

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees**  
**Tuesday, December 21, 2010 - Meeting Room on lower level**  
**04:00 PM - 05:20 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.

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**Board Members Present:** David Edelstein, Faye Hill, J Gordon, Marilyn Mastor and Rachel Myers.

**Board Members Absent:**

**Library Staff:** Pamela Kiesner; Colleen Morse and Wendy Jenkins.

**Others:** Michael Lilliquist, Council Liaison, Jamie Amend, WCLS Board representative.

**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair, David Edelstein.

**Approve/modify agenda:** No changes to agenda.

**Public comment:** Jamie Amend, WCLS Board representative, commented that WCLS wanted to wish BPL Trustees & staff the best for the season and share our hope that the great cooperation between the two systems will continue into the new year.

**Communications:** In the Board packet there are two communications addressed to the Mayor, both concerning Outreach Services. Faye and David expressed appreciation for these letters.

**Minutes:** Marilyn moved to approve the November 16, 2010 Regular Board meeting minutes. Faye seconded. No changes. Motion carried.

**Financial reports:** Claims: November, 2010 general fund \$50,092.23; gift fund \$4,916.20. Rachel moved to approve the November claims. Faye seconded. Pam pointed out the expenditure on clothing for our Security Attendants. We supply polo shirts and fleece vests with our logo so that our attendants are easily identifiable as library staff when they approach patrons. Motion carried.

**Library performance & activity measures:** Faye moved to approve the November performance & activity measures. Rachel seconded. Pam commented on the 2% circulation increase and the 9% decrease in persons visiting resulting from our shortened hours. Year end will probably look like this as well. Fairhaven circulation is almost back up to where it was. Motion carried.

In the packet is a spreadsheet which compares public libraries using 2008 data (the most recent available). Pam and Madeline chose the comparison libraries based on population, but are also the same libraries our consultant used in 2007. Faye complimented Pam on how we do more with less compared to many libraries. Rachel commented on how strong our visits-per-capita number is. Pam pointed out that 2008 was our high point for collection expenditures as a percentage of our total budget. In 2008 the percentage was 14.40, currently it is 10 or 11%. We will update again when the information is available.

**Library Board transitions:** Rachel Myers has been reappointed to the Library Board by the Mayor and was approved by City Council on December 13. Her first full term will run through December 2015.

Marilyn nominated David Edelstein as 2011 Board chair. Faye seconded. No other nominations. Motion carried.

Marilyn nominated Faye Hill as Vice chair. Rachel seconded. No other nominations. Motion carried.

**2011 budget:** Pam included in the packet the wording of the City Council Ordinance which “moved to allocate \$70,000 from reserves to continue Library Outreach program.” In an amendment, the Council decided that 50% of the funds are to come from the Capital Maintenance account. Library Board action is required to accept this change to the library budget.

Pam explained that in our capital budget for the city, \$310,000 was earmarked for library improvements: \$160,000 for carpeting; \$150,000 to remodel the returns room for efficiency. Michael added that the \$35,000 to restore Outreach from the Capital Maintenance fund isn't earmarked yet. The Council recognizes that the Board has autonomy, but also understood that what was last cut would be first back in. Faye appreciated the spirit of the Council's conversation. Marilyn commented that she feels the board is being heavily influenced to make the decision Council wants. The Mayor and the Council received numerous letters supporting Outreach. She doesn't feel it was a very democratic process to come back to the Board this way. It has nothing to do with her support of Outreach, but the Board has worked hard this past year to be fair to staff and patrons. Marilyn supports the motion, but needed to say this. Rachel added, that the bottom line of receiving \$70,000 for Outreach is great, but if Pam gets another call to cut 10%, the Board still has to make these decisions. Pam suggested the Library Board's motion include the words “continue Outreach services in 2011” since our funding is on an annual basis. J suggested also adding “current funding” because we don't know what will happen in the future. Michael commented that Finance uses all resources to forecast a reasonable financial projection. They are currently not anticipating more cuts.

David called for a motion and commented that if we get another budget cut from City Administration, everything is back on the table. He understands what Marilyn said, yet he prefers to think that Council recognized that the cuts we received were not a positive thing for the community. Marilyn said she is pleased this came about, but thinks it unfortunate we had to put a staff person and so many people in turmoil.

J. motioned we use this \$70,000 for the purpose of reinstating Outreach services in 2011 with the present funding. Rachel seconded. Motion carried.

Considering how cold the Lower Level meeting room is, the Board discussed moving the Board meeting back to the Board Room for 2011. The meeting was moved to the Lower Level to be more friendly to the public and in anticipation of larger audiences. Perhaps the Board Room can be arranged in a more friendly way and we can reserve the Lower Level room if we anticipate a larger audience.

The last piece of information in the Board packet is the Historical General Fund Expenditures and FTEs comparison spreadsheet. This was provided to Council and departments by the Finance department in November. Michael pointed out the large percentage swings between some departments. This is because part of the Executive department was moved to Finance. Records also moved to Finance. Public Disclosure was added to Legal. Without this detailed information, the wrong impression is given. The only departments that took a bigger hit than the Library, were Planning and Community Development because building went down so much. Pam said the most telling piece of information for her was that in 2008 we had a high of 50 FTEs, now we are at 40. J. added that our high circulation numbers are a testament to what the staff manages to do in an inefficient building.

**Board members' report:** David reported he had the pleasure of attending an All Staff meeting on the day the library was closed for door installation. There was a motivational speaker, Pam presented awards to 5 staff members, and then invited staff to question David. David sent his highest and best regards from all Board members to the staff.

Marilyn reported she visited the Beaverton, OR Library because it was designed by an architectural firm we have worked with. She asked staff members what they thought of the layout. The staff members said it wasn't working well and they are in the process of changing it. The grounds were beautiful and welcoming and plenty of parking was available.

**Library Director's report:** Pam went to City Council on the 13th and thanked them on behalf of the Board for restoring the \$70,000 to the library's budget. She talked with them about One Card, One Community, and handed out copies of *Border Songs* for Whatcom READS! It was good timing to be able to talk with them about something other than the budget.

The library closed on the 16th to have the exterior doors replaced. Patrons are very positive about the change. While we were closed, we started with a Twitter seminar, followed by our staff meeting, attended by David Edelstein. We listed our 2010 accomplishments and 2011 goals. We also recognized 5 staff members with these milestones: Cathy Coldren with 35 years; Deborah Brewer with 20 years; Wendy Jenkins with 15 years; and Beth Bevens and Janet Peterson, both with 10 years. In February, City Council will recognize the 35 and 20 year staff. After the staff meeting we had an all staff book share, which is important for the Readers Advisory we provide the public. After that was a great potluck lunch. The afternoon was dedicated to collection projects – shelving, weeding, collection review and more.

We are starting the process to fill 2 vacancies. The Children's Specialist vacated by Bethany and a Clerk 2 in Circulation. Our process includes evaluating the responsibilities of the position, considering if we need the position, updating the job description, and submitting a Request to Fill form to the city. When approved, we will start advertising in January.

We sent out our first E-newsletter to 21,000 addresses. If you are not currently receiving it, let us know your email address. We are sending out monthly to start and are trying to keep it short. Rachel added that there is research that justifies limiting the size of articles.

Pam asked the Board members if they are receiving the WLA Advocate. All Board members are members of WLA (the library pays for it). The latest newsletter mentions the WLA pre-conference in Yakima on April 6 that is relevant to trustees and Pam encouraged them to attend.

The final report from the Capital Facilities Task Force is now available. Pam suggested we ask someone from the task force to come and talk about the discussion concerning the library. The task force wording "develop library system plan" does not say build a new library. Where do we go from here? We want to do a work session, develop a revised building program statement and talk about sites. This report is another piece we will consider. Michael, who was on the task force as an alternate, offered to give his interpretation of the report. We will provide a hard copy of the report in the work session packet. Fayed added we need to be upfront about starting this process again. Michael said we can take this report as a mandate to reboot this process. The task force couldn't give clear direction because the Board does not have a clear direction yet.

Our meeting next month will be at Fairhaven. One of our agenda items will be our 2011 meeting agenda topics. Let Pam know what you would like to hear about.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – January 18, 2011** in the Fireplace room at Fairhaven Branch Library – at 4:00 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:20 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees