

Special Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Thursday, January 08, 2009 - Meeting Room on lower level
02:40 PM - 04:45 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; Christine Perkins; Scott Blume; Beth Farley; Iris Kaneshige; Madeline Sheplor; Donna Graddock

Others: David Webster, City's Chief Administrative officer, Jack Weiss, City Council Liaison, Elizabeth Roberts, WCLS, Margaret Ziegler

Called to order: Regular session was called to order at 2:45 p.m. by Chair, David Edelstein.

Pam Kiesner summarized the purpose of the meeting. All departments were asked to prepare a plan for a possible 3% and 5% reduction to the 2009 budget. Pam introduced David Webster.

David Webster stated that this is an exercise each department is being asked to do. When the council approved the 2009 budget, the revenues were down and are likely to be lower than originally anticipated. The city received the December sales tax for October's retail activity which is down 10% over last year. The end of 2008 sales tax revenues won't be received until February. The economy is slow and layoffs are happening everywhere. Council and city administration is willing to go into reserves but minimally. The exercise deadline was yesterday but because the Library Board needed to discuss and decide what and how to make the reductions, the library will submit their proposal to this city after this meeting.

David Edelstein recognized the passing of library board member, Barney Goltz. David stated that Barney Goltz was the finest public servant and a gentlemen. Pam noted that Barney served on the Bellingham Library Board from 9/2000 – 12/2004.

Pam Kiesner updated the Board on the Fairhaven renovation project. They had a meeting with the architects on Wednesday. The State Librarian asked if there were "shovel ready" projects that libraries were working on as did city representatives for Historic Preservation. As a result, two financial assistance package requests were submitted for federal and state funding support. Further discussion on the Fairhaven renovation project will be done at the January 20th Board meeting.

BUDGET reductions:

Pam thanked the management team and all staff for their input.

Pam presented a list of recommendations for the Board, supported by the Management Team, who discussed the library's mission and philosophy in order to present the recommendations. While the materials budget should be preserved, we sacrificed the materials budget to save staff positions. We currently have a seven day operation, open nights and weekends. We do all we can to run efficiently as possible. She is very proud of staff. We have been understaffed for several years. Business is up with an 9.23% increase in circulation comparing 2008 to 2007. Persons visiting the library is up 9.19% and will continue to increase during the difficult times in our economy.

The breakdown of the library's budget is as follows:

Budget: \$4,046,169

Personnel 2,755,382

Library materials 557,871

Interfund charges 530,753

Supplies, equipment 202,163

3% reduction \$121,385

5% reduction 202,308

David Webster added that there is a task force that will be reviewing the interfund formulas and possible adjustments in 2010.

Handouts that follow were discussed by the Library Board. The Board supports all the recommendations for 3% cuts. While there were questions about the 5% cuts, they generally supported this direction. Pam will submit this information to the City today.

Chair David Edelstein opened the floor for public comments. Christine Perkins mentioned the upcoming user survey.

Lizz Roberts offered WCLS support during this difficult time. What affects you, affects us, try to move forward together. 1% levy increase, our pressures may be delayed. 2.2% staff reduction. Almost impossible to cut their barebones materials budget. Will be going out for a lid levy lift later this year.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees