

## **CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH**

**Board of Library Trustees  
Newport Beach Central Library  
1000 Avocado Avenue, Newport Beach, CA 92660  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, September 19, 2022 – 5:00 p.m.**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 5:00 P.M.**

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

Trustees Present: Chair Paul Watkins, Vice Chair Janet Ray, Trustee Barbara Glabman, Trustee Ash Kumra (arrived 5:01 p.m.)

Trustees Absent: Secretary Douglas Coulter (excused)

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director  
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist  
Rebecca Lightfoot, Adult Services Coordinator/Acting Library Services Manager  
Annika Helmuth, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator  
Andrew Kachaturian, Circulation and Technical Processing Coordinator

Staff Absent:

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Vice Chair Ray**

**IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC – Waived**

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR – Administrative Support Specialist Francine Jacome**

**A. Consent Calendar Items**

**1. Minutes of the August 15, 2022, Board of Library Trustees (BLT) Meeting**

Chair Watkins introduced the Consent Calendar and confirmed that the other Trustees did not wish to discuss and/or did not wish to remove items from the Consent Calendar. Hearing none he noted that he had several observations.

**2. Patron Comments**

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

Chair Watkins thought the response provided by Library Services Director Melissa Hartson to a patron on e-waste was well done. He also thought that Adult Services Coordinator/Acting Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot handled the response to the internet activist well.

**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 reported that 17% of the year had elapsed and they were under budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23. He thanked Library Services Director Hartson and staff for keeping an eye on the budget.

**5. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List**

List of agenda items and dates for monthly review of projects by the BLT.

Chair Watkins called for a Motion on the minutes and noted that Vice Chair Ray would be abstaining because of her prior absence.

Motion made by Trustee Glabman, seconded by Trustee Kumra, and carried (3-0-1-1) to approve the Consent Calendar with the minutes as presented.

AYES: Watkins, Kumra, Glabman

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS: Ray (as to Minutes only)

ABSENCES: Coulter

**VI. CURRENT BUSINESS**

**A. Items for Review**

**6. Expressive Use Areas Policy (NBPL 9)**

Staff recommends that the BLT review Library Policy NBPL 9, *Expressive Use Areas*, and requests the Board approve changes.

Chair Watkins called for the staff report.

Library Services Director Hartson explained that NBPL 9 worked. There are established specific areas at each branch for the community to set up a table and provide viewpoints, seek opinions, and host petitions. The policy worked well, and the management of the space was handled by administrative staff. She was not recommending substantial changes to the policy, there were minor clarifications and errors corrected including a mislabeling of exhibits.

Chair Watkins noted the corrections and stated that the policy looked ready. He called for Trustee comment. Hearing none, he called for the public comment and learned there was none.

Motion made by Trustee Kumra, seconded by Vice Chair Ray, and carried (4-0-0-1) to approve Library Policy NBPL 9, *Expressive Use Areas*.

AYES: Watkins, Ray, Kumra, Glabman

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES: Coulter

**7. Literacy Services Update**

Staff will provide an update on the Literacy program and events.

Chair Watkins stated Cherall Weiss had retired and called for a staff report from Library Services Director Hartson.

Library Services Director Hartson stated that Cherall Weiss had provided her with a year in review of the Literacy Services. Her report listed the highlights of the program. They are returning to in person programming and learners and tutors had come back. There were 146 learners served in the past year with 7,015 volunteer hours. In person classes continue on a regular basis. The program raised over \$150,000 in the past year with several donations and two highlighted events, which were happy hours and well attended. Over the past year they went through a rebranding from Newport/Mesa ProLiteracy to Project Adult Literacy (PAL). She passed materials around for the Trustees to review and then showed a promotional video. The video was a powerful tool for community outreach to show people what the program was about. They considered the video to be a big accomplishment over the past year with the rebranding. September 8 was International Literacy Day and she shared some of the learner's thoughts about it with the Trustees. Cherall Weiss attended conferences over the past year and was a panel presenter at the California Library Association (CLA). After 18 years with the program and beginning as a tutor Cherall has now retired, and the City is moving through the hiring process and working to find her replacement. A new Literacy Coordinator should be in place sometime in October. Cherall Weiss will continue to work with the Literacy Advisory Board in the interim and transition. The Literacy Advisory Board appointed Jessica Bass as the new President.

Vice Chair Ray asked if PAL planned to host a luncheon like they did pre-COVID.

Library Services Director Hartson stated that getting something like that up and running would be part of the Literacy Coordinator's job. There would be a transition period and the new person would be able to work with Cherall Weiss. The luncheon was a large fundraiser and she imagined the luncheon event will return.

Trustee Kumra thought the update was fantastic.

Chair Watkins thanked Trustee Glabman for her work as liaison. He, Vice Chair Ray, and Trustee Glabman attended International Literacy Day. He then called for the public comment, but there was none so the BLT received and filed the report.

**8. Acceptance of Donation**

Staff recommends the BLT approve the acceptance of a donation from the Dorothy Arens Ressel Trust to enhance the Library's maintenance and operation budget.

Chair Watkins called for the staff report.

Library Services Director Hartson stated that Ms. Ressel left a portion of her estate to three departments within the City: Police, Fire, and the Library. The Library was honored

to be included. The gift was already approved by the City Council earlier in the year and now the funds would be transferred to the Library.

Chair Watkins asked what the funds were to be used for.

Library Services Director Hartson explained that they would go into collections. The estate did not put any specific restrictions on the use of the funds by the Library.

Chair Watkins called for BLT questions. Hearing none, he called for the public comment.

Rhonda Watkins, Newport Beach resident, asked if the funds could be used for the Library Lecture Hall.

Library Services Director Hartson explained that the gift could go to anywhere within the Library, but for the Library Lecture Hall the funds would have to go through the Library Foundation and the Library could not move the funds in that manner.

Motion made by Trustee Kumra, seconded by Vice Chair Ray, and carried (4-0-0-1) to approve the acceptance of a donation from the Dorothy Arens Ressel Trust to enhance the Library's maintenance and operation budget, including collections.

AYES: Watkins, Ray, Kumra, Glabman

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES: Coulter

## **9. Lecture Hall Update**

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

Vice Chair Ray reported that City Council had approved a major donation from the William Witte family of \$4 million. Accordingly, the Lecture Hall will be named Witte Hall. They are continuing in the silent phase of fundraising so there was nothing further to report. She thanked the Foundation for its work as the Library and Trustees did not become directly involved in the fundraising work.

Chair Watkins asked if Jerry Kappel wished to add to the report.

Jerry Kappel, Newport Beach Public Library Foundation (NBPLF) CEO, reported that there were two additional naming rights donations which were currently in negotiation. That represented an additional \$1,750,000. He hoped they would be ready for announcement at the next meeting. There was also a \$500,000 challenge grant which would be used to spur public donations.

Chair Watkins confirmed there would be a time period associated with the matching funds.

Mr. Kappel indicated that was correct and that any contribution would be matched within that time to a maximum of \$500,000.

Chair Watkins called for questions of Mr. Kappel.

Mr. Kappel added that there would be another design committee meeting but the date for that was not set.

Vice Chair Ray explained there was an ad hoc committee that had been working for the last three years. The process had been very thoughtful. The architect had an example of a seat and brought it to the City Hall for examination, but it was not a good fit so that was being revisited.

Chair Watkins called for the public comment, but there was none. He thanked Mr. Kappel and noted that the naming rights would be announced at the next City Council meeting or in October at the latest. He thanked Vice Chair Ray and received and filed the report.

**10. Balboa Branch Replacement Update**

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

Chair Watkins stated that there was nothing to report and confirmed that with Library Services Director Hartson.

**11. Library Services**

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

Library Services Director Hartson announced that new staff members were in place. She introduced Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Annika Helmuth and Circulation and Technical Processing Coordinator Andrew Kachaturian. Both brought a wealth of experience and knowledge to their positions, and she was thrilled to expand the team. With Library Services Manager, Rebecca Lightfoot's tenure was extended through the end of the calendar year.

Chair Watkins confirmed that Library Services Manager was Library Services Director Hartson's "deputy."

Library Services Director Hartson stated that was correct.

Chair Watkins congratulated Acting Library Services Manager Lightfoot.

Library Services Director Hartson repeated that they attended International Literacy Day. The Foundation's donor event was scheduled for Wednesday, September 21. The check presentation from the Friends of the Library would be held for the \$200,000 on Tuesday, September 27.

Chair Watkins thanked Library Services Director Hartson, called for questions/comments, and received and filed the report.

**B. Monthly Reports**

**12. Library Foundation Liaison Reports**

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

Vice Chair Ray indicated that Library Services Director Hartson covered the update.

Chair Watkins called for questions of Vice Chair Ray or Library Services Director Hartson. He then called for public comment.

Mr. Kappel reported that the next *Bookmark* magazine would be out soon and would contain the financial report. The Witte series was also being announced and Library Live had gone public.

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

Trustee Kumra reported that he had attended his first meeting the prior week and heard an overview of the upcoming programs. The speakers were very good. They discussed the vision of the lecture series and explained that they wanted attendance of at least 200 people.

Chair Watkins called for questions/comments from the Trustees. Hearing none, he called for the public comment. Hearing none, he then received and filed the report.

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

Chair Watkins reported they had met the previous week. The speakers would be announced in the *Bookmark* as indicated by Mr. Kappel. The lectures were scheduled for February 10 and 11, March 3 and 4, March 31 and April 1, and April 28 and 29. The Committee was a well-read group and was interested in bringing quality speakers. He called for BLT or public comment, but there was none. He indicated 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.

Library Services Director Hartson reported that the August bookstore sales were \$19,694, and the total income for the month was \$20,810.46, which included memberships. Membership stood at 882 people. They continue with a variety of specials and were looking forward to a vintage book sale and an art book sale in the coming weeks. The next big used book sale was scheduled for January 13 and 14.

Chair Watkins called for BLT and public comment. Hearing none he received and filed the report.

**14. Literacy Services Liaison Report**

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

Trustee Glabman explained that Library Services Director Hartson's report was complete. There were 97 active learners with 13 on the waiting list. There were 60 active tutors, 8 new and ready tutors waiting for assignment, and 5 returning tutors. International Literacy Day was September 8. September 13 was the most recent Literacy Services Advisory

Board meeting. Kappa Kappa Gamma chose PAL as the recipient of \$3,000 raised at their Author Under the Stars Event. PAL would also make a presentation to the Newport Beach Rotary Club on September 29. The Board was also looking to set up an assistance fund to remove hurdles from learners for things like paying for childcare during tutoring sessions or for transportation to tutoring.

Chair Watkins said that PAL has a good nest egg as the group is well funded.

Trustee Glabman said that they were working to replace Cherall Weiss and noted that the position was not full time. They are also working on an annual report and looking to fill Board positions. They need people with fundraising, outreach, public relations, and social media skills.

Trustee Kumra indicated that he might know someone and asked if the information was available on the website.

Chair Watkins stated that it was on the Library website under Literacy Services.

Chair Watkins called for the public comment.

Rhonda Watkins, Newport Beach resident, asked if the organization held trainings or meetings via Zoom as a way to overcome transportation and childcare hurdles.

Chair Watkins clarified that she meant the tutoring.

Trustee Glabman said that she was not sure and asked if that was how the learning occurred during COVID.

Library Services Director Hartson believed that they did utilize online tools during COVID but had transitioned back to in person learning.

Trustee Glabman stated that it was more than just tutoring, there was also mentorship and relationship building. She thought that was why they tried to have the meetings in person.

Ms. Watkins stated that she understood but noted that Zoom could be very personal.

Chair Watkins called for further comment. Hearing none he 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)**

Trustee Glabman noted that there was a great public relations article in the LA Times about things to borrow from libraries. She reminded the Trustees about the parking passes for parks they had available and how they had not been aware of that prior to the last meeting. She thought there were other items that were like that, and that the public was

not aware of them either. She suggested someone put together a piece for the local paper advertising those items.

Chair Watkins agreed that was a great idea.

Vice Chair Ray agreed that was a great idea and noted that not everyone reviewed the Library's website for different types of materials.

Chair Watkins announced that the next BLT meeting was Monday, October 17, 2022, at Mariners Library. The Friends of the Library's check presentation was on September 27, 2022.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT – 5:42 P.M.**

Submitted by: *Paul Watkins*  
Chair Approval of Minutes