

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, September 21, 2010 - Meeting Room on lower level
04:00 PM - 06:23 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; Madeline Sheplor; Doug Dickinson and Wendy Jenkins.

Others: Michael Lilliquist, City Council Liaison, Kathie Wilson, Friends of BPL President, Jim Long, Bellingham Public Development Authority, David Christensen, Regan Robinson, Public Services Manager, WCLS, Julie Guy and Beverly Jacobs, Cordata Neighborhood Association.

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: Beverly Jacobs and Julie Guy from the Cordata Neighborhood Association spoke about the need for a library in their community. They wanted to know if there was a formal procedure to apply to be included in the next bond issue to build a new library. David said that there isn't a formal application to become part of a future bond, but the Board appreciates that they brought the idea forward. Julie asked if it would be helpful for the neighborhood association to send a letter. David answered they would then be on record and the Board will look forward to the letter.

Kathie Wilson, Friends of BPL President, read a letter that stated the Friends' decision to supplement the materials budget for the library in 2011 with a one-time grant of \$18,249 (the amount of the most recent materials budget cut) because of the emergency situation that the current economic crisis has presented. Kathie also mentioned that National Friends of the Library Week is coming up Oct 17-23. They have posters to put up and will staff information tables. David asked that the Boards' heartfelt thanks be passed on to the Friends.

Communications: Pam passed around copies of 4 emails that the Mayor's office and City Council had received in support of the library. A supportive letter to the editor of the Bellingham Herald from Garland Richmond was also passed around.

Minutes approved: Marilyn Mastor made the motion to approve the August 23, 2010 regular meeting minutes. Faye Hill seconded. The motion carried.

Army Street project: Pam welcomed Jim Long from the Bellingham Public Development Authority and Architect Dave Christensen to discuss their work on the Army Street project. The BPDA has been given the task of evaluating a variety of city owned properties to determine which offer the greatest good in stimulating commercial activity. Army Street has become their number one focus. This property, which is across the street from Rocket Donuts, could serve as a hub with three main areas, Downtown, Old Town, and the Waterfront, all converging. The idea is to mix public and private funds, the right mix can stimulate ongoing development.

Jim sees the library as an important component of this plan. Libraries are cornerstones in many communities. He knows the Board has struggled with site selection and wanted to bring

attention to this property. He has taken the Boards' site criteria and evaluated the pluses and minuses and provided a hand-out resulting from this evaluation.

Dave then discussed his involvement over the years with plans to build a new library and with waterfront development. The plans and drawings he detailed for the Board shows the Grainery as a conference facility for use by the new library, WWU and a hotel. The plan includes shared parking and conforms to the Port's plan and WWU's needs.

Jim continued, saying there are some problems that need to be addressed. The potential can only be realized if the property connects with Downtown and Old Town. The plaza can be built to capture and contain the train noise. Without the Army Street property the waterfront is isolated. There are 6 property owners in the area. BPDA has met with 5 of them so far; all 5 are interested and want to know more. If this all comes together, the library becomes the center piece. This would not be easy, but is possible.

Rachel asked if the city owned the blue outlined property (where the library would be). The port currently owns the land. This plan would involve port and city and private owners collaborating. Faye asked if WWU was still on board. Jim answered he thinks so, they are in discussion and there are advantages that could bring them in. Michael Lilliquist shared that, to his understanding, in the long term this is the direction WWU wants to go. Marilyn commented that she doesn't see much public access to the waterfront. Jim reassured her that there is access including a one hundred foot path straight through to the water. The BPDA is also involved in the shoreline management plan with the port. Pam asked, if both the Board and the city were on board with this project, what other entities, facilities and infrastructure need to happen simultaneous to the library development in order for it to happen? Jim answered that a series of interlocking agreements between public and private entities would need to be orchestrated. The BPDA would have to work out how that would happen. Michael mentioned the city has no money for this, but has been seeking federal funding for railroad moving and road infrastructure. There is no guaranteed funding source. Another funding option being considered is a 63-30 non-profit corporation bond, involving both public and private partners, as has been used to fund projects such as city halls, libraries and hospitals.

Pam asked when the BPDA was looking for a commitment from the library. Jim responded not yet, they are going out to the private parties, WWU and federal and state agencies to determine if this is feasible. If there is a fighting chance, they will keep planning. It is an evolving process they want the Board to be thinking about.

David Edelstein mentioned the Board's site criteria included a minimum 1.5 acres so that a park could be on the property and wondered what other public use could we put in the structure that would make a compelling trade for a park... a senior center? A children's museum? Jim answered that the size of the site can still be adjusted in this planning stage.

Christine brought up the site clean-up that is ongoing on the waterfront, is there concern about building a library on a toxic site? J. Gordon answered that there are maps of the clean-up area. The library building site is one of the less contaminated spots.

David commented on the question of moving the railroad. If the railroad is gone, there is no noise question, but if it is there, we need to address that. Jim assured David it could be dealt with at an incremental cost.

Trustee education: Madeline Sheplor, Head of Technical Services and Doug Dickinson, Technology Specialist, presented a technology update to the Board.

Madeline and Doug oversee all of the library's technical needs including 50 staff computers and 84 public use computers (Internet, catalog/database, office, Overdrive download station, Self Checkout, and Laptops).

They also work closely with WCLS and demonstrated Bibliocommons, the new public website interface WCLS is about to launch. Doug and Madeline were involved with the selection of this software and are excited about the possibilities it offers. BPL currently has not budgeted for this software and know it will cause some confusion for patrons who use both WCLS and our websites.

They talked about the success of Cassie, the Internet Reservation System that has eliminated long wait lines and multiple-use abuse by some patrons.

Madeline shared the success of the Overdrive download station which allows patrons to download digital audiobooks and eBooks. We started to offer this service in 2008 (with a Friends' donation of \$7500), and added eBooks in 2010. If we continue at the current checkout rate we are going to more than double last year's total.

They also mentioned some of their upcoming projects such as the city's evaluation of the use of Lotus Notes, adding KitKeeper software and purchase suggestion forms to the website, evaluating new self checkout software, adding self checkout connections at BTC and WWU, setting up staff intranet, reviewing a summer reader module offered by Evanced Solutions and more!

Financial reports: Claims: August, 2010 general fund \$35,702.40; gift fund \$6,041.65. Faye made the motion to approve the August, 2010 claims. Rachel seconded. Pam mentioned that the purchase of library carts was funded by the Friends. Marilyn asked for clarification about Evanced Solutions. This is our online calendar and room reservation software. Motion carried.

The Whatcom Community Foundation yearly statement is included in this month's packet. Wendy pointed out that the trend, since 2007, has been for the fund to be losing Investment Income. This statement shows a reverse in that trend. Though there wasn't enough Investment Income to receive a distribution this year, if this trend continues, next year there will be one.

Library performance & activity measures: Faye made the motion to approve the August performance and activity measures. Marilyn seconded. Pam mentioned that included in the packet are the Central, Fairhaven and Barkley checkout statistics. Our checkouts per hour have increased. This is excellent, but hard on the stretched staff. Motion carried.

Agreement among partners to form a 501c3 for Whatcom READS!: Pam shared the draft of this agreement with the Board. Currently there are no established funds for Whatcom READS! The Friends of Bellingham Public Library and the Whatcom County Library Foundation are contributing for 2011. We believe forming a Foundation is the most sustainable way to continually fund Whatcom READS! WWU requires this agreement in order to go forward. David questioned if having just one business partner was a concern and asked Pam to run the agreement by the legal department. David then called for a straw vote. There was unanimous agreement.

One Card, One Community: There is a helpful brochure in the packet that answers many questions. Every library card holder can use their card at any library in Whatcom County. Sam Reed, the Secretary of State, was here last week and we got a great publicity photo for One Card, One Community. We are working out the delivery details. Christine mentioned we have already picked up 10 items at BTC.

2011 Budget: Pam reported there is still no word from the city on the budget. On a staff level we are working out how to close Outreach. Pam will keep the Board up to date.

Trespass report: Our policy states that any permanent trespass will be reviewed by the Board. We had one last week. A cursing angry women was yelling at patrons in the restroom and threatening them with pepper spray. She is a temporary resident. The officer handling the call recommended a lifetime trespass because of the pepper spray. The staff supported that permanent status.

David commented that he doesn't believe we should have a permanent trespass option. An incident might come up where we think a permanent trespass is appropriate, but this isn't the case. David thinks trustees have a responsibility to have policies that are legal and defensible and would rather have 5, 10 or 20 years. J. Gordon recalled that people have the option to ask to appeal or contest a trespass. Faye asked if the woman had been informed of her rights. Pam said that our procedure is to give the officer a handout to give to the person so they know of the appeal process. Christine believes in this case the officer basically served a verbal permanent trespass. Because this person is only temporarily in town, she probably will not return to the library.

Library Board Member report: No report.

City Council Liaison: Michael reported the Capital Facilities Task Force is in its' final stages. They have a tentative list of priority projects and the library is on that list. The Task Force is looking for ways to cut spending and likes the idea of partnering with private entities.

Pam mentioned the idea of incorporating an Early Learning Child Development lab with the library (partnering with WWU). David said partnerships like that benefit the companies as well as make good use of the land. Joint use of land also increases the opportunities for grants. Partnering with the Whatcom Literacy Council is another possibility.

Library Director: Pam reported the last Friends' book sale brought in \$10,000. They are having a mini Mostly Mysteries book sale Oct. 1 & 2. National Friends of the Library week is coming up and Pam has been talking with staff about what we would like to do for them. On top of the book sale, and the one-time grant mentioned earlier, they have recently donated 100 more yard signs for Summer Reading, \$7500 for eBooks, \$5000 for Whatcom READS! And \$750 for holiday music. The Board would like to do something for the Friends, including a resolution to acknowledge their good work.

Included in the Board packet is a copy of the email showing the City Council ratified the tentative agreement with 114L. There are also 2 articles about how libraries are doing.

Pam was interviewed by KGMI after the last Board meeting. Last week she toured the library with Secretary of State Sam Reed to show him some of the issues we face. She recently met with WCLS about communication and collaboration. Pam attended the BPDA's Board meeting earlier and has been scheduled 8 or more hours a week on desk in Children's. At the end of the month two internal candidates will be interviewing for the Head of Children's position. Pam will attend the Capital Facilities Task Force meeting Wednesday night and will be giving a Rotary Club presentation on the 28th.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – October 19, 2010 in the Library Lecture Room, Lower level – at 4:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

