

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, February 17, 2009 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 05:55 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; Donna Grasdock and Gladys Fullford

Others: Marilyn Olsen, Friends of Fairhaven Branch Library, Margaret Ziegler, Joan Airoidi, WCLS Director, Courtney Taylor

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.

Minutes approved: Vicky Marshall made the motion to approve the January 20, 2009 regular meeting minutes. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Claims approved: January 2009 general fund \$33,576.81; gift fund \$0.00. Vicky Marshall made the motion to approve the January 2009 claims. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Library performance & activity measures: Pam Kiesner discussed both the January performance and activity measures and the five-year review that is provided to the City as a budget document. Faye Hill made the motion to approve the January performance and activity measures. Vicky Marshall seconded. The motion carried.

Communications: Letter from Vince Biciunas, President of Fairhaven Neighbors stated recommendations for Fairhaven Branch Library. Sheila Randall also wrote a letter about the Fairhaven Branch Library. Copies of both letters were available. The Board packet contains public comments on the February 5 Fairhaven Branch Library meeting.

New Central Library – site review: Pam Kiesner reopened the site discussion. It has been two years since the current site was recommended to City Council and was unanimously approved by the Council. Shortly thereafter, the project was put on hold, and the new Mayor introduced his vision of a waterfront site. A decision is needed from the City on future use of this building. It could be that the status has changed on previously reviewed sites; many of the potential sites identified in 2002 could come off the list.

There was general consensus to get a firm answer on plans for future use of this building and to update the status of other sites. A specific timeline for when a waterfront site can be considered is also needed. Pam Kiesner, Faye Hill and Vicky Marshall will review the site list. Pam will ask the Mayor to attend a future meeting to share his current vision for the waterfront and for the future use of this building.

Fairhaven Branch Library: Christine Perkins reviewed the February 5 Fairhaven renovation committee meeting. There was widespread agreement from the 65 in attendance that repairs were needed. There were questions about the seismic work. An unreinforced masonry building is the most dangerous place to be in a seismic event. Any exterior work beyond repair could trigger a historical design review. The Fairhaven Historical District and Historic Preservation Commission oversee buildings on the National

Register. The main concern is to make sure the project happens without delay. If there is not enough money to do the whole project, do what is most necessary.

Fine-tuned cost estimates are expected at a meeting tomorrow with FFA Architects and RMC Architects. A special board meeting to review the costs before presenting the information to City Council will take place Monday, February 23, at 7:00 a.m. Entry will be by the back door.

Bellingham Public Library/Whatcom County Library System: Vicky Marshall and Faye Hill have attended WCLS Board meetings, and they will continue to attend WCLS Board meetings as BPL Board of Trustees liaisons.

Joan Airoidi and Pam Kiesner continue to look for estimates to conduct a consolidation/annexation study. They are researching other systems that have done this. They would like to find consultants with a team approach, who could look at financing, funding, personnel issues with unions, service and delivery.

Pam and Joan met with Mauri Ingram, Director of the Whatcom Community Foundation, to see if the foundation would be interested in funding the study. Mauri will check if there are interested donors. The City is looking at saving money and doing things more efficiently. The City could be asked to partially fund the study.

Joan Airoidi and Pam Kiesner are not recommending either way, but looking for answers before a WCLS levy lid lift election or future bond vote. A study was done in 1975, and the outcome was a recommendation to merge the two systems. Both Boards decided not to do it for philosophical reasons.

Pam will ask the Assistant City Attorney to update his response to the question of a consolidation/annexation and state law. It would not be a merger, but an annexation by WCLS.

The relationship of BPL and WCLS is trendsetting. We share a common database and save money by purchasing and maintaining our automated system together. Taxpayers get double the materials for their money. We are unique in the state and are a model for other libraries.

David Edelstein stated that he is not interested in moving forward with a study until we have further information and answers to questions.

A committee consisting of Joan Airoidi and Janet Boyhan representing WCLS, and Pam Kiesner and Vicky Marshall representing BPL will meet to discuss what research needs to be completed before moving forward.

Teen Summer Reading fine forgiveness: Faye Hill moved to approve the Teen Summer Reading fine forgiveness during the summer. Vicky Marshall seconded. Motion carried. This is following tradition since 2001.

Program Update: Barkley Branch Library author spotlights are scheduled through June. It is a great location for author talks. Authors tonight are Sara Stamey and Richard Widekehr.

WhatcomREADS: BTV10's Inside Bellingham filmed a tribal elder reading from the Sherman Alexie's book. Suzanne Carlson-Prandini is working with a team of county librarians on speakers and presentations. A full calendar can be found at WhatcomREADS.org. Sherman Alexie will be at WCC Orca Pavilion on March 19 at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. for two free public events. Sherman will also be at private presentations at Lummi Tribal School, Whatcom County Juvenile Detention School, and dinner with aspiring teen writers at the Fairhaven Branch Library.

User surveys were passed out by Friends last week. Over 1,000 have been entered in the computer to date. The survey will continue for two more weeks.

Community Food Co-op, Cordata Store: The contract has been initiated to pick up books at the book drop. They will pay us to do the service of emptying the book drop, similar to Haggen stores.

Website redesign: Fairhaven repairs and renovation information can be found on the website. This includes history, BOLA report, cost estimates, and drawings.

Public comment: None.

Library Board member report: Vicky Marshall said the Friends used book sale is March 4 – 7. Please come.

City Council Liaison report: None.

Library Director's report: Pam Kiesner reported the City has accepted the 3% cut proposed by the Library Board. The funds are frozen and will be removed from the budget if approved by Council. The Library's cut was \$121,000. We may be asked to make more cuts. Pam mentioned the plan for 5% cuts include closing the BPL Central Library at 6:00 p.m. on Thursdays and reducing Fairhaven Branch Library by 6 hours a week. A special board meeting would be in order if asked to go further than what the Board previously approved.

Some staff members are being cross-trained to handle non-librarian questions on the I & RS service desk, just as staff does in the Children's Department and at the Branches. This will be more efficient and will help with a severe staff reduction. Librarian Linda Hodge is retiring after 42 years, and Teen Librarian Jennifer Lovchik will be going on leave in March. One Outreach staff member is out because of illness and one for a preplanned vacation.

The library has a new Human Resources Analyst, Renee Bliss.

Several staff members have been recognized for years of service:

Cynthia Geri 30 years
Donna Grasdock 25 years
Sally Burmester 20 years
Iris Kaneshige 20 years
Wendy Detloff 10 years
Keyla Gonzalez 10 years
Jennifer Hinson 10 years

Security update: The bike rack in front of the building has been vandalized. A sleeper was found in the dumpster. The dumpster is now locked. A policy to ban smoking from library property will be coming to the Board for approval.

Christine Perkins gave a snapshot of today with every department stretched to the limit. The Board appreciates the staff's efforts.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – March 17, 2009 will begin at 4:00 p.m. following a retirement reception from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. for longtime Friends of the Library members, Ken and Phyllis Weber.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

