

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, February 22, 2005 - Library Board Room
02:30 PM - 05:00 PM

Amended 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.

Amendment Date:

Board Members Present: Chairperson: Tim Douglas, Vice-Chairperson: Alan Kemble, Faye Hill, Judith Wiseman, David Edelstein

Board Members Absent: None

Library Staff: Pam Kiesner; Gayle Helgoe; Margaret Ziegler; Iris Kaneshige; Gladys Fullford

Others: Mark Asmundson, Mayor, John Watts, City Council Liaison, Dick McKinley, Public Works Director, Cape Powers, Engineering Manager, Tom Glenn, Friends President, Claude Hill, Jon Gambrell, Michael Menard, Velma Wendt

Agenda approved.

Minutes approved: January 18, 2005 regular meeting minutes approved as read.

Minutes approved: January 25, 2005 special meeting minutes approved as read.

Claims approved: January, 2005 general fund \$29,844.95; gift fund \$317.12

Whatcom Community Foundation Fund: We receive a report twice a year that states the amount of reinvestment. Don Drake will be invited to discuss the fund with the Board at a future meeting.

City Quarterly Report: We have asked to reappropriate \$45,000 in materials carried over and encumbered items. Alan Kemble has agreed to meet with staff about the library budget.

Mayor's Report: Mark Asmundson talked about the city budget, property taxes and assessments. The purpose of assessments is equalization or a fair share of taxes. When assessments go up, the rate goes down. The General Fund's revenue from property taxes is limited to 1% increase of property taxes. New construction increases the tax base, approximately \$250,000 each year. The city has used 4.5% of its banked capacity (\$500,000) and has about 4.5% remaining. Voters can approve going to the maximum tax, \$3.60 per \$1,000 value. The present tax is \$2.74 per \$1,000. About 20% of property taxes go to the City of Bellingham. Remaining amounts go to County, Port, State and Local Schools. Property taxes pay less than 20% of the city budget. Other revenues include B & O tax, utility tax, and sales tax. The cost of providing services exceeds the rate of growth of taxes. The loss of the motor vehicle tax is a major loss. The City has reduced 50 positions over a 3-year period.

How do we fund projects? An EMS levy for 2005 is not anticipated. The city continues to negotiate with the county. It is hoped the library obtains enough information from the geo-technical study to make a decision for going to voters for a library bond. Mark strongly urges companion measures to build a library and a levy lid lift for on-going maintenance and operations. The city plans to reach people to help to understand city finances. There are other sources of revenue for capital projects, but revenue for the general fund has been dramatically reduced. State legislation will eliminate the city B & O tax on legal and accounting services in 2008. This will be a 1.5 million to 2 million year estimated loss.

Bellingham is doing better than most cities. General fund expenditures were slightly less than general fund revenues in 2004. However, reappropriations still need to be made.

Geo-technical and Seismic Study Progress Report: Cape Powers, Engineering Manager, reported that the contracts have been signed. The geo-tech people in town are booked solid, and time is limited to access drill rig. The study is contractually required to be completed in two months, by the end of April. The report will provide opinions on probable cost of what it would take to build a foundation. Borings will provide information on rock layers. Seismic questions of adding floors or bringing building up to current code will also be answered. Cape and Dick McKinley, Public Works Director, realize the urgency of the report, and will stress this with the engineers. Faye Hill asked if there has been such a study on the Fairhaven Library. Tim Douglas said Peter Lieurance had done an evaluation of drainage, foundation, and masonry. Public Works will check to see what was done.

Communication: John Watts attended a seminar in Olympia on how to go forward with a bond election. John will share the information.

Statistics: Iris Kaneshige has worked on the new statistics format. Questions or suggestions are appreciated. Circulation and services numbers decreased in January. This may be due to weather and holiday closings. However, Fairhaven went up.

Public Comment: A question was asked about combining with WCLS. WCLS works as a county district. Bellingham is part of the city budget. The countywide system has a 50 cents cap per \$1,000. That would currently produce less than the city's general fund funding.

Velma Wendt mentioned that Sandy Zell is leaving at the end of the month. She has resigned to take a librarian position in Pierce County. The Board congratulates her for all her efforts with the children's programs, especially the sister city We Share A Story program and public dignitaries involvement. She will be a hard act to follow.

Board Member Reports: Alan said he has visited five libraries that have self pick up of holds, self check out, and book drops before they reached the counters. They had designated parking, were bright and airy, empty top and bottom shelves, spacious, lots of tables but few comfy chairs. There were a high number of teenagers, and there was a high level of computer usage.

Library Director Report: Pam Kiesner said Sandy Zell has resigned. Her last day is February 28th. Staff will have a get together tomorrow. Sandy will be working in two Pierce County library branches.

Pam has registered for the seminar, Holding Successful Local Elections, on March 10th in Lynnwood. Are there Board members who would like to attend? Pam will also be attending the Washington Library Association conference April 20-23 in Spokane and Systematic Development of Informed Consent May 31 – June 2 in Fort Vancouver.

Strategic Planning: We have had the Public Works presentation. Greg Aucutt provided a written summary of his presentation at the last strategic planning meeting, and it was distributed to the Board. Pam and Gayle are putting together information for a series of public meetings. City Council retreat is March 12. The draft worksheet/timeline is due tomorrow for council planning. Board members expressed concern about a bond and levy at the same time. This needs to be discussed. A strategic planning meeting is scheduled for March 8th at 2:30 p.m. The Board agreed that they should meet, in addition to the regular board meetings, once more per month for planning purposes. Staff will prepare a draft schedule of additional planning meetings.

Trespasses: Pam asked what the Board would like to see regarding trespasses. Do they want detailed reports or shortened reports with verbal explanation? David Edelstein said he could not affirm a permanent trespass. He feels it would not be upheld in court. He would like to see this reduced to a five-

year trespass. Alan moved to direct staff to place five-year trespass status to a permanently trespassed patron. Staff should try to reach and notify the patron. The motion was seconded and approved. After further discussion Pam suggested the trespass before the Board should be tabled while our process is carefully reviewed and clarified. The City Attorney will be asked for a legal opinion. Tim does not want the staff to feel the Board does not support them, but we need to figure out how the Board should be involved.

Staff Informational Topic: Circulation Services: Iris Kaneshige gave a presentation of the circulation services and shared a plan of the lobby redesign. Self-checkout is needed to maintain increased circulation. Privacy issues will be resolved for self pick-up. An information desk is planned with the redesign. Judith Wiseman asked for a shelf by the book drop, so people can manage their books easier. Judith also asked for a display of current book suggestions to better market our library.

Other Matters: None.

Next Strategic Planning Board Meeting – March 8, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – March 15, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees