

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, January 15, 2008 - 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; Donna Grasdock; Margaret Ziegler

Others: Jack Weiss, City Council Liaison, Christine Walsh and Ken Weber, Friends of the Bellingham Public Library, Amory Peck, WCLS Trustee, Ian Tyson, Whatcom Independent, Sam Taylor, Bellingham Herald, Brad Cornwell, RMC Architects, Dixie McKay, Friend of the Fairhaven Library, Floyd McKay, Deborah Winter, Bond Counsel from Foster Pepper, Joan Hoisington, City Attorney, John Carter, Incoming City Finance Director, Jason Kuest, Interim Finance Director & Current Budget Director

Called to order: Regular session was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chair, David Edelstein.

Public comment: Amory Peck, Chair of Whatcom County Library System Board, said Happy New Year.

Library Board transitions: David Edelstein introduced and welcomed Jack Weiss, new City Council Liaison to the Library Board.

Trustee Education: Deborah Winter, Bond Counsel from Foster Pepper; Joan Hoisington, City Attorney; John Carter, incoming City Finance Director; Jason Kuest, Interim Finance Director & Current Budget Director in attendance to answer questions concerning bonds.

We are currently in the program development stage of the project to determine out how many square feet the new building will include as well as the associated costs. Pam explained that the Consultants have not yet submitted the estimated project costs, but will within the month. Deborah reminded the Board of a chart prepared by Therese Holm in Feb. 2007 that gives library funding options. The Board asked for an explanation of the difference between a levy lid lift and a bond.

Levy lid lift – Limited to a 9 year period, Voter approval of 50% required, \$3.60 levy limit – up to 30 million

Voted bond levy – Voters authorize tax increase to repay bond over period of time, may go above City's \$3.60 levy limit, and must be used for capital

There is an expectation that 85% of bond proceeds must be expended within 3 years.

The consultants haven't found that the City can support an additional branch at this time, but that it may be more feasible within 5 years. Pam asked about doing a bond with some monies earmarked for later in the project for use in the Northside. It is possible, but Deborah Winter reminded the Board that the money shouldn't sit around for that long after the voters approve it. Things that bond money can be used for: Moving in and out of the building, collections, furniture. Interim operations are not bondable. The new library can have space that is leased to other agencies, however, what kind of bond depends on the type of agency.

We can partner with County for parking. The county could bond for their share, or we could bond for the whole thing and be paid back by county.

March 28 is the deadline for the ballot measure. Before that time the Library Board needs to have a description of the bond and the amount, and have approval from City Council to proceed.

Fairhaven Branch upgrades – Renovations and repairs are bondable. Day to day maintenance is not bondable. Everything presented in the BOLA study of Fairhaven is bondable.

The clock doesn't start ticking on use of the money until the bond is called upon. That gives leeway to get the designs and movement to a temporary location into place. The costs for the design itself can be reimbursed from the bond.

If there is money leftover from the bond, it would be used to pay down the bonds.

It was recommended by the speakers to ask for a lump sum that would be used for specific things that are listed in a general way. They do not recommended attaching amounts to specific items in the project.

Keep the description of the bond simple for the ballot.

Preliminary Library block site review: Brad Cornwell, RMC Architects: The Thomas hacker consulting team was asked to review the current site to look at the idea of leaving the existing library building in place while the new building is being built. Brad reports it is ideal to use the south side (Central Ave. side) to be the entrance to the new building with greenspace. It would be best to use the north side (Lottie St.) for an entrance into a below ground parking garage. Pam reminded the Board that we want the architects to have the best place on the block to build. That does mean the possibility of the existing building coming down. That is what went to City Council last year and it was approved.

Thomas Hacker's team agrees that the best for the library is to demolish and build. It allows for the best use of the site for function and aesthetics.

Marilyn Mastor pointed out that it would be very stressful for staff and the public to be in the existing building while a new building is being constructed right next door. Also, there wouldn't be space for construction staging which increases costs.

Thomas Hacker/RMC was not hired to design the building. Their visuals are to help in development of the program statement and cost estimates.

Pam asked the Board for their consensus opinion on still moving and allowing for the possibility of the existing building being demolished. All agreed. J doesn't want to compromise on the design elements. David wants to start fresh and move forward with the idea that it is in the best interest for a good design to have the whole block to work with.

Pam is doing a lot of planning for the interim. A lease cannot be put into place until we are further along in the project. Pam has looked at potential sites to lease, costs associated with the move and the lease and how to continue service during the interim time.

Minutes approved: December 18, 2007 regular meeting minutes approved. January 3, 2008, special board meeting minutes approved.

Claims approved: December, 2007 general fund \$85,365.86; gift fund \$67.53

Library Performance & Activity Measure for December: Total circulation is up nearly 7% over 2006. Persons visiting is up almost 10% and website visits is up 17%.

The December Library Performance & Activity Measures were approved.

Communication: The Friends of the Fairhaven Branch Library sent a letter to Mayor Dan Pike, Bellingham City Council, Library Director, Library Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library concerning the anticipated Fairhaven Library renovation project. The Friends of Fairhaven stated that they believe inclusion of the Fairhaven library repairs is inappropriate with the bond issue for a new building. They are concerned that the repairs and renovations needed for Fairhaven are not bondable. They ask the city to use money from a reserve fund to make the repairs this year. The library board asked Pam to write a letter on their behalf assuring the Fairhaven Friends that the repairs and renovations needed for the Fairhaven building are bondable.

Board Report: No reports.

Director Report: Pam asked for a Special Board meeting on January 29, 2008 at 11:30 am to go over the report from the consultants and prepare for the joint meeting with City Council on Feb. 4, 2008.

Next Special Library Board Meeting – January 29, 2008 will begin at 11:30 a.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – February 19, 2008 will begin at 4 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees