

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees**  
**Tuesday, July 15, 2014 - Meeting Room on lower level**  
**03:30 PM - 06:22 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:** Faye Hill, J. Gordon, Marilyn Mastor, Rachel Myers and Tom Barrett

**Board Members Absent:**

**Library Staff:** Pamela Kiesner; Janice Keller; Beth Farley; Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins

**Others:** Jack Weiss, City Council liaison, Brian Henshaw, Finance Director, Angela Beatty, Renee Mueller and Camille Gatza, Human Resources Analysts, Fred Haslem, WCLS Board representative, Beverly Jacobs and Julie Guy, Cordata Neighborhood Association

**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Chair, Faye Hill.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Pam Kiesner proposed adding the Bellingham Public Library 2005 Facilities Needs report to #8 Strategic Planning under Facilities Committee. Tom Barrett moved to approve the agenda as amended. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Public comment:** Julie Guy, Cordata Neighborhood Association President, passed out a letter:

*Bellingham Public Library, Attn: Pam Kiesner, Library Director*  
*July 15, 2014*  
*From Cordata Neighborhood Association*

*Our association has expressed a need for more library services and presence in the northend of Bellingham for several years.*

*Recently we had a meeting with the Superintendent of Bellingham Public Schools. He indicated their support for children's library programs in the summer of 2015 at Cordata Elementary School, Micah Smith, Principal.*

*Your staff gave us a copy of the 2014 summer programs at the Central Library and at Fairhaven. We ask that you include in your budget and planning at least 4 sessions tailored for children that would be held at Cordata Elementary in the summer of 2015.*

*We will be meeting with Micah Smith in August to help coordinated the planning of these sessions with Cordata Elementary and the Central Library.*

*Library service for the hundreds of children in the northend is long overdue. We look forward to helping obtain programs for them.*

*Cordata Neighborhood Association*

*Julie Guy, President*  
*Bev Jacobs, Vice President*

Bev Jacobs commented that Birchwood Presbyterian Church is another space option [for programming], adding that there is no place to gather in the north end of the city.

Pam mentioned that Bethany, Head of Youth Services, and Bernice, Children's Specialist, were invited by Julie to attend the meeting with Dr. Greg Baker, School District Superintendent, about the Children's programming we are offering here and in the north end.

Tom suggested we put this topic on next month's board meeting agenda. Jack added that this issue is talked about in City Council, Parks and Greenways – the north end is an under-served area of town.

Pam introduced Janice Keller to the Board. Janice, our new Communications, Community Relations, and Programming Manager, informed the Board that she has 25 years of experience in state and local government, most recently in community relations for the Mayor's office. She is excited to be here, stating that the library is one of the best services the city offers. She sees her job as getting the word out about what the library is doing – that it is used and loved. Her immediate priorities include moving the strategic plan forward, updating the 2005 Facilities Needs document and familiarizing herself with library policies and procedures.

**Consent agenda:** Marilyn Mastor moved to approve the June 17, 2014 Regular Meeting minutes, July 7, 2014 Special Meeting minutes and the June, 2014 financial reports. Tom Barrett seconded. Motion carried.

**Trustee education:** City of Bellingham financial review & forecast: Pam introduced Brian Henshaw, the new Finance Director, who gave a PowerPoint presentation: *2014 City Financial Overview July 15, 2014*. Highlights included:

- Bellingham is the largest small city in the state with over 50 funds, such as General, Special Revenue, Enterprise, Internal Services, Debt Services, Construction and Permanent.
- 2013 General Fund revenues were \$67.8 million; the four main sources being Property, Sales, B&O and Utility taxes.
- 2013 General Fund expenses were \$67.6 million; 71% was for Salaries & Benefits.
- 4 year Average Revenue Change (2009-2013) was an increase of 2.5%.
- 4 year Average Expense Change (2009-2013) was an increase of 4.7%; employee costs have risen significantly:
  - o In 2008, the city had 916 employees at an average cost of \$78,582 per employee
  - o In 2013, the city had 846 employees at an average cost of \$95,305 per employee
- Reserves have been declining – currently there is less than 10%; target is 12%.
- Other budget considerations include:
  - o Revenue growth is flat
  - o Environmental remediation costs could be as much as \$30 million
  - o Annual facilities maintenance could run \$1 million (30+ buildings)
  - o PFD debt service is \$1+ million
  - o Fire & Police pensions total \$30 million
  - o Loans total \$14 million
- The City of Bellingham receives 23.8% of Whatcom County Property taxes; other distribution is:
  - o Bellingham School District – 39.1%
  - o State General Fund – 22.8%
  - o County Levy – 10.2%
  - o Port of Bellingham – 2.5%
  - o Flood Control – 1.2%
  - o Conservation Futures – 0.4%
- Distribution of the City's portion of Property taxes:
  - o General Fund – 59.09%
  - o Greenways – 19.72%
  - o Housing – 12.82%

- o Fire/Police Pension – 8.23%
- o Revenue Development Area – 0.14%
- Property Tax Levy Rate is at \$2.736 with a cap of \$3; possible future levies include:
  - o Chuckanut Community Forest
  - o Jail
  - o EMS
  - o Fire Station
  - o Library
  - o Schools
- Capital Facilities Task Force Guiding Principles:
  - 1) Make fully informed decisions
  - 2) Be prudent
  - 3) Pursue alternatives
  - 4) Protect basic assets and services
  - 5) Where and how we build matters

Brian added that monthly reports, audits and statements are available on the City's website.

Bellingham Public Library Collection Development: Beth Farley, Head of Information and Reader Services, oversees collection development. In the packet is a copy of the Collection Development Policy, updated in 2008. The collection development cycle begins with selection. Six selectors – librarians assigned to certain collections – choose from electronic vendor carts, patron requests and local community events (such as what movies are showing at the Pickford Theatre). The number of copies is determined by an established hold-to-copy ratio, currently 1 copy per 6 holds. Guided by the Crew Weeding Manual, selectors pull unused, outdated (legal, medical, science) and unappealing (worn, damaged) books so as to keep the collection clean, attractive and relevant. We also weed because of space considerations. Beth noted that eBooks are now 10% of our collection.

**2015-2016 budget:** There are two items in the packet related to budget: 2015-2016 Budget proposed operating requests and a tentative proposal for restoring hours.

The Mayor has not yet asked for the proposed operating requests; Pam will meet with her in August. Discussion ensued about the library's proposed requests.

**Library performance & activity measures:** Tom Barrett moved to approve the June performance & activity measures. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried. Pam pointed out that libraries collect a lot of data. We report our statistics to the state, who then report to the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). People are using libraries differently now, for instance patrons are using mobile apps or Bibliocommons to access our website, so our direct website visits are trending down. Pam asked Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Circulation, to take a long view of our statistics – pre-recession to current – to determine trends. Jen's PowerPoint presentation revealed:

- Program attendance has increased in all areas: Adult, Teen and Children's. Our Children's program attendance is the highest in the state; overall attendance ranks 2nd, behind WCLS.
- New borrower registrations increased during the recession (we promoted the library as a free resource) and declined when the economy improved. Registrations have now returned to pre-recession numbers.
- Though recent circulation numbers have declined slightly, they remain firmly above pre-recession levels.
- We lead the state in Circulation Per Capita, yet are 2nd to the last in operating income – we accomplish much with very little (our materials budget was also 2nd to the last in the state).
- Since 1951, the population has slightly more than doubled; circulation has increased by more than six times.

- In 2008, e-resources made up only 1% of our circulation; currently they are 10%. We are doing well in meeting the Strategic Plan goal of providing access to high demand e-resources – Zinio, Tumblebooks, and NW Anytime Library.
- FTE staff was at a high of 47 in 2001; during the recession we dropped to 41.3 in 2009; currently we are at 45.2.
- We also lead the state in Visits Per Capita while our FTE Per 10,000 Population is 2nd from the bottom.

Pam concluded that this does not completely explain the slight decline in current statistics, but does put them in perspective.

**Strategic Planning:** Outreach Committee: Tom met with Terry Bornemann and plans to meet with his other council contacts again before budget talks begin. Faye has set up a meeting with Michael Lilliquist. Rachel and Marilyn are planning an August tour of the library with Pinky Vargas, Roxanne Murphy and Cathy Lehman.

Concerning a Children's Department Advisory group, Pam reported that Bethany Hoglund, Head of Youth Services, has a good rapport with patrons; they often provide feedback and advice. Currently there is not staff resources, or perhaps need, to develop an advisory group. We have a Facebook page and an e-newsletter focused on parents of young kids to help build community support.

It was suggested we contact the neighborhood associations requesting to include their email lists to receive our e-newsletters. We could also request a library link on their websites. Julie Guy, from the Cordata Neighborhood Association, commented that they would love to do this.

Tom and Rachel brainstormed ideas for the upcoming Library Card Campaign in September, including using social media, a table at Barkley Haggan and the Saturday market and having the library van visit the schools. Pam added that we are developing a pre-movie advertisement for Regal Cinema. Other ideas are a presence at sports field, such as the Northwest Soccer Park, or at popular food trucks – find good new venues to pop up. Trustees can send other ideas to Wendy, who will compile a list to forward to staff who are implementing the card campaign.

Facilities Committee: Pam thanked all of the board members for attending the joint work session with City Council. The Board felt that everyone did a fine job presenting and the Council asked good questions.

Pam noted that the site that is currently of interest did not have a site review done – at the time of the reviews the site was not available. Pam asked for 2 board member volunteers to complete a site review. Faye and J. offered; Pam will send out a form for them to use.

Pam has asked Janice to update the 2005 Bellingham Public Library Facilities Needs document, inserting current statistical information as well as relevant Strategic Plan elements. This should provide talking points about the need for a new Central Library.

**Library board meetings:** The Board discussed ways to provide more time during the meeting for discussion and questions within a time frame of 2 hours. Ideas presented were provide trustee education materials in the packet with a short meeting presentation; have committee reports included in the packet; and have a timed agenda, either time-specific or with approximate duration.

**Board member reports:** Faye attended the WCLS Board Meeting and reported they are working hard on the South Whatcom temporary closure, hoping to find a solution soon and determine how to avoid a similar situation in the future.

**City Council liaison report:** Jack complimented the Board on their well-prepared presentation to Council. He reported the Council approved the Downtown Plan which includes language concerning the library.

He also reported the Council recently asked the Police Department to turn down a Department of Justice grant they were offered - it involved proprietary software that collects citizen data. The Council felt it was inappropriate for Bellingham.

**Library Director's report:** Pam reported that Facilities commissioned an indoor air quality assessment for the Central Library after receiving complaints from patrons and staff. A report is forthcoming.

A public right-of-way next to the Fairhaven Branch parking lot is scheduled to be worked on the week of July 21. It should not impact public parking during open hours.

Pam distributed the 2013 BPL Annual Report – there were 2 slight revisions from the copy distributed last month.

The library is having a joint All Staff Learning Day with WCLS at Bloedel Donovan. We will be closed until 2:00 p.m. on Friday, December 5. This coincides with the Friends December book sale, but we will have a security attendant on site to have the building open for the sale.

**Meeting adjourned** at 6:22 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – August 19, 2014** at the Central Library, 210 Central Ave, Bellingham, Washington – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees