

Bellingham Public Library



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees Tuesday, June 21, 2016 – 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.

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

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner, Beth Farley, Bethany Hoglund, Janice Keller, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins.

Others Present: April Barker, City Council liaison; Mayor Kelli Linville; Michael Cox, WCLS Deputy Director, Faye Hill and Kathie Wilson, 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. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: Michael Cox, WCLS Deputy Director, commented that it is amazing the lengths our two systems go through to work together and he feels it pays off in the experience we offer our patrons.

Mayor Kelli Linville: The Mayor and Board hoped to touch on three subjects: north side service, sustainable funding options, and the feasibility study.

J. stepped in to share the Facilities Committee had looked into the start-up costs for Barkley Branch and estimated the start-up costs for a north side presence. Barkley Branch expenses, in 2008, were a little over \$300,000 with the Barkley Company covering \$200,000 in construction build-out. Start-up costs for a north side satellite is anticipated to be around \$475,000. The Board is not opposed to a north side presence, but we do not currently have the ability to fund.

The Mayor shared that she thinks the library is an essential service, that it is a community amenity that should be available to all for little or no cost. The City is looking at Level of Service (LOS) for all departments because this will help to determine how we can

maintain our current service levels. Tough decisions have to be made, if we want to expand service with a north side satellite, we do not have the money for a new building/expansion study. Tom commented that he sees this as a growth issue, part of the Comprehensive Plan is providing amenities. We can't provide a north side building, but there is a need to be met. The Mayor replied that if the idea is to invest in a satellite and increase service capacity, then the idea of building or renovating Central is pushed back – it is a reality. Service is key for the Mayor. Rachel added that just two weeks ago we brought the branches up to 8 open hours on Saturday, we haven't provided enough access to patrons. The Mayor agreed we need to build up what we have lost. Rachel wondered if funding would continue for these newly opened hours and J. added that our materials budget is very low. The Mayor responded that the goal of the biennial budget is to commit to a longer work plan and the LOS discussion is looking 4 years out – the City is not going to cut the service in that time frame. Rachel said the discussion is not just about new building versus a branch, we dipped into materials so that we could be open more hours. The Mayor responded that it is the job of the City to try to be sensitive to costs and to try to increase the capacity of the budget – the City provides the funding and it is the trustees' job to determine how to use it.

Pam asked when we will receive directions on the budget, and if we will be able to ask for an increase. The Mayor said to assume we will get the same amount as the last budget cycle, determine if there are areas we can cut, then explain if the same money doesn't mean maintaining the same level of service. She is asking all departments to do the same – figure out what you can do to fit into the budgetary box, then explain what you need.

Rachel asked about the possibility of funding a social worker in the library, we already work to connect people with services. The Mayor suggested making sure the library is tuned into the services already offered in the community, adding that nothing prevents the library from volunteering space to the hospital, the Opportunity Council, Unity Care or other organizations. She doesn't think the City should replicate what is already being done in the private sector. Pam commented that the Opportunity Council's Homeless Outreach Team attended a staff meeting and they have been helpful.

J. introduced another topic, a retreat to explore sustainable funding ideas – inviting the Directors of the Spokane Public Library and Seattle Public Library to share what they have learned from their funding studies. The Mayor agreed this was a good idea. J. added that we still have not determined the best use of the feasibility study funding, that a retreat will help determine. He asked if the funding will still be available in 2017. The Mayor answered that she needs to see the Zervas study, hopefully this summer.

Tom pointed out the current Comprehensive Plan has earmarked 2020 for a library site purchase and 2021 for building, and asked if these are just plugged numbers. The Mayor answered that yes, these are unfunded capital projects. The City actually has 350 million in unfunded capital projects that range from street maintenance, to a library and fire stations. We can't see that by looking at the comp plan. She has asked Brian Henshaw to separate out what we are actually funding.

Pam thanked the Mayor for coming to the board meeting.

Consent agenda: Tom pointed out he should be listed as absent in the May minutes. Marilyn commented that she was pleased to see the increase in circulation at the colleges. She also wondered if the Mayor is aware that part of the downturn in circulation is directly related to the lack of materials. Pam will discuss this with the Mayor – she may also not be aware of the 40% cut in materials in 2009. Marilyn Mastor moved to approve the May 17, 2016 minutes as amended and the May 2016 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Tom Barrett seconded. Motion carried.

Board member's report: Rick reported that he, along with Rachel and April, attended the Boards in Gear presentation. Much of the information was focused on traditional non-profits, but there was relevant information as well. He brought handouts to share with the Board. Rachel and April suggested it would be good to have a work session spent evaluating how effective they are as a board – there is always room for improvement.

Rachel commented on the editorial in Sunday's Herald, *Libraries promote equity, diversity*. Janice drafted the article with feedback from J., Rachel, Rick and Pam. Rachel added that she is so impressed with all of the events library staff present, from baby storytimes, to teens and gaming, to supporting seniors.

City Council liaison report: April reported the Council held a moment of silence last night for the Orlando shooting. At the council meeting she mentioned the library as one of the places she sees people from all walks of life. The demographics for 2027 show our youth will be 50% white/50% people of color – if we do not make big changes in our community, the library will be even more necessary.

Friends of BPL report: Faye and Kathie reported they made over \$13,500 at the Ski-to-Sea Book Sale, largely because of the hard work the volunteers put in every day sorting books and the generosity of our community. The next sale is the Summer Book Sale August 18-20.

Faye has called a special meeting of their board to review their Mission Statement.

Library Director's report: Pam thanked Janice, J., Rachel and Rick for their work on the editorial. Pam sent out a message to staff with a link to the article. We have sent out Tweets and a Facebook message. The library will be a presence at the Pride Parade on July 10.

Pam has shared sustainability strategies information with all staff and with the WCLS management team.

Page Appreciation Days were last Friday and Saturday. Staff provided pizza, treats and a \$10 Co-op gift card to all Pages.

One of our library supporters, Laurie McClain, has passed away. The library was included in her obituary. Kathie added that she was a long-time Friends volunteer.

Committee reports

- Outreach Committee report: Tom met with Terry Bornemann on June 4. Terry was pleased to hear about the increase in branch Saturday hours. He is a big supporter of the library.
- Facilities Committee report: Pam handed out copies of *Public Library Facilities for the Future*, a good document commissioned by the Sno-Isle Library System as they prepared to do a capital facilities plan for their system. Pam pointed out Julie Guy's letter advocating for a north side library presence which is in the packet. She also reminded trustees that City Council will be discussing the chapter in the Capital Facilities Plan that includes the library on June 27. Pam will attend.

City of Bellingham Level of Service: Sustainability Strategies: Pam pointed out the copy of the City's Process Schedule that is included in the packet. A few changes have occurred since last month's meeting: Metropolitan Parks District has been grayed out (because of the Greenways Levy on the upcoming ballot); Library Annexation has moved up on the timeline but is still mid-2017. WCLS included in their board packet for today copies of two past annexation studies: the 1977 "Holt" report and the 2009 *Study Committee Report Regarding the Potential for Annexation*. Pam will forward these to trustees in preparation for a future discussion.

American Library Association (ALA) Statement on Libraries: An American Value: As the Herald article, *Libraries promote equity, diversity*, was being worked on, it was decided it would be appropriate for the Board to affirm what the ALA document says. Rick commented that the statement is about things that libraries have believed in the whole time, not a reaction, but a long-time commitment. Rick Osen made a motion that the Board reaffirm the ALA statement from 1999 that is encapsulated in the article. Marilyn Mastor seconded. Motion carried.

2017-2018 Budget: Pam passed out copies of the 2017-2018 Payroll Update Request. We used this opportunity to update department titles to reflect changes that have been made – for example changing Children's Services to Youth Services. Rachel Myers moved to approve the Payroll Update Request. Tom Barrett seconded. Motion carried.

Bellingham Public Library/Whatcom County Library System Interlocal Agreement, Overview of History, 1986-2016: Pam provided background to this agenda item: last year when the Interlocal Agreement was presented to the Board for their approval, Tom asked how the dollar amount was arrived at and questioned if it still makes sense. It was decided that the board would consider this mid-year, prior to next year's agreement. Pam investigated the history and found a 1986 document that described the process used to determine the dollar amount. The process is quite complex and at some point it was decided to use the current year's amount with a yearly increase based on COLA. Pam asked the trustees if they want to discuss a new method. Michael, from WCLS, mentioned that their board discussed it this morning. They

concluded that without hard data on users, it would be difficult to determine an accurate method and they also recognize the real value BPL offers county residents. He added there were raised eyebrows but no proposal to change. Rachel suggested that the conversation about annexation should be addressed first. Rick agreed that the benefits/non-benefits of annexation should be first, that the Interlocal agreement discussion would be a piece of it. Tom thinks that, with cost accounting, a new method could be done easily and he doesn't feel good about the current method, this is tax payer money that is being used. Rick responded he doesn't see how it could be done easily, there are so many variables that a new method would be even more complex, plus it depends on the outcome of the 2017 funding strategies study. Pam will talk with WCLS Director Christine Perkins and then put this item on the agenda for further discussion in August. Rick added that this money goes into the General Fund, so perhaps someone from the City should be involved.

Policy review

- Eligibility for Library Service Policy: Pam reviewed that this revised policy was brought to the Board last month. At that meeting, April questioned the need for photo ID for in-house use of materials and use of digital materials. The library management team discussed this and decided photo ID was not necessary. That change has been made to the policy. Tom Barrett moved to approve the policy as revised. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

Operations update

- Removing barriers to service: Courtesy renewals – Jennifer Vander Ploeg reported that, starting August 1, automated first renewals on eligible items will go into effect. Approximately 30% are typically not eligible. She is working with Michael Cox from WCLS to determine the process, which will include a notice to patrons.

New Business

- Scheduling a Sustainable Funding Retreat, inviting Seattle Public Library and Spokane Public Library Directors to share what they have learned from their sustainable funding search. Pam will contact the Directors to see what their availability is.
- Next Level of Service standard – materials. Include Beth Farley in the process.

Action items for next meeting:

- Preliminary 2017-2018 budget discussion
- Retreat
- Video Surveillance Policy review

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – July 19, 2016 at the Central Library, 210 Central Ave, Library Board Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees