

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, September 15, 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; Donna Grasdock 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, Kathie Wilson, BPL Friends, Linda Parcher, Doreen Doris, 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 4:25 p.m with no action resulting from the Executive session.

Public comment: Kathie Wilson, President of BPL Friends spoke about the trespass appeal on the Board's agenda. A BPL Friend's volunteer was assaulted. Kathie said she is concerned for patron safety as well as the right to use the library. She is especially concerned about safety in the children's library.

Minutes approved: Vicky Marshall made a motion to approve the August 18, 2009 regular meeting minutes. Faye Hill seconded. Motion carried.

Library performance & activity measures: Vicky Marshall made a motion to approve the August performance and activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. Even with Fairhaven closed, circulation has increased 14% over last year. Visitors have increased 7.5%. Whatcom Community College's circulation is way up even with no school in session. Motion carried.

Communications: Correspondence has been forwarded by the Mayor's office regarding the cutbacks. Pam has responded to these as well as correspondence that came directly to her.

Claims approved: Aug 2009 general fund \$43,458.89; gift fund \$1,312.97; Facilities Capital Maintenance fund \$182,547.27. Marilyn Mastor made a motion to approve the August 2009 claims. Vicky Marshall seconded. Motion carried. Pam Kiesner noted that the library was named as a recipient along with another organization for memorial donations for Robert G. Millard. We have received \$230 so far. We have written to the family and donors. Money will used to purchase materials.

Trespass Appeal: An incident of assault to a Friend's volunteer in the Children's Department on August 10 resulted in trespassing the assailant for one year. The Friend was treated and released, but went to the Emergency Room later as a result of injury. An appeal has been made by Donna Davis, mother of Wil Davis, the assailant. Scott Blume, Children's Librarian, and Christine Perkins, who debriefed the staff member, are present for questions from the Board.

The amount of time for trespass is based on several factors. This incident went beyond threat and actual contact occurred. A paramedic was on the scene, and it was a significant incident. William Davis is

a regular user of Children's and Fairhaven Branch. He comes with a parent or care giver, and enjoys interaction with the Children's library staff. There have been other outbursts, and there is concern for the safety of volunteers, staff and children.

Vicky Marshall commented that she has empathy for children with issues, but she feels strongly for the safety of children. It was very frightening for the person being assaulted, and suggested honoring the people who made the trespass decision by upholding that decision. Donna Graddock, Fairhaven Branch Specialist, said Wil has a wonderful attitude at Fairhaven, and has never been a problem at Fairhaven. Wil also visits WCLS' Pt. Roberts Branch Library with his father, and the Branch Manager there wrote a letter of support for Wil.

David Edelstein, chair, opened the meeting for public comment. Donna Davis thanked the Board for putting this on the agenda and appreciates the comments. She offered her sincere and deepest apology for what has happened. Donna said she is not trying to condone or minimize what happened, but Wil does not have the capability to control an outburst. Donna hopes that her son will be able to return sooner. A reduced amount of time may help him understand what happened better. The library is a big part of his social life. Wil is impulsive and had no intent. Donna asked for understanding towards his disability. She suggested restrictions such as only coming with a parent and limiting visits to once a week.

David Edelstein said he was sensitive to staff and volunteers, but is not ready to close the door on an alternative solution. He acknowledged that the assault was not intended and suggested tabling this and search for an ability to compromise. Faye Hill asked that Children's and Fairhaven make suggestions for parameters on Wil's visits, should the Board consider reducing the trespass. Faye Hill made the motion to table. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried with one abstention.

Operations & Staffing Update: Pam Kiesner reported that lay-off notices were given out August 17. We lost 3 staff members almost immediately, and are already running short staffed. We are working on eliminating, changing, or transitioning some of the elements of the responsibilities to other staff members.

A special staff meeting was held for suggestions and comments for ideas for "Surviving 2009-2010." We will continue to discuss them and problem-solve at our next staff meeting. Even small changes can make big improvements when we are working with fewer staff.

Three Outreach visits have been eliminated as has the number of materials going to each Outreach patron. Thursday Night Spotlight and Barkley Author Spotlight will be eliminated in order to free up staff to work in other critical areas.

Staff morale is low after suffering the loss of 6 staff members and elimination of 8 positions. We will all be working together to support one another through this difficult time, with the goal of building the team back up again. Pam and Christine attended an HR-conducted workshop on assisting and motivating lay-off survivors.

The library had a record 3,000 holds. Fourteen staff came in to work on a Sunday for a marathon shelving and "holds pulling."

2010 Library budget: Budget objectives are in the packet. The City has a new planning strategy and asked departments to align their objectives to City Council's legacies and strategic commitments. After discussion, Pam will revise and present a scaled-back version at the next meeting.

The Outreach senior retirement residences that were cut have mostly mobile residents. Those who are not mobile can receive home service, sending someone to pick up their materials. Marilyn suggested that if residences are for-profit businesses, they should provide the service.

The library's 2010 budget target has not yet been reached. Some cost savings have come as a result of negotiations with 114L union. We were approximately \$65,000 short and the city asked for another \$75,000 cut, so we still need to cut a minimum of \$140,000. The choice is materials or staff or a combination of the two. Materials have already been cut 20%, leaving the materials budget at 11% of the total operating budget. The industry standard is 15 to 20% of the total budget. Cost of branches consists of Fairhaven facilities and staff at \$161,000 and materials \$10,000. Barkley staff costs \$30,651, has no facilities cost, and has a 3-1/2 year lease.

After discussion the Board agreed to ask Pam and the Management Team to come up with several options and their consequences. The Board will evaluate the consequences. Pam said that we have been advised by the City that additional lay-off notifications would need to be in mid-October, and lay-off by November 30 in order for those persons to take advantage of 65% COBRA subsidy through the Federal government.

Fairhaven Branch Library repairs and renovations update: Christine Perkins said the sign wall in front has been rebuilt. The re-stucco is coming together with the exterior façade. Window rehabilitation means rebuilding from scratch. Currently doing regrading and landscaping. Project should be completed by end of November at which time the materials can be moved back. Meeting rooms should be available in January. We are still under budget.

Library Board member reports: Vicky Marshall attended the WCLS Board meeting. WCLS is working hard for the levy lid lift election November 3. They will hold listening tables where the Board members will listen to the public's concerns. The Deming Library held a grand opening ceremony for their addition last weekend.

The Bellingham Public Library Friends raised \$9,800 at the last book sale. This is the best they have done.

City Council Liaison report: Jack Weiss spoke about the shoreline management program. The regulator tool that states buffers and standards has a potential buffer that may impact the footprint of where the mayor wanted the library new building.

Library Director's report: Vicky Marshall asked if the time of the October 20 Board meeting could be earlier. The Board decided to meet at 2:00 p.m. in the Library Board Room since the Library Lecture Room is unavailable.

This week Pam went on an outreach visit to the Willows, she worked on the circulation and reference desks, she handled one union grievance related to the lay-offs, attended an area library director's meeting and talked about how we can collaborate and work more closely together. Pam also met with Stan Snapp about library issues.

The AFSCME 114 union leadership read an open letter to City Council. 114 represents several of our library employees.

The Big Read! Whatcom Reads! book was distributed at the August Chuckanut Radio Hour. Copies of "Old School" were given to Board members to read and pass along. The author, Tobias Wolff will be here February 8. Books will be presented to City Council next Monday.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – October 20, 2009 in the Central Library Lecture Room, Lower level will begin at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

