

Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, January 29, 2008 - Library Lecture Room
11:30 AM - 01:30 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: David Edelstein, Vice-Chairperson: Faye Hill, J. Robert Gordon, Marilyn Mastor

Board Members Absent: Vicky Marshall

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Beth Farley; Donna Grasdock and Gladys Fullford

Others: Kacey Jurgens, Thomas Hacker Architects, Brad Cornwell, RMC Architects, Linda Storck, Judicial & Support Services Director, John Carter, Finance Director, Janice Keller, Communications Manager, Sam Taylor, Bellingham Herald, Ian Tyson, Whatcom Independent, Tim Douglas, Alan Kemble, Beverley Jacobs and Julianna Guy, Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood, Velma Wendt, Cliff Baacke, Bill Bode, Kate Grinde, Michael Lilliquist, and Claude Hill

Public Comment: Michael Lilliquist advocated for branch libraries. He suggested it would be good to look once again at cost variances between main and branches.

Velma Wendt asked if there would be time for public comment at the end of the meeting. David Edelstein answered that if there was enough time, there would be another opening for public comment. Velma also asked when there would be a more detail architectural plan and how do we know the amount to ask in the bond election. David answered that the Library is giving as much information as we can before the building is approved. Kacey Jurgens explained Thomas Hacker Architects have developed cost estimates based on square feet related to Bellingham's building climate, quality of project, building type, site work and parking issues. Mechanical and electrical systems as well as City standards are also factored in.

Beverly Jacobs of Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood acknowledged the need for a branch in the Cordata area, and she supports the new building.

Tim Douglas commented on the branch question and the reality of funding general fund expenses. The Mayor and Council's first budget priority is public safety and then look at how various services can be provided with the remaining money. The day to day operating expenses in the future must be addressed. Bellingham is already at a branch level typical of a city our size. Tim supports the effort in Cordata because it is a high traffic area. Whatcom Community College is beginning to provide drop off and pick up services. Barkley in the northeast portion is closer to having a branch available. Every neighborhood would like a branch, but it is not easy to do. We need to bring this forward in the future as population grows. The Board has done a lot of research and appreciates the people's interest.

David Edelstein commented that the Trustees are committed to providing library services to all citizens of the community. They will continue to look at branches and partnerships with private or public entities to provide space.

Kate Grinde supports the concept of re-doing the library and developing a central library identity. She supports whole community branches and would like the Board to follow up on partnerships.

Review and discuss the draft "Community Analysis, Library Needs Assessment, Central Library Building Program Statement and Cost Analysis: Pam Kiesner explained the community input with open houses, key stakeholder interviews, on-line survey, and focus group

meetings. Everything discussed is captured into the report. The purpose of reviewing each section is to familiarize everything for the February 4th joint work session with City Council.

Kacey Jurgens reviewed the executive summary, the assessment of needs and the conclusions. Community analysis compares the service levels of other communities of same size. They typically have one branch. More branches develop with larger communities. The study looked at the estimated growth of the community to 2022 because that is the year out to which we have projections.

The Central Library Program details each space of the library and generates non-construction costs for items such as furniture, equipment, fixtures, fees, library materials and more.

The Building Needs is a summary of spaces of what the consultant suggests for each floor including mechanical rooms, shaft spaces, and elevator rooms. Square footage of the current building is 44,000 with 78,000 square feet suggested. It is difficult to add on to this building to make a great building. The Board has thoughtfully decided on the current site for the facility with great insight for the next 50 years.

Operations considers issues such as staffing and hours. Goals include more reading areas, more computers, bringing books in closed stacks out in the public, size of the building and how to build on this site. If the current building remained open the new building would be pushed right to Lottie Street. The space in front would be too large. It is better to demolish and have a full block on which to design.

When a library is more than 25,000 square feet, two stories should be studied. There is no adjacent property available to serve the parking needs of just the library. Code states one parking space for every 200 square feet of open public area. Stacks are not really open area. This calculates to 125 needed parking spaces below the building.

Once the bond is passed, work can commence on the building design. Cost analysis estimated with walls and stairs and site work is \$36.5 million. This includes below grade parking at \$5 million and site work at \$1.5 million. The Fairhaven Branch renovations cost is \$2.3 million. Indirect or non-construction costs include City management fees, professional fees, furnishings, costs of moving, rent, utilities, and permitting fees are estimated at 35 to 45% of construction costs. With the escalation factor and project assumptions included, the total cost is estimated at \$52 million to \$56 million which is escalated to 2010 dollars.

J. Gordon commented on the inefficiencies of the current building. The new building would be more energy efficient and staff efficient.

Pam Kiesner said John Carter, Finance Director, and staff will work with the Library on the operating budget projections for the new building. With a new building use usually skyrockets. Pam anticipates adding a few more FTE employees as we are already understaffed.

Kacey explained that libraries are more expensive to build than an office building. Any public building is more durable because of more durable materials used which also lessens maintenance costs. Appearance of a public building is important. Stacks are heavy, and more outlets are needed in the floor. Indirect costs include equipment such as a sorting machine which scans, checks and sorts which should increase staff efficiencies.

How could budget be trimmed? Cut down on size of building, but you want a building that won't need expansion for 40 to 50 years. Think of the future generations. The Board's responsibility is to not contemplate extravagance but quality and size for future value. Kacey Jurgens stated the

building would have to be cut by a third at 55,000 to 65,000 square feet to cut \$15 million. Make sure the building will serve the future with room to grow.

Brad Cornwell explained the parking concerns. This is the appropriate number of parking stalls, honed down from what public code had requested. David Edelstein added that the cost of underground parking is less expensive when you already have the piling and the land is already partially excavated.

Construction would take 18 months. The Board met with Bond Counsel. The move in and out may be included in the bond, but the lease would be operational costs. There may be costs of upgrading an interim building. We will provide library service during the construction.

At the talk with City Council work session, Pam will give an overview of where we've been and where we're headed. The meeting will be televised. The Council will receive the report with an agenda. The discussion will not be about the ballot language, but to provide information, discuss, and get Council feedback. The Board will go to Council at the end of February for ballot approval.

Public Comment: Michael Lilliquist asked on the usefulness of the current building for other civic functions. The Board asked the Bellingham Planning Group for studies on adaptive reuse of the building as part of a new central building. After studying their concept of additions, the Board decided that wasn't the best use of the site. It compromised a finished library. Piling would only support just this building. Seismic upgrades of over \$1 million would still leave an insufficient building.

Questions and Answers: Language for bond will be prepared for the February 25th City Council meeting, assuming they give the go ahead to present ballot language. The third reading would be March 3rd. We have a March 28th deadline for a May 20th ballot.

Furnishings in current building will be used in interim location. Any City surplus items will go to auction.

Timeline for selection of architect should begin with bond passage with six weeks for proposals. Design could take 18 months. Eighty-five percent of bond must be spent within three years.

Renovation on Fairhaven will be done immediately, so it will be finished and ready when we begin construction here. An RFQ could be issued prior to bond election stipulated to if the bond passes.

Tim noted that the library situation parallels to Bellingham School District when the voters had sticker shock. The School District had to pick up the pieces and proceed ahead. Citizens had to pay more money than if the initiative was passed originally. Tim asked for the estimate of the cost if it has to be taken forward 5 to 10 years. Deferring will cost much more. Waiting will not make it more economical. City Council needs to know what it will cost if they do not support the issue this year. Costs and circulation are going up.

When this building was remodeled for 20 years more, the growth of the community and library use ate up the 20 year capacity. The rate of growth of library use has been considered. The consultants feel the new building will serve needs through 2022 and beyond.

WWU may also be interested in a pick-up and drop-off like we have at WCC.

Can North end partner with Parks Department for building space for meetings, children's gatherings? We are not in the business of building a community center; but if built, we would like

to look at being a part of a community building. Tim said the City is funding \$150,000 for a larger gym in a new school in a partnership to help meet the needs of the community.

Looking to the future we have a large investment in our bus system. Ridership should go up with expanded system. The downtown hub will serve to bring people to the Civic Center.

Kate Grinde suggested showing the cost of building other civic buildings in today's prices (yesterday's quality at yesterday's prices.) It is important to know how much it costs now and why.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – February 19, 2008 will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees