

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Board of Library Trustees
Civic Center Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach, CA
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 19, 2025 – 5:45 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chase Rief called to order the Board of Library Trustees meeting for May 19, 2025, at 5:47 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. CLOSED SESSION

1. Discuss the Library Services Director's Appointment, Employment, and Evaluation of Performance (Government Code § 54957).

The Closed Session was postponed to a future meeting.

IV. RECESS

V. RECONVENE AT 5:45 P.M. FOR REGULAR MEETING

VI. ROLL CALL

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

Trustees Absent: None

Staff Present: Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Andrew Kachaturian, Adult Services Coordinator
Annika Helmuth, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator
Camille Escareal-Garcia, Cultural Arts Assistant
Maria Nicklin, Library Marketing Specialist

Staff Absent: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist

VII. CLOSED SESSION REPORT

None

VIII. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Secretary Dorothy Larson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IX. **CHAIR'S WELCOME**

None

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

XI. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Cultural Arts Assistant Camille Escareal-Garcia read the Consent Calendar Notice to the public.

A. **Consent Calendar Items**

2. **Minutes of the April 21, 2025 Board of Library Trustees Meeting**

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.

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

Motion made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Secretary Dorothy Larson, and carried 5-0-0-0 to approve the Consent Calendar Item Nos. 1-4.

AYES: Rief, Castro, Larson, Kramer, Murray

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES:

XII. **CURRENT BUSINESS**

A. **Items for Review**

6. **Fiscal Year 2025-26 Library Services Budget**

Staff requests the Board of Library Trustees review and approve the Fiscal Year 2025-26 operating budget for the Library.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget is not much different than what the Board saw earlier in the year. She added the City thinks there is more research needed on potentially reclassifying a Librarian III position to a paraprofessional and as such it is not reflected in this budget. She added the City Manager did approve two part-time Library Clerk positions and additional funds for the Sculpture Exhibition, both of which will be presented to the City Council.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot reported the FY 2025-26 budget is smaller than FY 2024-25 due to facilities maintenance and janitorial services being taken over by the Public Works Department. She added this decrease is listed in a combination of the professional services, supplies, and facility maintenance portions of the budget.

Trustee Kramer reported she served on the Ad Hoc Committee to look at the budget and expressed her appreciation for staff's work and support of the result.

In response to Vice Chair Castro's inquiries, Library Services Manager Lightfoot clarified a paraprofessional position is meant for someone who does not have a master's degree. She confirmed any level of Librarian position requires a master's degree.

In response to Secretary Larson's inquiries, Library Services Manager Lightfoot confirmed the library materials budget is unchanged. She confirmed there will be an opportunity to request funds in FY 2026-27 to help cover expenses of reopening the Balboa Branch following its 18-month reconstruction, including general materials.

In response to Chair Rief's inquiry, Library Services Manager Lightfoot confirmed this is not a receive and file item but rather one requiring a motion.

Motion made by Trustee Lauren Kramer, seconded by Secretary Dorothy Larson, and carried 5-0-0-0 to approve the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Library Services Budget.

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

7. Marketing and Social Networking Update

Staff will provide the annual briefing on Library marketing and social media activities.

Marketing Specialist Maria Nicklin reported on how she ensures the Library's goals are reflected in all of her promotional work, including increasing awareness of the Library, filling its programming, reaching new audiences, and continuing to build a consistent Library brand.

Marketing Specialist Nicklin cited the screening of *The [M] Factor* documentary as an example of successful promotion for a Library event, leading to the need for a waiting list within 48 hours of the initial announcement for an event that ultimately saw a room full of people where many were attending a Newport Beach Public Library event for the first time.

She noted the turnout was strongest among women between 40-60 years of age. She reported many of the same tactics led to a successful book signing for local author Sophie Stava with an overflow crowd lingering an hour after the event's official closing time.

Chair Rief commented that the success of programs like this could lead them to need a larger facility to host Library programming.

Marketing Specialist Nicklin reported social media numbers are increasing and will look to grow in the coming months by using promotions and targeted advertising. She noted how Find Your Next Great Read has driven additional traffic to the Library's website and increased social media usage through its recommendation program. She reported on the success of Fire Station Storytime and further growing attendance at an already-popular event. She added marketing efforts were increased around the annual butterfly release event, seeing positive results both before and after the event through an additional 100 social media followers within 48 hours. She lauded the Storytellers workshops.

Marketing Specialist Nicklin reported the Library's opening rate on marketing emails has increased from 15% in 2020 to 52% in 2025 through deliberate focus on components such as the subject line. She stated this is a sign the Library is sending out relevant and important information to its email list. She added the open rate for children's programming emails is up to 70%. She reported on the growing number of email list subscribers, now eclipsing 31,000 for general information and another 6,000 for children's-specific information. She reported the Library's Facebook following has grown from 1,250 in 2021 to over 4,000 today.

Marketing Specialist Nicklin reported on the efforts to build a polished, credible, and modern brand identity for the Library with all of its printed and digital promotional materials. She added, since her hire in 2020, she has taken most of the promotional photographs herself to help foster brand integrity. She reported her next steps will include continuing this successful work from the past year with an eye on events aiming to fill the new and larger Witte Hall.

Chair Rief lauded the 400% increase in Fire Station Storytime attendees since 2021, crediting the enhanced marketing and promotion for the regular events. He also noted an increase in attendance for the annual butterfly release event which included two sites this year for the first time. He commended having a 52% email open rate while also growing the audience, noting 52% is above industry standards.

In response to Vice Chair Castro's inquiries, Marketing Specialist Nicklin reported many entries on the email list only list the recipient's name and email address and not their physical address. She added some could be cross referenced with the Library Card holder's database to determine their residential location but noted the form to sign up for the emails only requests an email address and not a mailing address. She agreed having this information could be helpful in promoting targeted events for Newport Beach residents only. She added they can target more focused groups through social media and there is potential to capture more information. She added email addresses are captured in many ways ranging from event attendance, Library Card applications, direct mailed postcards, Library website visitors, and others. She reported Library staff does not force email list membership on people, adding enrollment is always optional, even while signing up for a Library Card.

Secretary Larson encouraged Marketing Specialist Nicklin to use her abilities to encourage attendance for events at the new lecture hall and added the space can become a wonderful amenity for residents.

Chair Rief added social media could also promote the Seed Library by encouraging residents to send in the results of their planting to share on Instagram and other social media channels.

Chair Rief received and filed the report.

8. Library Activities

Monthly update of library events, services, and statistics.

Library Services Manager Lightfoot noted the recent passing of Elizabeth Stahr who was an integral figure in the creation of the Central Library and a long-time supporter of the Library. She reported on a closure for Memorial Day, the Friends of the Library's used book sale on June 6-7, and the start of the Summer Reading Program on June 7.

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

Chair Rief received and filed the report.

B. Monthly Reports

9. Library Foundation Liaison Report

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

Secretary Larson reported the Library Foundation's May 12 meeting featured planning for Balboa Branch's reconstruction and the June 18 Summer Solstice event. She reported the Foundation's recent programming has been sold out, including a recent Spotlight on Science event which overflowed its space.

Chair Rief reported he also attended the meeting, and the organization announced it will be changing its name to the Library Foundation of Newport Beach.

10. Foundation Literacy Liaison Report

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

Vice Chair Castro reported the group received a \$22,475 grant from the Library Foundation. She reported efforts will be made to publish the written works of the learners as a vehicle to highlight the program and its results.

11. Friends of the Library Liaison Report

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

Trustee Meghan Murray reported she was unable to attend the last meeting but stated the group is gearing up for its June book sale.

Chair Rief opened the items to public comments, there were none.

Chair Rief received and filed the monthly reports.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – THREE MINUTES PER SPEAKER
None

XIV. 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

XV. ADJOURNMENT – 6:15 P.M.
The next meeting will be June 16, 2025.