the decision.

Trustee Ray said it was a sensitive issue in the community and not one that had been decided by the BLT. It is an issue when you look at the land and the amount of space occupied by the trees, but the trees are beautiful. However, eucalyptus trees can break and cause injury or property damage.

Chair Watkins thought the issue would be taken out of the BLT's hands.

Trustee Coulter said he asked because he was led to believe that they could not get permission from the appropriate people to eliminate the trees.

Chair Watkins said the issue was more complicated, that they had looked at it in detail, and that it was taken out of BLT hands.

Trustee Ray said there would be a community survey to receive input, and that would be both online and in print.

Chair Watkins called for further comments. Hearing none he called for the public comment.

Ronnie Watkins, Newport Beach resident, suggested solar carports in the parking lot to assist with the bird mess issues.

Trustee Ray said it was a nice thought, but everything would have to be taken into consideration.

Chair Watkins commented that on the inside of a wall there were pictures that he had not noticed before with historical images of the original Balboa Branch.

Library Services Director Hetherington said they used to have pictures of the early incarnations of the facilities, but Balboa Island Museum is currently holding a photographic exhibition so they may have a photo of the library there.

Chair Watkins stated that committees tend to get too large and then their progress is slowed. That said, he asked if it made sense to add Fire Chief Jeff Boyles or a representative from the Fire Department.

Trustee Ray said they absolutely needed to be consulted. She has spoken to some of the firemen, and they have ideas and thoughts about their needs.

Chair Watkins asked if they should be provided a seat at the table now.

Trustee Ray said they could wait until an architect was selected.

Library Services Director Hetherington said with the Corona del Mar Branch (CdM) both groups met with the architect and hashed out the ideas. Fire was not included in the early stages because they focused on the library side of things.

Chair Watkins said that there ought to be a footnote that states when it is appropriate to include Fire.

Vice Chair Kost asked if it would be a similar design to CdM.

Chair Watkins said he did not think so.

Trustee Ray said that was part of the process. Some people might want to duplicate CdM. She was not interested in doing that but wanted to take what they learned from CdM and apply it.

Chair Watkins thought it made sense to make a commitment to the historical nature of the site in some way. Those things are yet to be decided. He thanked Trustee Ray for the report.

10. COVID-19 Update

Staff will update the Trustees on the Library's activities during COVID-19.

Library Services Director Hetherton reported that the Library is still following County and State guidelines for in person services. Unvaccinated members of the public are asked to wear a mask. The County's recommendation is to wear masks if you work with the public. The Library is not making that mandatory for employees, but many employees are exercising their choice to wear a mask. Storytimes are still being held outdoors and are very popular. He stated he was happy to answer questions.

Chair Watkins called for BLT or public comments and questions, but there were none. The Board received and filed the report.

11. Library Services

Report of Library issues regarding services, patrons, and staff.

Library Services Director Hetherton reported on a new marketing campaign for the children's database Beanstack. It is a reading challenge program called "Back-to-School Bingo." Parents are glad to expose their children to the library and the program provides opportunities to use the database. The database is very popular and very utilitarian. The marketing campaign is live on the website. With respect to the Friends Gift Shop/Foundation Passport Office, the BLT previously requested pictures of the merchandise. There is branded merchandise that they want to sell including bookbags. Marketing Specialist Maria Nicklin helped created the branded merchandise.

Trustee Coulter asked about the price point for the bookbags.

Library Services Director Hetherton stated he would have to look at the spreadsheet. There is synergy between the merchandise and the website. He continued to show the BLT merchandise.

Trustee Coulter complimented the selection.

Library Services Director Hetherton explained there were other items they could consider selling such as toys based off children's books, t-shirts with funny slogans, notecards. They wanted to start with the branded items to get the store going and then they can add merchandise from there. The gift shop will open after Finance answers some tax questions. They have a meeting scheduled for Thursday to further discuss the matter. The proposed gift shop hours are Monday through Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The gift

shop will be staffed by Library staff, which precludes them from being open on the weekend due to skeleton crews Friday through Sunday. They may institute some kind of item hold if a patron sees something on a weekend that they would like to purchase. All profits of the gift shop sales will go to the Friends. Part of the proceeds will be used for future inventory. The resale permit has been obtained. The Passport office is open and fully operational.

Circulation & Technical Processing Coordinator Melissa Hartson stated passport business is seasonal. They handled the first rush and are now in a bit of a down time period. She expected things to pick up again prior to Spring Break.

Chair Watkins inquired about Christmas merchandise.

Library Services Director Hetherton stated they would look at it.

Chair Watkins asked where the profit off gift shop items went.

Library Services Director Hetherton explained the Friends received it.

Chair Watkins asked about the cost of operation.

Library Services Director Hetherton explained that the Friends agreed to fund the program and provided \$10,000 in seed money for the merchandise. When items are sold the Friends will receive the proceeds. The proceeds will fund the Friends annual gift to the Library as well as restocking the gift shop. City staff operates the gift shop, so that portion is paid by the City.

Chair Watkins confirmed that all profits after costs are accounted for go to the Friends.

Library Services Director Hetherton said that was correct. He explained t-shirts would be \$25, bookbags \$20, and that merchandise was reasonably priced.

Chair Watkins stated he planned to shop for his grandchildren's Christmas presents at the gift shop. Therefore, the sooner it was open, the better. He asked if they were still planning on opening September 30.

Library Services Director Hetherton explained that was the ship date on the merchandise, not the opening of the store. The merchandise is being designed and fabricated currently.

Trustee Ray asked if the items were fabricated locally.

Library Services Director Hetherton said they were not.

Adult Services Coordinator/Acting Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot stated the vendor was on the East Coast.

Chair Watkins hoped the gift shop would be stocked by Christmas.

Trustee Coulter said that shipping was backed up.

Ronnie Watkins, Newport Beach resident, commented that many people work during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and inquired about online shopping.

Library Services Director Hetherington stated that an online component was possible.

Vice Chair Kost suggested keeping the gift shop open to 4:30 to give children a chance to make it there after school.

Library Services Director Hetherington said that everything depended on staffing. They must ensure the service desk is properly run.

Vice Chair Kost asked if they were selling some office supplies that people who were using the library for studying or work might need.

Library Services Director Hetherington explained that they sell the basics such as pencils and highlighters right at the Reference Desk. There are many kinds of products that the gift shop can offer.

Trustee Coulter said that they had a nice start with the merchandise.

Library Services Director Hetherington said this was the first retail establishment he had ever opened. If they can expand the gift shop hours they will.

Chair Watkins said that he had asked Library Services Director Hetherington to provide categories of employees, differentiate between them, and provide any education requirements. He asked if that was in writing.

Library Services Director Hetherington said it was in writing and that he could send it to the BLT.

Chair Watkins directed him to send the information to the BLT. He called for questions from the BLT or public on the Library Services Report.

Trustee Coulter thanked Library Services Director Hetherington for a good report.

Chair Watkins indicated the BLT would receive and file the report.

B. Monthly Reports

12. Library Foundation Liaison Reports

A. Library Foundation Board – Report on the most recently attended meeting.

Vice Chair Kost stated he had no report.

Chair Watkins invited NBPLF Director of Programs Kunga Wangmo-Upshaw to provide the update.

NBPLF Programs Director Wangmo-Upshaw reported that the Library Lecture Hall update provided by Trustee Ray was the same as the one they received from Library Lecture Hall

Committee Chair Jill Johnson-Tucker. They updated donor benefits and started the September programming.

Chair Watkins called for Board and public comments or questions, but there were none. The Board received and filed the report.

B. Library Live Lectures Committee – Report on the most recently attended meeting.

Chair Watkins reported the September 8 meeting was cancelled and rescheduled for October 6, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.

NBPLF Programs Director Wangmo-Upshaw stated she would send out the information. They are unsure if the meeting will be via Zoom or in person as they are still trying to work out scheduling issues. There may possibly be two co-chairs, Tammy Tang and Joanna Kim.

C. Witte Lectures Committee – Report on the most recently attended meeting.

Secretary Glabman was absent. Library Services Director Hetherington reported there was a meeting.

Chair Watkins asked Ms. Wangmo-Upshaw about the lineup.

NBPLF Programs Director Wangmo-Upshaw reported that all the contracts are signed and there are four speakers. Announcements will be made in October in their *Bookmark* magazine.

Chair Watkins stated he looked forward to the October *Bookmark* for times, places, and prices. He asked which month would have a live speaker.

NBPLF Programs Director Wangmo-Upshaw stated that would be January and both Witte and Library Live are moving forward with in-person events.

Chair Watkins called for Board and public comments or questions, but there was none. The BLT received and filed the report.

13. Friends of the Library Liaison Report

Trustee update on the most recently attended Friends of the Library Board meeting.

Trustee Coulter reported that the Friends appreciated their Board members, Library staff and Library Board of Trustees who attended the Friends \$200,000 check presentation to the Library at the September 14 City Council meeting. He stated the Friends are very hard working and flexible. The August sales were \$14,260 and membership fees of \$705. The bookstore sale was featured in *StuNews* and the *Daily Pilot*. He announced all the current Friends sales including the November 19 members-only sale and the November 20 sale, which is open to the public. He has membership applications for anyone interested.

Chair Watkins called for BLT or public questions and comments, but there were none. The Board received and filed the report.

14. Literacy Services Liaison Report

Trustee update on the most recently attended Literacy Services Advisory Board meeting.

Trustee Ray reported that the September meeting was scheduled for the 21st.

Chair Watkins called for BLT and public comments and questions, but there was none. The Board received and filed the report.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

VIII. BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

Chair Watkins requested that all the Trustees attend the September 28, 2021, City Council meeting in support of the Library Lecture Hall.

Chair Watkins announced that the October 18, 2021, meeting of the BLT will be held at Mariners Branch.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 6:04 P.M.

Submitted by: *Paul Watkins*
Chair Approval of Minutes