

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, October 16, 2007 - Library Board Room
02:00 PM - 04:10 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: David Edelstein, Vice-Chairperson: Faye Hill, Vicky Marshall, J. Robert Gordon, Marilyn Mastor

Board Members Absent:

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Madeline Sheplor; Doug Dickinson; Iris Kaneshige; Margaret Ziegler; and Gladys Fullford

Others: John Watts, Council Liaison, Alan Marriner, Assistant City Attorney, Amory Peck, WCLS Trustee, and Julianna Guy, Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood

Called to order: Regular session was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chair David Edelstein.

Public comment: Amory Peck, Chair of Whatcom County Library System Board, mentioned there are many library issues the two boards share in common; she is here to listen.

Margaret Ziegler has listened to the discussion about the trespass policy and permanent trespasses. Margaret shared that in a number of instances, many trespasses happened before a permanent trespass was issued. Five years is not long enough in some cases. Probation periods put the librarians in an awkward position to determine if the probation has been broken and whether to trespass again.

Margaret has heard suggestions that in planning for a new library, everything should be in the public area – no closed stacks. Margaret said Bellingham Public Library is a central library, not a branch. There is reason to keep items in closed stacks. These items do occasionally get pulled for patrons. As BPL grows and serves other branches, extra copies and reference material would serve well. The storage area element has been used well over the years. An important element to consider is to build a space that allows for expansion.

Julianna Guy stated she was here to learn more about the library system and requirements. Julianna continues to advocate for a branch in the North end.

Executive Session: Discussion of labor negotiations and grievance.

Regular Session: No action was taken as a result of the Executive session.

Trespass appeal: The trespass appeal tabled at the last meeting was discussed. The library has not received a support letter from the individual. It was determined that five years have not passed, and there has not been enough evidence of change. The policy will be revisited at the next meeting. A change to the policy could state a review would be possible at the end of a five year trespass. It would be a patron-driven appeal. Three letters of professional reference showing change in behavior could be requested.

Marilyn Mastor made the motion to deny the current appeal. Faye Hill seconded. Discussion followed. The motion carried. Alan Marriner, Assistant City Attorney, was asked for guidance on the policy. He will research if any trespass policies are in effect within the city. It was suggested to check if WWU and WCC libraries have a trespass policy. Amory will ask Joan Airoidi, WCLS Director, to talk to Pam about their policy.

Pamela Kiesner updated the Board about the customer who broke the front door. He has been trespassed for five years.

Trustee Education: Introduction to Library Technology: Madeline Sheplor and Doug Dickinson passed out their agenda. Doug is an ITSD staff member assigned to the Library. Madeline is liaison to ITSD, and they work closely with WCLS in sharing databases and computer networks. The Technology Planning Committee meets monthly and looks at technology trends. Demos of projects are reviewed and evaluated. Technology tip handouts are available for the public.

Behind the scenes a dozen servers provide the patron database and website. They are secure in a controlled environment at Fiber Cloud. Currently we have 50 staff computers with scheduled maintenance and replacement. There are 30 public computers with internet access. They are pretty much in use all the time. Many databases are available on the computers. A Gates grant has provided two computers that have been installed in the Teen area.

Self check-out is averaging 400 check-outs at each station. Wi-Fi has been online since May. There are 12-15 unique users each day. We hope to add more wireless access points for the Lecture Room, Children's area and another in the Adult area. We plan to have RFID (Radio Frequency ID) in the new building. It is a material handling system. The cost is slowly coming down.

The first batch of electronic books which are readable on a computer have been ordered. We currently have Playaways which are digital audio devices. Credit and debit cards will be accepted soon. Chat Reference: Ask a Librarian in real time will be added to our website. This is instant messaging shared with a big group of librarians 24/7 with a live person. We are waiting for the demo on PC reservations – signing up for computer sessions. There will be a website revamp. The website is a virtual branch. Content will be maintained, but it needs a face lift to incorporate more elements. WCLS has issued a RFP to do this, and we will piggyback.

The Friends will purchase six laptops to be available for training sessions in the Lecture Room, and can travel to places like the Senior Center or Outreach venues. The Lecture room will have increased technology with wireless access and a mounted projector.

The Digitalization Project is a website focused on the history of Bellingham neighborhoods. It has maps, history, houses, and data. The Museum, Planning & Development, ITSD, and Library have been working together on it.

Barkley Branch will also have wireless and four internet and catalogue computers as well as check-out and staff computers.

A lap top with wireless will be available for Outreach staff. It will have access to our computer system through a cell phone network.

A demo will be set up for a Live Homework Help program similar to Chat Reference. It is more focused with persons with expertise in special areas.

The databases are the best kept secret around. It is hard to determine who is logging in as each database vendor counts access differently. We advertise the databases on our website by featuring different ones each month on the front part of the site.

Strategic planning update: Fairhaven condition: Rhoda Lawrence, BOLA Architects, is revising the costs on stucco versus brick.

Barkley progress report: Alan Marriner has made revisions to the draft lease for Barkley. Pam Kiesner and David Edelstein will meet about the lease.

Whatcom Community College: Pam met with Linda Lambert from WCC. Our presence there is going great. The staff is meeting together to assess the statistics over a month's time. Pam also attended the WCC new president's reception and also had a meeting with her and Ray White from WCC. The WCC library is undersized for its use. They are considering going to the State legislature for a new Library Learning Commons. Their Board unanimously supported a partnership with us and WCLS. They have asked our Board for a letter of support by December 1st. The President of their Board is Robert Fong. Chuck Robinson is one of their board members.

Central Library: Pam is organizing the consultants visit next week. There will be another open house on Tuesday, October 23rd. Pam asked the Board to promote with others to take the on line survey, which will be easier to compile than hard copies. Janice Keller, Communications Coordinator, has been helping with the library video on BTV10, City Council presentation, news releases, promotions, newspaper ad, fliers, updated letter on line, and Power Point presentation.

Minutes approved: September 18, 2007 regular meeting minutes approved.

Claims approved: September, 2007 general fund \$26,037.18; gift fund \$1,474.07

Library Performance & Activity Measures for September: Circulation is up 7% and persons visiting is up 10%. We are continuing to work on weeding, updating, and keeping the collection fresh. The Library Performance & Activity Measures for September were approved.

Communications: Margie Lee sent individual letters to the Board. Paul Leuthold, Parks Director has responded to her. Pam has responded on the Board's behalf. Pam will write again acknowledging her letter and explain this is the Parks Department venue. An email was received from Kathleen Sparks on the importance of branch libraies. Pam will respond.

Board Report: Faye Hill reported on the WILL conference. There were great classes on the countdown to a new library, planning for the library's future, passing successful bond issues, welcoming libraries, and nuts and bolts of the library. Robert Spector explained how "The Nordstrom Way" relates to libraries, empowering employees to give customer service. Top tips for passing a successful bond levy: Traditional publicity is not enough, must have a community-centered program, high profile of library activities, community education, on-going community engagement and stakeholder investment, build allies and endorsers, keep the library in the spotlight, yard signs and buttons really help, research how ballots come in from districts for decisions on last minute ads.

J. Gordon commented on the selection of speakers from around the country. It was a great venue. The big issue for J. was the relevance of a library in today's technology. A library is much more than a repository; it is the central hub of the community. Washington State Library is the best in the country in supporting libraries. J. shared four pages of notes with Pam and the consultant. In the future libraries may not be serving information seekers, but information developers. J. highly recommends attending future conferences.

Vicky Marshall invited the Board to the Maude Hayes Fischer awards on November 17th. This honors second to fifth grade students' efforts, not achievement. The Children's librarians do a wonderful book presentation.

City Council Liaison Report: John Watts said the budget was presented to the Council last night.

Director Report: Pam mentioned copies of the city's preliminary budget are available for check-out. Pam will present the library's budget to the Council on October 22nd. Highlights will include the new central library and Fairhaven reconditioning that have to be bonded, the presence on the north side, adding 1.5 fte staff to support meeting the needs.

The consultants will meet with Therese Holm, Finance Director about funding issues.

Recruitment has begun for the Assistant Director position.

End of year business items include election of board officers and the 2008 calendar of board meetings. J. Gordon's term ends January 1st. Reappointment will likely take place after the new mayor takes office.

A library card campaign with WCLS will be January to March. ALA theme is "The Smartest Card, Get it, Use it @ your library."

We co-sponsored a Banned Books week event with Village Books and WCLS, featuring Chris Finan, author of From the Palmer Raids to the Patriot Act.

Pam had coffee with the new Museum Director. Pam is on the selection team for the new City Human Resources Director.

A collection of "Bellingham Public Library in the news" articles were passed around the table.

The League of Women Voters asked the two mayoral candidates about the future of libraries. Both were positive.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – November 20, 2007 will begin at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees