

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Board of Library Trustees
Civic Center Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach, CA
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 18, 2025 – 5:00 PM

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Lauren Kramer called to order the Board of Library Trustees meeting for August 18, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Trustees Present: Chair Lauren Kramer, Vice Chair Antonella Castro, Trustee Meghan Murray, Trustee Chase Rief

Trustees Absent: Secretary Dorothy Larson

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist
Annika Helmuth, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator
Andrew Kachaturian, Adult Services Coordinator
Benjamin M. Zdeba, AICP, Planning Manager

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Kramer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - Waived

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

A. Consent Calendar Items

1. Minutes of the July 21, 2025 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

2. Patron Comments

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

3. Expenditure Status Report

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

4. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List

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

Chair Kramer opened the item to public comment.

Jim Mosher reported on Item No. 3 that the Library's collective expenditures are under budget. He expressed concerns that being overall under budget may hamper the Library's ability to request a budget raise from the Finance Committee in the future. He encouraged the Board to direct staff to buy items based on volume and not on price because if the expected volume of purchases goes over budget it will raise attention and possibly funding levels.

Chair Kramer closed public comment.

Motion made by Trustee Chase Rief, seconded by Vice Chair Antonella Castro, and carried 4-0-0-1 to approve the Consent Calendar Item Nos. 1-4.

AYES: Kramer, Castro, Murray, Rief

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES: Larson

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review

5. General Plan Update

Staff recommends that the Board of Library Trustees receive and file the draft Elements and provide any initial guidance or feedback on their goals and policies.

Chair Kramer reported there is a lot of information in this forthcoming presentation, and her initial instinct is to return in a month or two for more complete and helpful comments.

Planning Manager Ben Zdeba reported that a General Plan is a State-mandated framework to help shape the City's future visions and improvements. He reported that the General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 2006 and provided an update on the ongoing updating process led by the community-based General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC). He added that the City's goal is to have a revised General Plan ready to be presented to the City Council in early 2026.

Planning Manager Zdeba highlighted community outreach efforts to date and added that there will be larger, more formal community events, including an open house, later in the process as the draft elements get closer to completion.

Planning Manager Zdeba added that the Arts and Culture Element is not one required by the State but is included by Newport Beach as a reflection of the value the City places on arts and cultural events. He reported that the Draft Element includes calls for more public art, enhancements to the library system and its services, support for musical

programming, and emphasizing collaboration with other stakeholders. He reported that the Historical Resources Element, which is also not a State requirement but rather a civic inclusion, does not directly connect to the Library, but noted that the Library is the best connection the City has for historical resources and documentation. He noted that the Historical Resources Element also encourages the creation of a Legacy Business Program to recognize long-standing community businesses.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that this item is intended to be more of an introduction to the elements, and that staff does not expect high-level detailed feedback today. He clarified that these drafts represent an ongoing conversation, and they are at a proper stage to add the Board to the conversation for its input, adding that the drafts will also be shared with the City Arts Commission at their next meeting. He noted that the elements will come back to the Board for a final recommendation later in the year.

GPAC Member Paul Watkins reported that he is also a member of the GPAC's Arts and Culture/Historical Resources Subcommittee, and that the group has had extensive commentary on the current General Plan that was applied to these two draft elements. He encouraged the Board to be able to provide more formal comments at an upcoming meeting within the next couple of months so that the GPAC can stay on its schedule.

Chair Kramer opened the item to public comments.

Mr. Mosher, clarifying that he speaks as a Newport Beach resident and not in his role as a GPAC Member, reported that the Library self-identifies as the cultural heart of the community. He noted that the Library is only specifically mentioned in one of the Arts and Culture Element's policies (AC-2.5). He noted that the General Plan projects to 2050, by which time there will be changes to the City's population and demand for library services. He recommended adding the Library to Goal AC-1 and Goal AC-3 in addition to its present place only in Goal AC-2. He noted that the Library is not mentioned directly in the Historical Resources Element, despite its housing of several Newport Beach historical collections with the potential for creating more. He added there may be inaccuracies in the General Plan's Technical Background Report.

Newport Beach Public Library Foundation Chief Executive Officer Jerold Kappel noted that Witte Hall will be a center for cultural events in Newport Beach once it opens.

Chair Kramer closed public comments.

Chair Kramer stated that she is not interested in creating an Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate the draft elements and recommended having the elements return during the Board's October meeting so the Trustees have ample time to draft their feedback.

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

6. Adult and References Service Update

Library staff will provide an annual update on reference services, collections, and programming for adult patrons.

Adult Services Coordinator Andrew Kachaturian reported that the daily activities of reference services extend beyond what is seen at the Newport Beach Central Library's Reference Desk. He reported on many other areas of the Library where their work is

requested and discussed multiple outreach events that staff attended on behalf of the Library's Adult Services. He reported that the staff attends to customer service requests.

Chair Kramer reported that the focus on customer service is well-recognized, led by a hospitable and helpful staff at the Reference Desk. She commended their work.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

7. The Friends Meeting Room Policy (NBPL 14)

Staff request that the Board of Library Trustees review and approve revisions to Library Policy NBPL 14, *The Friends Meeting Room*.

Library Services Director Hartson reported that this item is a proposed revision to the Friends Meeting Room Policy, incorporating language from the City's Risk Management staff to update insurance requirements. She added that language has also been updated to eliminate redundancy, along with creating additional Standards of Use covering programs conflicting with Library programming and commercial activity.

In response to Chair Kramer's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson clarified that the Standards of Use changes are intended so that outside entities do not use the Library to solicit business, which could also detract from comparable Library programming. She cited the financial literacy events hosted by the Library Foundation as an example of an event where the Library would not want to host a competing entity soliciting business.

Chair Kramer called for not including the entire legal provision relative to insurance requirements, adding that the language can also change periodically.

Library Services Director Hartson clarified that staff submitted the entire policy to Risk Management and were told this language needs to be incorporated as it is written.

Chair Kramer stated that they can vote to add a provision acknowledging that this language may be modified.

Trustee Rief agreed, noting insurance requirements can change annually, and it may be easier to provide this sort of mechanism rather than making staff present the same policy to the Board annually to simply change the insurance policy.

Chair Kramer requested language stating that "the provision of insurance should be general liability and approved by Risk Management as amended from time to time." She added that she trusts staff to ensure the insurance limits are high enough, and she does not feel compelled to approve the limit.

Library Services Director Hartson stated that the proposed revision would work because staff can provide the current requirements when receiving a room rental inquiry. She added that a revision to the policy will require a reassessment by Risk Management.

Chair Kramer opened the item to public comments.

Mr. Mosher noted that the insurance policy language does not specify who provides the insurance, recommending specifying that the applicant provides the insurance. He recommended that the Board have staff rework the policy with these comments and return to the next meeting with a revised policy, adding that the matter is not urgent. He expressed concerns about confusing language under the Applicability heading, which could have lost some meaning during the updating process. He added that the four subcomponents for Third Priority status are unclear as to whether they are sequential or not. He encouraged consolidating the list of provisions applicable to all groups. He expressed surprise that some groups do not require written approval for the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Chair Kramer closed public comments.

Vice Chair Castro stated that the policy should return to the Board once it is revised, adding that the insurance provision should be presented cleanly to the Board.

Chair Kramer stated the policy does not need to return to the Board if approved with her suggested changes.

Vice Chair Castro stated she will not approve the policy with a suggested change unless she sees it after it is revised.

Motion made by Chair Lauren Kramer, seconded by Trustee Chase Rief, and carried 3-1-0-1 to approve the item with modified language in Section J stating that “the provision of insurance should be general liability coverage as approved by City staff as amended from time to time.”

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

8. Acceptance of Donations from the Library Foundation

Staff recommends the Board of Library Trustees approve the acceptance of three donations from the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot requested approval of three donations from the Library Foundation – \$40,000 for annual grants, \$34,000 to help fund the Opening Day Collection at the Balboa Branch, and \$6,000 to purchase new computer chairs for the Mariners Branch. She added \$22,475 is also being awarded to Project Adult Literacy, and the Foundation has also raised \$1,640 for new podcast equipment for the Sound Laboratory.

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

Motion made by Vice Chair Antonella Castro, seconded by Chair Lauren Kramer, and carried 4-0-0-1 to accept the donations.

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

ABSENCES: Larson

9. Library Activities

Monthly update of library events, services, and statistics.

Library Services Director Hartson reported that construction began today on a pathway connecting the Central Library and the parking structure just to its northeast as part of the Witte Hall project which will also add 13 parking spaces. She reported that the work will last for 4-6 weeks. She added that, in September, Public Works is looking to replace the Central Library's air handlers along with other interior work, necessitating a three-week closure. She stated that staff is working on a plan to maintain limited services during this time, incorporating the branch libraries, with the assumption that the air handlers will arrive as scheduled on September 15.

Library Services Director Hartson reported that the State has recently requested a copy of the City's collection development policy for review.

In response to Chair Kramer's inquiries, Library Services Director Hartson reported that the State's request is in conjunction with the California Freedom to Read Act, which takes effect on January 1, 2026. She reported that she has no concerns about the City's collection development policy and pledged to keep the Board informed about the process.

Chair Kramer opened the item to public comments.

Mr. Mosher inquired about whether the appeal to the California Coastal Commission impacting construction at the Balboa Branch Library has been withdrawn, requested more information on the new online content management system mentioned in the staff report, and pondered how Adult Services Coordinator Kachaturian's previous tech-related duties are being filled following his promotion.

Chair Kramer closed public comment.

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

B. Monthly Reports

Chair Kramer opened Item Nos. 10-12 for public comments, there were none.

10. Library Foundation Liaison Report

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

Secretary Larson's absence prevented a report.

11. Foundation Literacy Liaison Report

Trustee update of the most recently attended Foundation Literacy Committee Meeting.

Vice Chair Castro reported that the group is looking forward to the International Literacy Day Celebration event on September 5, encouraging the Board to attend.

Library Services Director Hartson added that there will also be a Proclamation issued at the August 26 City Council meeting recognizing International Literacy Day.

12. Friends of the Library Liaison Report

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

Trustee Murray reported that she was unable to attend the meeting but has received updates that it was a great month with sales significantly increasing.

Chair Kramer received and filed the monthly reports.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – THREE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

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)

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 5:45 P.M.

The next meeting will be September 15, 2025.