

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, September 20, 2011 - Library Board Room
04:00 PM - 05:40 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, Marilyn Mastor, J. Gordon and Rachel Myers

Board Members Absent: Faye Hill

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

Others: Stan Snapp, City Council Liaison, Kathie Wilson, Friends of Bellingham Public Library President

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: Kathie Wilson reported earnings of over \$11,000 at the last Friend's book sale. They are going to have a one day Overstock sale on September 29. At their last board meeting, the Friend's established two educational grants: one for staff continuing education (conference or workshop) and one high school student scholarship involving an essay on "Why the library is important to me."

Minutes: Rachel Myers moved to approve the August 16, 2011 Regular Board meeting minutes. J. Gordon seconded. Motion carried.

Communications and Courtesies: None this month.

Library performance & activity measures: Marilyn Mastor moved to approve the August, 2011 performance & activity measures. Rachel Myers seconded. Pam pointed out the website visits which continue to increase – almost half a million hits so far in 2011. Motion carried.

Financial reports: Claims: August, 2011 general fund \$33,288.34; gift fund \$11,485.90. Rachel Myers moved to approve the August claims. Marilyn Mastor seconded. Pam commented that we purchase many of our books from Amazon.com and Baker & Taylor, but order locally when we can, such as recent purchases from Village Books and the Whatcom Museum. Motion carried.

Interlibrary Loan: Pam proposed the library eliminate the Interlibrary loan (ILL) fee. Philosophically, if we don't have an item in our collection, we should try to get it and not penalize a patron for our lack. Currently we charge for the actual postage. WCLS, with whom we try to align our fees, does not charge an ILL fee. Assessing the charge and accepting payments takes staff time, probably costing us about as much as we take in.

After considering:

1. if patrons are discouraged from requesting items because of fee;
2. should there be a quantity threshold, i.e. under a certain amount, no charge; over the amount, a charge;
3. will the service be abused, resulting in numerous or frivolous requests;
4. would it be worthwhile to start with no fee on print materials only;

Rachel Myers made a motion that we eliminate the postage charge on interlibrary loan items, aligning ourselves with the WCLS, beginning in January of 2012. J. Gordon seconded the motion. Marilyn suggested we revisit after six months. The motion was adjusted to include review in June of 2012. Motion passed.

2012 library budget: After reviewing all department budget submissions, the Mayor's office adjusted the Library's budget target, increasing it almost enough to cover the two anticipated layoffs, but requiring another \$10,000 cut from the general fund. A 2.7% increase in our Interlocal Agreement with WCLS will satisfy \$3,700 of the \$10,000, leaving \$6,300 which Pam recommended be cut from the materials budget.

The standard goal is for materials to be 15-20% of the total budget. Pam distributed a copy of the Library Materials Budget History, 2002-2012, which illustrates that in 2008, with 14.4%, we almost reached the standard minimum. Yearly budget cuts have reduced it to 9% for 2012. Another \$6,300 cut would bring it to 8.8%.

David questioned if the position left open by the anticipated Librarian retirement might be filled with another employee, perhaps a clerk, resulting in cost reduction. Pam responded that with every vacancy, we go through an intense process determining if the position is needed and how best to fill it, including delays or reclassification. Currently, there are no extra clerks to fill a position, all are needed to cover circulation desks. Rachel commented on the delicate balance between staffing and library materials, cuts in both resulting in pressure on library quality. Pam suggested Beth Farley give her presentation on Collection Development before the Board makes a decision on this additional cut.

Trustee education: Collection Development; Selection, Budget, and Digital Trends; Beth Farley, Head of Information and Reader Services. Beth passed out a spreadsheet that shows the breakdown of the materials budget and where she made the most recent reduction of \$21,780: \$8,000 from Adult Reference and \$13,780 from Adult/Children's DVDs. She asked the Board to keep in mind that in 2011 the Friends supplemented the material budget with \$18,000, which fully funded the large type collection and helped fund the digital download budget. Kathie Wilson commented that the Friends are here to support the library, but do not want to take on what is the city's responsibility. Pam agreed, these spreadsheets do not include gift funds. These donations are hard-earned gift funds, not operating funds.

Beth added that the selectors are closely scrutinizing all areas of the collection. This past year they reviewed all periodicals and cut 50 subscriptions. They are also aggressively reviewing materials that are donated – 2600 items were added last year, 2100 so far this year. Acquisition is more demand-driven now. Selectors do get the hot items, but are restrictive, raising the holds to copy ratio and limiting number of copies. People simply need to wait longer.

David commented he could clearly see that cuts have made staff very sharp and he is uncomfortable cutting the materials budget more; it is not a world class library if we do not have a reasonable materials budget.

Continuation of 2012 library budget discussion: David continued that the Board voted last year to eliminate Outreach, considering how few benefit, as opposed to the materials which serve so many. How can we have Outreach if we don't have a materials budget? We have to weigh the value of what we are doing. J. asked Pam if we need to revisit other options. Pam agreed we need to have this conversation, but the 2012 budget is being finalized, so there is not time this year, but we can revisit for 2013. Rachel suggested we revisit for 2013, but for 2012, delay filling a potential vacant position to cover the cut. It was agreed it is the least painful to delay filling the position.

Trustee education continued: Beth continued with some statistics: eBook circulation is up 377%; Mobile downloads (smartphone, Ipad) are up 1500%! We've had eBooks for close to a year now. It has been challenging for front line staff to answer questions about the variety of devices. Reference staff has done a lot of one-on-one training with patrons. Beth and Madeline put together a hands-on staff training to raise awareness. The Anytime Library website we use to download is about to upgrade to make it compatible with Amazon's Kindle. We anticipate our eBook numbers will skyrocket. The Friends provided a download station for audiobooks so patrons don't have to have their own computer. Currently we own about 2500 eBooks and 2500 audiobooks. We are talking with WCLS about possibly lending eBook readers so patrons can try them out to see if they want to purchase one.

Pam commented that our world has changed so much. Libraries are dealing with the changes. But, with all of this, our storytimes are just packed. The basic technology of reading a book is still so important.

City Council Liaison: Stan Snapp shared that Council has been busy hearing 2011 budget reports. There is paving going on all over town. Everyone is wondering about election results, many council members are up for re-election. Stan met with David Webster about volunteer recognition. They brainstormed a plan with a party format to genuinely thank people for all they do. Christine asked Stan to include the Friends board members.

Library Director's report: Pam will be giving a 2011 Objectives Update to City Council October 3 and a Budget Presentation October 24. She will share the Budget Presentation with the Board first and get their feedback.

Pam will be serving on the selection team for the new Parks Director. There is a Thursday night reception and interviews on Friday for the five candidates. The reception is open to the public.

Pam's annual review with the Mayor and CAO is October 5.

The library's Early Learning and Literacy Space came in 4th in the Walton Beverage Pepsi Refresh contest – our prize is a \$2000 grant to be used for the space.

Starting on November 7 we will be adding four open hours to Barkley, bringing us back into compliance with our lease. This will be on Mondays from 2 to 6. Pam suggested we meet there for November's board meeting. Two of our Tech Services staff who have worked desk in the past are getting up to speed to help with this additional desk shift.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – October 18, 2011 at the Central Library, 210 Central Ave – at 4:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees