

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, September 16, 2003 - Library Board Room
04:00 PM - 06:00 PM

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Board of Library 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: Alan Kemble, H.A. Barney Goltz, Judith Wiseman, Karen Durham, Tim Douglas

Board Members Absent: None

Library Staff: Julie Carterson; Margaret Ziegler; Scott Blume; Sandy Zell; Gladys Fullford

Others: Grant Deger, City Council Liaison, Tom Glenn

Minutes approved: August 19, 2003 regular meeting

Claims approved: August, 2003 general fund \$24,933.35; gift fund \$586.55

Julie Carterson reported that the budgeting process, which began in early February this year, has been especially grueling for all City Departments. Department Heads were asked to submit two plans: one predicated on a 4% reduction, the other on a 7% reduction. The lesser reduction assumed passage of the EMS Levy, the greater reduction assumed that the levy failed. The County's request to postpone the levy until the General Election necessitated that all departments submit draconian 7% reduction budgets to the Mayor.

In order to prepare their respective budgets, each Department including the library, was provided with a base forecast figure from which to work. The forecasts made assumptions about the CPI, benefits, and other elements used to project fiscal futures. The forecast figure derived for each department was the figure used to determine the amount of the mandated reduction.

The Budget Office determined that the library's base forecast was **\$2,928,076**. A seven per cent (7%) reduction equaled a budget cut of \$205,000 leaving an operating figure of \$2,723,076.

Departments that had the capacity for generating some revenues were permitted to achieve the target figure through a combination of increased fee schedules and specified reductions. Besides instituting specific cost-saving measures for 2004, the library's Board of Trustee's had also voted to increase fees and penalties, which resulted in a projected \$121,000 in additional revenues. The final operating budget figure for the library was **\$2,844,076**.

Once all Department budgets were submitted to the Mayor, the balancing act began.

The library's budget was soon reported to be severely out of balance, even though a balanced budget had been submitted. After three weeks and even more cuts in an effort to achieve the balance required, it was finally discovered that the Budget Office had inadvertently dropped two 0.9 library positions when figuring the library's base forecast. Consequently the library's budget adjustments were computed on a base that was in fact erroneous and considerably lower than it should have been. The correct base forecast from the Budget Office should have been **\$3,037,781** (showing the two staff positions being increased from 0.9 to full time), **not \$2,928,076** (which eliminated the two positions altogether). However, the library was not permitted to amend the budget to reflect the higher base. **The difference between the two original base forecasts was \$109,705.**

Though the 7% reduction on the higher base would have been \$212, 644 rather than \$205,000 as calculated on the incorrect base, a significantly higher beginning base would have been preserved

for future year budget projections. It should also be noted that the additional cuts made by the library to meet the stipulated balance were not restored.

During Board discussion it was pointed out that unless the discrepancy in the 2004 base forecast is acknowledged and addressed by City administration, the budget base for fiscal year 2005 would reflect the initial (lower and erroneous) 2004 forecast made by the Budget Office. When budget preparations for FY 2005 begin, the higher figure needs to be reinstated; otherwise the library is penalized.

Barney Goltz moved, "Inasmuch as the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees made a budget reduction in excess of the 7% reduction directive for fiscal year 2004 (approximately 9%), the Board respectfully requests that the base budget for fiscal year 2005 be adjusted to \$2,946,136." This calculated amount would have met the target goal. Judith Wiseman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Statistics: The formula for computing year-to-date changes for circulation and holds has been corrected to reflect the actual percent of change. Updated reports were given to board members.

Board Member Reports: Karen Durham shared materials a friend brought back from the new main library in Salt Lake City

Director's Report: Sandy Zell personally delivered the *We Share A Story* books and letters to the Port Stephens classes in Australia. She visited 15 schools in three days. Margaret Read MacDonald, author of "Mabela the Clever," visited Tateyama to help the teachers there to understand the We Share A Story program. Won-Ldy Paye, a Liberian Storyteller, will read "Mabela the Clever" on KAFE radio on November 18th. He will also perform at Whatcom Community College that evening. The Board gave a big thank you to Sandy and to the Friends for supporting this program which has acquired international status and support.

The opening reception for the Russian librarians participating in the **Open World Leadership Program** will be October 5th at 5:00 p.m. in the rotunda Room of the Whatcom Museum. The closing event will be October 11th. Five librarians and one facilitator will be assisted by many who have generously offered homes, translation services and transportation. Their itinerary includes visiting the State Librarian and library lobbyist in Olympia, meeting with Pete Kremen and Mark Asmundson, attending a Council Meeting and touring local libraries.

DYNIX has offered to develop a cash management module that complies with state audit requirements. Julie Carterson will contact Brian Sontag, State Auditor, and other state librarians to consider developing system specifications that will meet audit standards. These standards would be available to any library automation vendor. DYNIX has already developed a module for Texas libraries on their system. Julie also commented on the systems demonstrations staged by DYNIX and POLARIS and noted they are much evolved and measurably enhanced from the system we are currently using.

We will be applying for matching funds for continuing education grants for staff to attend the PLA (Public Library Association) conference.

Julie reported on skateboard inhibitors that may solve several problems including the ongoing damage to retaining wall edges and curbing. In spite of the ordinance prohibiting skateboarding and the signs, which clearly indicate same, the activity continues to be vexing and disturbing to many.

Jane Lowery and Julie Carterson are developing a survey questionnaire to outreach facilities we currently serve

Discussion Items: Board and staff members are urged to attend one of the many CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act) workshops being offered by the State Library. The workshops will cover recent interpretations of the Act as well strategies that may be used to meet the test of compliance. There is concern

that failure to comply with CIPA may jeopardize applications for federal and state grants. Interpretations of CIPA rules vary widely.

It was agreed that the October Board Meeting be moved from October 21st to October 14th at 4:00 p.m.

A letter was received from Barry Meyers expressing the concern of a client regarding a room rental for an informational seminar. The Board unanimously agreed that advertising for events held at the library should provide affiliation information and state that the library does not sponsor the activity. A disclaimer will be crafted to send with the invoice.

The Anthropology Department at WWU has an internship program that includes participatory field study. They have asked that the library be a possible field site.

Judith Wiseman was concerned about the misinformation contained in the Huxley College student project entitled *Bellingham Public Library Proposed Site Evaluation: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment*. Judith highlighted factual errors. A letter will be written to the supervising professor asking for an addendum citing factual corrections. The letter will ask that the addendum be distributed to all who received the original document.

Action Item: After consideration it was decided that the room exemption is not a major problem. The groups who applied for exemption were listed under the Mayor's counsel.

Private funds have been raised to pay for the Alford Group Fundraising Feasibility Proposal. Tim Douglas made the motion to authorize Alan Kemble to sign the contract with the Alford Group. The motion was seconded and approved. The study will be completed before the end of the year.

Executive Session: 5:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting – October 14, 2003 will begin at 4:00 p.m.

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Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees