

Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees
Tuesday, September 18, 2012 - Library Board Room
03:30 PM - 05:45 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, Faye Hill, J. Gordon and Rachel Myers

Board Members Absent:

Library Staff: Pamela Kiesner; Christine Perkins; Bethany Hoglund and Wendy Jenkins

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

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, David Edelstein.

Approve/modify agenda: Pam informed the Board that Stan Snapp, City Council Liaison, would be late, arriving after a City meeting. Pam asked that *Approve Library Mission* be added to the agenda under *Strategic Planning*.

Public comment: Kathie Wilson, Friends of BPL President, reported that the Friends have been very busy. They have an upcoming *Treasured Tomes* event Saturday, September 29. For a donation, people can bring in up to 3 books to have their value assessed. The Friends had a booth at the Farmer's Market – they gave away 10 boxes of free books and asked people for their vision for the library (examples included more hours, open Sundays, parking improvements and storytimes at Barkley). The last book sale brought in \$11,646. Kathie brought in a deposit summary so that the Board could see the breakdown of what they earn. They have earned \$96,835 to date!

Consent agenda: Rachel Myers moved to approve the August 21, 2012 minutes and the August, 2012 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Faye Hill seconded. Motion carried.

Trustee education: Bethany Hoglund, Head of Children's Services, presented a Powerpoint presentation: What is Early Literacy, why is it so important, and what is Bellingham Public Library doing? Highlights included:

- Early Literacy is so important because children are born learning – learning to read starts at birth!
- Well-developed early literacy skills have been proven to create greater success throughout the school years.
- The most important skills are decoding and comprehension:
 - ü Decoding is noticing print, knowing names and recognizing sounds.
 - ü Comprehension includes narrative skills, vocabulary and motivation (fun experiences).
- 85% of intellect, personality and skills are established by age 5 (the brain window) – "change the beginning and change the whole story."
- Libraries are set up for early literacy – they already have an audience and they are free. Our strategic planning process has revealed that the community values and supports early childhood programming.
- Five simple practices help kids get ready to read: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing.
- Library services are changing – we are getting a little louder, creating play space to cultivate the fun of playing.

- We have joined ELPLP (Early Learning Public Libraries Partnership) to get involved in decision making at the state level and WELA (Whatcom Early Learning Alliance) to join efforts locally.
- We currently have 11 storytimes a week: Little Storytime (birth to 3); Raccoon Time (2 ½ to 4); and Time for Tales (families).
- We recently transformed the Dodson Room into an Early Learning Space with proceeds from the Walton Beverage Pepsi Refresh Grant.

Highlights from Summer Reading 2012:

- There were 1,602 finishers (370 birth-5 year olds completed the Early Literacy Game; 1,232 5-12 year olds read for 15 hours).
- Children's staff presented 103 programs.
- The Friends and eighteen local community partners provided prizes to each finisher:
 - ü Mystery coupon from a community partner
 - ü Yard sign
 - ü Free book
 - ü Recognition ceremony with Mayor Linville
- Staff delivered Summer Reading packets to every elementary school child (public and private) and 12 childcare centers.

2013 budget update: At Pam's Department Head meeting, John Carter, Finance Director, shared that he recently met with other city finance directors in the state. All cities are struggling with salaries and benefits, but overall, Bellingham is doing very well. Mayor Linville has finalized the 2013-2014 preliminary budget and will present it to City Council on October 8. Pam will have more information for the Board at the October meeting.

Strategic Planning: Phone calling sessions for survey follow-up are scheduled for Tuesday, September 25: 8:30 to 11:00 in the morning and 6:30 to 8:00 in the evening.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow.

Pam would like to get approval on the latest version of the Library's Mission statement:

Connecting Our Community with Each Other and the World
READ LEARN MEET DISCOVER

Bellingham Public Library

After discussion, Faye Hill moved that the Mission Statement be accepted as written, except with "Bellingham Public Library" on top. Motion carried.

Pam emailed, to the board members, a draft of 5 Strategic Directions (with possible objectives and goals) that were developed by the Management Team from the themes identified from the Stakeholder Retreat discussions, staff, board, and public sessions, and the community survey. The 5 Strategic Directions are:

1. Essential Community Institution: We are (the public's)(Bellingham's) library.
2. Library (Materials)(Collections)(Content?): We provide access to a wide variety of books and other library materials.
3. Library Facilities: We provide and develop physical library facilities that meet contemporary needs.
4. Access to library services: We address limitations and barriers to free and equal library access.
5. Early Learning: We establish Bellingham Public Library as the community's Early Learning Center.

Staff and technology were not listed as separate entities because they are woven throughout all of the Directions.

After discussion, questions and ideas raised were:

- After a careful reading, it is hard to figure out clear directions. The Directions list already established services. Library services are changing (such as eBooks) – how do we include this change dynamic in the Directions?
- "Wide variety of books and other materials" is listed, can this be expanded to include whatever formats they take?
- Initiatives vs. Directions – the word Directions is more forward-looking and realistic. Should the Directions be more consumer-focused on what services we offer and not include all of the operation processes we already do?
- Could the Early Learning be an Initiative area? An Early Learning Center could truly be a hub for early learning.
- Can we eliminate numbering 1 to 5, to not weight the Directions?
- Typically a Strategic Plan is concise, 3 to 5 future-thinking, energizing goals. Could community partnerships be one of the goals?
- How about "keep BPL sustainable" – this is a huge strategic issue for us. We need to secure sustainable funding so we can remain an essential community institution.
- This is the opportunity to state where we want to be – what are the goals to get us there?
- We must move in the direction of a new Central Library. If the community says so, it is the Board's responsibility to point it out. We need to say it in the Strategic Plan. If we don't hold up that value, nobody else will. It may need to be a collaborative effort – we need to be cognizant of the economic environment.

Pam concluded the Steering Committee will meet and wrestle with these questions and ideas; another version will be presented at the October meeting.

Board member's report: Faye attended WCLS's board meeting. They are also striving, struggling and progressing on their Strategic Plan. They established an ad hoc Search Committee to replace Joan Airolidi, WCLS Director, who is retiring. An eBook presentation was given for trustee education.

City Council liaison report: Stan Snapp reported that City Council just concluded a tough meeting in preparation for the Mayor's upcoming budget presentation on October 8. Council is also working on rate studies – water, sewer and storm water.

Library Director's report: Pam reported we received notice of an anonymous gift of \$25,000 for a new building. Pam will pen a thank you that the Whatcom Community Foundation can pass along.

September 15 was the All Staff Learning Day held jointly with WCLS. It was a great, productive time.

WCLS's Finance Committee approved eliminating children's fines beginning in January, 2013. Three of our staff will be meeting soon to talk with WCLS staff about the change. Madeline is working on determining the lost revenue amount if BPL follows suit. Joan Airolidi commented that they were following the example of Fraser Valley Regional Library. WCLS is dropping the children's fines, but raising adult fines, so it will actually be a revenue increase for them. They are hoping this will remove hurdles for children, putting the responsibility on the adults. The fine elimination will apply to kids materials on kids cards.

We interviewed three candidates for the Librarian 2 position. We are checking references and hope to make an offer soon.

Pam attended a Library Council of Washington (LCW) meeting in Yakima where they had a full agenda; most discussion centered on how the federal funding the State Library receives is allocated.

Pam will be out for several weeks beginning November 12. She is looking ahead now to the agendas for the November and December board meetings. Nicole Oliver is scheduled to speak about city performance measures at the November meeting. December meeting will include election of officers and other end-of-year board activities.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – October 16, 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