

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

Board of Library Trustees
Civic Center Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach, CA
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 20, 2025 – 5:00 PM

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Lauren Kramer called to order the Board of Library Trustees meeting for October 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Trustees Absent: None

Staff Present: Melissa Hartson, Library Services Director
Francine Jacome, Administrative Support Specialist
Rebecca Lightfoot, Library Services Manager
Andrew Kachaturian, Adult Services Coordinator
Annika Helmuth, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator
Miranda Gentry, Circulation Coordinator
Ben Zdeba, Community Development Planning Manager

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Secretary Larson 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 September 15, 2025 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

2. 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 Kramer opened the items to public comment, and there was none.

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

AYES: Castro, Kramer, Larson, Murray, Rief

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES:

VI. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review

6. General Plan Update

Seeking Input on Refreshed Goals and Policies in the Draft Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element.

Planning Manager Ben Zdeba reported on the community-driven General Plan updating process, adding that staff has returned to the Board looking for feedback on the two relevant draft elements presented at the August meeting.

Chair Kramer opened public comment, and there was none.

In response to Secretary Larson's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba could not recall the entire membership of the General Plan Advisory Committee's (GPAC) Arts and Culture Subcommittee, but reported that it is at least partially comprised of GPAC Member Paul Watkins, GPAC Co-Chair Arelene Greer (who also chairs the Subcommittee), and GPAC Member Dennis Baker. He added that GPAC Member Watkins is in attendance if the Board has any questions.

Chair Kramer commended the draft elements and stated that she has nothing to add to them.

The trustees agreed and lauded the thorough nature of the documents.

8. Mariners Branch Update

Staff will provide the annual overview of the Mariners Branch operations.

Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Annika Helmuth reported that Mariners Branch Librarian Alex Johnkins was unable to attend the meeting. She reported that the Mariners Branch opened in 2006 and continues to operate in conjunction with Mariners Elementary School. She added that it is the City's second-largest library and is open seven days a week, following the Central Library's schedule.

Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Helmuth reported that since the Public Works Department took over maintenance of all City libraries, the Mariners Branch has already seen improvements to its safety and efficiency, with a complete roof replacement and fire sprinkler system overhaul upcoming. She added that the Mariners Branch saw 150,000 visits in the past year, with the most popular program being Storytime. She reported that the children's area's interactive art wall is growing rapidly in popularity, and the Mariners Branch also saw strong participation in the Summer Reading Program (SRP). She reported that the Seed Library is growing in popularity, and the City's Test Proctoring Service is now housed at the Mariners Branch after being transferred from the Corona del Mar Branch.

Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Helmuth reported on the Mariners Branch's many community outreach activities.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

9. Youth Services Update

Staff will provide the annual overview of Youth Services.

Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Helmuth clarified that the report's format has shifted from calendar years to Fiscal Years, with this report focused on FY 2024-25. She added that Youth Services saw growth in the past year, along with additional community engagement. She added that early literacy is essential to the mission of Youth Services with a focus on elementary schools. She noted that the educator engagement webpage has been streamlined and extolled the popularity of the Storytime events, SRP, and first-grade class visit programs.

Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Helmuth reported that a new projector system funded by the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation has been installed in the Central Library's Children's Room. She added that the children's collection is one of the most active in the library system. She reported on usage figures, reflecting increased participation over the previous few years alongside increased outreach efforts. She thanked the Newport Beach Friends of the Library and the Foundation for their support of Youth Services.

In response to Secretary Larson's inquiry, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator

Helmuth clarified that graphic novels are geared towards elementary school students ranging from kindergarten through sixth grade.

In response to Chair Kramer's inquiry, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Helmuth reported on how library staff tracks attendance at events through the rudimentary use of a headcount clicker.

Secretary Larson commended the graphic novels for how they encourage children to read.

In response to Vice Chair Castro's inquiries, Branch and Youth Services Coordinator Helmuth stated that staff is currently emphasizing after-school programming for ages 6-11 and looking for ways to incorporate learning into the busy afternoon schedules of children after school lets out. She added that there is room for growth around the Storytimes, and staff is considering what would be the best extension after these popular events. She confirmed that the writing program is focused on teens with an emphasis on essays, but she added that there have been stand-alone writing workshops focused on ages 8-11.

Vice Chair Castro advocated for the writing programs, including the inclusion of poetry.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

10. Library Activities

Monthly update of library events, services, and statistics.

Library Services Director Hartson introduced newly hired Circulation Coordinator Miranda Gentry to the Board. She reported that the Central Library's productive recent three-week closure saw the completion of a Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning project, Children's Room recarpeting, repainting, front lobby art display system installation, lobby lighting updates, and general facility cleaning, all being concluded on time. She noted how the Corona del Mar Branch saw an increase in patron visits for those three weeks due to displaced Central Library patrons. She added that staff has received excellent feedback about the Central Library's facility upgrades since its reopening.

In response to Chair Kramer's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson confirmed that there has been discussion among staff about repainting the exterior of the Central Library ahead of Witte Hall's opening. She reported that the City has solicited bids for a larger Citywide exterior painting project that includes the Central Library. She added that there has not yet been a decision made about either keeping the Library the same color or whether it should be changed to tie the Civic Center area together under a unified exterior color.

In response to Secretary Larson's inquiry, Library Services Director Hartson reported that the timing of the painting is sooner rather than later due to a goal of completing the Central Library's exterior painting before Witte Hall opens.

Secretary Larson expressed her pleasant surprise that the Central Library reopened on schedule after its three-week closure for renovations.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

B. Monthly Reports

11. Library Foundation Liaison Report

- A. Library Foundation Board – Report of the most recently attended meeting.
- B. Library Live Lectures Committee – Report of the most recently attended meeting.
- C. Witte Lectures Committee – Report of the most recently attended meeting.

Trustee Rief reported that he was unable to attend the latest Foundation meeting but has an appointment to discuss some matters with the Foundation, adding that Chief Executive Officer Jerold D Kappel has a full meeting report included in the Agenda packet.

Library Foundation Director of Programs Kunga Wangmo-Upshaw reported that the last Library Live Lecture was sold out and included participants from the inspiring California School for the Deaf's football team depicted in the recent novel "The Boys of Riverside." She added that the November Library Live Lecture is also sold out.

Secretary Larson reported that the lecture series is so successful because they are proactively focused on contemplating what people will want to hear about over the coming year.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

12. Foundation Literacy Liaison Report

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

Vice Chair Castro reported that they met on September 23, to discuss the success of International Literacy Day, award recipients, and financial matters. She reported that Project Adult Literacy now has 61 learners and tutors, noting that there is a volunteer training opportunity upcoming on October 29. She promoted a holiday potluck brunch on December 6, at 10:00 a.m. She reported that Project Adult Literacy staff attended an event in the City of Carlsbad to exchange ideas and best practices.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

13. Friends of the Library Liaison Report

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

Trustee Murray reported that the most recent meeting was canceled, but added that she attended the Friends of the Library's check presentation at the last City Council meeting.

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

Chair Kramer received and filed the report.

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)

Chair Kramer reported that she will be absent from the November meeting.

Vice Chair Castro confirmed that she will be at the next meeting and able to run it.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – 5:26 P.M.

The next meeting will be on November 17, 2025.