

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, August 18, 2009 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 06:10 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; and Gladys Fullford

Others: Jack Weiss, City Council Liaison, Lorna Klemanski and Renee Bliss, Human Resources, Jan Hunter and Joan Airoidi, WCLS, Vinnie O'Connor, AFSCME Representative, Margaret Ziegler, and Fred Voltz.

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

Approve/modify agenda: No changes to agenda.

Executive Session: Labor negotiations update.

Regular session reconvened at 4:17 p.m with no action resulting from the Executive session.

Public comment: Vinnie O'Connor is the Staff Representative for Washington State Council of AFSCME unions 114 and 114L. He said there are different stories circulating, but 114 did their best to offer things to the city. He said he was disappointed that they couldn't negotiate an agreement on behalf of the work force.

Margaret Ziegler noted that the city website posted all positions eliminated. The large percentage are in the library. The heart of the library is people and materials. People are using library the most in hard times. It is extremely difficult and sad the most cuts were made here and in Parks. Margaret hopes the Board can address the issue with the Mayor. David Edelstein said the point was well taken. David said he is very proud of the board being champions and supporters of staff. The Board has the highest regard for staff.

Minutes approved: Vicky Marshall made a motion to approve the July 21, 2009 regular meeting minutes. Marilyn Mastor seconded. Motion carried. The current maximum fines for a patron to use self check-out and to be able to access the internet will remain \$10.

Library performance & activity measures: Marilyn Mastor made a motion to approve the July performance and activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. Total circulation has increased 13% over last year. Visitors have increased 8%. We are unable to pull data on room rentals from the new software yet. Motion carried.

Communications: None.

Claims approved: July 2009 general fund \$71,813.98; gift fund \$3,138.70; Facilities Capital Maintenance fund \$112,388.83. Vicky Marshall made a motion to approve the July 2009 claims. Faye Hill seconded. Motion carried.

Faye Hill moved to approve the Second Quarter, 2009 report. Vicky Marshall seconded. Pam noted that the city has asked each department to predict if they will have turn-backs at the end of the year. The

library is on target with our expenditures, and we do not expect to have funding to turn back to the city. Motion carried.

Whatcom Community Foundation report is in the packet. There are no distributions from the fund this year. No action required.

2010 Library budget: Pam Kiesner gave a Power Point presentation about 2010 budget information. The budget is due to the city by Friday. We must be at or below the 2009 revised budget minus \$350,000, absorbing 2010 inflationary increases in wages and benefits. The library's budget goals are basic: to staff public service desks during open hours, move the materials, and maintain security of public, staff, buildings, and materials. Revenue trends show that fine receipts are increasing, and room rentals are down with the Fairhaven closure.

Budget cuts already taken in 2009 include \$107,871 in library books and materials and \$13,500 in computer hardware, temporary librarian labor, and staff development. Staff cuts for 2010 will be implemented October 1, 2009. This amounts to \$350,000 in personnel reductions. Positions have been eliminated, and notices have been given to affected staff. Affected staff have ten days to exercise any bumping rights. We still need to cut approximately \$95,108 to reach the city's target for 2010.

Pam's recommendation is to reduce hours open to the public as a first step for library service cuts. The management team discussed many options and reviewed library usage by hour. Pam recommends that the library would remain closed on Sundays all year. As of October 4, the library would close at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Fairhaven would open an hour later, and would be open 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday. This would be a reduction of 14 public service hours throughout Bellingham Public Library. It was proposed to discontinue BPL's role as a partial depository for state documents and discontinue Outreach service to 3 facilities and reduce the number of staff-selected items we deliver. We will continue to review all programs, tasks, services, and open hours for potential cutbacks. We'll maintain as high a level of service as possible.

Proposed hours reduction: We circulate the fewest number of materials on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Sundays are the busiest per hour circulation day of the week. The public survey asked what hours would be preferred if we had to eliminate hours. Sunday was by far the public's choice. There is more flexibility in staffing Fairhaven from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; fewer staff are required. We may need to come back to the Board and ask for more closed hours; these are the hours we would like to try. We don't expect circulation to go down at all. We will need to shift staff to get the work done. When asked if Public Works would charge us less with less open hours, Pam replied that Public Works charges by the square foot regardless of open hours. We can ask about energy cost savings because of the reduced hours.

Faye Hill made the motion to approve the proposal for hours reduction as printed in the handout. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion was approved.

Rates and fees: Pam Kiesner does not recommend changes. Last year the Board said we would look at this each year. It is not advisable to balance a budget with raising fees. There will be no change.

Review budget detail and approve library direction: Budgets are due to the city on Friday. No capital projects were requested. Each line item has been reviewed. There are increases in union negotiated salaries. The \$95,108 needs to be cut from materials or staff. There has been a 20% materials cut this year and now a 13% cut in salaries and benefits. We cannot make cuts and continue making services available. Materials are now at \$5.75 per capita. The 114L union is still in negotiations; there could be some concessions.

After discussion the Board would like to ask the city for more time. There may be more cuts in October. If we have to do more cuts, it would be better to do this together. Christine Perkins will prepare a news

release about layoffs and the Board's decision regarding closed hours. In summary, we will wait to see what the city says about gaining more time, bundle any more cuts coming with the figure needed to reduce, and see what concessions may come from the unions.

The Board asked how to adequately express their appreciation to the staff for all that they have done. It was suggested that the Board could attend the staff meeting Thursday morning or write a letter.

Fairhaven Branch Library repairs and renovations update: Christine Perkins said we are still within our budget. Unknown items have been addressed. There has been significant progress on the front entry, Fireplace Room, flashing and windows. The rotten beams in the Fireplace Room have been trimmed off and replaced. Rusted poles have been replaced. The display of historic photographs was dismantled, so they can be used elsewhere. Repair to sheetrock.

Sign wall on outside crumbled; the limestone in the mortar leached out, leaving sand. Concrete foundation was rebuilt using concrete masonry units, to be covered with repaired original sandstone.

Front entry is much more structurally sound with rebar in the footings. GeoTest is monitoring the work. Change order was \$90,000. Windows are being rebuilt in the style of original windows. The inoperable windows had rusted and there were bent metal beams in the window system. These have been replaced with stainless steel channels. Flashing replacement has been more extensive than anticipated. There will be a change order for this.

It was agreed to do only what is structurally necessary to the interior brick on the south wall of the auditorium. The structural integrity is more important than the look. Mortar color may be slightly different. Miscellaneous interior repair includes replacing sheet rock and repairing ceiling cracks.

A key card entry system is being installed. Public Works is paying for this. It is a city-wide system that provides staff and public access. Public key cards will only have access to the back door and meeting facilities. When necessary, the code on a card can be cancelled.

Dawson estimates completion by the end of October or early November. The contract says November 12. Change orders may impact that schedule. George Banning and RMC are taking a hard look at proposals from Dawson Construction regarding cost and schedule.

David Edelstein commented that the weatherization of the building will leave it in far better condition to withstand the elements than any other time in its history. The original focus was on stucco replacement, and it turns out more repair was necessary. We did the right thing and have the right people doing it. This is the best money the city has spent on a facility renovation.

Library Board member reports: Vicky Marshall said the Children's Craft Fair was wonderful. The teen book sale was successful. The Friends gave away 175 books at the recognition ceremony for the Children's Summer Reading Program, and had \$700 in sales.

City Council Liaison report: Jack Weiss mentioned the Parking Commission is considering the installation of Luke stations around the library block to demonstrate they do work. They will be beneficial for volunteers using a preset amount of time. Patrons can use cell phones to charge additional time. It will give the city more information about usage of parking spots. Marilyn Mastor recommended having someone available to assist people for awhile.

Library Director's report: Pam Kiesner said the AFSCME 114 union is paying for 3 Outreach staff members to attend a Bookmobile and Outreach Services conference in Everett in October.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – September 15, 2009 in the Central Library Lecture Room, Lower level will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees