

CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

**Board of Library Trustees
Civic Center Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach
Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 17, 2024 – 4:30 PM**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – 4:30 PM

Chair Paul Watkins called to order the regular meeting of the Newport Beach Board of Library Trustees.

II. ROLL CALL – Roll call by Administrative Support Specialist Francine Jacome.

Trustees Present: Chair Paul Watkins, Vice Chair Dorothy Larson, Trustee Antonella Castro, Trustee Chase Rief (arrived at 4:32)

Trustees Absent: Secretary Lauren Kramer (excused)

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

Staff Absent: None

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Watkins led the Pledge of Allegiance

IV. NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC - Read by Administrative Support Specialist Francine Jacome

V. PATRON APPEALS OF DIRECTOR'S DECISIONS

Chair Watkins introduced the Appeal Hearing.

Chair Watkins explained the appeals process and provided the background of these appeals. The library defines the age range for the children's collection to be 0-6th grade. The teens' collection is 7th grade through 12th grade, beyond grade 12 is the adults' collection. He read the three titles that are being appealed. He reviewed the collection development policy including approximately 20 selection criteria included in the policy. The Board's commitment is to keep an open mind regarding the appeals, to listen to both sides, offer input as Board members, and help craft a consensus/final resolution as per the Collection Development Policy. Based upon the 20 criteria set forth in the policy, the Board will either uphold or amend the Director's decision for a final resolution for each title. Chair Watkins provided information regarding spectator rules. Each appellant will be provided with five minutes to state their appeal. The information backing each appeal is located in the Agenda Packet.

1. Appeal Hearing of “Alice Austen Lived Here” by Alex Gino

The Board of Library Trustees will conduct an appeal hearing for the Director’s Decision of “Alice Austen Lived Here” by Alex Gino

Chair Watkins introduced the first book and called for the first appellant.

Sydni Webb cited her reason for the appeal of the Director’s original decision to leave the book in the children’s collection section by reading excerpts from the book and stated the book explains sexually explicit behavior without parental guidance and demonstrates hate and racism against white American males. Ms. Webb read the definition of the word “grooming” and believes the book has material relating to grooming children towards gender dysphoria. The human brain finishes developing when a person is in their mid-twenties. Very difficult topics are being presented to minors who are incapable of understanding the consequences. Ms. Webb read a decision made by the Academy of Pediatrics who has stated doctors need to stop supporting gender affirming care for youth. Ms. Webb believed the book should either be relocated into the adults’ section of the library so adults can check it out for their children should they feel it’s warranted, or it should be removed completely given the racism nature of the book against young Caucasian white boys. The evaluation and appeal information can be found in the Agenda Packet on Handwritten pages 6 through 22. Appellant Beverly Betcher did not attend the meeting.

Library Services Director Melissa Hartson provided information about the book, its location and how the evaluation result was decided and stated that the publisher of the book, Scholastic Inc., is a reputable and the largest publisher and distributor of children’s books in the world. It has received favorable reviews from professional review journals for children’s books that are timely, contain concise critical appraisal of the book as a whole; they identify its strengths and weaknesses and list the age or grade level suitability. These review journals rated the age suitability for this book from 8 years old to 12 years old, or 4th – 8th grade level. The California Department of Education includes it in its recommended literature list with a grade level span of 6th – 8th grades. The book received an Accelerated Reader rating suitability for early 5th grade. Accelerated Reader also considers qualitative factors which monitor the interest level. This interest level relates to content and age appropriateness and is based on students’ abilities to comprehend the purpose and context of the text as a whole. “Alice Austen Lived Here” is rated for middle school graders or for students in 4th – 8th grades. The teens’ collection is meant for 7th-12th grade level readers; so, for these reasons the book does belong in the teens’ fiction collection of the Library.

Chair Watkins thanked Ms. Webb for the research and good information that she provided and stated he found it informative and called for public comments and requested all comments be limited to two minutes and subjective to the pros and cons of the appeal and not extraneous arguments.

Wendy Leece spoke as a Costa Mesa resident whose school district uses the Mariners Library for their school and commented about her experience as a School Board member 20 years ago and felt the book would be more appropriate in the adults’ section.

Carrie Slayback, Orange County teacher of the year, told a true story about the end of her career and helping two 5th grade students who were about to fail, and the librarian gave

the boys books to read that helped them pass. Books should not be removed from the shelves.

Haley Jenkins acknowledged gratitude that the book was initially moved into the teens' section and provided comments against keeping the book in the library. She's not an advocate of moving inappropriate material from one section of the library to another. The contents of the book contain inappropriate behavior that is being portrayed as normal behavior. Additionally, the repeated references of racism and tolerance of hatred for white boys isn't a good lesson for children of any age.

Kim Jonsma, Newport Beach resident, provided comment in favor of the Director's decision to keep the book available in the teens' section, and advocated for inclusivity within the library.

An unidentified speaker spoke in favor of removing the book from the library due to its content and believed relocating the book to the teens' section was dumbing down children.

An unidentified speaker spoke regarding the impact of the decisions being made regarding the books and how those decisions will affect future generations. The topic currently being debated is no longer sexual orientation.

Mary Beth Saucerman, Newport Beach resident, spoke in favor of the Director's decision and believed all of the books should be kept in the sections the books were intended for and cited Benjamin Franklin who stated, "Libraries change lives for the better, and the library has a crucial role in fostering democracy."

Laurie Smith, Newport Beach resident and teacher, commented on how librarians and educators have been doing an excellent job supporting the book choices of children. The Board has done an excellent job at ensuring a variety of literature has been available to the community and supported the decision of the Director.

Vien Nguyen, Newport Beach resident, provided comment about the first public commenters research and the American College of Pediatricians as a socially conservative advocacy group that promotes conversion therapy and questioned their ability of being an authoritative voice and was in favor of the director's original decision.

Joni Nichols, Newport Beach resident, spoke regarding a hand count that was taken at a prior meeting that was discounted and on the responsibility of the Board to represent as a whole what the community supports. One group of people choosing for the good of many is a violation of freedom.

Bill Dunlap provided comment in support of parents being provided with the opportunity to teach their children as they see fit, but the book not being made available for small children to read while unattended. There should be a community-involved review committee.

Barry Behrstock provided comment as a pediatrician and in favor of the Director's decision and believed the problem isn't the children seeing books in the library, rather children having access to the internet via cell phones.

Jim Mosher, Newport Beach resident, provided comment in support of the Director's original decision and questioned the logic of moving the book from the teens' section to

the adults' section and recalled children under the age of 12 are always supposed to be accompanied by an adult. A 12-year-old has the ability to go into any section of the library they want, moving it wouldn't hinder their ability to access the material.

Ann Lopour, Irvine resident, provided comment in support of the Director's decision and believes her own opinion ends at her doorstep, as well as everyone else. Parents are supposed to be with children when in the library choosing books. Mariners Branch is different in that it is also used as a school library. What is supposed to be public is being limited.

Chair Watkins closed public comment and invited Director Hartson to respond to comments.

Library Services Director Hartson clarified that the book is not available Mariners Branch's school library section.

Chair Watkins brought the discussion back to the Board and commented that he appreciated Ms. Webb's research and liked points made by comments and enjoyed reading the book. After hearing comments, he supports the Director's decision to leave the book where it is located. It is a mature theme but believed appropriate for teen readers.

Vice Chair Dorothy Larson commented she appreciated some of the comments about the purpose of the Library, it's important that American libraries remain free and independent resources of diverse and inclusive reading materials. Vice Chair Larson believed there seemed to be a consistent pattern of looking for material that is considered as "grooming", a word that is being given more power than it has. The overriding theme of the book was acceptance, and in addition the kids in the book work on a project for school and go way over and above what was required. It's a brilliant example of kids going out of their way to put good thought into a school project. She supports the Director's original decision and is a bit disappointed it's not still in the children's collection. It's important to have books in the library that really appeal to children, tell a story, and are helpful while being informative.

Trustee Chase Rief commented he appreciated the Director's decision of relocating the book to the teens' collection and it would have been his recommendation had it still been in the children's collection.

Trustee Antonella Castro also supported the Director's decision and believed it is appropriate for the teens' collection, after considering the guidelines of the Collections Policy. It's an important resource and the overall message of the book was to celebrate a person in history in Statton Island that hadn't gotten appropriate recognition and the kids recognized that and, in the process, learned about themselves. It's a really good story and appropriate in the teens' collection.

Motion made by Trustee Chase Rief, seconded by Trustee Antonella Castro, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Trustee Lauren Kramer absent) in favor of upholding the Director's decision to keep the book in the teens' fiction collection.

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

2. Appeal Hearing of “It’s Perfectly Normal” by Robie H. Harris

The Board of Library Trustees will conduct an appeal hearing for the Director’s Decision of “It’s Perfectly Normal” by Robie H. Harris

Chair Watkins called for the first appellant.

Haley Jenkins provided her appeal of the Director’s original decision to leave the book in the children’s collection, which was submitted in the Agenda Packet on Handwritten pages 24 through 25. She found 12 titles of books in the children’s collection that fall under the category of “child sex instruction”. There are 72 books in the children’s collection under the tag “puberty”. This means there is already a wide selection of books for kids if they are curious about those things. Most of the books give the same information without the shock of explicit graphics. This book has those graphics, which are highly inappropriate for children. When this book has been discussed on the news, the television stations are required to blur out the photos. When shared on social media the pictures are removed from the post or warnings are placed on top of them. She inquired if the Library could do a better job at providing a book with the same type of information that does not have explicit photos. This book would serve as a good resource in the parenting section of the library.

Library Services Director Melissa Hartson provided details of the book and when it was published. The suggested publisher age range for “It’s Perfectly Normal” is 10 years old and up. Publishers rank books based on how users use the book whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. There are more than one million copies of the book in print, and it has been translated into 35 languages. The book has received favorable reviews from all five of the main professional review journals for children’s books. These reviews identify the book’s strengths and weaknesses and list the age-appropriate level suitability per book. School Library Journal profiled the book as appropriate for ages 10 years old and up. In recognition of its literary merit, the title has received a number of acknowledgements and awards. The California Department of Education included the book in its recommendation for its 2022 literature list for students. The library check-out history of the book shows a demand for the book. The author and illustrator state the book is intended to help kids and teens to stay healthy and safe as they continue to grow through puberty and adolescence. Twenty other Orange County locations have this book included in their children’s collections. The item meets the conditions as established by the Collection Development Policy for children’s nonfiction collection, and the copies are located at the Central Library and Balboa Branch locations.

Chair Watkins reviewed the Director’s decision on the evaluation was to have the book remain in the children’s collection, and called for public comments and requested all comments be limited to two minutes and subjective to the pros and cons of the appeal and not extraneous arguments.

Sydni Webb, Newport Beach resident, commented regarding the book and highlighted several images in the book that she felt are inappropriate. Small children should not learn about masturbation in a book from the children’s library. If the Director feels this book is appropriate for small children, she believed the Director’s decision-making is flawed. The book should be moved to the adults’ section and consideration needs to be put into the evaluation process.

Dianne Wells provided public comment against the Director's decision to keep the book in the children's section and move it to the adults' section. It contains very mature sexual themes that are unsuitable for children. Ms. Wells read excerpts from a letter written by Attorney Tracy Henderson of the California Parent Union about California laws against obscenity.

Francine Howard commented against the Director's decision and regarding the reviewers of these books have not been adequately challenging the author recommendations on children's books. She found it very unlikely that all journal reviewers would find consensus down the line, with every review. The process seems scripted and geared towards how to fight white Christian nationalism.

Bill Dunlap commented against the Director's decision and the number of how many copies of the book had sold; and questioned when Newport Beach cared about the quantity of something, particularly the readership of material. The book's illustrations are pornographic, and it should be removed from the Library.

Annie Vangrow, Newport Beach resident, spoke in favor of the Director's decision and questioned how images of the human body could be considered pornographic. There is nothing shameful regarding the physical attributes of the body and the changes everyone experiences. The book also provides accurate information and promotes safe practices.

Vien Nguyen, Newport Beach resident, spoke in support of the Director's decision and agreed with the previous speakers points. Much of the book is teaching anatomy, which is impossible without pictures, this includes pictures that children can understand versus a medical journal that most adults don't understand.

Wendy Leece, Costa Mesa resident, spoke against the Director's decision and stated the differing opinions of all tax payers should be considered, whether they are in the majority or not. They aren't trying to remove people's rights or ban books, only protect children's innocence.

Joni Nichols, Newport Beach resident, provided comment in support of the Director's decision as it covers all the usual topics that covers puberty and anatomy, but it also goes beyond and touches on touching and attraction, sexual abuse, abortion, all the subjects that kids think about, joke about and talk about with their friends. Adults are the ones who feel uncomfortable talking about them. What makes this book special is that the illustrations are anatomically correct.

An unidentified speaker spoke in favor of the Director's decision and felt the reaction in the room to a book that teaches young people about the human body and reproduction shows why the author wanted to call it 'perfectly normal'. It is perfectly normal, and society tends to be puritanical. Sexuality is perfectly normal, and the illustrations are not sensational.

Ann Lopour, Irvine resident, provided comment in support of the Director's decision and found the book to be factual, objective, and non-emotional. The adults who don't appreciate the book should read it from a child's perspective. She trusts the librarians and staff, and as a retired nurse anesthetist she has been amazed at the number of adults who didn't know what body parts are called.

Laurie Smith commented in support of the Director's decision and how the libraries are the crown jewels of the city, and all of this has become a stain on that. From the lecture series to all of the stacks of books, her kids grew up in the Mariners branch. It took a great amount of time and money and effort to establish it as a shared library. Concerns regarding books are personal opinions and personal opinions don't belong in publicly shared space.

Chair Watkins reviewed the Director's decision and brought the discussion back to the Board and commented that the book belongs in the public library. He was somewhat concerned with chapter 15 and believed it could potentially be a better fit for the teens' collection but is open to the other Board members thoughts.

Trustee Antonella Castro commented that she has young children and knows that puberty discussions are happening around the 4th grade because that's when most girls begin to menstruate. Moms are talking to children about the changes girls go through to help mitigate embarrassment and teasing. The book is comprehensive and factual. The visual literacy on intercourse is probably advanced from where 4th-6th graders are, but nonetheless it is happening whether parents are comfortable with it or not. Based on the book as a whole, she would support placing the book in the teens' collection and suggested a possible sub committee to review adding different subcategories for material relating to puberty.

Trustee Chase Rief commented this book was more challenging for him, so he checked out every book available regarding puberty and all of the books show people having intercourse. This book is more mature than some of the rest of them, and what was most upsetting was that the book was out on display in the children's section. He has mixed feelings about this book, but he leaned towards moving the book to the teens' collection, and reserved his final response after he heard the rest of the Board's opinions.

Vice Chair Dorothy Larson commented she agreed it's a tough choice. She really liked the book and is concerned about some of the things people are describing as weird or pornographic when in fact they are fashionable and graphic. The book did a great job at normalizing all body types and leaned in the direction of Trustee Rief regarding not displaying the book. However, she supports keeping it in the children's collection because parents are supposed to be there to supervise their children. Vice Chair Larson wouldn't object to it being relocated but feels it belongs in the children's collection. This book also addresses issues such as inappropriate touching and posting pictures on the internet, which are both very important pieces of information for young children as well.

Motion made by Vice Chair Larson to keep the book in the children's collection. There was not a second to the motion, the motion failed.

2nd Motion made by Trustee Chase Rief, seconded by Trustee Antonella Castro, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Trustee Lauren Kramer absent) in favor of upholding the Director's decision to keep the book "*It's Perfectly Normal*" in the children's collection, however, not on display.

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

3. Appeal Hearing of “What Is White Privilege?” by Leigh Ann Erickson

The Board of Library Trustees will conduct an appeal hearing for the Director’s Decision of “What Is White Privilege?” by Leigh Ann Erickson

Chair Watkins called for the first appellant.

Sydni Webb cited her reason for the appeal of the Director’s original decision to leave the book in the children’s collection, which was submitted in the Agenda Packet on Handwritten page 34. Ms. Webb read a sample quote from the book and commented that the book is discriminatory towards white people and racist. It stated that it leaves young white children feeling like they’ve done something wrong and because of their skin color they should feel back about that. Books in the children’s collection should leave children feeling better about themselves. This book is similar in theme to the book on appeal last month “Not My Idea,” and that book was relocated to the adults’ section. No racist material should be funded by tax dollars.

Appellant Beverly Betcher did not attend the meeting.

Library Services Director Melissa Hartson provided information regarding how the evaluation result was decided and stated that it is the Library’s intention of the Collection Development Policy to provide balanced materials with permanent value with current interests. “What is White Privilege” is intended for children through grade six. The book received favorable reviews from the School Library Journal who profiled the book from 3rd through 7th graders, Booklist recommended it to 5th – 8th graders. It is in the children’s nonfiction collection in four other Orange County libraries. After careful consideration of the book, Library Policy, and professional evaluation, one copy remains in the children’s nonfiction collection at the Central Library only.

Chair Watkins noted in the Director’s original decision on the evaluation, the title was to remain in the children’s nonfiction collection at the Central Library and be removed from Mariners Branch; Chair Watkins called for public comments on the book “What is White Privilege?”

Barry Behrstock thanked the Board for their work and spoke in favor of the Director’s decision and provided commentary on the definition of white privilege within America and cited experience as a doctor on what resources children can acquire knowledge and how that knowledge shapes the way they learn.

Haley Jenkins provided public comment against the Director’s decision and read a definition of white privilege from a book that had been pulled previously due to poor circulation and is part of a collection of “anti-white” books. This book is similar to “Not My Idea” and promotes racism and should not be the type of book that Newport Beach purchases.

Annie Vangrow, Corona del Mar resident, explained that white privilege refers to advantages that people received simply because of their race; creating conditions where white individuals have greater access to power, resources, and opportunities compared to people of color. Ms. Vangrow explained the ways it can manifest and supported the Director’s decision.

Patty Gwin, Newport Beach resident, provided comment in support of the Director's decision and commented on the influence of fear in the presence of change and throughout life.

Carrie Slayback provided comment in support of the Director's decision and shared a historical story about the last wild Indigenous boy who walked out of Oroville that she shared with her elementary students; he became part of the museum at UC Berkley after his entire tribe was killed by white settlers.

An unidentified speaker spoke against the Director's decision stating she believes there are evil groups in all ethnic groups, she's against books that single out one specific group for the purpose of making them feel bad about themselves.

Debra Klein, Newport Beach resident, provided public comment against the Director's decision and stated any book that talks about privilege is racist when an ethnic group is targeted in the title and the content.

An unidentified speaker spoke in favor of the Director's decision and provided examples of white privilege, something that is present in society and is not meant to make children feel bad about themselves; it would be no different than having a book about bullying.

Wendy Leece, Costa Mesa resident, provided public comment against the Director's decision as it is not developmentally appropriate for 3rd – 7th graders. The philosophy came from a university, and that's where the discussion should stay. The book is divisive.

Vien Nguyen, Newport Beach resident, provided public comment in favor of the Director's decision and provided statistics of the group of patrons who are requesting the books to be removed from the libraries. There are 120,000 active borrowers, divided by the 20 patrons against the books equals .017% of the patrons who are creating the complaints. The book is about white privilege, not white people, they are two totally different concepts.

Francine Howard commented against the Director's decision, commenting that the book is written by people who are not living in current everyday life.

Anne Lopour, Irvine resident, provided public comment in favor of the Directors decision and spoke regarding bias and implicit bias and the differences between the two and how prominent it is. Racism and bias are subtle, people need to learn about it when they are young.

Joni Nichols, Newport Beach resident, provided public comment in favor of the Director's decision and spoke about the natural instinct of everyone wanting to believe they earned what they have, and in cultures all over the world people are aware of advantages their children will have if their skin is lighter.

Chair Watkins brought the discussion back to the Board, and explained the original decision was to retain the title in the children's collection but remove it from the Mariners branch location. He believed there was some doctrine error that was being passed along and wondered if children under 11 are in a position to look at the doctrines being stated. There was some generalization and didn't recall any footnotes or research to support some of the generalizations. Chair Watkins referenced pages 16 and 18 of the book and read excerpts that did not have research to back up the information, and on page 20 there

were examples listed. Chair Watkins questioned if 9 and 10 year olds would know how to process that information in a fair way; for that reason, he supported the title being located to the teens' collection.

Trustee Chase Rief commented he agreed with Chair Watkins and appreciated how he articulated his thoughts. Trustee Rief also had passages highlighted that were substantiated and felt it would be difficult to teach young children how to process the information. The future of America should not be about making a child feel bad about the color of his skin because of the sins of his ancestors. His concern is the book is not a teen book and it's not written as such and believed it does not add merit to the collection.

Vice Chair Dorothy Larson commented regarding the Collection Development Policy, which was revised to indicate that a title would not be removed based on a single image or sentence. In listening to the public comments, she felt like they were reading different books. This book is historic fact, it doesn't try to make kids feel bad about themselves, rather it tries to get the child to understand that the color of one's skin doesn't dictate opportunities that are available. Based on history, she's not going to feel bad about being white, however she would acknowledge that is the history of the United States. She would advocate for leaving it where it is. Parents can help their children interpret the information. She commended the speaker who stated kids learn mostly from their peers, however they do learn bigotry from their parents.

Trustee Antonella Castro commented her struggle with leaving the title in the children's collection, not knowing if children are able to understand the concept of white privilege and not view it just as a skin color. It is an important topic but not one that most 10 year olds would comprehend, particularly given the many layers of complexity. She is not a fan of removing books but would be in favor of removing the title from the children's collection.

Chair Watkins offered relocating the book to the teens' collection as a compromise.

Motion made by Vice Chair Dorothy Larson, seconded by Chair Paul Watkins, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Trustee Lauren Kramer absent) in favor relocating the book "*What is White Privilege*" to the teens' collection.

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

The Board Took a 10-Minute Break at 6:42 p.m. and resumed with all members present except for Secretary Lauren Kramer who had an excused absence.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

A. Consent Calendar Items

Chair Watkins inquired if any Trustees had requests to pull an item from the Consent Calendar.

4. Minutes of the May 20, 2024 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

Chair Watkins noted Mr. Mosher's written submitted comments about the minutes seemed fine and included:

Comments on pages 3, 6, and page 11 are fine.

The work "release" on page 12 should have been preach.

Comments on page 13, 16, 18, 21, 22, and 23 are all fine.

5. Patron Comments

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

6. Patron's Request for Evaluation of Library Resources

Monthly review of evaluations of library resources as requested by patrons, with corresponding staff responses.

7. Library Activities

Monthly update of library events, services, and statistics.

8. Expenditure Status Report

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

Chair Watkins reported they are 91% through the annual budget calendar and 1% under budget.

9. Board of Library Trustees Monitoring List

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

Chair Watkins opened the item for public comments.

Jim Mosher, Newport Beach resident, commented regarding the Expenditure Status report and noted staff always finishes the year close to the budget but never goes over the budget and with respect to that City Council's action to increase the budget for library materials is very erratic and doesn't always seem to reflect increases in prices. With the recent changes in inflation, he noted at the finance committee's budget meeting that the materials for library did not increase again for 2025. The Board may want to consider putting that on their radar.

Motion made by Trustee Antonella Castro, seconded by Trustee Chase Rief, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Secretary Kramer absent) to approve the Consent Calendar Items 1-9 with the minor changes to the May 20, 2024 draft minutes with the changes submitted by Mr. Mosher in writing.

AYES: Watkins, Larson, Castro, Rief

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENCES: Kramer

XII. CURRENT BUSINESS

A. Items for Review

10. **Children's Collection Development Policy Review (pp 99-112)**

The Children's Collection Development Ad Hoc Subcommittee's recommended amendments to Library Policy NBPL 2, *Collection Development Policy* for the Board of Library Trustees to review and approve.

Trustee Castro reported the draft of the proposed amendments to the current Collection Development Policy. After feedback from the Board and public feedback, the changes were incorporated and before the Board was the revised draft.

Chair Watkins referenced the following changes:

- page 103 of the redlined version and requested the addition of a semi colon, in the 4th line of the same paragraph add "Collection" after "Children's".
- on page 104 the underlined language in the middle of the page – second line replace "emotion" with emotional.
- top of page 105 – 4th line from the bottom of the underlined material at the – add the word "to" before anything and the contrary.
- Top of page 106 the first line of the underlined language – add "of" between "call for review" and "any materials contained in the library".

Chair Watkins opened the item up for public comment.

Haley Jenkins provided public comment regarding her email to strengthen the wording of the policy to include teens, it's unfortunate that the focus of this is only on the children's collection. And suggested they review the books already in the Collection, specifically at the Mariners branch in the students' section, white privilege should be added to the list of controversial issues, and parents should be allowed access to the library when the school students are using the library.

Trustee Castro responded that the subcommittee deferred some of the public feedback to the City Attorney and adding white privilege/racism is not something that can be added.

Annie Vangrow spoke regarding the policy and wondered why the parents of students in the schools that use the Mariners branch are not represented, neither are the schools, in these meetings and discussions. Including them would be the responsible thing to do. Age appropriateness under the controversial topics is based on the preferences of the Board members and not based on the research that has been done by community members.

Portia Fisher provided comment that the material placed in the children's section should be objective and balanced. Many of the sources that are often cited don't tend to cover a wide range of material. It might be worth letting the community be involved in purchasing materials.

Dianne Wells expressed concern under the patron rights section and the freedom to read in the Library Bill of Rights and questioned if the Library pays for a membership under the American Library Association (ALA). She struggled with endorsing the Freedom to Read under the Collection Development Policy as it relates to the ALA. Freedom to Read should

be viewed as a Constitutional Right, and not the activism of the ALA's interpretation of Freedom to Read. The revised policy should reflect the community's values and not the values of a political organization in Chicago.

Chair Watkins interjected that in general the Board supports the freedom to read.

Wendy Leece supported Ms. Wells' comments and spoke against using the ALA's version of the Freedom to Read. Their main goal is that children should become critical thinkers regardless of what age they are. The schools and libraries should not be following that ideology. The parents should be made aware of the current issues and a committee should be made up of community citizens.

Library Services Director Hartson responded that the Library has an avenue for the parents to recommend books for purchase and staff takes those very seriously and evaluates them as they come in. There is an active Memorandum of Understanding for Mariners Elementary's input as well.

Chair Watkins brought the item back to the Board.

Motion made by Trustee Chase Rief, seconded by Vice Chair Dorothy Larson, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Secretary Kramer absent) to approve the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to approve the amendments to Library Policy NBPL 2, Collection Development Policy.

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

11. Budget Amendments for Fiscal Year 2023-24 (pp. 113-115)

Staff requests that the Board of Library Trustees review and approve the FY 2024-25 operating budget for the Library.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot reported yearly funding for the libraries and referenced Packet Page 115 for the spreadsheet of resources.

Trustee Castro requested clarification of the numbers on page 113.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot stated she would recheck her calculations and returned stating the 339,670 figure on the spreadsheet was the correct figure.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

12. Approval of Site Placement for Sister City Donation (pp. 116-117)

Staff recommends the Board of Library Trustees approve the Passport Office at the Central Library as the site placement for the mixed media artwork piece, *Indivisible* by artist Pierce Meehan.

Library Services Director Hartson reported the Newport Beach Sister City Association (NBSCA) recently traveled to Okazaki and donated a work of art titled "Indivisible" by artist Pierce Meehan in celebration of their 40th anniversary of being Sister Cities. NBSCA will

be presenting City Council with a second identical piece at an upcoming meeting. The City Arts Commission recommends that the piece be added to the City's art inventory, and then placed in the Central Library's passport office to recognize international friendship and international travel.

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

Motion made by Trustee Chase Rief, seconded by Trustee Antonella Castro, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Secretary Kramer absent) to approve the Passport Office at the Central Library as the site placement for the mixed media artwork piece, "Indivisible" by artist Pierce Meehan.

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

13. Acceptance of Donation (pp. 118)

Staff recommends the Board of Library Trustees approve the acceptance of donations from the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation (NBPLF) and from Harbor View Elementary Associated Student Body.

Chair Watkins reported that last month he forgot to ask for a motion to accept the donations.

Motion made by Vice Chair Dorothy Larson, seconded by Trustee Chase Rief, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Secretary Kramer absent) to accept the donations from NBPLF and Harbor View Elementary school.

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

14. Friends of the Library Wish List and Acceptance of Donation (pp. 119-120)

Staff recommends that the Board of Library Trustees approves the acceptance of the donation and annual wish list request for funding from the Newport Beach Friends of the Library.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot reported that the Friends of the Library presented staff with a \$200,000 donation. Staff is asking the Board to accept the donation and approve the annual wish list request of \$150,000 for materials and \$50,000 for programming.

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

Motion made by Trustee Chase Rief, seconded by Vice Chair Dorothy Larson, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Secretary Kramer absent) to approve the acceptance of the donation and annual wish list request for funding from the Newport Beach Friends of the Library.

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

15. Newport Beach Public Library Foundation Wish List (pp. 121-122)

Staff recommends that the Board of Library Trustees approves annual wish list request for funding from the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation.

Library Services Manager Rebecca Lightfoot reported the total is \$40,000 for databases, which were no longer funded through the state, a catalog stand for the Popular Library at Central, and a portable projector and mountable screen set up for the children's library.

Library Services Director Hartson clarified that staff presented this list to the Foundation Board and the wish list was accepted.

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

Motion made by Vice Chair Dorothy Larson, seconded by Trustee Chase Rief, and carried (4-0-0-1 with Secretary Kramer absent) to approve the annual wish list request for funding from the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation.

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

16. Lecture Hall Update

Report on the activities related to the Witte Hall project.

Jerry Kappel, Newport Beach Public Library Foundation (Foundation) CEO, reported the Foundation has raised in cash and commitments \$9.2 million dollars, so there is 2.5 million left to raise. They will try to exceed that amount in case there are change orders that are needed. This Sunday, June 23, there will be an event in the Friends Room and in the Courtyard in support of the Foundation's efforts to fund Witte Hall.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

17. Library Services

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

Library Services Director Hartson took time to recognize the good works of Chair Watkins, his eight years served and countless hours, and thanked him for his dedication, care, and thoughtfulness in each meeting. His ability to run a tight ship has been well received and appreciated. The Board and staff presented Chair Watkins with a token of their appreciation.

Chair Watkins stated he was honored to work alongside such an amazing team. He's proud of the work they've accomplished together.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

B. Monthly Reports

18. Library Foundation Liaison Reports

A. Library Foundation Board

Report on the most recently attended meeting.

Chair Watkins stated that Jerry Kappel's (Foundation CEO) monthly report was excellent and was included in the Packet.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

B. Library Live Lectures Committee

Report on the most recently attended meeting.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

C. Witte Lectures Committee

Report on the most recently attended meeting.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

19. Friends of the Library Liaison Report

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

Trustee Rief reported the annual luncheon was well attended and there was great food. They elected their new Board.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

20. Pals4pal Liaison Report

Trustee update of the Pals4pal Board meeting.

Trustee Castro stated there was nothing to report from the recent Board meeting however their newsletter went out in May, and they are looking for volunteers for their adult literacy program and the Library sent nine volunteers to a conference to learn techniques and how to be better tutors. Pals4pals paid for two spots.

Chair Watkins asked for public comment. Seeing none, he received and filed the report.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – Two Minutes per speaker

Jerry Kappel (Foundation CEO) stated that both he and the Foundation are greatly appreciative of the work of Chair Watkins. It's been a wonderful working relationship with the trustees and with Chair Watkins. What he's done was out of love and because he believes in the institution. That's important because the institutions cannot thrive without volunteers. He will miss seeing Chair Watkins at the meetings.

Jim Mosher thanked Chair Watkins for his service on the Board and he was surprised to see the decision to drop the Balboa Branch Replacement Update as a standing item on the Agenda and recollected that it was referred to as a concept, which implies there could still be changes in the actual facility that is being constructed. It's important that the staff and the trustees continue to pay attention to what happens with the branch replacement.

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

Chair Watkins read an email by the former Mayor Nancy Garner, donor of the piece "A Novel Idea" by Craig Gray, expressing heartfelt wishes for the piece to be placed at the new Balboa Branch Library.

Chair Watkins requested a straw poll vote to reconsider the donation of "A Novel Idea" and placement at the Balboa Branch. The Board approved 4-0 to bring back the item for a vote at the July 15 meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT – 7:33 P.M.

The next meeting will be held in the Council Chambers on July 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

DRAFT