

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, December 16, 2008 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 06:05 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: Pam Kiesner; Christine Perkins; Suzanne Carlson-Prandini; and Gladys Fullford

Others: Jan Hunter, WCLS Trustee, Margaret Ziegler, Beverly Jacobs and Julie Guy, Co-Presidents of Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood Association

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. Note a change for public comments to be later in the meeting which may be more convenient for public arriving after 4 p.m. and provides a time for comments on the meeting.

Minutes approved: Vicky Marshall made the motion to approve the November 18, 2008 regular meeting minutes with the correction there were thirteen students honored for their efforts at the Maude Heyes Fischer award ceremony. Also, Pam Kiesner corrected the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 3. The last sentence will read, "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." Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried.

Claims approved: November 2008 general fund \$40,440.15; gift fund \$972.93. Because of 2008 budget cuts spending has been suspended since the day after the last Board meeting. Vicky Marshall made the motion to approve the November 2008 claims. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried.

Library performance & activity measures: Circulation was up close to 8%. We expect to finish December with 1.5 million circulation. Visitors are up 9.5%. Revenue for meeting rooms is down slightly. Whatcom Community College children's circulation increased over 400%. Faye Hill made the motion to approve the November performance & activity measures. Vicky Marshall seconded. The motion carried.

Communications: None.

Library Board transitions: David Edelstein has been re-appointed by City Council to the Library Board for a second 5-year term. Pam Kiesner commented on David's dedication to the Board.

David Edelstein was nominated for Board Chairperson for 2009 by Marilyn Mastor, and Faye Hill was nominated for Vice Chairperson by David Edelstein. The nominees were elected to Library Board Chair and Vice Chair for 2009.

Library schedule: Pam Kiesner asked about early closures on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. Past practice has been to close at 5:00 p.m. When the Library closes at 5:00 p.m., it is posted on the doors, and there is a news release announcing the early closure. The consensus of the Board was to approve closing at 5 p.m.

In 1999 the Board had an agreement to let the Director make the decision on the library schedule. David Edelstein suggested if the Board made the decision, any disgruntled public could blame the Board rather than the Director. Pam Kiesner said we would not deviate from standard practice. It is simpler to not bring it before the Board with the caveat that the Board would be called to ratify Pam's decision for weather related emergencies. The consensus of the Board was to leave library schedule decisions up to the Library Director.

Trustee education: Suzanne Prandini-Carlson talked about the Bellingham Reads: Book Club Kits. We have 65 titles and 88 groups. Groups consist of 5 to 18 people. Some people in multiple groups make recommendations to their groups. In November 28 kits were checked out. This means at least 140 people got the books when they wanted them. Book clubs can schedule in advance. One group donated \$125 and requested *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* for a kit. In 2009 there will be a web page for Bellingham Reads titles list and information. There are multiple kits for the Whatcom READS! selection. Suzanne lets the Friends know what books she is looking for. The Friends put those books aside for the kits. The Friends have provided over 20 titles. WCLS has also started having book kits.

Titles are selected because they are a good book for discussion. Recommendations are made by patrons and staff. Suzanne also looks at other library reading groups and the New York Times Best Seller List. Award winning books are also considered. Trade paperbacks are purchased for the kits as they are less expensive than hardback and a little higher quality than regular paperback. Trade paperbacks are slightly larger with better paper grade and binding and a little larger print than regular paperbacks. Each kit contains information about the book and suggested questions for discussion.

Getting people to read and discuss is what we are about!

Strategic Planning 2009-2011: The plan is in draft form. The entire staff was invited to several sessions related to the vision, mission statement and goals. Public input from the new library process is included. The plan in the Board packet is condensed. Pam Kiesner passed out the full worksheet for the goal: administrative priorities for leading the library forward. The Library did not previously have a strategic plan.

When asked how the staff feel about the plan, Pam Kiesner explained the staff are saying let's get it done. They want to see what we are aiming for and what will happen in the planning process with the facilities master plan and communications plan. They are anxious to know what direction we are headed. They have a lot of buy-in with the goals, especially developing young readers, sparking imagination, and creating comfortable space.

Christine Perkins added she has the supporting documents and 2009 action steps. the next step is to determine what is realistic to accomplish in 2009. It is important to keep everyone focused on the goals.

Vicky Marshall commented that she liked the personal comments format.

As Pam reviewed the plan, the Board gave suggestions.

David asked about the security personnel. Hiring was approved by City Council. Security personnel were needed at Central Library because of the number of incidents we have had. Because we are short-staffed, it was difficult to be as responsive as needed. Situations were scary and dangerous for staff. Three 20-hour Security & Information Attendants were hired. They are giving directions at the welcome desk. The security attendants are welcome and appreciated by staff and patrons.

Other suggestions to strategic plan: On page 8 under programs, add the Friends. They actively contribute to the enhancement of Bellingham Public Library.

The Board suggested the vision statement should be active -- something to aspire towards. They preferred the statement at the last meeting: From Bellingham Public Library, access the world. The Board liked the mission statement and core values as written.

Goals with action steps: we need to continually address inefficiencies of the building for staff and patrons. A big issue is to study the question of annexation to WCLS. Joan Airolti is continuing to research the cost of a study. Under responsiveness to changing collections on page 17, it was explained that we respond to requests for purchase of materials, and will begin an alert service to give patrons a heads up on certain new books in which they might be interested. We also plan to provide programs and materials relating to 2010 Olympics.

Appendix A is the Library Services Matrix. The City is looking at long term fiscal sustainability. This identifies all our core services. We will probably be asked to attach costs for each program. David Edelstein suggested adding an explanation for mandated, essential and policy, and adding the matrix header on the next page.

J. Gordon stated that Washington state will receive Federal stimulus spending money for shovel-ready projects. We should have the Fairhaven renovations ready to present if the opportunity arises.

We will make further changes and tweaks to the strategic plan, and send it in the next packet. We will have a short condensed plan for the public. The Board gave permission to go forward with the plan.

To conserve time, the 2009 budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

Book drop at Community Food Coop, Cordata Blvd: The new food coop is opening January 14th. Their Community Relations Manager is interested in a drop box service like Haggens. The store would provide a lock box and two rolling bins. Our delivery driver currently empties the bins at WCC twice a week, and could add the coop to his route. We now go to Barkley seven times a week. We can add a service like this in a time of cuts because it doesn't cost a lot extra. The food coop would be paying us for the service. We need to develop a policy related to our book drops. It is a convenience factor for shoppers to return their books. The Food Coop is raring to go and looking for a nod from their trustees to go ahead. The Food Coop will be having WCC extension classes in their meeting room which we might consider as a location for storytimes at some time in the future. The Board gave an enthusiastic go ahead on the Community Food Coop book drop.

Public Comment: Beverly Jacobs, Co-President of the Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood, was glad to see the vision on page 26 of the strategic plan. King and Queen Mountain have been annexed, and development is planned. The Community Food Coop has good parking and holds up to 50 in the meeting room. WTA will hold an opening on January 5, honoring Cordata Neighborhood with a heated space to wait for the bus. Beverly suggested offering a donated book drop for the Friends at the food coop. Response could be overwhelming. Signage could give the phone number to call if they have books to donate. An exchange basket might be an option.

Julie Guy, Co-President of the Guide Meridian/Cordata Neighborhood, suggested more specifics be mentioned about the north side in the strategic plan. A study for feasibility and planning time frame would be helpful. Priorities would be funded as money is available. A time frame would be very valuable, as the public would know something is coming. The area is developing very rapidly. Julie asked if there would be a specific time for the public to comment on the strategic plan. The public is interested in commenting on comprehensive material.

Margaret Ziegler said it was exciting to see the strategic plan. People struggling with a new building idea needed to see this first. Regarding the vision statement, Margaret likes the concept of from this place, access the world; or accessing the world starts with your library, or the library is the first resource for your reading.

Jan Hunter is here to represent WCLS.

Library Board member report: Vicky Marshall said the Maude Heyes Fischer award ceremony went well. Mayor Dan Pike presented the awards. The Friends used book sale made almost \$8,000.

Faye Hill mentioned the Fairhaven birthday party went well. The little village bookshop was fun.

J. Gordon suggested an application to Whatcom Community Foundation for a contribution towards the annexation study. There is an application deadline. Friends might also contribute. WCLS also has a foundation. It was suggested when we know the magnitude of the cost, the local governments be asked to fund the study.

Library Director's report: Pam Kiesner mentioned a staff member found musical groups to perform at the library: Squalicum Storm Singers, Sehome string quartet, and Squalicum string quartet. They played on the mezzanine. The acoustics were good, and the music was well received by the patrons.

Pam attended the Deming Library celebration of their new addition.

The City Center Action Group had a goodbye to Dick McKinley, Public Works Director. Tom Rosenberg will be the Interim Public Works Director, and will attend the Fairhaven architect meeting in January.

Pam also attended the Waterfront Advisory meeting.

Pam passed out an article about library closures. It states how other libraries are coping with the economic situation.

Black Dog Productions filmed a public service announcement for SPIE at the library. It features three teenage boys interested in optical engineering. It will have a national audience.

Discussion took place about changing the date and/or time of the January 20th regular Library Board meeting. (It was decided later to begin the meeting at 2:00 p.m. rather than 4:00 p.m.)

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – January 20, 2009 will begin at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees