

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees**  
**Tuesday, February 21, 2012 - Meeting Room on lower level**  
**04:00 PM - 06:12 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, Marilyn Mastor, Faye Hill, J. Gordon and Rachel Myers.

**Board Members Absent:**

**Library Staff:** Pamela Kiesner; Christine Perkins and Wendy Jenkins.

**Others:** Brian Burton, WWU Dean of the College of Business and Economics, Kathie Wilson, Friends of Bellingham Public Library President, 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:** Pam introduced Brian Burton, Western's Dean of the College of Business and Economics who will be facilitating the Strategic Planning process. The decision was made to begin the meeting with Strategic Planning to accommodate Brian's schedule.

**Strategic Planning:** Brian Burton stopped in to meet the members of the Library Board and plan for the first meeting, March 7. Brian suggested the group think about strategy from the broadest perspective possible, building on the planning that has already been done. Brian offered to facilitate the Steering Committee's discussion - to help keep the committee on task and point direction. The library staff and board members will supply the content. Pam passed around examples of other institutions' strategic plans: King County Library Systems Future Services Strategy; Seattle Public Library Strategic Plan; Confronting the Future by ALA; IMLS Museum and Library Services. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, but reinvent for Bellingham. The goal is to complete the plan in six to nine months.

J. asked for clarification on how the strategic planning process differs between private and public entities. Brian responded they have similar beginnings - both have a mission statement that needs to be revisited, confirmed or modified, and similar outcomes - both end with strategic goals and objectives. The difference is in the middle - a private entity looks internally and has a smaller group of stakeholders. A public entity looks externally, has a broader stakeholder base requiring surveys and more discussion. (Brian then excused himself to leave for another meeting.)

Christine passed out a Communications Plan draft which includes:

- Mission statement
- Assumptions about the current economy and patron base
- Key message suggestions
- Communications audience list
- External and internal communication tools
- Suggested goals for 2012 (with strategies, tactics and evaluation):
  - ü All local residents will know they have the opportunity to give input on strategic planning.
  - ü Potential donors will know about opportunities to give to the Whatcom Community Foundations and for planned giving.
  - ü Increase the percentage of residents who have library cards.
  - ü Establish Bellingham Public Library staff as experts in reader's advisory/ BPL as a place that provides stories.

Rachel steered the discussion to why the library is valuable, is still relevant in the digital age. What are the overriding messages we want people to get? Suggestions included:

- Gathering place - community connection center
- Early learners are lifelong learners
- Information resource - the library offers expertise and resources needed to thrive
- Sharing resources - the ultimate green institution
- Stories add richness to life - sharing, accessing, creating stories
- Learning institution - speakers, presentations
- Responsive to evolving community needs

What are the most enticing messages? Which audiences need which messages? Pam suggested the mission statement will prioritize the messages. Discussion revealed the statement should be:

- Brief, but capture audience to pull into the information
- Local, specific to Bellingham
- Basic, we deliver knowledge, entertainment, equal opportunity and value

**Library Board transitions:** Stan Snapp, our City Council Liaison, was unable to attend. The Board appreciates his work on behalf of the library in 2011 and looks forward to his continued support in 2012.

**Public comment:** Kathie Wilson, Friends of Bellingham Public Library President, reported that the recent 2-day Children's book sale netted \$1700 and that, at their last board meeting, the decision was made to continue to spend 80 -100% of their proceeds on the library. They also decided to make a donation of \$50,000 to the Bellingham Public Library Fund at Whatcom Community Foundation, to the Capital 'bucket.' Pam added we will kick-off the opening of the Fund during National Library Week (April 8-14, 2012) and announce the Friends as the first major donor. The Board expressed their gratitude to the Friends for their continued support, and especially for the major gift to our non-endowed fund.

**Minutes:** Faye Hill moved to approve the January 23, 2012 Regular Board meeting minutes. Marilyn Mastor seconded. Motion carried.

**Communications:** The recent [Bellingham Herald](#) article about the Barkley Branch Library is included in the board packet.

**Library performance & activity measures:** Marilyn Mastor moved to approve the January, 2012 performance & activity measures. Faye Hill seconded. Motion carried.

Pam also included in the packet the 2011 library measures that will be used in the City of Bellingham Budget book. There are some interesting statistics such as materials expenditures per capital, collection expenditures as a % of operating budget, and website visits (an increase of over 145,000 from 2010 to 2011).

**Financial reports:** Claims: January, 2012 general fund \$39,340.02; gift fund \$4,243.71. Marilyn Mastor moved to approve the January claims. Faye Hill seconded. Pam pointed out the Hardware Sales expenditure for a Children's desk and invited everyone to stop and take a look at the rearranged Children's work area. She also pointed out the \$995 expenditure for the Non-profit Resource Center Database. This has been paid for with a yearly grant from Whatcom Community Foundation. The Foundation decided to put this expenditure in their budget so we no longer need to re-apply each year for the grant. Motion carried.

The 4th Quarter, 2011 report is in the packet. We ended the year spending 97.4% of our budget. We have asked for approximately \$5000 in materials and supplies be re-appropriated

from the 2011 budget to the 2012 budget for items ordered in 2011, but not received before the end of the year.

We received from Whatcom Community Foundation, this year's distributable amount from our Bellingham Public Library Endowment Fund and from the Bayview Fund. The two checks total \$8,015.50. Typically we reinvest the distributions back into the Endowment Fund to keep it growing. This year, Pam recommends we deposit the distributions in our Library Gift Fund, earmarked for expenses related to strategic planning. Pam read aloud the City of Bellingham Municipal code for the Gift Fund, " final determination of suitability of items so designated to rest with the Library Board and the librarian." Rachel Myers moved that we deposit the Whatcom Community Foundation checks, totaling \$8,015.50, into the gift fund to be used at the Board's discretion. J. seconded. Motion carried.

**Library Board meeting structure:** Pam received an email from Rachel about possibly reorganizing the board agenda to help create some time for strategic planning. Rachel's suggestions included creating a consent agenda (lumping items such as monthly reports, standard contracts and minor policy revisions into one motion for consideration) and supplying written reports in the packet prior to the meeting so trustee education and member reports can be streamlined. Rachel has found it very effective for Whatcom Literacy Council board meetings. The new format was agreed upon.

Pam asked the Board if they wanted to put trustee education on a back burner in order to focus on strategic planning. It was unanimous that the Board wants to continue with trustee education, that they value the staff contact. If staff reports are delivered ahead of time in the packet, the education segments will be streamlined and also provide more time for direct questions.

David suggested starting the next meeting at 3:30 p.m. rather than 4:00 p.m. to provide a little more time for discussion. It was agreed upon to try a 3:30 p.m. start time for 3 months.

**Washington Library Association (WLA) Annual Conference:** Pam encouraged the trustees to attend the Washington Library Association conference at the Tulalip Resort April 19-20, 2012. There are several presentations that would be of interest to trustees, as well as exhibits and speaker luncheons. Pam and Christine are presenting at this year's conference.

**Library Board members report:** Faye attended WCLS's board meeting and met the newest board member, Liz Marshall. Deb Lambert is continuing as President, Jamie Amend as Vice-President. Tom Burton is Secretary. They will focus this year on reviewing the by-laws and strategic planning. They had a trustee education segment on website usage.

**Library Director's report:** Pam and Christine met with the Friends to discuss the best use of the Wilkes' trust. The Friends feel we should figure out a visible project to help promote future giving. One of the projects that interests Pam is finding out if we can afford to uncover and renovate the sky light at Fairhaven. Would uncovering the sky light interfere with future seismic work? J. can help determine if this can be done.

Pam met the new Seattle Library Director, Marcellus Turner, at January's State Public Library Director's Meeting. In 2013 the ALA Midwinter Conference is in Seattle. There will be a trustee/director reception at Seattle Public Library.

Kelli Linville will be attending the March board meeting. When Pam met with her last week, they discussed the issue of a northside branch as Pam had just met with representatives of the Cordata neighborhood. Pam explained that currently our budget doesn't support staffing a new branch and that, in the past, it was decided we couldn't support another branch without a new central library to support an expanded branch system. We are stretched to the max with

our current deliveries, for instance. In addition, Pam explained that most communities our size do not support as many branches as we have; having one branch after reaching a population of 100,000 is more typical. Pam also mentioned facilities will be part of the strategic planning discussion. Christine added that, down the road, if we go for a bond that includes a northside branch, Central Library and Fairhaven repair, there will be something for all community members.

Pam also shared with Mayor Linville the idea of co-locating with ITSD; a building that could house BTV-10 for public access, television, the library as the public computing interface and more.

Pam reported that one of our librarians, Jane Lowrey, is retiring. June 8 will be her last day. The management team is reviewing the job description and determining how to best fill the vacancy.

Faye asked what we have heard from Whatcom Community Foundation concerning acknowledgements. Pam answered that she is working with them on a process, and it appears that monthly notification can be worked out.

**Meeting adjourned** at 6:12 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – March 20, 2012** at the Central Library, 210 Central Ave, Library Board Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees