

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, April 21, 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, Marilyn Mastor

Board Members Absent: J. Robert Gordon, Vicky Marshall

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Christine Perkins; Scott Blume; and Gladys Fullford

Others: Jack Weiss, City Council Liaison, Dan Pike, Mayor, Les Reardanz and Linda Stewart, Waterfront Project, Mauri Ingram, Whatcom Community Foundation, Margaret Ziegler, Bruce Deile, Jan Hunter and Janet Boyhan, WCLS, Sam Taylor, Bellingham Herald, Kathie Wilson, Friends of Bellingham Public Library, Sue Hynes, Friends of Fairhaven Branch Library, and Erik Thomas

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

Approve/modify agenda: Mayor Dan Pike's presentation will follow the financial reports.

Minutes approved: Marilyn Mastor made the motion to approve the March 17, 2009 regular meeting minutes. Faye Hill seconded. Bruce Deile requested the minutes reflect that he said it was possibly a violation to not allow a wheel chair person to sit at the stand up computer. The motion carried with this correction.

Claims approved: March 2009 general fund \$49,996.48; gift fund \$0.00. Marilyn Mastor made the motion to approve the March 2009 claims. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Mauri Ingram explained the Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF) semi-annual statement for the Bellingham Public Library fund in the Board packet. There was a \$40,834 loss. The loss is an unrealized or paper loss. Endowment funds are invested 70% in equities, 25% fixed instruments such as bonds and 5% in cash equivalents. It is unlikely there will be any payout this year. Gifts coming through the Library to WCF must go into the Endowment Fund. A donor who gives directly to the WCF may designate a fund not endowed. Mauri gave a check to Pam that had been mailed to WCF for the Children's Library in honor of a first birthday.

Mayor Dan Pike Pam Kiesner introduced Mayor Dan Pike as well as Les Reardanz and Linda Stewart, who are heading up the Waterfront Project for the city. Mayor Dan Pike said the City Council and Port Commission have agreed to move forward together. The next steps are to draft a master development plan, to draft the EIS, and to cautiously look for funding opportunities to rebuild Cornwall and relocate railroad.

Mayor Pike has considered the Waterfront as a site for the new library to be built. He would like to see if there are ways to leverage building the library and drive interest in the waterfront. The Port and WWU have indicated they like the idea of the library there.

Although the current library building is not suitable for future library needs, it could be used for offices for crowded City Hall staff. There is significant life left for non-library uses. Another story could be added to the building for non-library use, since it would not need to support the heavy loads of book stacks. Mayor Pike is philosophically opposed to demolishing the current library building. Mayor Pike appreciates the work that the Library Board has done to find a site. Things have changed since the Council approved the site for the new library. Jack Weiss agreed that the current Council would want to

save the current building unless this was really the only site. David Edelstein said there is no perfect site, and the Board is keeping open minds on all sites.

When asked what support system is needed before a Library could be built on the Waterfront, Mayor Pike answered the site off the end of Bay Street is already infrastructured. It would be a couple of years before it would be reasonable to have the wherewithal to build the library and a parking structure. The Library could be the nexus between the Waterfront and downtown. David Edelstein commented the Board has talked about not having a single use building, but having a possible adjunct use. The Library building should have the ability to expand or contract. Mayor Pike is willing to work with the Board in analyzing the waterfront site.

Any specific waterfront questions can be directed to Les Reardanz and Linda Stewart. The Granery, which is adjacent to the waterfront site, is targeted for adaptive reuse.

Library performance & activity measures: Pam Kiesner reviewed the March performance and activity measures. Huge increases in people count and circulation. We had 92,000 visitors (an 11% increase) and a 13% increase in total number of materials circulated. In times of economic downturn, libraries are used more. Marilyn Mastor made the motion to approve the March performance and activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Communications: An email from Beatrice Pogin that came through the Mayor's office is in the Board packet. Her email is complimentary to the library.

Operations and staffing update: Our vacant Librarian II position has been put on hold and will not be filled because we expect more budget cuts. This leaves Information & Reader Services (IR&S) short staffed. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the 114-L union will allow a staff member who has a degree in library science to work at the desk at Librarian 1 wage. Another MOU with the union will allow non-librarians to work at the Information Desk in an assistant capacity. Staff is currently being trained to answer the daily questions that are not librarian specific.

It has been extremely busy in IR&S and Circulation. Incidents are up and we appreciate the Security Attendants being on duty. We are very short on Pages. Iris Kaneshige puts out notices asking staff to help shelve books. Pam Kiesner shared an excerpt from the New York Times about how economic downturn puts new stresses on libraries. Bellingham Police are doing regular patrols and have a good relationship with our security attendants.

Human Resources staff are coming to the next Management Team meeting to discuss reductions in the work force. Mayor Dan Pike and David Webster will come to the next all-staff meeting to talk about the City's budget situation and answer questions.

David Edelstein asked about the city-wide freeze on new hires. Pam Kiesner answered that we can request to fill positions in extraordinary circumstances.

Central Library – 2009 capital projects: Pam Kiesner reviewed the \$600,000 in capital projects for the Central Library with management staff and shared recommendations for fiscally prudent priorities. Replacing entry doors and installing security cameras is critical. The Management Team felt that building office space is low priority, and did not include it. Renovating for efficiency includes minimal consultant work and improvements are recommended. Painting needs to be done in public places: exterior, corridors, stairwells, and renovation touchup. Carpeting replacement is critical in certain areas. Updating signage and adding a community book drop are low priorities at this time. Out of the \$600,000 budgeted, spending approximately \$400,000 would be appropriate at this time. Faye Hill made the motion to go forward with changes as listed. Marilyn Mastor seconded. It was noted that Public Works is not able to assign a staff member to manage the Fairhaven repairs project and Central projects because they don't have the staff. Substantial Public Works involvement in library projects ended in February. Ravyn

Whitewolf and Joan Cady pitched in with the bid posting and Rory Routhé with the project manager interviews. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. We are trying to do the best we can with the resources we have.

David Edelstein suggested amending the motion to add the building of office space for \$35,000. Faye Hill and Marilyn Mastor agreed. Discussion followed. The motion carried.

Fairhaven Branch Library: Christine Perkins said the permit application for the repair project has been submitted. The Design Review Board granted a waiver for design review. As of today 17 general contractors are listed as plan holders. Fifteen people attended the pre-bid conference on April 16.

There may be lead paint on the building window frames and under the eaves. There will be an addendum in the bid documents regarding the potential for abatement. The original bricks that failed may have been covered with lead-based paint. We need to find out if the paint comes off with the stucco. If it stays, we may need to seal and re-stucco. If it doesn't, we will need to abate the stucco chips and dust. Christine will call Whatcom Environmental to do more examination.

George Banning, CCM, is being hired as the Project Manager. He is an experienced contractor and construction manager. He impressed the interview panel with his thorough review of the project. A contract is being negotiated.

The bid opening will be 11:00 a.m. Monday, April 27 at Public Works Operations, 2221 Pacific Street. Brad Cornwell will be on hand to help identify the lowest responsive bidder. There will be a Special Board meeting at 4:00 p.m. Monday, April 27 in the Library Board Room to review the bids and understand the one that will be recommended to City Council. The bid award goes to Council on May 4. After negotiating the contract, the library will be closed around June 1. Our Meeting Room Coordinator is notifying groups and collecting keys from the regular renters.

To minimize the impact of the temporary closure as much as possible within the constraints of our budget, we are looking at ways to temporarily install the new book drop nearby.

Christine Perkins reported that Fairhaven Friends had asked about lighting that would illuminate exterior signage and also about installing exterior outlets for holiday lighting. She checked with Public Works and the architects, who agreed that these projects were not part of the scope of work approved by the City Council. Once repairs are underway, and if we are under budget we could ask the general contractor to do an estimate for a change order. The Friends of the Fairhaven library may choose to fund one or both projects. Perkins warned that there may be design review issues with the goose neck lights, and would need to go before the Historical Preservation Committee. She is already working with Jackie Lynch, the city's historic preservation specialist, to address this.

WCLS/BPL Study Committee Report: Pam Kiesner and Vicky Marshall (representing BPL) and Joan Airolti and Janet Boyhan (representing WCLS) have reviewed the 1977 Holt report, which recommended a merge. The report conclusions were that a merger appeared to result in financial savings, but there was no hard data to support this. Almost everything else recommended in the report has been done. Research is on-going. The committee will meet again in May and come up with recommendations to the respective Boards.

Patron suggestion regarding the Internet: The Board decided many years ago not to purchase internet filtering software. A no-cost way of filtering on his own has been suggested to the complainant. The Internet Policy was last reviewed in 2003. It is time to review and update it if necessary. Pam Kiesner shared the American Library Association (ALA) statement regarding filtering, noting that ALA states that filtering violates the Library Bill of Rights. The Internet Policy will be on next month's agenda.

Public comment: Bruce Deile said it only takes one time to be exposed to illegal activity on a computer for a young person to be victimized. In his opinion, filtering would prevent that from happening. A parent cannot be responsible if a computer is rigged by a prankster. It is democratic to put power in patron hands to have the choice to use a filter.

Christine Perkins checked with ITSD staff to learn that when a computer session ends and restarts, you cannot go back to the previous patron's website. The system is protected from hacking.

David Edelstein requested this be discussed at the next meeting when the entire Board is present. David also suggesting moving the public comment session back to the beginning of the meeting, so the public does not have to sit through the entire agenda unnecessarily. There will also be opportunity to comment at the end of the meeting.

Staff Safety and Security Committee report: Changing the policy to no smoking on library grounds has made a difference on the number of people congregating in front of the library. The Lobby courtesy phone has been removed. People are directed to the pay phone downstairs. The phone was not being used appropriately and was causing disruption.

Repeat offenders violating the library's rules of conduct are a constant drain on staff and patrons. Security cameras at the doors and halls would serve as a deterrent.

The person who assaulted a staff member in December has been identified. Police issued a lifetime trespass prior to asking library staff if this term is appropriate. The Board can review lifetime trespasses if so desired; they will let this one stand.

Public Comment: Margaret Ziegler asked about the joint BPL & WCLS committee study about a merger. Answer: the committee will report to the Boards, who will decide if further study is needed.

Erik Thomas asked who owns the library building. Answer: the City of Bellingham
Erik also asked about the elevation of the Waterfront site and if there are any records of flooding from Bellingham Bay. Answer: the site critique will address the elevation. Erik asked about volunteers to help shelving to help with the Page shortage. Answer: It is Union work, so we are not able to let volunteers do it at this time. Erik tipped his hat to the recent survey, and asked about a survey directed to teens and youth. Answer: not at this time due to limited resources. Youths and teens did participate in the earlier survey.

Bruce Deile requested that patrons be allowed to pull up a chair to the stand-up computer at Fairhaven Branch. Bruce understands ADA requirements, but does not think it would block wheel chairs from getting by. Pam responded the City Attorney has said there are sufficient sit down computers at the Fairhaven Branch. We will keep Bruce's comments in mind and get back to him if we can change the situation.

Library Board member report: None.

City Council Liaison report: none.

Library Director's report: Pam Kiesner said there may be a need for a special board meeting to discuss the budget with a possible executive session regarding union staffing issues.

An article in the April Whatcom Watch is supportive of WCLS, but not of Bellingham Public Library. The May issue will have Pam's article in it.

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

Christine Perkins announced the Barkley Author Spotlight Wednesday night: Alma Alexander, fantasy writer. May 7 speaker will be JoAn Roe. Attendance for Sherman Alexie's performances: 1,500.

Next Special Library Board Meeting – April 27, 2009 in the Board Room will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – May 19, 2009 at Barkley Branch, 3111 Newmarket St. Suite 103 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