

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, January 17, 2006 - Library Board Room
02:30 PM - 05:10 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, Vicky Marshall, David Edelstein

Board Members Absent:

Library Staff: Pam Kiesner; Gladys Fullford; Diana Black

Others: John Watts, City Council Liaison, John Blethen, Fourth Corner Dance Group, David Imburgia, Bellingham Country Dance Society, Bethany Gronquist, KGMI

Called to Order

Executive Session: Annual review of Library Director

Regular Session

Agenda Approved

Minutes approved: December 20, 2005 regular meeting minutes approved as read.

Claims approved: December, 2005 general fund \$48,745.86; gift fund \$790.69. The Board members asked how well the electronic databases purchased from the Office of the Secretary of State are used.

Statistics: The numbers keep going up. Pam will include information about the high number of holds being placed and patrons being served when she prepares a press release regarding self check-out. The number of hits on the website will be available and included in the statistics in 2006. There were close to 100,000 hits during the last six months of 2005. The counters do not count people going into the meeting room, only the Adult or Children's areas.

Materials Withdrawn: Alan moved to approve the 8,702 materials withdrawn during the fourth quarter of 2005. David seconded. The motion carries.

Communications: A letter from Garth Hammond to the Friends was copied to individual board members. Alan said the letter was worthy of a response or acknowledgement. David agreed, but felt the response could be in the form of an invitation to a Board meeting. Mr. Hammond had had a roll in dealing with drawing up plans, and is offering advice that he hopes will be helpful. Vicky mentioned that Mr. Hammond made some good points. Tim will get back to him.

Tim had a phone message from a graduate student out of Texas, who has experience in architecture. Pam also talked with the student. He is using the Bellingham Public Library for a project he is working on.

Public Comment: David Imburgia and John Blethen commented on the new meeting room fee structure.

Review of Meeting Room Fee Structure: Tim opened the meeting to those who wished to speak about the meeting room fee structure. Pam introduced Diana Black, who is responsible for the room bookings. The new fees went into effect this month. We had compared our facilities with others available in the community. David Imburgia represents the Bellingham Country Dance Society, who rent the Fairhaven Auditorium twenty times a year. David explained the dance groups have used the Fairhaven Library

for a number of years. They are respectful of the work the Board has done on the review of rentals. The groups are losing money each year. As non-profits they cannot charge admission to the dances, but ask for donations. John Blethen added that the dance floor was worn out and too dangerous to use three years ago. They went to the Mayor to raise \$15,000 for the project. They found materials at net, and laid the new floating floor with volunteers saving \$10,000 to \$20,000. John worked with the state historical society to maintain the integrity of the floor. The dance groups reflect the community with ethnic appreciation nights. The dance groups are concerned that they may have to disband if they cannot find other funding. They feel they are a valuable resource and an asset to the community. They clean up after the dances, police the activity, and are good quality tenants. John realizes that costs are rising citywide. The dance groups are culturally valuable. It would be a tragedy to lose them. Tim does not want to evaluate the worth of groups as the main factor that makes up the fee structure. It is a bit of a dilemma for the Board. As expenses go up, the revenue stream has to come up. It is the community norm that the public expects not to pay for community events. Alan asked about membership fees for the dance groups. Alan and Vicky asked about increase in charges from Public Works for Fairhaven. Pam answered that we have projected a certain amount of revenue set on increased fees. David said the rates we are charging are still a bargain. The previous rates were tantamount to a gift. He appreciates the unique circumstances of the tenants' improvement to the facility with their time and energy. David made the motion to retroactively change the 2006 rate for the Fairhaven Auditorium from \$50 to \$40 per hour for profit. The same 50% would apply to non-profit from \$25 to \$20. Vicky seconded. The motion was amended for the profit rate to stay at \$50. Vicky seconded the amendment. Tim said if the non-profit groups fold, we lose all revenue. John asked if the rates are modified, does it need to go to City Council. Unless other compensation is found, the budget is affected. David said the budget figure was only a projection. Revenue streams could change. Faye spoke for the Fairhaven Friends. They appreciate what John did on the floor. The Fairhaven Friends also paid for floor board materials. The motion carries as amended

Strategic Planning: Tim thanked Alan and Faye for preparing the report on Site O, the county owned building across the street which houses Hizzoners. Vicky asked about the negative of operating costs for the building on the third page. Alan said more staff is needed when there are more floors. Alan said accessibility is a major issue. The creek buffer makes it a small site with traffic problems. Land would be lost for bus parking and maneuvers. It would be better to have streets on all sides of the property. John suggested connecting the property across the creek with a pedestrian bridge. Tim mentioned there is not as much usable land as first appears. He sees more value in the property south of the current building. It is adjacent to the Children's Museum. It might be more advantageous to expand this building to the south and partner with the Children's Museum.

Pam reported the RFP information will be available on the due date, January 27th at 11:00 a.m. There has been lots of media coverage. Awareness has been heightened. An architectural firm for the World Trade Center Museum at Ground Zero called to ask where we were in the process. John suggests a design competition similar to the Children's Museum. Alan thanked David for pushing the Board to go ahead with the RFP. Alan suggested a special meeting if there are any entries.

Pam said we are still waiting to hear more about another site which the Board previously considered, adjacent to the Senior Activity Center and close to Bellingham High School. Dick McKinley has conversed with the owners, and we hope to have a meeting soon.

City Council meets February 4th for a retreat. Department Heads have been asked to provide any specific actions that need to be placed on the calendar.

Tim talked about the bridge project connecting the library to another building at WWU. It is invigorating to explore what may be possible. Vicky said Garth Hammond asked some good questions in his letter. We need the building to be people friendly. Faye remarked the Board needs to be visionaries to see what can and needs to be done.

2005 Budget: Achievements, objectives and accomplishments have been turned in to City Council. The 2006 targets in the performance tables will be revised and based on 2005 real numbers.

Tim talked about the retailing approach. He appreciates the Vancouver Library's design. It makes a difference on what people pick up to read. Our lobby redesign lends itself to more merchandising presentation and reader advisory services.

Alan asked about the video telephone service. Pam explained the service and its location by the microfiche machines. Deb Brewer is to be commended for setting up the service, and any reference librarian can explain its use if Board members would like to stop over.

Vicky commented on the Whatcom Independent editorials. What is the Library's standard procedure on addressing such editorials? Tim said we do not have a standing policy. We don't respond to everything. There is difficulty in the timing. Answering back sometimes only prolongs the item in the newspapers. It is a judgment call. If there is erroneous information or a misunderstanding, we would respond. We may wish to create a strategy to put forth positive information.

Director's Report: Pam will be at the State Director's meeting in Federal Way on February 2 and 3. Pam helped judge the senior culminating projects, and appreciated being a part of the process. Staff helped compile the 2005 successes and goals for 2006, and a copy was shared with Board members.

Other Matters: None.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – February 21, 2006, will begin at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees