

Bellingham Public Library



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, April 18, 2016 – Barkley Branch 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.

Board Members Present: J. Gordon, Marilyn Mastor, Tom Barrett, and Rick Osen.

Board Members Absent: Rachel Myers.

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner, Lola Estelle, Janice Keller, Jen Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins.

Others Present: April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of Bellingham Public Library.

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Chair, J. Gordon.

Approve/modify agenda: Rick Osen moved to approve the agenda. Tom Barrett seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: A member of the public commented they are grateful that the reading room at Barkley Branch Library is available to the public.

Consent agenda: J. expressed appreciation for the article on homelessness provided in the packet. Marilyn also appreciated the article and suggested the library work with non-profits to help with this issue. Pam responded that it might be a good topic for a future board meeting, adding we are providing important services and interact with the homeless population. Marilyn also brought up the idea of a library foundation that could co-support the library. Pam responded that the board explored whether we should form our own foundation – the board's decision was to use the resources of the Whatcom Community Foundation. Rick added that it is historically difficult for libraries to support themselves with a foundation because it is thought that a library should be funded by the city. Tom Barrett moved to approve the March 15, 2016 minutes and the March 2016 performance and activity measure and financial reports. Marilyn Mastor seconded. Motion carried.

Board members' reports: No reports.

City Council liaison report: April joined the board meeting after the afternoon City Council session. Following a United Way presentation to City Council, April suggested the board read the United Way ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Restrained, Employed) report.

At today's council meeting they discussed the top recommended strategies from the list of proposed sustainability strategies discussed at the recent council retreat: Metropolitan Parks District – Greenways Forever; Emergency Medical Services Levy; and Regional Fire Authority. The Library Annexation strategy is not currently recommended for study, but April stressed that that could change. Tom suggested that discussion of library annexation should be tabled until next year. April said she was hesitant to scrap it; things can change quickly and she would like to be educated on the equitability of annexation.

April asked about the current state of the Central Library building. J. answered that it has functionality problems as a library, but still has a functional life.

Pam has invited the mayor to attend the June board meeting.

Friends of Bellingham Public Library report: Faye reminded everyone that the Friend's Annual Meeting is this Saturday, April 23 – they will honor libraries, celebrate the Friends and talk about the positive impact libraries have. Mauri Ingram and trustee Rachel Myers, both from Whatcom Community Foundation, will be the keynote speakers. Janice thanked the Friends for the amazing array of handmade gifts and food that they showered staff with in honor of National Library Week.

Library Director's report: Pam handed out an article from *The Atlantic*, "Fewer Americans Are Visiting Local Libraries – and Technology Isn't to Blame." The article explains that people are visiting libraries less, not because of digital materials, but because of lack of funding and declining services.

Pam introduced Lola Estelle, our new Head of Information & Digital Services. Lola has worked for Proquest, a global provider of library materials and flow systems, and Seattle Public and King County Library System. She received her MLIS from the iSchool at the University of Washington and also earned a Master's in English from Western Washington University.

Pam completed performance appraisals for staff members who report to her.

Four staff members have been approved for \$500 Library Staff Education Grants from the Friends of the Library – 2 pages and 2 clerks.

Tom Barrett and Kenni Merritt made a donation to the Bellingham Public Library Non-endowed Capital Fund at Whatcom Community Foundation in honor of the work of Julie Guy. Julie has asked that the donation be earmarked for a northside branch. Tom added two people were honored at the last City Council meeting – Julie Guy and Jack Weiss.

Committee reports

- **Outreach Committee:** nothing to report.
- **Facilities Committee:** Rick worked on Level of Service information that will be covered later.

Level of Service:

- Background briefing on FAST report, Capital Facilities Task Force, City Council meetings and retreat: Pam met with Mayor Kelli last week who mentioned that 2017 might be a good time for the facilities study, that they should have some decisions by then. Tom commented that the Planning Commission still has not completed the Capital Facilities Improvement Plan. The old Plan lists "Develop library system plan" as number 3 under General Fund Priorities. Library annexation is on the current list of potential options for the

Proposed Strategies – a matrix of ideas for City Council to look at for financial sustainability. It is on the list because Peter Moy suggested it be looked at. Pam pointed out that she provided a lot of information in the packet concerning where city administration is at in this discussion.

- Bellingham Public Library Standard for Open Hours: Rick and Pam worked on a draft Level of Service standard for open hours. In the packet are examples of other libraries that have developed a standard on open hours. They requested board input on determining minimal, operational and optimal number of open service hours. We currently are open 56 hours a week; in 2009 we were open 60. After discussion it was determined that branch hours would be noted somehow – as overlapping, not additional hours. The LOS should be a meaningful measure; it is a lasting document that will be reviewed during growth decisions.

Operations update:

- What's new at the Barkley Branch? During open hours we now have use of the office space next to the reading room. It is used as an Early Learning Space funded by a Rotary Club of Bellingham grant.
- Reciprocity update: Pam reported the Upper Skagit Library District board voted to offer reciprocity to any Washington state library patron who presents a library card from their local jurisdiction. We are working on revising our policy as well.
- Removing barriers to service: Beth Farley is working with WCLS to improve in-house digital access. Currently patrons with more than \$10 in fines are blocked online. We have jointly agreed to remove that block so that patrons have access to digital materials, but cannot check out physical materials.

2017-2018 Budget: Pam has received a tentative Annual Budget Cycle. Payroll requests and updates will be worked on in June and July; department budget entry will be in July and August; department presentations to City Council will be in October and November.

Trustee education:

- National Library Week, April 10-16, 2016: Libraries Transform. Janice pointed out the sample graphics in the packet for this national campaign. She also handed out a copy of the editorial that has been submitted to the *Herald*, "Libraries serve as dynamic learning centers and catalysts for change."

Action items for next meeting:

- Policy review: Eligibility for Library Service
- Cascadia Rising overview and the library's participation
- Quick overview of website refresh project

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 17, 2016 – 3:30 p.m. at Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, Washington

ATTEST
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Chair, Library Board of Trustees