

# Bellingham Public Library



## Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees Tuesday, September 15, 2015 – 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.

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

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

**Others Present:** Jack Weiss, City Council Liaison; Ted Carlson, COB Public Works Director; Rick Sepler, COB Planning & Community Development Director; Caryn Dudley.

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**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by Chair, J. Gordon.

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

**Public comment:** No comment.

**Consent agenda:** Tom Barrett moved to approve the August 18, 2015 minutes, the August 19, 2015 minutes for the WCLS Trustees Strategic Planning retreat and the August 2015 performance & activity measures and financial report. Rick Osen seconded. Motion carried. Pam pointed out the two Communications items: *Your Library at a Glance* that Janice created and the *Early Literacy Video Series & Website Portal* that features the work done by Bernice for her Master's Degree with the help of Janice and BTV10.

**City of Bellingham Capital Facilities & Comprehensive Plan update:** Pam welcomed Ted Carlson and Rick Sepler and explained she invited them to provide an update on their respective plans considering that the library board wants to update the Library's 2007 Building Plan. Ted is nearing completion of the Capital Facilities Plan and Rick is working on the Comprehensive Plan – how does a new building Feasibility Study fit into these plans?

Ted explained the Capital Facilities Plan has changed over the scope of the project. He was first tasked with filling up the Federal Building, then they began looking at other

facilities as well – assess the condition of the current assets and how to fund their maintenance and maximize use of the space. This tied in with the timing of updating the Comprehensive Plan – looking at facilities needs for the next 20 years. The Zervas Group was contracted with for Phase 1 of the Capital Facilities plan – determining what should be in City Hall, the Federal Building and how to best utilize current assets. One of the findings was confirming the library building is not working for current needs. Phase 2 is a financial assessment which will require a different consultant and will consider a 20 year time frame and options for funding. There is a lot more need than ability to fund. The library feasibility study could work in tandem with this.

Rick reiterated that the Zervas Study was a space planning exercise. Phase 1 preliminary results determined the current library space doesn't meet current needs. We want to move forward sooner rather than later. Phase 2 raises the questions – there isn't a funding stream to replace this building or for other city needs, what strategies do we have to make this work? FCS (Financial Consulting Group) is looking at how to make this work, developing a financial model for capital and operating. We hope the Comprehensive Plan will offer models, tools to show us how to align goals so we have a good road map without significantly altering level of service. We need to determine how to start these initiatives and the library needs to find its space in the ask. We need to look beyond the city, for instance what is the school district doing? We need to have a robust discussion with everything on the table to decide the game plan for who goes to the voters first.

Discussion ensued; conclusions reached include:

- The goal is to go through the process holistically – first look at the facilities, second look at the financials, then take it to the voters.
- Ted and Rick assured the Board that the Library has a place at the table – the Library is essential to the community.
- Internal work on the Library Building Plan could be done and Pam has received chapter 5 (library related) of the Capital Facilities Plan to update by the end of November, but the Library Feasibility Study should wait until after the Comprehensive Plan is further along, anticipating it might provide direction as to whether the Library should renovate the current building or build a new one.
- Once the final components of the Plan are in place, a City Council work session could be arranged, with all the players to have a good discussion.

#### **Committee reports:**

- Facilities Committee:
  - It was acknowledged that many of the points in Rick Osen's facilities discussion paper were already touched on in the previous discussion.
  - Pam could get started on updating what she can in the building plan.
  - Jack suggested looking at what the level of service should be, square footage needs and determining numbers – capital aspects, but more importantly, operating costs.
  - Pam added that we would like to do a general library update to Council in November. Jack advised the trustees to touch base with council members between now and the end of the year.

- Possible Council share points: information from Rick's paper, inflationary cost of library materials (cost historically outpaces revenue), and the cost of digital materials.
- Library feedback will be requested for the Comprehensive Plan – talking points need to be developed.
- Jack added that this is a functional building that could be creatively renovated.
- Outreach Committee:
  - Tom will be attending the Puget Neighborhood Association meeting tonight.
  - Tom and Marilyn will be attending the Birchwood Neighborhood Association on September 22.
  - Tom talked with April Barker, who is a strong library supporter.
  - Janice has provided some great information for trustees to share.

### **Reports:**

- Board member reports:
  - The WCLS retreat was interesting, but the presenter's numbers were skewed.
  - Rick will be speaking at the upcoming Newcomer's Club.
- City Council liaison report:
  - Council approved a jail agreement to present to the County Council that includes downgrading to 450 beds and funding from the General Fund and a sales tax – this is a compromise and will require a County compromise as well.
  - Jack asked if there was a funding request the Board would like him to present at the final budget session. Pam mentioned that we are, in the mid-biennium budget adjustment process, requesting \$12,000 for the pre-processing of materials, and \$28,000 for digital media funds that were mistakenly not re-appropriated. More open hours for branches and an increase in the materials budget were suggested. Pam will prepare a response for the October Board Meeting.
- Library Director's report:
  - We have two new staff babies.
  - Pam chaired the Library Council of Washington meeting, held in Ellensburg, last week. Rand Simmons has resigned from his position as WA State Librarian; current Deputy Secretary of State, Greg Lane, will be acting State Librarian and he attended the meeting via phone.
  - At the end of September, Bernice Chang will attend the Rotary Club of Bellingham meeting, with Pam, to accept a check for a \$1,000 service grant and provide a short Early Learning presentation. Marilyn sponsored the grant request.
  - Union mediation for both 114 and 114L have been on hold so that the mediators can help with the Seattle school negotiations.
  - Homelessness will be the topic at our next All Staff Meeting – the Homeless Outreach Team from the Opportunity Council will be presenting.

**Whatcom Community Foundation:** Pam briefly went over the documents provided in the board packet. We do not receive notice of donations until these statements are sent out – thank yous are in the works.

**2015/2016 Budget:** There are 3 budget items in the packet:

1. Materials budget history – materials are one of our biggest expenses. Our goal is for materials to be 15-20% of our budget; we are currently at 9% (this takes into account a 3% increase in materials already included in the budget for 2016).
2. Interfund Allocations: out of our \$4.3 million budget, over \$800,000 goes back to the City. This covers costs such as facilities, insurance, legal services and human resources.
3. Last is the Mid-biennium Adjustment request. The first item on the list is a housekeeping issue having to do with splitting a full-time Children's Library Specialist position into 2 half-time positions. The second item – State of Washington Digital Consortium – is the digital media funds mentioned early. The third item is also a housekeeping item concerning the Head of Information & Digital Services position. The last item is \$12,000 for the pre-processing of materials that was also mentioned earlier.

Tom Barrett moved to approve the Mid-biennium Adjustments request as written. Rick Osen seconded. Motion carried.

**Policy review:** Tom Barrett moved to retire the Unattended Children Policy and approve the Youth Safety Policy as written. Marilyn Mastor seconded. Motion carried.

**Action items for next meeting:**

- Determine a specific additional budget request
- Rates & Fees for 2016
- Early Learning video
- Discussion about moving forward with the revised building program.

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:32 p.m.

**Next regular Library Board meeting:** October 20, 2015 at the Fairhaven Branch Library, 1117 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Bellingham, Washington – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST  
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees