

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

August 2008

Director's Report and Highlights August 26, 2008

Pamela Nyberg Kiesner, Director
Bellingham, Washington

Meeting location – Central Library

Please note that we are **not** going to meet at the Barkley Branch as we had hoped. While construction is moving along, we are not quite ready to host a meeting there comfortably.

Our meeting will take place at the Central Library, in the lower level meeting room.

Labor negotiations

We begin negotiations on a new contract with our professional librarians this year. I'm pleased that Lorna Klemanski, HR Analyst is attending our meeting. We're having an Executive Session at the beginning of the meeting.

Whatcom Community Foundation

Included in your packet is information about our Bellingham Public Library Fund at the Whatcom Community Foundation – we've received a dividend check in addition to a grant check from the Bayview Fund. Previously, you've chosen to reinvest these checks in our established fund with the Foundation. I'll be asking you to decide how to handle these wonderful checks again this year.

In past years you've had questions about our fund, so Mauri Ingram, President and CEO of the Foundation is attending to talk with you about our fund, the Bayview gift, and the Foundation. Welcome, Mauri!

Library budget

We have three budget tasks to accomplish at this meeting:

Ø Review and approve library rates and fees for 2009

My recommended rates and fee changes are included in your packet; note the many suggestions for increases in our maximum fines, photocopier charges, facility use rates, and special invoices.

Ø Review and approve the library operating budget for 2009

The budget was due to the City on August 18th. Throughout this month I worked with Gladys and the management team to develop our budget based on the city's guidelines, and our goals: maintain the current staffing level; maintain staff development funds; and, maintain a materials budget that equals 15% of our total library budget.

All departments were asked to present a cost-neutral budget – this was difficult to achieve. I'll walk you through our budget, and discuss it in more detail at your meeting.

Ø Review and approve a plan for reducing the library's 2008 budget by 3 percent

All City Departments have been asked to recommend a plan to the Mayor's Office to reduce department budgets by 3%. The library's plan is due on September 1st.

For the library's budget, this amounts to \$116,786 – not an easy task at any time, even more difficult when we are 8 months into the year.

I've reviewed with Gladys and the management team each one of our line items, what is unspent or uncommitted at this time, and where we may be able to make cuts. Staff layoffs are not an option – this is a directive from the Mayor, and one which I support. I have continued to assure the staff that this is not part of the plan, nor is it my intention.

This will be a work in progress up until your meeting, so I was not able to include information in your packet. I'll present a list of options to you for these reductions at the Board meeting.

And, finally...

Not all is doom and gloom! We had a fantastic summer reading program, we have a staff that provides superb service (see the letter in your packet), the library had a "tent" at several major summer venues, and our numbers continue to climb. How good is that?

See you on the 26th!