

**Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees**  
**Tuesday, March 08, 2005 - Library Board Room**  
**02:30 PM - 04:30 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.

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

**Board Members Absent:**

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

**Others:** John Watts, City Council Liaison, Jon Gambrell, Claude Hill, Michael Menard

**Strategic Planning Session:** Review and discussion of draft planning documents, look at timeline, and review calendar.

**The Straight Story:** Pam Kiesner mentioned this is a revision of the 2004 Facility Needs Report, and figures continue to be updated. The revision has the inclusion of Fairhaven and discussion of branch development. The document consists of background, inadequacies, what we are doing to exist in current structures, and what are the next steps. The correct figures for the materials collection are being ascertained. Alan Kemble would like to see a brief paragraph following the mission statement that summarizes focus groups and visioning accomplished in 1988-1989. The 1983 limited expansion had severe budget constraints and a 15 year horizon. It has filled its function. Alan would also like to see a comment on children's programs and room limitations.

Judith Wiseman suggested adding a section about partnerships we have already formed, especially regarding expensive materials it would not be wise to duplicate. The nature of the reference collection could be covered in a separate document.

More could be said under Changing Technologies about what is on the horizon. This might go in the possibilities document. We need to share our story with the community of what we currently provide. The library is a resource for the public that otherwise does not have access to technologies. Home computers are not duplicates of reference materials at the library.

John Watts suggested inserting between the background and inadequacies, a statement of existing facilities, services, groups we serve, and partnerships.

Tim Douglas asked for a clearer statement of the role of a central collection. Would it be better to have resources spread about the community, or would it become complicated to go to more branches for materials. John said the role of a central library is the cohesive force for usage and management of distributions. People can access our collection 24/7. Materials can be put on hold for pickup at any county branch, but the central library is the nerve center, the headquarters.

At some point we may wish to develop a fact sheet that states what library resources are available to our citizens, not only from BPL and WCLS, but also in the community. For instance many citizens may benefit from knowing that they can use the WWU library, but to check anything out, one must purchase an annual pass for \$35.

These documents can be used as base documents from which information can be drawn. It's what the public sees and hears as well as what they read.

David Edelstein mentioned the building was designed to serve a population of 46,000. Now the population is nearly double that number. We will be serving a broader area and a projected 31,600 increase in population in the next 20 years. Staff will clarify population figures and projections.

A paragraph on the inadequacies of access and parking could be added. John suggested this is civic center problem, and a survey of all parking availabilities should be made. There should be collaboration with other city and county facilities to plan for these amenities.

Faye Hill asked about branch development, repair and/or addition to Fairhaven, and a possible community center. Pam said when we review library facilities and take a community wide perspective, we should think many years into the future. She recognizes the city is growing, and is looking at possible Fairhaven improvements and expansion. What might the actual needs be? Improvements could include masonry, structural, and wiring updates. Faye cautioned that the wording should not be misleading.

John asked about provisions for housing the collection and keeping it available for public use during a possible renovation of the present building. This has been figured into previous site evaluation reports as a \$2 million unrecoverable expense.

Pam will continue to update the next steps when we receive the structural, seismic, and geo-technological study results expected by the end of April.

Pam asked about placing the board member names and phone numbers on these documents as there is value to having names on the documents so members of the public can identify key people. Board members suggest their names are important to include, as well as the library's web address.

**The Next Chapter:** The second document is a draft of a factual statement of basic expectations and possibilities. This will be reformatted and will highlight what other libraries have and the basics that anyone should expect in any library. Tim said given our aging and highly educated population, we are below where we should be to provide programming for this segment. David said the Next Chapter should restate what the community expects and deserves in facilities and services in their library. The point is that we do not have the basics. Change possibilities to necessities. Add economical and environment friendly green building. This document may become talking points.

**Between the Lines:** The guiding principles are ideas that we have previously discussed that have guided our planning. Tim mentioned seeing the Friends workroom at the Kirkland library. Faye said the Anacortes Library Friends have a room at the library entrance. The community can see volunteers doing things for their library. What would foster greater ownership in a community building? Encourage community to come and do programs in which they have expertise. The library should be the center of the community and a popular gathering space for learning opportunities. David suggested using the term "Your Library."

The Board requested that the library measure the website hits on general information and catalog pages.

Tim stated that the original Facility Needs document had limited graphics, and suggested the updated document for the public also use more graphics and less text. We want this document to have a whole new look, and staff will update the photos and layout. Statistics can be used to support arguments, but one picture is worth a thousand words. Statistics can be augmented with media photographs and walk-throughs.

**Timeline:** The timeline has been turned in for the city council retreat including a possible library bond issue this fall. Tim mentioned that he hesitated having an operating levy considered separate from other city issues. Questions about other city services, revenues, etc. need to be answered first. It would be extremely difficult to mount a good campaign. The question was raised, are we restricted to the 50 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation? With the geo-technological study result in April, there is a lot of work to

be done. The bond issue will be kept on the table. Is it do-able to do a good job? We should be confident in success, or not go forward. We will move ahead briskly with improvements to the case statement and other documents whether we move ahead with bond issue or not.

**Calendar:** The Board will proceed with the proposed planning meetings on the second Tuesday of the month.

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

**Next Special Library Board Meeting – April 12, 2005 will begin at 2:30 p.m.**

**Meeting adjourned** at 4:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees