

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, March 15, 2005 - Library Board Room
02:30 PM - 04:50 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: Chairperson: Tim Douglas, Vice-Chairperson: Alan Kemble, Faye Hill, Judith Wiseman

Board Members Absent: David Edelstein

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Gayle Helgoe; Margaret Ziegler; Scott Blume; Gladys Fullford

Others: John Watts, City Council Liaison, Michael Menard, Sue Tercek, Sue Hynes, Noel Collamer

Minutes approved: February 15, 2005 special meeting minutes approved as read.

Minutes approved: February 22, 2005 regular meeting minutes approved as amended: Velma Wendt was present. "Levy" was corrected to "bond" in the third sentence of second paragraph of Mayor's Report.

Claims approved: February, 2005 general fund \$50,891.29; gift fund \$1,394.25

Statistics: Circulation and interlibrary loans are down slightly. Good weather affects library usage. Explanations will be noted in future statistic reports.

Communications: Copies of an e-mail from Elisa Claassen to Tim Douglas with her thoughts on long term planning was distributed to Board Members.

Pam responded at the request of the Mayor to a petition to retain Sandy Zell's position in the Children's Library, and provided a copy to Board President Tim Douglas.

Public Comment: Noel Collamer asked about whether to continue suggesting books with his monetary donation or if he should buy the books and donate them to the library. The library's preference would be to receive title or category suggestions that can be considered. Because the library usually receives a discount on the materials it purchases, receiving a monetary donation can often be more cost effective.

Michael Menard expressed his concern about planning a new library. He feels a bond issue would not pass because of a lot of opposition. He thinks the concern should be that the library is seriously threatened and needs to do something about operating funds. He encourages a contingency plan. Tim Douglas said we need to address the library's operating budget, look at priorities, capacities, and how we deliver services. The library cannot expect to be spared when all other departments face cuts. Gayle Helgoe mentioned we are already using Fairhaven for off-site storage of magazines as a way of responding to space issues. We are looking for other efficiencies as well.

Board Member Reports: Judith Wiseman and Faye Hill attended the AWC Workshop, "Holding Successful Local Elections." Eric Wilson from Seattle Public Library spoke about the economic climate and mood in the state and how to mount a campaign. People are very divided and lack trust in government. Judith and Alan Kemble attended a workshop two years ago that used statistics tailored to each area and voting patterns from the last six elections. It is difficult to overcome the 60% threshold. If there is a re-do of the gubernatorial race, there would be a huge turnout especially of younger voters who are less tax conscious. The pre-planning period is the time to talk to the community. The public process and debate phase should take place before decisions are made.

Tim Douglas talked to Stowe Talbot, and made him aware of our talks about the northeast part of the city. They continue to be very interested in developing community and services there. We will continue to see more retail in the village core and residential townhouses. Stowe had looked at a Portland branch library with residential spaces above the library. They plan increased parking and perhaps underground parking for new buildings.

Library Director Report: The number of hits on our web page can now be reported. Between Friday and today (Tuesday) we had an average of 700 hits a day. Pam met with Malcolm Fleming, the city's new Administrative Officer. Pam can invite him to speak at a future board meeting. Pam met with Richard Cardwell from the architect firm that did the Anacortes and Longview Libraries' planning and feasibility studies. Pam also attended the workshop, Holding Successful Local Elections, with Judith and Faye.

The City Council worked on goals and an action calendar for 2005 at their retreat on Saturday. There are a significant number of items on their calendar this year. Modification of committee structures was discussed. A clearer focus is achieved by small groups. No changes were made. For more access of research capabilities, the Council would like to have interns do designated assignments. John Watts said the Mayor will appoint the Budget Advisory Committee. They will be trained and come up with advice for the budget. The budget process will begin earlier this year. The preliminary budget will be out in September. Department Directors gave presentations to the Council. The Council needs public input regarding the effects of not having adequate revenues. There may be desirable but not as necessary programs that will need to be cut. The community will decide what it wants to keep. Pam spoke to the Council about the bond for the fall and the concerns about being able to do it right by fall. She also mentioned the concern about the operating levy.

Ken and Phyllis Weber were selected as the recipients for the Washington Library Friends Trustee Association Award. Thanks to Gayle for nominating them. They will be presented the award at the Spokane conference. Ken and Phyllis visited the new Cerritos Library which has an old fashioned reading room and a fantastic children's department that looks like a museum.

Process for Labor Negotiation: Negotiations for the librarian's union will open fairly soon. A negotiator was hired in 2003, and the cost was split with Human Resources. Jo Zeimet, Human Resources Director, does the negotiating with other city unions and feels she could do this for the Board with Lorna Klemanski and Pam at the table. Alan Kemble mentioned he would like to talk to Jo before negotiations begin at an executive session. Alan made the motion to authorize the Human Resources Director to negotiate on the Board's behalf with the 114L Librarian's Union. Judith seconded the motion. The motion carried. Iris Kaneshige is the only staff member who belongs to the Professional and Supervisor Union because she is the only non-librarian who has extensive supervisory duties. Jo Zeimet will be invited to an executive session at the next regular board meeting.

Strategic Planning: The next planning session is April 12. Pam and Gayle will meet with Dave Christensen to update the building program statement to reflect current figures. Tim Douglas mentioned we will continue to review the cumulative list of interested parties. A careful in-depth study of the budget and prioritization of budget items will be added to the agenda. Pam is working on the elements of an operating budget for a new library.

Policy Review: A revised Rules of Conduct Policy in the city's Peabody format was passed out. It has Bellingham Public Library at the top, shows the RCW link, makes library plural, and crosses out the staff action since it is a procedure. Facilities recommend not allowing public to recharge battery packs. Plugging in their laptops is acceptable. Trespass appeals would come before the board, not each trespass. This conforms with the Seattle Public Library and is approved by Alan Marriner, Assistant City Attorney. "Trespass" is a police expression. Is it understandable? Further discussion pointed out that use of cell phones with cameras can come under stalking and sexual misconduct. Any staff member who feels harassed can call Dispatch. The patron can be excluded for a day. Rules of Conduct will be posted. Excluded or trespassed patrons are handed a brochure of rules of conduct and how they can appeal. Alan

Kemble moved to amend the Rules of Conduct Policy with the additional amendments proposed this afternoon. Faye seconded. The motion carried.

The Guidelines for Deciding the Length of an Exclusion or Trespass Policy was discussed. The Board has strong feelings against permanent trespasses. They would like “permanent trespass” removed. This would mean rewriting # 7 of the Rules of Conduct Policy. The Board would like the second policy reworked for the next meeting, and to review and amend the related language of the Rules of Conduct.

Staff Informational Topic: Children’s Services: Scott Blume gave a presentation of the children’s services.

Other Matters: None.

Next Strategic Planning Board Meeting – April 12, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – April 19, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees