

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, June 20, 2006 - 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.

Board Members Present: Chairperson: Tim Douglas, Faye Hill, Vicky Marshall, David Edelstein

Board Members Absent: Vice-Chairperson: Alan Kemble

Library Staff: Pam Kiesner; Lizz Roberts; Scott Blume; Gladys Fullford

Others: Tom Glenn, Friends of BPL, and Margaret Ziegler

Called to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Tim Douglas. Agenda Approved.

Public Comment: None .

Minutes approved: May 16, 2006 regular meeting minutes approved as read.

Claims approved: May, 2006 general fund \$45,817.48; gift fund \$709.79

Statistics: There was a significantly high number of holds, a slight decrease in circulation, and an increase in persons visiting.

Communications: Tim Douglas received an email from a member of the Lettered Streets Neighborhood. Their Board thought the ReStore site would be a great idea. We may receive a letter recommending the site. Tim had a call from someone who expressed reservations to a new library and thought the main reason we are looking for a new site is for parking. Tim told her that parking is not a driving force. In a list of reasons the library is looking for a new site, parking would be in the bottom 10-15%. She was also concerned about traffic on her street. Tim explained that we are starting with City-owned sites and discussing them thoroughly. Tim stated that he does not see traffic in the City Center as a problem. David Edelstein mentioned that if the library had to go in the current site, desirability of underground parking would be in the top 10-15% of reasons as our duty to the community. Tim said it is not because we lack parking that we are addressing the adequacy of the building; but because of addressing the adequacy of the building, we are considering parking.

2007 Budget: Pam Kiesner reported that the City Budgeteers had their first meeting. The Budget Office will project the 2007 salaries and benefits. They will also project the 2007 expenses based on the six-month actuals of 2006. We will have numbers to work with in July.

Two budget tasks, increases in rates and fees and capital requests are due now. Vicky Marshall made the motion to continue the rates and fees in 2007 at the current amounts. Faye Hill seconded. The Fairhaven Auditorium rates were reduced for non-profits in January. The Board would like to keep the reduced rate. John Blethen is organizing a group to refinish the floor. The motion carries.

Pam reviewed the capital requests. Land acquisition is included in the event the purchase of land is necessary. This was increased to \$5,000,000 to reflect inflationary land values. Preliminary design work amount was increased to \$405,000 to reflect increased construction rates. Pam mentioned the design competition for the Museum cost \$117,000. That included competition consultants and \$15,000 to each of the three design finalists. For the construction costs of the new Central Library, Dave Christensen suggested that Pam call Rory Woolsey, a local professional cost consultant. Pam recommends the underground parking option for a total construction request of \$21,000,000 plus \$5,000,000 for parking. Tim said money invested in pilings would offset some of the costs of underground parking.

To acknowledge rising gas prices and other factors that might affect estimates, the term “adjusted” or “altered” will be used in place of “skewed.” David said we should talk about the total costs. Pam explained that we need to separate the land from the total project estimate. David is concerned with the credibility of stating the whole cost to the community when it is still so preliminary. Tim mentioned the possibility of having an alternate location during construction and the costs of moving. David said the estimate could be qualified by stating either that the budget does not contemplate moving the library out and back in or putting enough money for the move(s) into the budget. David also stated that the budget contemplates building a new structure. It does not contemplate addition to the current building. David suggested a footnote that the budget contemplates a new building. This is not contemplating a renovation or addition to the current building.

The Fairhaven structural study has been awarded to BOLA, a Seattle firm astute with historical buildings. We won't know the costs until the study is finished. Pam has included \$250,000 for each of three years as a place holder. David suggested adding, “In as much as we haven't gotten the result of the structural assessment, it is possible the total budget may have to be spent in a shorter time period.” The amount of \$200,000 for a two year time period is entered for the Northside presence.

Vicky made the motion to approve the capital budget submission as amended with today's discussion. David seconded. The motion passes.

Lizz said BOLA is on the City's short list of qualified architects to do the Fairhaven structural study. She met with Susan Boyle about what kind of assessment we wanted. Lizz is encouraged to know that a lot of Carnegie buildings are still used, and a lot of things can be done to preserve them. BOLA will also suggest extra things that can be done while the building is apart to make it a better building. There are things that can be done to preserve the Chuckanut sandstone.

Reports: Faye will attend the Project for Public Spaces Workshop with Pam. Vicky offered congratulations on the Jazz grant, and asked about the Head of Reader & Information Services position. The position is open until filled. We are interviewing on June 30th.

Tim and Pam met with Jeff Kochman with the Barkley Company to talk about their ideas. They are starting to build their residences, and space could be made for a library presence. We are not talking about a branch library at this point, but the ability to pick up books, some computer availability, a rotating browsing library, an adjacent coffee house, and maybe a small commercial book shop. The key element is to achieve the City's objective: an urban village. The trade-off is they provide the space which would build a sense of community. Vicky suggested the Friends could be involved, perhaps with providing browsing books.

Pam reported that we are working with WCLS on a telephone messaging system that should go into place by the end of summer. Patrons can select to receive notifications of holds and overdues by phone or email. This should decrease postage costs.

Lizz is working on a program to bring Jo Dereske, author of the Miss Zukas books, to the library in July.

The Jazz grant is in cooperation with WCLS and the Jazz Project. We are doing this with highly esteemed libraries and universities. The \$1,000 is for travel to Chicago for training. The project includes showing the films, facilitated discussions, and jazz performances that Jud Sherwood will be arranging.

Strategic Planning: Mary Dumas has been engaged by the Mayor for a public involvement needs assessment.

Pam mentioned that Pamela Jull from Applied Research contacted her to see if the library might be interested in being included in a survey.

The City's citizen satisfaction survey has taken place, and the results are being compiled.

In preparation to site discussion Pam handed out to the Board a preliminary staffing and facilities development forecast that she prepared for City Department Heads and Administration.

In response to last month's communication from the Fairhaven Friends asking about the land next to the Fairhaven Library, Pam asked Patty Fernandez, Public Works Real Property Manager, to call the property owner. Patty found that the land is not for sale. The owner prefers a 50 year lease at \$5,000 per month. It looks like something we are not able to move forward. Faye moved for the Board to write a letter to the Fairhaven Friends, thanking them for the letter about property next door, and that we checked into it. Vicky seconded. Motion carries.

Tim, David and Pam met with Tara Sundin and Tim Stewart to talk about the Sash & Door site at great length. There is enough land for a library and possible joint venture. The City's anticipated use is flexible. A mixed use is possible and fits economic development purposes. A library could add economic viability. Changes in the area would compliment a library. Access is not the best, but it is accessible. The Maritime parking lot has been adequate for school buses to turn around. Also discussed were footings, pilings to bedrock and underground parking. Rory Woolsey estimated underground parking for 142 spaces at \$5,000,000; this would also provide the foundation. The Municipal Court site was also discussed. David mentioned that we want to be able to explain all the details, pros and cons of all the sites to the City Council. All sites have compelling features, but none have all the compelling features. Sash & Door site could have a footbridge to a beautiful lawn. Real estate developers have descended into Old Town; this could be a whole new situation in 6-12 years. Tim and Tara mentioned the good assessment of the Sash & Door site. It is not as toxic as the Georgia Pacific site, which has questions about mercury contamination. David said we would want the City to provide clean-up of the site.

Northside Presence: Pam will provide a report of the population forecast into 2022 and the library square footage needed to serve the community. Tim said the City is underway with a study of trails, corridor and parks in the Cordata area. A library presence at the confluence of those trails would be good. Mauri Ingram has stated that many residential developments are providing ready access to public meeting space. However, the Literacy Council is struggling to find space for tutoring.

Executive Session: To consider real estate matters.

Regular Session: Reconvened at 4:30 p.m. No action was necessary as a result of the Executive Session.

Other Matters: None.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – July 18, 2006 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