

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Monday, August 23, 2010 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 05:27 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: David Edelstein, Faye Hill, J. Gordon, Marilyn Mastor and Rachel Myers.

Board Members Absent:

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Christine Perkins; Colleen Morse; Beth Farley and Wendy Jenkins.

Others: Lorna Klemanski, Human Resources, Jamie Amend, WCLS Board representative, Kathie Wilson, Friends of BPL President, Jill Nelson, Activities Director, Shuksan Healthcare Center, Mary Henry, resident, Shuksan Healthcare Center, Howard Levitt.

Called 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: Kathie Wilson shared the Community Coop Shopping day, last Saturday, was moderately well attended. It was a chance to talk with people and the money will be forthcoming.

Communications: In the Board packet there is a letter from the Mayor to Bruce Radtke concerning cuts to Outreach and a letter from a resident at Fairhaven Estates.

Minutes approved: Faye Hill made the motion to approve the July 20, 2010 regular meeting minutes. Marilyn Mastor seconded. The motion carried.

Financial reports: Claims: July, 2010 general fund \$30,474.22; gift fund \$6,801.71. Rachel Myers made the motion to approve the July, 2010 claims. Faye Hill seconded. Motion carried.

Library performance & activity measures: Marilyn Mastor made the motion to approve the July performance and activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. Pam added the numbers are looking a little better. Circulation increased 3%. Visits were down 15%, again attributable to being open fewer hours. Faye appreciated the spreadsheets for the Fairhaven and Barkley statistics and wondered if it was possible to get the same figures for Bellingham. Pam said we can do that. Motion carried.

Executive session: The Library Board Chair called the Board into Executive session for approximately 15-20 minutes beginning at 4:10 for purposes of labor negotiations update. The Library Board resumed their regular session at 4:30. David Edelstein, Chair, stated labor negotiations were discussed. There is nothing to take action on.

Public comment: A request was made to reopen public comment. Shuksan Healthcare activities director, Jill Nelson, said how important Outreach is to their facility. Many of the residents have no families and they need and love their books. Jill added Colleen knows just what the residents need and implores the Board to save this service. Jill introduced Mary Henry, a resident at Shuksan who is legally blind and receives stacks of talking books. Mary spoke about how important talking books are to her because she has lost her vision. Jill thanked Colleen and the others who come to their building.

2011 Budget: Pam reviewed the budget information in the Board packet: a spreadsheet with the entire library budget and a list of chargebacks (what the library pays back to the city for services such as network services, telephone, van, insurance and facilities). This adds up to over \$570,000 of our \$3.5 million budget. Note our telephone went from \$8,000 in 2010 to \$20,000 projected for 2011, so included is a written explanation from our IT Director for that increase. Marilyn asked if there was a history of the telephone charges and Pam directed the Board to page 1 of the budget spreadsheet.

The other large chargeback increase is facilities. Ted Carlson, Director of Public Works, provided a written explanation for the increase. Nearly all of the other budget line items remained at zero increase.

Next in the packet is our Library Materials Budget history. If we go forward with the proposed reductions we will be down to 10% of our total budget. The library rule of thumb is 15-20%. J. Gordon asked if this was consistent with other libraries and how does it balance with other increased costs (materials). Pam answered some formats are growing in cost. Beth Farley, who is in charge of acquisitions, added one area costs have decreased is recorded books. Print materials costs are increasing. DVDs are more reasonable than they were a few years ago. Downloadable materials are expensive, but we have been adding this format because it is very popular. She knows from talking with other libraries, all are getting hit hard, we are not alone.

Pam pointed out for the public that this is not the first time the Board has seen and talked about the library budget. We start in May, taking it a section at a time. In June we had to provide to the city what a \$372,000 cut would look like. So we have had significant discussion.

The last item in the packet is the 2011 Budget Reduction Options. We look at each line item considering whether it can be reduced, do we need to increase, and then we make adjustments. When the budget was released to us, the items that were already eliminated were 1-4, which the Board chose to reduce in June: elimination of Head of Circulation; Admin. Asst. salary difference; no COLA for Director/Asst. Director; and reduction of pre-processing materials costs.

The library's 2011 budget target is \$3,486,557. Other reduction options the Board chose in June that were forwarded to the city are listed 5-9: freeze the vacant Clerk 3 position; reduce Librarian temp labor; reduce 2 Cataloging Technician positions; eliminate Outreach service; reduce Library Materials budget. In order to reach our target, we still needed to cut \$21,749. ITSD just notified us of \$3500 in costs we do not need to pay in 2011, so that drops the amount to \$18,249.

Rachel commented, in her opinion, the difference should be taken from the materials budget, the area we can potentially recoup. Faye mentioned Pam's earlier email which said that this was the Director's preference. Pam added that was true, none of the options are great, but she would suggest taking the difference from materials. If we have the opportunity to freeze another position, we could apply those savings to the materials budget. Pam added she is aware that the staff is stretched. In September she will be bringing up discussion of another hours cut. Pam and Christine are working circulation desks. We are using staff as much as we can without burning them out.

Kathie Wilson asked if Pam recalled the amount the Friends had agreed to contribute to materials. Pam said they contributed \$30,000 to the Children's collection. Kathie asked about 2011 and Pam answered that historically the library anticipates receiving approximately \$15,000.

Faye said she was thinking of making a motion that states we reduce the materials by \$18,249 and adding to it, if there are any unexpected funds available, they be put to materials. Last year,

something similar happened. The materials budget was decreased and a retirement was able to replenish it. Marilyn asked if we have one more meeting before deciding or is this it? Pam answered the budget is due now.

Pam added we did discuss cutting Outreach completely or cutting it in half. But it has already been cut in half once, it would be difficult to halve again. And we would need to make cuts someplace else.

David said he would like to make a couple observations, "I'm not going to disagree with Rachel about cutting the materials budget, but it is not without cost. One of the reasons our customers use our facilities is because of the materials budget, the amount and the way we spend it. If we cut all materials, we would be open, but I don't know if the customers would keep coming. We can keep cutting, but we are cutting the quality of what people come here for. My other observation is what we are voting on is not necessarily the hand that we are going to see at the end of the game. It is the hand we have now, but the city can still raise or lower our budget." Pam confirmed when we get the budget to the city, it will be in the Mayor's hands. Then the Council will make the final decisions in December. Rachel asked if, historically, there are changes that late. Pam answered, not in her time. David added if we do a motion to cut the materials budget and Outreach, it is our responsibility to go to our Outreach customers and explain to them what we have done and why and offer some alternative advice or concepts on how this service can be taken up by other organizations. That is an absolute must, but we do not have to cross that bridge today. Pam said if Outreach is reduced, we would do everything possible to work with and communicate with any organization.

Kathie Wilson mentioned that she can't speak for the Friend's Board, but if there are materials cuts, the Friends would be willing to fill in.

Rachel asked Pam if she has had a recent revenue forecast from the city. Pam just met with the Mayor, David Webster and John Carter about revenue projections. Things are not looking worse for the city, but also not better. Pam recently discussed with them the Library's revenue changes (room rentals down, fines slightly up).

David asked if there were any other questions pertaining to the budget and asked for a motion. Pam requested that David and she be given the latitude to make minor budget decisions to avoid calling another meeting. Faye moved that we take the reductions that we made on 6/15/10 as listed on the sheet 5-9 and in addition we reduce the materials budget by \$18,249. If we have an additional savings in the year, that it be applied to the materials budget. She also moves that Pam and David use their own discretion in making budget decisions. David added, I think what you want to do is, if there are additional funds, the first \$20,000 apply to the materials. Rachel seconded the motion. Marilyn commented that she thinks the motion is messy. She'd like to make the motion without the additions, to keep it clean. Pam said that if there are salary savings through vacancies, they could be significant and she would feel she needed to go to the Board for decisions on whether to fill the position or apply the funds elsewhere. Marilyn said she would like to make the decisions when the time comes. David added he was fine with that. The motion is to approve options 5-9 plus reduce the materials budget by \$18,249. Motion carried.

Library Board Member report: Faye went to the WCLS Board meeting out in Lynden. Sarah Foster, the new Lynden manager, was introduced, a delightful person. There was also a report from Ann McFarland about a Hard Times grant, a grant to develop awareness and skills for non-English speaking and low-income people. Faye was impressed with how WCLS is doing this.

Library Director: The Bibliocommons demo is moved to September. Madeline Sheplor will do a technology update. The Bibliocommons update will show you what the County library is doing. The costs are about \$10 to \$15,000, it is not in our budget. WCLS can move forward and

we can learn from that, maybe fund in 2012. Also in September, Jim Long, Executive Director of Bellingham Public Development Authority, will share the plan he is working on for the Army Street project. Pam attended the PNLA/WLA conference in Victoria. Joan and Pam were part of a panel on regional collaborations.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – September 21, 2010 in the Library Lecture Room, Lower level – at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees