

**BRaille AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY USER ADVISORY COUNCIL DRAFT  
Provisional Minutes (Slated to be voted on at meeting of July 15, 2017)**

**Meeting Date: Saturday, March 4, 2017**

\*All cited "Action Items" will be listed at the end of the notes.

**Attendance:**

Gil Johnson, Chair, San Leandro  
Alan B. Smith, Vice-Chair, Concord  
Margie Donovan, Folsom  
Shannon Ramsay, Davis  
Karen Parsegian, Sacramento  
Roslyn McCoy, Mount Shasta  
Janet Snow, Redding  
Richard Rueda, Sacramento  
Lenore Presley, Sacramento

**Absent:**

Hy Cohen, Stockton

**BTBL Staff:**

Mike Marlin, BTBL Director, Ex Officio  
Mary Jane Kayes, BTBL Outreach/Reference Librarian  
Donna Scales, BTBL Readers Advisor Supervisor

**Guest Presenter:**

Greg Lucas, State Librarian of California, Ex Officio

**Meeting Notes:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:36 AM by Gil Johnson, Chair.

**Approval of Agenda**

Margie motioned to approve the agenda with Alan seconding. The meeting agenda was adopted with no changes.

**Adoption of Minutes of December 3, 2016**

Roslyn moved adoption, Alan seconded. Approval of minutes passed with Margie abstaining.

- Introductions of attendees and staff were made. New members were welcomed and encouraged to ask questions.

- Gil noted that Hy Cohen was unable to attend due to a work commitment. It was also noted that Mary Willows, representative of the National Federation of the Blind of California (NFBC) submitted her resignation to the group as she is preparing to move to New Mexico.

### **Remarks from Chair (Gil Johnson)**

- Expressed appreciation of being elected Chair.
- Books/literacy have been and continue to be very important to Gil.
- Suggested that all including self be considerate of all attendees, speakers, to speak clearly so that interpreters can keep up.
- Gil acknowledged that it would be good to pace the meeting with a hoping to end between 3 and 4 PM.
- Staff discussed housekeeping, i.e. location of restrooms, leaving the building, etc.
- Gil reminded all that communication with each other is best by email and that he is routinely checking and responding to email. And to copy other Council members as necessary and appropriate.
- Gil reminded that we shall have a discussion at end of meeting regarding "Action Items."
- Gil noted "allergy to acronyms" i.e. to spell out name of organization, agency or group when speaking vs. using the abbreviation.
- Gil noted that Judy Wilkinson, California Council of the Blind president, asked him to be a panelist during their conference in April and to represent BTBL. Gil noted that he will be participating by teleconference.
- Gil agreed to write review for "The Untold Story of the Talking Book" By. Matthew Rubery. This will be for the *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness* (JVIB) for the American Foundation for the Blind.

### **Mike Marlin:**

- Noted the purpose of the group is that of "advisory capacity". Further to assist BTBL via advisory means to let them know what is going well and what needs improvement.
- Original proposed name for BTBL was Patron Advisory Council, (PAC). Advised by legal that "PAC" would not be suitable as it sounded too close to Political Action Committee.

### **Greg Lucas, State Librarian of California presentation:**

- Welcomed all, thanked all for their duty, passion to the advisory body/process.
- Addressing issues including:
  - i. Who uses services
  - ii. Who should use but is not
  - iii. Which ones are most likely to use services
  - iv. Analogy to that of "low hanging fruit"
  - v. Discussed the extraordinary diversity, dialects of Californians

- Discussed overview of how digital books, recordings have changed the playing field from economics, distributions, labor, etc.
- Coined analogy of how we will never have a “Beatles” phenomenon, now that there are many paths/access points to news, music, information, resources vs. just three TV networks i.e. in the 1960’s.
- Greg, “Happy to have us”, to help California State Library to continue to thrive.

### **Greg invited questions from Advisory Council.**

- Alan asked about Kevin Starr tribute (former California State Librarian)
- Response: Dr. Starr has most words on/about California state history written in print,
- Greg notes that he liked his enthusiasm, diversity, all Californian’s story is heard, Dr. Kevin Starr invested in making sure California natives voices were captured/recorded
- Greg, noted there are a variety of tributes to Dr. Starr in archives,
- Mike Marlin noted that the Dr. Kevin Starr Act of 2001 is to be remembered for Access News, California sponsorship of Newsline for the Blind, and Braille Institute’s Telephonic reader program.
- Alan recalled having nice meeting with Dr. Starr in late 1990s regarding Prop 14, library construction bond
  
- Roslyn inquired if there is much of a movement for audio books.
- Response: Greg, generally sees books being published, in variety of formats.
  
- Lenore adding to comment, accessibility to books in deafblind community. Deafblind community having difficulty with BARD.
- Response: Deferred to Mike’s report.
  
- Mike acknowledged that these were good questions for Greg to hear.
- Margie noted to Greg: that she was pleased, amazed, with all books with library has with specific topic she is dealing with.
  
- Karen asked a general outreach question to Greg regarding resources to be provided for outreach, etc.
  - Greg discussed some examples i.e. having only so much money available. Example was that of assisting the State Lands Commission to help via the Library to digitize old brittle maps. Library only had limited funds to digitize some but not all maps. It comes down to prioritizing and demand.
  - Greg, when beginning a project, asks, what’s the landscape, conditions that exist, getting from point A to point B.
  - How do we identify most promising options,
  - Gil inquired, Can Council lobby legislators for more staff, resources?
  - Greg noted that anyone in room as concerned resident, who may be a member of BUAC can write to their legislator for more funds to bring on more staff.
- Staff believes ok to advocate as BUAC member and there being no ramifications or, legal consequences.

- Discussion ensued on how things were run in the past and how former Library administration did not believe BUAC members could advocate with their BUAC affiliation as it was perceived as conflict of interest.
- Greg and current administration does not believe this is and or should be an issue.
- It was suggested that BUAC writing and lobbying legislators with one message vs. several messages may be most effective to get points across to legislative body.
- Comparison of how other local and state legislative administrations and bodies work was discussed and appear to allow advisory bodies to advocate.
  
- It was clarified that per a question asked that 90%, not 100% of funding for library comes from Federal government.
- Gil noted that per this discussion and topic, both consumer groups, i.e. California Council of the Blind and National Federation of the Blind of California have significant clout and leverage with the state and advocacy to the legislative process.
- Greg responded: Successful advocacy equals more people saying the same, more allies, the stronger the message, likely to get positive resolution.
- Mike reminded all that we are 1 of 4 library networks in entire state, i.e. San Francisco, Braille Institute, Fresno and Braille & Talking Book Library (Sacramento).
- Mike noted that BTBL has role to play, yet, state employees are restrained.
- Alan, asked about online vendor catalog matter and if BTBL can write regarding outstanding concerns.
- Greg noted letter from BTBL or BTBL advisory group could work.
- It was mentioned that BTBL has been providing feedback to vendor for years, but not being heard. The vendor is the only one currently set up to do the service and knows this.
- Discussion ensued regarding an Open Source database alternative.
- Further discussion ensued regarding when the Braille & Talking Book Library would have a day at the Capital to inform legislative staff and members about the purpose of the Braille and Talking Book Library. After considerable discussion, Tuesday's and Wednesday's spanning from late April to mid-May will be looked at. With the exception of the second week in May when staff will not be available, all other weeks will be evaluated and room in Capital will attempt to be reserved.  
[Subsequently, May 16 was chosen]

**Mike Marlin report:**

- Clarified to Richard that meeting notes could largely be in bullet points
- Encouraged new members to ask questions of Mike and the Braille & Talking Book Library staff.
- Mike mentioned that NLS, in conjunction with the American Library Association, distributes NLS standards governing 13 aspects of operations that all libraries should adhere to. Some areas include, staffing, public contact, budget, communication and the Standards document is revised every 5 to 7 years.

- Gil noted that many of the listed standards are included in BTBL's strategic plan.
- Mike noted that NLS performs a site visit every 2 years and makes recommendations. He does the same to BTBL's subregional libraries.
- Mike noted that when he first started with state, there were many recommendations and now, years later, very few recommendations were noted.
- Area needing improvement from BTBL was noted to youth and juvenile populations.
- Cited that it is difficult to do much outside of agency as there is little travel budget available. Unable to visit San Francisco and Fresno every two years for example.
- Discretionary funds are needed for supplies such as mailing cards, new equipment, printer ribbons, etc.
- In 2016-17, the available funds for the State Library Services Bureau (BTBL is one of seven sections) Materials budget was approximately \$30k for year, yet projection of over \$120k in expenses.
- One reason for budget shortfall is that Department of General Services (DGS) raised rent for state library.
- Gil asked Mike if it would be appropriate for BUAC members to attend site visits with Mike. Mike will find out. Mike noted he surveys the subregional library via a standards questionnaire.
- Mike noted that other states have similar BTBL type advisory councils.
- Mike provided overview to question asked of his day to day role. In addition to budget, policy, and other administration, a lot of what Mike does is in the trenches to help out at all levels due to staff shortage. Mike is yet appreciative to have access to all roles as he gets a first-hand view of how the system works at all levels.
- Discussion continued on the day to day function of BTBL including what Mary Jane and Donna's duties are.
- Mike returned to addressing questions asked of Greg from previous morning discussion.
- Mike discussed with group text to speech matters regarding BARD.
- Mike also discussed the EPUB file format that is globally accepted and how EPUB can be made and adapted to many accessible formats for blind, deafblind patrons.
- Question was asked why NLS is not getting EPUB like that of Bookshare. Response was that it's partly due to government rules and regulations, copyright restrictions, inability of talking book machine to handle text to speech files, and more. Even if EPUB was made available to NLS, there likely would not be enough staff power to get it ready for dissemination - yet.
- Mike noted that he does not foresee increase in NLS library budget,
- Mike reported that in state of Massachusetts NLS is experimenting with Orbit20 refreshable Braille displays as part of program expansion.
- Discussion ensued re; downloads, using a computer, etc.
- Question centered around "How much do libraries need / should get involved to get people set up with BARD, if they are not computer savvy.

- BTBL staff discussed how often they interact with persons who need assistance with creating email, setting up BARD and walking folks through different file structures to get books downloaded.
- It was noted that Institutional agencies, organizations can have their own account to help their populations with set up of downloading books.
- Mike discussed the latest on the Marrakesh Treaty, the Judiciary sub-committee feedback, recent compromises with limited reporting and next steps.
- Treaty would allow for global sharing of files in accessible formats and the development of Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) organization to facilitate global exchange of files, etc.
- NFB Suggested possible meeting with Senator Diane Feinstein (on Senate Foreign Relations Committee which handles treaties) to help advocate for this.

### **Committee reports:**

- Gil discussed the strategic plan.
- Further discussion continued on the Legislative Open House
- Mary Jane reported on outreach and that BTBL will have a table on March 9 and 10 at the California Transcribers & Educators of the Blind & Visually Impaired (CTEBVI) annual conference.
- Richard agreed to be on the Outreach committee.
- It was suggested that BTBL know about CTBVI's journal publication and perhaps putting in an article to increase awareness of BTBL.
- BTBL noted that they already subscribe to and follow the Braille N Teach list serv, where many Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI's) share resources across California.
- Richard agreed to assist on the "Solicitation" of new members committee. Margie is Chair. Margie will send out dates via email to set up a meeting.
- Mike noted that BTBL has a conference line that committees can use.
- Gil noted that there is a vacancy for the NFB of California. He will reach out to Everly Hairston, the new state president to help identify a representative.
- Bylaws Committee: Both Shannon and Alan agreed to assist on that committee.
- Mike discussed reimbursement logistics. If there is no receipt, it is difficult to reimburse.
- Mike discussed the Foundation endowment and how over the years patrons have been generous with donations and bequests.
- Gil discussed that he will be working with the California Council of the Blind (CCB) on drafting language to include in an April CCB resolution where asking the state to work to best support and improve library services for blind patrons can be endorsed.

### **New business:**

- Discussion centered on having permanent "tent" name tags at future BUAC meetings so that interpreters can easily identify names.
- Richard acknowledged how it was appreciated that BTBL is on and uses Facebook to market and advertise their services.

- Discussion next centered on the next meeting. General consensus was that BTBL would meet next on Saturday, July 15, 2017.
- Meeting time would run from 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM but could finish sooner.
- Mike noted that BUAC members and BTBL staff can use: [L-buac@library.ca.gov](mailto:L-buac@library.ca.gov), to send out email to entire group.

**Meeting was adjourned at 3:13 PM.**

**Action Items (as updated March 7 follow)**

The vendor letter is to be drafted by Alan for discussion at the next meeting. Mike is to provide the vendor name and address.

1. Shannon will convene a bylaws revision committee to consider revising BTBL's Bylaws.
2. Mike will research all possibilities regarding Legislative Open House that will include dates and times, likely Tuesdays and Wednesdays spanning late April through late May, excluding second week in May. Will work with BTBL staff to reserve room for first floor and for refreshments. Times likely from 10 AM to 1:30 PM.
3. Determine a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) for getting set up with BARD. No one specific tasked. Need further clarification.
4. Margie will contact Selection & Recruitment committee members by email to set up meeting to get going on identifying new members for the existing vacancies.
5. Gil will reach out to National Federation of the Blind of California (NFBC) President to identify member who could participate on User Advisory Council.
6. Mike Marlin will resend the new contact list of User Advisory Council members.
7. Determining focus and scope of BUAC advocacy and lobbying:
  - a. Discuss and come up with what is appropriate to lobby for as members of BUAC. Will include catalog improvements.
  - b. Mike will send out a summary of existing BTBL's letter to vendor requesting improvements to BUAC for discussion and review when considering further advocacy.
8. BTBL Staff will research table "tent" name placards for future meetings.