

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, January 19, 2010 - Fairhaven Library Fireplace Room
04:00 PM - 05:18 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, J. Robert Gordon, Marilyn Mastor

Board Members Absent:

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Christine Perkins; Wendy Jenkins

Others: Vicki Marshall, Ken Marshall, Michael Lilliquist, City Council Liaison, Alan Marriner, Assistant City Attorney, George Banning, Fairhaven Construction Manager, Jack Weiss, City Councilman, Joan Airoldi, WCLS, Kathie Wilson, BPL Friends

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

Approve/modify agenda: Number 6 on the agenda, presentation on pay stations, delayed until next month. Frank Ordway, Parking Commissioner or Clark Williams, Public Works, will be here next month.

Public comment: Jack Weiss, City Councilman and past liaison to the Board, thanked the Board for the opportunity to work with them over the past challenging year and expressed his appreciation for the work they have done and continue to do.

Library Board transitions: Pam commented she was happy to have Vicki Marshall here today so she could be honored for her work on the Board. She enjoyed getting to know Vicki and appreciated her focus on children. David commented that it was a pleasure to work with Vicki and she was an inspiration. Marilyn added that Vicki brought a note of cheer and care to everything she does. Vicki was presented with tulips and a card. Vicki commented that she enjoyed her years on the board, learned a lot and appreciated all of the thought that goes into library decision making.

Michael Lilliquist was welcomed to the Board as the new City Council Liaison. Pam and David have met with him and his contact information is in the packet (with a minor correction, number listed is cell number rather than home number, but is the best number to reach him).

Policy: Public Use of Community Rooms: Pam Kiesner asked Alan Marriner, Assistant City Attorney, to attend and give insight on our policy concerning the use of public meeting rooms for worship service as it relates to state law. We rent to a wide variety of groups religious in nature, primarily at Fairhaven.

Alan Marriner commented that there is no clear cut answer concerning religious worship. Generally, federal and state laws require separation of church and state, but also public institutions cannot discriminate against any group. Our current policy is silent on religion. Pam Kiesner solicited information from other libraries; some libraries do mention religious groups in their policy. Alan mentioned that current case law is mixed.

Michael Lilliquist commented that our policy does not mention religion is not allowed. Section #2 in policy suggests religion is allowed.

Should we change our policy to make it more clear, what is allowable by state law? People now sign up online, we then "authorize."

Alan commented no library has been successfully sued for allowing groups, but libraries have been sued because they did not allow groups, but again, there is not a lot of case law to clarify.

Pam reiterated that state and federal law states public facilities may not be used for religious worship. Faye Hill asked if there have been any complaints. Pam answered there have been a couple of questions. David Edelstein stated that to avoid problems in the future, at a minimum our policy should state the law and users should acknowledge they know the law. The library is interested in bringing the public in; we do not want to limit use, but also do not want to act counter to state law.

Pam brought up the frequency of use by groups or individuals. There are 4 groups that use more than monthly: two dance groups, a religious group, and the literacy council uses hundreds of hours. Should we limit use to equalize access? David added one group should not rent to the detriment of other groups. Marilyn Mastor asked if the public sees the policy with online sign-up? If we require acknowledgement, burden is on them to not break policy. Christine asked if charging for the room rather than offering it free changed how the law affects us. Alan said no; an argument could be made, but our rates are low enough they could be considered a gift. David suggested we state the law in our policy. When and if we have a problem, we have done what we can to uphold the law.

David said we should also add a paragraph in policy stating library board is going to regulate frequency of use so as to be fair to the entire community. Michael pointed out that #2 may already cover that (“Community room use is made available on an equitable basis”). Pam concluded staff will revise the policy and share with the board in February.

Minutes approved: Faye Hill made the motion to approve the Dec. 15, 2009 regular meeting minutes. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried.

Financial reports: Claims: December 2009 general fund \$64,793.88; gift fund \$3,091.02; Facilities Capital Maintenance Fund \$51,377.48. Marilyn Mastor made a motion to approve the December 2009 claims. Faye Hill seconded. Michael Lilliquist asked if the one month acquisitions total was high. Pam answered that no, it fluctuates. Motion carried.

Gift fund donations: Pam reported Kathie Wilson, Friends President, is on the agenda next month to share more about the Friends, but the Board should note that \$38,000 has come from the Friends which is absolutely fantastic. New in donations this year are the book club kits. Each kit costs \$125, we have received several. There were a couple significant memorial gifts. This is an area we could do more promotion on. Marilyn Mastor asked if Robert Millard was active in the Friends. He was a regular Fairhaven patron. Faye Hill commented people need to make it known to their family that they want to donate. Faye asked about the Bellingham School District grant for Children’s non-fiction books. The grant was for a co-sponsored social studies training program which included the purchase of library materials. Pam mentioned more checks will be coming in to support the Genealogy databases. We always send a thank you letter to donor and to family of person memorialized. We always try to honor special requests for certain types of books.

Library performance & activity measures: Marilyn Mastor made a motion to approve the December performance and activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. Pam asked for a drum roll for the (nearly) 1.6 million items circulated.

Pam pointed out one correction: Total use says zero, but we had 909 meetings (2037 last year – down this year due to Fairhaven closure).

Faye noticed holds were down and wondered if it is because of the numbers of holds allowed being reduced. Christine Perkins answered yes, that change was made at the end of November. Marilyn Mastor asked if it could be a seasonal thing. J. Gordon asked if being open one day less could have an effect. Yes, that could, as well as reduced hours and Fairhaven closure. Michael suggested calculating numbers

differently to reflect fewer open hours. Christine commented that patrons could be rethinking how they place holds with the imposed limit. Michael suggested a more accurate holds usage number could be calculated by subtracting out the 30 or so high end users.

David Edelstein asked Pam to please send the board's highest regards to staff for their efforts. Motion carried.

Communications: No communications, but the Olympia Report is included in the packet. Wednesday, March 3 is Library Legislative Day. Pam cannot attend. Friends and Trustees are welcome to go and meet with legislators. When asked if we receive support from the state, Pam responded that we do not receive direct state funding. We receive benefits and some funding through the Washington State Library whose budget is threatened this year.

2010 Library Board meeting calendar: Included in the packet is the calendar in draft form. Pam asked for any comments or suggestions for topics. Next month Jim Long, Executive Director for the Public Development Authority, will speak about the role of the PDA and how might the library be involved. Kathie Wilson will speak about the Friends and Clark Williams will speak about pay stations. Staff members have been plugged in for continued education about the library.

Faye Hill suggested a meeting on the formation of a Bellingham Public Library Foundation (one of Pam's 2010 goals). David mentioned we have an endowment but we have talked about a Foundation governed by trustees. Michael asked if this was connected with the Friends. Christine clarified that they are separate, Friends funds for public benefit and a foundation for bigger ticket items – different group, different goals. Pam added WCLS has a separate foundation. J. Gordon added that he believes foundation donations can be tax deductible. David added that we need two dedicated funds: an endowment for interest earned and another for capital development items. David commented that people in the community could consider this foundation in planning their estates. Pam will include this topic on a future board agenda.

Fairhaven Branch Library: Christine reported overwhelmingly positive comments about the re-opened library. Friends did a great job arranging music and refreshments for the grand re-opening. The final construction costs are \$1,125,000 which includes change orders, 14% below budget. Michael asked what happens with the left over funds. Pam said they would be turned over to Public Works for door project at Central. Christine mentioned a few patrons are concerned about fewer books on shelves. Parents are pleased with the children's collection being moved to the back of the library. George Banning, Construction Manager, commented the job is essentially complete with a few outstanding items to complete; Dawson will take care of them. David added that when we first got involved with this project, we thought Public Works would manage job. It did not turn out that way, but the end result was George did a most wonderful, thorough job. The city was fortunate to have George and Dawson Construction on board. Pam also thanked Christine for her involvement.

Library Board Member report: Faye Hill reported the re-opening of Fairhaven was a wonderful day. People stopped to chat about their love of the library. We make decisions that affect patrons, so it is nice to have that one-on-one contact. Faye attended the WCLS Board meeting. They elected new officers and it was good to be there.

City Council Liaison: No report.

Library Director: Pam will attend the Jan. 28-29 Director's meeting. This is always a fantastic meeting with directors of large and small libraries. Good sharing and support system.

Pam will also plan to attend PLA in Portland in March. Beth Farley also will go for one day to visit exhibits.

There is a joint WLA/PNLA conference in Victoria in August. Joan Airoidi, WCLS Director and Pam will be on a panel together “Regional Partnerships” with 3 or 4 other people.

Pam was invited to attend a WWU dinner early in February “100 Community Conversations.”

We have partnered with WCLS on a Letter of Intent for Whatcom Community Foundation funding for programs related to domestic abuse and violence.

The area Library directors met at the Northwest Indian College Library. Pam encouraged everyone to visit this library, they have a great collection and it’s open to the public.

Gladys Fullford is gone until February 6; Wendy Jenkins is our note-taker today.

Pam is working in the Children’s Department approximately 15 hours a week.

Additional item: Big Read: Christine reported Tobias Wolff will be at the Syre Center on Monday, February 8 at 7:30 p.m.

They had a spot on Entertainment NW, newspaper articles, the Storytellers Guild tied in with the theme of Old School and had 80 in attendance.

Wednesday, Jan. 27 there will be a panel discussion at WWU “Art of Plagiarism.”

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – February 16, 2010 in the Library Lecture Room, Lower level - will begin at 4:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees