

**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH**

**Board of Library Trustees  
Civic Center Council Chambers  
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach, CA  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, November 18, 2024 – 5:00 PM**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chair Antonella Castro called to order the Board of Library Trustees meeting for November 18, 2024.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Trustees Present: Vice Chair Antonella Castro, Secretary Dorothy Larson, Trustee Lauren Kramer, Trustee Meghan Murray

Trustees Absent: Chair Chase Rief (excused)

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director  
Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager  
Andrew Kachaturian, Adult Services Coordinator  
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist

Staff Absent: Annika Helmuth, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chair Castro introduced Alex Denisova of the Mayor’s Youth Council, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - Waived**

**V. PATRON APPEALS OF DIRECTOR’S DECISIONS**

Appeal Hearing of “Grandad’s Pride” by Harry Woodgate.

The Board of Library Trustees will conduct an appeal hearing for the Director’s Decision of “Grandad’s Pride” by Harry Woodgate.

Appellant Haley Jenkins presented her reason for appealing the Director’s decision to keep “Grandad’s Pride” in the children’s collection based on the changes made to the rules in Library Policy NBPL 2, *Collection Development Policy*, in June regarding suitability of illustrations and information contained in the material. The book contains illustration of two men wearing sexual attire while embracing and kissing, and has an intended reading audience of 3 to 6 year olds. Ms. Jenkins requested the book be moved to a different area within the Library and that staff review the changes made within the Policy for age appropriateness.

Library Services Director Hartson provided background information on the original Director’s decision to keep the book “Grandad’s Pride” in the children’s picture book collection. Resources

used in making that decision were provided, along with information on the awards the author and book have received. It is a 2024 Rainbow List Top Ten Titles for younger readers. The illustrations in the book are not sexually graphic or violent in nature. Professional reviews profile the book as suitable for children ages three to eight, or in first through fourth grades.

Vice Chair Castro opened Public Comments.

Paul Watkins provided commentary about his decision not to back the Director's original decision and felt the book should be relocated out of the Children's collection.

Sydni Webb commented regarding the current Policy for the Children's Collection and questioned how the book was perceived appropriate for three year olds.

Linda Barker provided comment about her history as an educator and felt the Director's decision should not have been to keep the book in the Children's collection. The book contains very complex situations that young children would not yet understand; situations that deserve thoughtful discussion amongst family members. The book should be moved to the adult section so parents can choose when to introduce the material to their families.

Patty provided comment regarding her background as an educator and suggested the book is inappropriate for young children and should be moved to the adult section of the Library.

Jim Mosher provided comment regarding Mariners Branch versus Central Library and children utilizing the Library without parental supervision and suggested the Board be mindful of the diversity of material while also staying within the guidelines of the Policy for the Children's Collection. Mr. Mosher noted that in a past appeal, the appellant had requested to move a book to the adult collection and the book was removed from the Library completely, indicating an evenhanded approach by the Director.

Vice Chair Castro closed Public Comment and brought the discussion back to the Board.

Trustee Lauren Kramer commented that she felt the illustrations were sexual in content and not appropriate for young children; it's a kids picture book and they totally missed the mark on the book's age appropriateness and believed the book should be removed from the children's collection.

Trustee Meghan Murray commented that the goal is to find a solution. There is reference in the book to AIDS, bondage, transexual children, nazi era criminal codes and others that are beyond the comprehension of most first graders, and she believed the book should be removed from the children's collection and suggested creating a "Sensitive Subject" area.

Secretary Dorothy Larson provided comment in favor of the Director's Decision and noted it is in a section that requires parents to accompany their children; she had a difficult time reconciling

the description of the book with what she read. If the book is viewed through the eyes of children, it has warm pictures and is heartfelt story about a grandfather who has a very loving relationship with his partner. She believed it was fine where it currently sits.

Vice Chair Castro inquired how long the book had been in the collection. Library Services Director Hartson answered it was added to the collection in fall of 2023. There had been one request for evaluation during that time period.

Vice Chair Castro stated she read the book and found it in the children's collection at Barnes and Noble. She liked the story and had to look at the illustrations a few times to review it's compliance with the Policy. Visual literacy was recently added to the Policy, and she expressed an interest in voting with the majority.

**Motion** made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Trustee Meghan Murray, and carried 3-1-0-1 to relocate the book to the Adult Nonfiction section in an area that is categorized for this type of topic.

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Murray  
NOES: Larson  
ABSTENTIONS:  
ABSENCES: Rief

**VI. CONSENT CALENDAR**

Administrative Support Specialist Francine Jacome read the Consent Calendar Notice to the public.

Vice Chair Castro inquired whether any Trustees had requests to pull an item from the Consent Calendar.

**2. Minutes of October 21, 2024 Board of Library Trustees Meeting**

Trustee Kramer noted on handwritten page 18, top of page, please change harsh comment to "hostile comment". Vice Chair Castro submitted the written edits that Mr. Mosher sent in. On handwritten page 19, please change student news to Stu News Newport; handwritten page 20, please change Motion made by Vice Chair Kramer to Trustee Kramer on item 9.

**3. Patron Comments**

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

**4. Expenditure Status Report**

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

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

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

Vice Chair Castro opened the item to public comments, there were none.

Vice Chair Castro received and filed the report.

**Motion** made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Vice Chair Castro, and carried 4-0-0-1 to approve the Consent Calendar Items 2-5 with the above mentioned edits to the October draft minutes.

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Larson, Murray  
NOES:  
ABSTENTIONS:  
ABSENCES: Rief

**VI. CURRENT BUSINESS**

**A. Items for Review**

**6. Library Use Policy (NBPL 1)**

Staff recommend the Board of Library Trustees review and approve changes to Library Policy NBPL 1, Library Use Policy.

Library Services Director Hartson reported on the edits made to the Library Policy NBPL 1, *Library Use Policy*, which ensure public access to the collections, programs and resources of the Library and sets the expectations for public behavior to preserve and promote access in a safe and welcoming environment. Simple modifications have been made to reflect updates to terminology and broaden the scope of patron's behavior when using the Library based on recent Newport Beach Municipal Code changes. Library Services Director Hartson covered the modifications for the Board, which included: adding the term "vaping" to the no smoking policy, small changes to both broaden and lessen the scope of occupying space on furniture in the correct manner, limiting eating and drinking around electronic equipment and in the media and sound labs, adding clarity to the clothing standards of tops and bottoms, addressing safety concerns of the use of wheeled equipment in the Library, utilizing Mr. Mosher's comments to revise the use of devices with or without headphones, revisions to the list of prohibited soliciting, addressing the size of wheeled conveyances used while utilizing the Library (i.e. guitar case, amplifiers), addressing recent municipal code changes regarding unattended personal belongings, misusing of electrical outlets, and broadening the scope of lack of personal hygiene.

Vice Chair Castro commented regarding the use of the term "limited restrictions".

Trustee Larson suggested adding "public areas" as suggested by Dr. Mosher.

Secretary Kramer suggested making the change "all members of the public" can utilize the libraries providing they abide by library policies.

Vice Chair Castro asked if anyone had suggestions regarding prohibiting soliciting.

Secretary Kramer commented that it could mean the front of the Library, and suggested re-wording it to “soliciting is prohibited unless authorized by the Library Services Director”.

Some of the Board members expressed concern of Friends of the Library being considered solicitors. Library Services Director Hartson responded that staff consider Friends as an organization not a patron.

Vice Chair Castro opened the item for public comments.

Jim Mosher, Newport Beach resident, commented that Item 22 is redundant and in Item 10 soliciting is a very broad term that could generate controversy. It would be helpful to say that they were trying to limit soliciting or raising funds by patrons, adding unless authorized by city staff would be appropriate.

Jerry Kappel, CEO of the Library Foundation, commented that he was concerned about the solicitation policy as the Foundation has brochures and fliers throughout the libraries for Witte Hall. Caution should be used in how it’s worded. He anticipated that it would be clear that the institutions and foundations of the Library are not banned from providing the support they continue to provide. He recommended they rework it a bit before they finalize it with approval.

Vice Chair Castro closed public comments.

Library Services Director Hartson stated the original iteration of Item 10 covered the organizations such as the Foundation and Friends of the Library.

**Motion** made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Vice Chair Castro, and carried 4-0-0-1 to approve staff recommendations on Item 14, the addition of Mr. Mosher’s suggestions for the changes of Items 8, 16, 17, and restoring the original language on item 10, in the Policy, as discussed.

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Larson, Murray  
NOES:  
ABSTENTIONS:  
ABSENCES: Rief

**7. Media Lab Use Policy (NBPL 6)**

Staff recommend that the Board of Library Trustees review Library Policy NBPL 6, Media Lab Use and approve minor changes to the policy.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot reported that there were no changes other than adding it was reviewed in keeping with the two year review of all policies.

Vice Chair Castro opened the item to public comments, there were none.

Vice Chair Castro received and filed the report.

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Castro, seconded by Secretary Dorothy Larson, and carried 4-0-0-1 to approve staff recommendation for NBPL 6.

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Larson, Murray  
NOES:  
ABSTENTIONS:  
ABSENCES: Rief

**8. Sound lab Use Policy (NBPL 7)**

Staff recommend that the Board of Library Trustees review Library Policy NBPL 7, Sound Lab Use and approve minor changes to the policy.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot stated the same applied for this policy, the only change was to note it was reviewed according to the two year policy review.

Vice Chair Castro opened the item for public comments.

Jim Mosher, Newport Beach resident, commented that his impression was this was used by a single person or a collaboration of people and when they are in the sound lab, they are making sound, it doesn't make sense to require electronic devices to be muted.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot responded that the Policy is meant to include the hallway, while cell phone use is allowed in the sound lab, it is discouraged in the hallway.

Vice Chair Castro closed public comments.

**Motion** made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Trustee Murray, and carried 4-0-0-1 to approve staff recommendation for NBPL 7.

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Larson, Murray  
NOES:  
ABSTENTIONS:  
ABSENCES: Rief

**9. Review Holidays and Meeting Schedule**

Staff requests that the Board of Library Trustees review the Library's holiday and meeting schedule for 2025 and approve as presented.

Library Services Director Hartson reviewed the Library Board of Trustees meeting schedule for calendar year 2025.

Vice Chair Castro opened the item to public comments, there were none.

Vice Chair Castro received and filed the report.

**Motion** made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Secretary Dorothy Larson, and carried 4-0-0-1 to approve staff recommendation.

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Larson, Murray  
NOES:  
ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES: Rief

**10. Library Activities**

Monthly update of library events, services, and statistics.

Library Services Director Melissa Hartson reported on staff updates; Andrew Kachaturian has been reassigned to the Adult Services Coordinator position. They will look to fill his prior role. Christina Smith was promoted to the Literacy Coordinator position. The Project Adult Literacy Holiday Potluck will be held Saturday, December 7, at 10 a.m. in the Friends Room at Central Library. The Corona del Mar Branch will be open Sunday, December 8, from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. for the Holiday Open House.

Secretary Larson asked if that coincided with the Corona del Mar Christmas Walk. Library Services Director Hartson responded that it does.

Vice Chair Castro opened the item to public comments, there were none.

Vice Chair Castro received and filed the report.

**B. Monthly Reports**

**11. Library Foundation Liaison Reports**

Trustee update on the most recently attended Library Foundation Board meeting.

Jerry Kappel, Foundation CEO, provided an in-depth report that was included in the packet.

Secretary Larson inquired if the date for the January Foundation Board meeting was correct. Mr. Kappel responded that the meeting is on Monday, January 13, the date was a typo and should be corrected on handwritten page 61. The report included Witte and Library Live, and both have had more ticket sales for this time of year than ever before.

Vice Chair Castro opened the item to public comments, there were none.

Vice Chair Castro received and filed the report.

**12. Friends of the Library Liaison Report**

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

Trustee Murray reported there is nothing new to report.

**13. Pals4pal Liaison Report**

Trustee update of the Pals4pal Board meeting.

Vice Chair Castro stated Pals4pal is dissolving so there is no report.

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – Three Minutes per speaker**

Jim Mosher, Newport Beach Resident, commented that on Handwritten page 26, the January meeting anticipated a day late could be rescheduled to January 24 as the circulation policy reviewed in January 2023 is on track to be reviewed again at the January 2025 meeting, as the state law goes into effect on January first. Under the new policy they will be receiving Director determination reports as an Agenda Item in the consent calendar to be received and filed, which could inhibit the appeal process as members of the public don't call consent items up for review, only Board Trustees. That is currently absent in the Collection Development Policy which is not due to be reviewed until 2026. The Board may want to review it sooner.

Trustee Kramer responded there had been case law that states you can't be a judge in your own appeal, which is why they don't call the appeals up for review.

Library Services Director Hartson explained that the appeal policy was reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

Mr. Mosher explained that a Call For Review is used by City Council and Planning Commission.

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

Vice Chair Castro asked to add an item regarding creating an ad hoc subcommittee to explore creating a special section in the Children's Library for books on sensitive subjects.

Library Services Director Hartson read the bylaws for creating subcommittees which indicated the Chair appoints all subcommittee members.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT – 6:21 p.m.**

The next meeting will be December 16, 2024.