

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, March 17, 2009 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 06:15 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; Madeline Sheplor; Bethany Hoglund; and Gladys Fullford

Others: Jack Weiss, City Council Liaison, Margaret Ziegler, Bruce Deile, Jan Hunter, WCLS, Kie Relyea,

Bellingham Herald, Friends of Bellingham Public Library:

Ken and Phyllis Weber, Marcia Leishman, Ruby Larive,

Christine Walsh, and Kathie Wilson, Friends of Fairhaven

Branch Library: Sue Hynes and Claude Hill.

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

Faye Hill gave an official expression of appreciation to Ken and Phyllis Weber. Ken and Phyllis have worked with the Friends of Bellingham Public Library since 1991, and have perfected the book sales to a science. Ken and Phyllis were recognized for their work and the amount of money earned from book sales. Ken and Phyllis were wished a happy retirement.

Approve/modify agenda: No changes to the agenda.

Minutes approved: Faye Hill made the motion to approve the February 17, 2009 regular meeting minutes. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried.

Faye Hill made the motion to approve the February 23, 2009 minutes. Vicky Marshall seconded. Spelling corrections: Kris Hamilton and SEPA. The motion carried.

Claims approved: February 2009 general fund \$41,581.53; gift fund \$0.00. Faye Hill made the motion to approve the February 2009 claims. Vicky Marshall seconded. The motion carried. Pam Kiesner noted that the Friends also paid \$5,000 towards the reference desk project.

Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF) semi-annual statement for the Bellingham Public Library fund is in the Board packet. There was a \$40,834 loss. The Board has chosen to reinvest checks from this fund as well as from the Fredericka Bond fund. Jack Weiss asked about safer alternative investment options. Pam Kiesner will ask Marui Ingram, WCF CEO, to come to the next Board meeting and explain the loss and whether the funds can be moved to less risky ventures. Jack also suggested talking to John Carter, Finance Director, about investments.

Library performance & activity measures: Pam Kiesner reviewed the February performance and activity measures. Circulation was up almost 15%; visitors were up almost 7%. Vicky Marshall made the motion to approve the February performance and activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Communications: Letter from Julianna Guy, and email from John Harriman. Copies of a letter of support from Garland Richmond to the editor of the Bellingham Herald were passed out to Board members. Garland's letter was published in today's newspaper.

Faye Hill suggested a couple of the Library's scrapbooks could be made available for the Board to review before regular Board meetings.

Trustee Education: Madeline Sheplor, Head of Technical Services, and Bethany Hoglund, Children's Specialist, presented the new library website which was launched in January. The website is easier to use. It has a clean, crisp appearance, and uses new technologies. The team of Madeline, Bethany, Jennifer, Christine and Doug made a list of what we wanted. Steven Niedermeyer, ITSD, built the website and trained staff on the software. Staff who update information on the website now have access at their desks. The new calendar system from Evanced Solutions saves on staff time. It shows programs we are hosting and allows public to make room reservations. Pam commented that Madeline and Bethany are two examples of our excellent staff.

Bruce Deile asked about choice of filters for the public. Pam Kiesner will look into this. A Board decision was made many years ago that we would not filter computers.

New Central Library – site review: Pam Kiesner explained 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. The status of some previously reviewed sites may have changed; some of the potential sites identified in 2002 could come off the list. There is interest by the City of reuse of the current building.

Mayor Dan Pike will be at the April 21 Board meeting to identify more specifics about the waterfront site. Waterfront development team consisting of Assistant City Attorney, Les Reardanz and Neighborhoods and Special Projects Coordinator, Linda Stewart will also be at the meeting.

Vicky Marshall, Faye Hill and Pam Kiesner met to review the list of possible sites and bring it back to the Board. Copies of the list were handed out. The Board decided to hold off on discussing the list until hearing from the Mayor.

Fairhaven Branch Library: Christine Perkins said the design specifications and project manual from the architects is being reviewed by Public Works Purchasing for bid preparation. Engineering is also reviewing the specifications. The call for bids may be the week of March 23. A pre-bid walk-through will be scheduled. Tentative deadline for bids is the week of April 20. Council could give approval to award the bid at their April 27 meeting. There may be a special board meeting called to look over the bids. Mobilization of the project will begin in May, after a contract is signed.

Christine Perkins is working with Public Works to hire a project manager. Public Works does not have in-house staff for this project. Architects estimate a three to four month time period. We are waiting for the contractor to commit to a schedule.

Fairhaven Friends are scheduled to meet March 25 with the Parks Department to review the landscaping plans.

Jack Weiss asked about incentives for early completion. David Edelstein suggested a tight completion time in the contract. David also asked about possibility of enclosure around doors to allow the building to be open part of the time if the workers would not be inside the building. Christine Perkins replied there will be window work inside. The parking lot is a significant impact. Stairway removal and rebuilding will occupy a significant portion of the projected timeline.

Public Works staff Rory Routh and Ravyn Whitewolf will look at the specifications. Rory will also be on the interview team for a project manager. If the total cost of a project manager is under \$50,000 the small works roster can be used. Of the five firms listed on the roster, only one is capable, qualified and interested. Otherwise we would need to accept proposals from three firms.

User survey: Christine Perkins updated the Board on the preliminary survey results. There was a high response: 2,919 surveys completed; 93% of surveys were returned. Out of pocket cost: \$446.59 at 15 cents per survey. Friends donated candy for completed surveys. Phone and mail surveys are costly and do not give as good a return rate. Some results:

- 92% gave highest rating of library importance
- 88% gave highest ratings of overall satisfaction
- 73% use library 1-2 times a week
- 75% use Central Library most often
- 85% have visited website
- 53% returned materials to drop boxes
- 140 have used book club kits

A significant number of patrons use the Central Library in addition to branches. In answer to what the public would be willing to do without, patrons answered duplicate copies of popular titles, on-line research tools, adult programs, Sunday hours, weekday evening or morning hours, or one day a week. Transportation by car was 65%. Jack Weiss commented the City's goal is 73% or less, so library patrons are already high users of alternate forms of transportation.

Overall theme was that people love the library and appreciate the staff. Also mentioned: security issues of intimidation and harassment at Central Library, cell phone use, need more quiet, spruce up Central Library, and parking. People are divided on the issue of having food in the library.

Survey results and comments will be in binders at Adult and Children's Departments, Barkley and Fairhaven Branches. Once the information is more solid, there will be a press release and results will be on the website.

Whatcom READS!: Sherman Alexie will be speaking at WCC Thursday. There will also be an on-line chat opportunity in the morning. One promising student from each high school will be selected to attend an aspiring author's dinner at Fairhaven Branch Library. Dinner will be cooked by staff.

Public comment: Bruce Deile requested the Board consider implementing a choice of using a filter on public computers to protect patrons from pornography. Bruce also commented on the stand-up computer at Fairhaven Branch, and had a problem with how he was treated. Bruce said it was possibly a violation to not allow wheel chair person to sit at the stand up computer. Christine Perkins responded that staff behavior issues have been addressed. We do offer sit down computers, and the children's computer can be used if not already in use. We are in compliance with ADA. Bruce asked if the computer could be moved to where everyone could use it. David Edelstein said the Board and staff will interact to see if an item should be placed on the Board agenda.

Library Board member report: None.

City Council Liaison report: Jack Weiss said the City faces serious challenges in dealing with revenues and expenses in the next few months and years. Every department faces serious issues.

Library Director's report: Pam Kiesner is speaking at the Newcomers Club tomorrow.

Pam is working on researching merger/consolidation issues with WCLS, and will put this on the agenda for the April Board meeting. The committee of Pam, Vicky Marshall, Joan Aioldi and Janet Boyhan will meet before the Board meeting.

David Edelstein commented the public's accolades in the surveys wouldn't be there if staff didn't do an excellent job.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – April 21, 2009 will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees