

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, November 18, 2008 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 06:40 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

Board Members Absent: Marilyn Mastor

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Christine Perkins; Beth Farley; and Gladys Fullford

Others: Amory Peck, WCLS Trustee, and Margaret Ziegler

Called to order: Regular session was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair, David Edelstein.

Approve/modify agenda: No changes to the agenda.

Public comment: Amory Peck, WCLS Trustee, said it was good to be back, but this will be her last time attending as Chair of the WCLS Board. Amory has served 10 years on the WCLS Board, 8 years as Chair, and her Board tenure ends at the close of the year.

Minutes approved: October 21, 2008 regular meeting minutes were approved.

Claims approved: October 2008 general fund \$128,953.58; gift fund \$101.55. With the \$60,000 cut in spending for 2008, we are getting down to the wire and will likely be freezing spending for the year. The third quarter report shows we are on target.

Library performance & activity measures: October performance and activity measures were approved. Pam reported total circulation is up 8% over 2007. Visitors are up nearly 10%. Staff has done a good job of weeding the collection. Total holdings are down 10%. Story time at Barkley is gangbusters. We are keeping an eye on how we are meeting the needs. A people counter could be installed, and we could look at hour by hour statistics. An adjustment in hours may be needed. Saturday story time at Barkley is very successful.

Communications: None.

2009 Library Board regular meeting schedule: The Board agreed to continue the meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. The Public Comment portion will be moved to later in the meeting. This may be more convenient for the public arriving after 4 p.m. and would provide the opportunity to comment on topics discussed at the meeting.

2009 City holidays and proposed library closures: The AFSCME 114L contract approved by the Board typically abides by City designated holidays, but we are a seven day a week operation. Additional closures suggested are Easter Sunday, April 12th, Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Independence Day, Saturday, July 4th, and closure at 5:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve. Following discussion, Faye Hill made the motion to approve additional library closures as noted. Vicky Marshall seconded. The motion carried.

Strategic Planning: Pam Kiesner presented a modified draft of the strategic plan for the Board's review and discussion. We are still struggling with the vision statement, but feel good about the core values. We have not had a vision statement in the past. The goals were developed from an ALA planning process,

and staff met six times to discuss the individual goals and objectives. The plan will set the direction for the library for the next three years.

Vision Statement: The Board preferred to be engaged upfront with “from this place...we access the world!” rather than the phrase using “renewed excitement.” J. Gordon suggested “Find yourself and access the world at BPL.”

Mission Statement: The Board preferred “engages” as an active participation, such as “engages our community in the joy of life-long learning.” The Board also liked the use of the word “reading.” Pam said the staff will continue to develop both the vision and the mission statements and bring back another draft.

Core Values suggestions: Faye Hill suggested reach into the future, be responsive to our changing world. Vicky Marshall mentioned the need to develop in youngsters a “joy” of reading and help them to become life long learners. J. Gordon asked about the library’s role in teaching technology skills. Pam thanked the Board for their careful review and for their suggestions, and will share the full draft plan at the next Board meeting.

Library materials collection update & OCLC reclamation projects: Beth Farley reported the staff is working hard in getting the collection up to date, responding to public demand, and refreshing where needed. OCLC is an on line computer library center for 65,000 libraries in 112 countries. The OCLC reclamation project will update BPL’s records in the database. All the holdings will be put into one database for research, borrowing, and lending. We are getting the collection in the best condition, as accurate as possible, before sending all the information to OCLC for the reclamation project. It takes 30-90 days for OCLC to complete the process of updating holdings to the public and other libraries.

We are replacing old, damaged and dirty books with up-to-date and clean editions. We have lowered the shelves in the stacks to a more human scale. Some collections have been shifted to make them more visible. The graphic novels were placed in the front of the library, and were depleted within the first week.

The closed stacks collections have been heavily weeded. Space has been freed up in the closed stacks, and allows room for the Children’s department to make their sorting work flow more efficiently. The Friends have more room to do their business more effectively. Materials kept in the closed stacks are the newspapers, magazines, and local history that is not being used frequently as well as overflow fiction and nonfiction.

Snapshot of collection circulation in November: Teens 33%, Children’s 29%, graphic novels 61%, media 50%. Feature films in the collection are hardly seen on the shelves. Circulation tends to go up after weeding. It is easier to see the collection and make selections.

Pam Kiesner commented that Beth Farley has done an amazing job of moving us in this direction.

Interlocal agreement: This is an annual agreement between Bellingham Public Library and Whatcom County Rural Library District for mutual extension of borrowing privileges and services. The agreement has been updated. Irrelevant items have been removed. Vicky Marshall made the motion to approve signing of the Interlocal Agreement. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Other BPL/WCLS collaborations: Pam Kiesner mentioned several ways that BPL and WCLS collaborate, including sharing the cost of capital items such as an automation system, a shared materials collection, shared purchasing, aligned policies, and meeting on a regular basis. Ways they are different: separate Boards, staff, unions, web pages, and funding mechanisms. BPL is a City department while WCLS is a separate taxing district. We could collaborate more on staff development, studies that affect us both, RFID research, and could share the cost of an annexation study. Rather than a merge, WCLS would have to annex Bellingham according to state statute.

Amory Peck said that WCLS discussed this today at their Board meeting, also. Amory believes we are all good stewards of tax dollars, but would like to be able to prove it if asked. Or, face up to it, if not. As a first step, Janet Boyhan has volunteered to be part of a discussion group. Both systems will go to the public for levy elections in the next few years. Difficult questions about the budget are expected.

Property tax is WCLS' main source of revenue. They are currently taxing at 38 cents per \$1,000 property valuation. They are allowed to tax up to 50 cents per \$1,000 valuation. They plan to go for a levy lid lift tentatively in 2010 to 47 or 48 cents.

Amory Peck stated the question of the two systems becoming one is asked consistently. The WCLS Board feels it is important to defend we are operating in the most appropriate and cost-effective way.

The recommendation of the 1975 Holt Report was for a merger. Both Boards decided not to pursue it.

There are two different systems, City and Rural. It would be a shame to have either one depreciated in the effort to economize. Pam reported that Joan Airoidi, WCLS Director, is checking for names of consultants who have not worked with either system to see how much a study would cost. There are no funds in either WCLS or BPL's budget for a study. Both Joan and Pam will gather information for now.

David Edelstein suggested the best information for us may come within the state of Washington.

Amory Peck stated that when she attends conventions, BPL and WCLS are held up as a model of cooperation between entities. They are often mentioned as well run systems.

Library Board member report: Vicky Marshall announced the Maude Heyes Fischer award ceremony is Saturday, November 22nd. Thirteen students will be honored for their efforts. The Friends used book sale is December 3-6.

Faye Hill mentioned she has enjoyed working on the Fairhaven Branch architectural committee.

Library Director's report: Pam Kiesner gave the Library's budget presentation to City Council on November 10. It is likely the City will be asking for more cuts early in 2009.

The Library is partnering with Bellingham Public Schools in a grant to promote student success in social studies. There will be training and materials for school and library staff.

Staff raised over \$3,300 for United Way. This is a 150% increase in donations. Suzanne Carlson-Prandini did a marvelous job as staff liaison.

BPL partnered with WCLS to have Nancy Pearl do a staff development presentation. Twenty-five BPL staff and twenty-nine WCLS staff attended.

Pam handed out copies of Sherman Alexie's, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian* to Board members. The books are to be read and released to the community as a part of Whatcom READS! Whatcom County Library Foundation paid for the books donated by the Wenatchee Public Library. The author is coming in March, and will speak at many sessions. This is the first annual event of the One Book, One Community idea. Release the books into the wild: restaurants, coffee shops, stores, etc.

Assistant Library Director's report: Christine Perkins said the Friends donated funds for the welcome desk. It will be home base for the security attendants. We have received positive comments from the public on the desk. Staff is thrilled to have security attendants. This frees staff to focus on their library-related work rather than security and discipline issues. The public appreciates the attendants. They are well-trained and customer friendly.

Space in a more secure area has been freed up for the Friends' nearly new books for sale. This is a consolidated area for Friend's items.

The Library has collaborated with the Sue C. Boynton poetry contest with a Poetry Walk on the Central Street side. Eleven poems on permanent stands will be displayed for a year along the walkway. They are waterproof, vandal-proof, and easily accessible poems.

The Fairhaven Renovation Committee met with the architects Thursday. Cost estimates are expected in December. There will be a meeting with the Mayor, Finance Director, and a City Council representative, so they will know what the project includes with cost estimates. Architects will break the work down to exterior, seismic upgrade, first floor historical restoration, second floor, and mechanical. The ADA ramp outside may not be the proper slope. We need to find out what the City will fund. Architect said it could cost more than planned. It is a nice bidding climate now.

We are looking at options to offer service on south side during the closure; possibly a site for holds pick-up and drop-off. There is a potential of using a WCLS bookmobile. Costs associated with the bookmobile would be \$10,000. We did not budget any funds for this purpose. Other options might include increasing Barkley Branch hours by redeploying Fairhaven staff. We need to get the capital project funding first, then look at options for service.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – December 16, 2008 will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.
Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

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