

# Bellingham Public Library



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, May 17, 2016 – Central Library  
Library Board Room – 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, Rachel Myers, and Rick Osen.

**Board Members Absent:** Tom Barrett

**Library Staff:** Pamela Kiesner, Lola Estelle, Beth Farley, Bethany Hoglund, Janice Keller and Jennifer Vander Ploeg.

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

---

**Call to order and introductions:** Board Chair J. Gordon called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Rachel Myers moved to approve the agenda. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried.

**Public comment:** No public comment.

**Consent agenda:** Rick pointed out that our performance measures correlate with *The Atlantic* article handed out at the last board meeting, "Fewer Americans Are Visiting Local Libraries – and Technology Isn't to Blame" – we see a negative impact due to funding. Barkley and Fairhaven branches are seeing an increase in people, an impact of increased hours; on the other hand, because there has been no increase in materials funding, circulation is down even though traffic is up. Rick Osen moved to approve the consent agenda. Rachel Myers seconded. The motion carried.

**Board members' reports:** Marilyn attended Seattle Public Library's Friends of the Library sale and brought a flyer to share. It was held at the Seattle Center, was well-organized, and was at least ten times larger than our own.

Rachel shared that she and Mauri Ingram, both of Whatcom Community Foundation, spoke at the Friends Annual Meeting. Rick and J. also attended. In response to the question at the end of her speech, "Why isn't anything happening with a new building?", J and Rachel shared that despite the Board actively trying to move forward for years, there currently aren't any answers.

**City Council liaison report:** April reported that the Council voted last night to put the Greenways IV levy on the November 2016 ballot. It will include maintenance, operation, and development along with acquisitions. This could free up dollars from the General Fund. 2.5 million is needed in order to stop using the City's reserve funds.

**Friends of Bellingham Public Library report:** Faye Hill, President, reported on the Annual Meeting. She added that she was pleased to hear people still want a new library and quoted Margaret Mead, "Never underestimate the power of a few dedicated people." She invited the trustees to the upcoming Ski-to-Sea book sale that starts on May 25.

**Library Director's report:**

- The City is undergoing the yearly Accountability Audit, including the Library this year.
- Pam would like to start the new trustee recruitment process in August; Marilyn's term is up at the end of the year.
- Pam met with Mayor Kelli and shared some program highlights, our participation in Cascadia Rising and the website refresh project. They discussed library annexation; the Mayor said the \$50,000 set aside in her budget for a feasibility study could be used for an annexation study. She is open to alternative ideas as well. Mauri Ingram, from Whatcom Community Foundation, met with the Mayor about developing a multi-use facility which includes the library on the county parking lot site. Mauri plans on meeting with Jack Loews, County Executive, next. The Mayor will be attending our June meeting.
- Pam passed out an article from *The Oregonian*, "Central Library brings a social worker on board." Pam suggested we might want to explore the idea of bringing a social worker to our library and ask the Home Fund to fund it.
- Some program highlights: after hours Children's Art Walk; before hours The Transit of Mercury viewing; Bethany participated as a judge for this year's Sasquatch Superbowl.

**City Of Bellingham Level of Service: Sustainability Strategies:** Pam pointed out packet documents on the City's Sustainability Strategies, and specifically the section on Library Annexation. Pam will discuss annexation with Christine Perkins, from WCLS. Pam recalled from previous board discussions that the concept of annexation was a difficult one; there was a belief that Bellingham is 50% of the county and would not be comfortable dissolving and becoming a branch of WCLS. The idea of both systems dissolving and becoming a new regional library system should be explored. Pam read the description of a regional library system from Chapter 27 of the RCW. There are also sections in the RCW on contract libraries and annexation. Another financial sustainability option is an operating levy. The next Strategic Plan will provide an opportunity to explore the different scenarios.

**City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Update:** The memorandum in the packet provides a link to the draft Bellingham Comprehensive Plan and the Council Review Schedule. June 27 is the work session on the chapter that includes the library. (note: this was later changed to July 11)

**Library Level of Service Standard for Open Hours:** Pam provided a new draft in the packet for discussion. J. and Rick both have reviewed the draft and provided feedback. Rick pointed out that after the branch hours are increased in June, they will be at 28 hours per week. Central is currently at 56 hours per week. Establishing 64 as the Medium or Operational range for Central puts in on par with neighboring libraries (such as Ferndale). 36, as the Medium for branches, is what Fairhaven was operating at before 2008. This is our Level of Service proposal for the City of Bellingham. It would be beneficial if the State Librarian established a State of Washington standard. Rachel Myers moved to approve the Library Level of Service Standard as written.

Marilyn Mastor seconded. Motion carried. The board now has established standards for space and hours; it was suggested materials be worked on next.

**Policy Review:** Eligibility for Library Service Policy: first review. Pam and Jennifer Vander Ploeg have updated this policy to allow for reciprocity with other public libraries within Washington State. April questioned the need for photo ID to receive a library card or access computers – this is a barrier to access. Beth Farley responded that we refer people without ID to the Law Advocates ID program so that they can obtain one. Photo ID has been required for computer access so that patrons with \$10 or more in fines could not work around the fine block. Recently procedure changed so that anyone, regardless of fines, can access computers, so the question of requiring photo ID will now be re-evaluated.

**2015 Washington Public Libraries Annual Report:** Pam provides a copy of the Bellingham Public Library information plus the Federal Notes on the information so that trustees have a chance to review what we have submitted to the state.

#### **Committee reports**

- Outreach Committee: Aside from the Friends Annual Meeting information provided earlier, nothing to report.
- Facilities Committee: Nothing to report, though we are looking forward to talking with the Mayor at the next meeting.

#### **Operations Update:**

- New branch hours begin on June 4. Summer Sunday closure at Central begins at the same time and continues through the Labor Day weekend.
- Woody Ciskowski, one of our Pages, was selected as the new 25-hour Library Clerk.
- Removing barriers to service: Jennifer Vander Ploeg provided a preview of the concept of courtesy renewals that will be presented to the board at the June meeting. Courtesy renewal is an automated first renewal for all eligible items (ones that do not have holds on them or that have not already been renewed). This would provide a positive customer service. It would save staff time with over-the-phone renewals. Circulation could increase, revenues could drop slightly.

#### **Trustee education:**

- 2016 Summer Reading for kids, teens and adults: Bethany provided handouts for this year's program, "On Your Mark, Get Set... READ!" Children are challenged to read or listen for 15 hours, and if completed, receive a yard sign, a book, a mystery coupon from a community partner and they are invited to shake hands with the Mayor at the Recognition Ceremony on August 18. Packets were distributed to all public and private schools. Activity sheets for children birth to 4 were distributed to preschools and daycares. Teens are invited to read and review – the more reviews they submit, the more chances to win prizes. Adults are invited to participate in a Summer Reading Photo Challenge.
- Overview of website refresh project: our virtual branch is getting a remodel. Lola has been looking at options for redesigning and relaunching the website. Currently our website is housed on the city server. It will be moved to the cloud on a Wordpress site. After looking at 5 local web design contenders, WordPress was chosen – we want to be modern, but can't afford cutting edge. The aim is to be inspired by the City of Bellingham

site as well as Bibliocommons to provide a seamless experience. We would like to launch a test site and request Survey Monkey input.

- Library participation in Cascadia Rising exercise: Janice explained that the local community and regional neighbors have planned an emergency exercise – a mock earthquake and tsunami – planned for June 7-9. This is an opportunity to talk about preparedness. The library will participate on June 7; working with a developed scenario, we will look at what to do when the shaking stops.

**New business:** No new business.

**Action items for next meeting:** These items were identified for consideration at the next meeting:

- Welcome Mayor Kelli Linville
- Eligibility for Library Service Policy – final approval
- Personnel budget
- Courtesy renewals
- Interlocal agreement background

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:30 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting: June 21, 2016** – 3:30 p.m. at Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, Washington

ATTEST  
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Chair, Library Board of Trustees