



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, March 21, 2017 – Central Library  
3:30 p.m.**

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Library Board of Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

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- Board Members Present:** J. Gordon, Rachel Myers, Rick Osen, Rebecca Craven and Jim McCabe
- Library Staff:** Nancy Kerr, Lola Estelle, Beth Farley, Janice Keller and Wendy Jenkins
- Others Present:** April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of BPL; Tom Barrett and Catherine Huhndorf, members of the public
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**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Chair, J. Gordon.

**Welcome new library trustees:** J. invited our new trustees to introduce themselves. Jim McCabe considers himself a newcomer to the community – he moved here 16 years ago. He has served as a volunteer on many local boards and committees, including serving on the city's Transportation Commission, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and Bellingham Sister Cities. He has been a member of the library's book club group for over 8 years and believes it all comes together at the library.

Rebecca Craven is also a 16 year "newby." She is a recent empty nester and thinks it is time to return to civic duty. She is a long-time library user. Her kids grew up walking to Fairhaven Branch. She is hoping to improve our already-strong library. She currently is the Program Director with the non-profit Pipeline Safety Trust. She has served as a volunteer at Larrabee Elementary School and on the board for Brigid Collins.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Rick Osen moved to approve the agenda. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Public comment:** J. presented a gift to Tom Barrett in honor of the contributions he made to the library and the city. Tom stated that he enjoyed the time he spent as a trustee, but believes we have a great new director and trustees.

Catherine Huhndorf introduced herself as a citizen and library lover. She expressed concern that at times there isn't a Security Attendant on duty. She questioned why there isn't a back-

up attendant. J. responded that the City provides a set budget for the position, when someone is out sick, there isn't funding to replace. Beth Farley added that we have three 20-hour positions so that we can cover most open hours, but if someone takes leave, there isn't anyone to fill in. J. suggested we request more police walk-throughs if we have a predictable time without coverage. Nancy commented that the police response time is good here, plus she has noticed the police are very respectful to our patrons. Beth added that all staff are aware that they can call 911 at any time. Catherine thanked everyone for the helpful information.

**Consent agenda:** Jim commented that the claims document does not have a year-to-date column for comparison. Wendy responded that we provide a quarterly report that does show year-to-date; the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly report will be next month. Rick Osen moved to approve the February 21, 2017 Regular meeting minutes, the February 27, 2017 Sustainable Funding Retreat meeting minutes and the February 2017 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Board member reports:** Rick attended the February Cornwall Park Neighborhood Association Meeting – there were 80-100 attendees! Rick has been asked to be on their board.

Rachel provided kudos to staff for the new website, stating it is awesome, well thought through and intuitive.

**City Council liaison report:** April said there has been much community concern about the recent unfortunate shooting, adding that our police go above and beyond. She found it poignant that the young man held onto his sleeping bag until the last moment – she feels this is part of the community's homelessness and mental illness issues. April reported the Mayor is back from vacation and council is looking at jail alternatives.

**Friends of BPL report:** Faye reported the Friends earned \$9,700 at their March book sale. As always, there was a lot of hard work put in by volunteers. At their recent board meeting they voted to use the remaining \$1,000 in the Vicky Marshall fund for a Parent Education series – they are working with Bethany on this. National Library Week is in April and the Friends are planning activities to honor staff. Their Annual Meeting is on Saturday, April 22 at the Fairhaven Branch Fireplace Room. Nancy will be the keynote speaker. Faye invited all of the trustees.

**Library Director's report:** Nancy welcomed Jim and Rebecca and thanked Tom for his service and excellent baked goods.

We will be holding Page interviews next week – there were over 100 applications. We also have a job posting for an Adjunct Librarian.

The library is being re-roofed this summer. Representatives from Facilities stopped in, requesting input about program times to avoid.

Wendy worked with the Fire Department to get new Knox Box key boxes on the outside of our buildings; there was a break-in concern with the older key boxes.

We received donations in the amount of \$300, earmarked for Children's Programming, and \$1,000 for the purchase of books, CDs and DVDs.

Janice and Nancy met with staff from Red Rook, the firm that has been doing much of the PR and marketing work for WCLS. This would be a good future source if we ever need some short-term freelance design work.

Nancy plans to attend the first portion of the City Council retreat this Saturday, where they will be discussing Sustainable Funding options citywide.

**Sustainable Funding Retreat:** Though it was unfortunate the retreat needed to be held on a Monday, which limited attendance, the retreat did provide the opportunity to capture the experience of the Seattle and Spokane library systems sustainability studies. Andrew Chantse provided copies of the study that Spokane Public Library did as part of their levy process. Marcellus Turner shared the process that Seattle Public Library went through and included a helpful spreadsheet of funding options.

Currently, the board has three standing committees: Outreach (Rachel only); Facilities (J. and Rick) – on hold for the present time; and Sustainable Funding (J. and Rick). Rick is working with Brian Heinrich, Deputy Administrator. Rick reported that they hope to get the sustainable funding study process started in April. The first steps are to identify a timeline, a process and what we hope to accomplish. Brian is hoping we can provide funding direction by October so that it can be folded into the city's supplemental budget process. We do intend to hire a consult. Rick shared the Seattle funding options spreadsheet with Brian; we need to develop a similar spreadsheet along with what service we want to provide. We need to determine what budget we are looking for that is sustainable and how to make up the difference from where we are at and where we would like to be.

J. added that we don't know what the Mayor would like this to look like, but we do know she wants us to explore annexation. It is important that we include a cultural assessment, county systems operate differently from city systems. We need to engage the community in this conversation and have an open and transparent conversation – what is in the best interests of our community? Both Seattle and Spokane chose a levy which supplements General Funds.

Rachel commented that it is worth noting that two trustees are working with the city – J. (and Nancy) with the Mayor and Rick with Brian.

Jim asked how the consultant selection process works. Rick responded that he thinks it will be the Board and the Mayor's office choosing.

**Rates and Fees:** Elimination of the \$.50 fee for Adult Holds not picked up: libraries across the country have been eliminating this fee. It was originally intended as an impetus for patrons to pick up their holds, but the fee takes a lot of staff time and confuses and upsets patrons. The fee also removes the opportunity of staff knowing their patrons and being able to place a hold on their behalf – if there is a penalty, staff cannot do this. Currently, this fee, as well as all other revenues, goes into the General Fund. Nancy commented that the library trend is to remove barriers for service, but this can hurt revenues. We are considering this now because

WCLS is looking to remove this fee and this could cause confusion for our patrons. April suggested that we bring this up with the Mayor before we decide. We will know next week if WCLS approves this.

Janice added another fee we will be looking at in the near future is Community Room rental fees. There are many different elements to it and relevant information will be provided, such as what other local organizations charge and how other library systems handle this.

**Level of Service Standards – Materials:** Rick reported that the board established two Levels of Service in 2016, one for Facilities (square feet per capita) and one for Open Hours. The board chose Library Materials Collection for the third LOS to tackle. Rick, Pam and Beth began working on this last year, and the work has continued this year with Nancy. In the packet is a copy of the draft that the committee is recommending, based on materials expenditure per capita. As with the first two LOSs, we are at the lower level –\$5.00 per capita for materials. We have a high circulation per capita and a very high turnover rate, resulting in faster deterioration of materials. People are waiting longer for items. Jim commented that, because we share with WCLS, we do have access to more items. Rick added that we do not have a collection development policy between the two library systems, so we do not have input into their selection, plus, in a consortium, it is ethical to pull your own weight. Nancy commented that this is the first system she has seen where consortium-involved libraries weren't required to spend a percentage of their budget on materials. Beth mentioned that having access to WCLS materials is a benefit for online users (they can place requests), but shelf browsers do not have that availability.

Rick Osen moved to accept the Level of Service Standards for Library Materials Collections as presented. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Whatcom READS! update:** Janice thanked Rachel for presiding over the Mount Baker Theatre event. She received applause for her comment, "At a time when alternative facts, fake news and access to information are constantly in the news, libraries and the freedoms and resources they promote are more important than ever." There were six presentations from March 9-11. There was slightly lower attendance this year, but many great, heart-felt, conversations.

BPL will be the lead agency for Whatcom READS! 2018. The book chosen for 2018 is *Your Heart is a Muscle the Size of a Fist*, by Sunil Yapa, which was recently nominated for a PEN/Faulkner award. The book is based on the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle and told in multiple voices. Rebecca commented that it is timely, accessible and relatable to the region. Janice provided special thanks to the Friends who are a significant donor for this event.

**Action items for next meeting:**

- Board committee assignments: Jim asked what is involved with the Outreach Committee. Rachel responded the idea is to keep in contact with City Council and other community partners, such as neighborhood meetings, adding that Janice is a good resource for contacts. Once the Sustainable Funding study is in process, the board can determine assignments. Andrew mentioned at the retreat that Spokane held joint meetings between the library board and city council. April commented that

Council has been discussing the idea of town-hall type meetings, for instance on housing – perhaps the library would be a good topic.

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:20 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – April 18, 2017** at the Barkley Branch Library, 3111 Newmarket Street #103, Library Board Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST  
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees