

Bellingham Public Library



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees February 21, 2017 – Central Library 3:30 p.m.

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Library Board of 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: J. Gordon, Rachel Myers, Tom Barrett and Rick Osen

Library Staff: Nancy Kerr, Beth Farley, Bethany Hoglund, Jennifer VanderPloeg, Janice Keller

Others Present: April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of BPL

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Chair, J. Gordon.

Approve/modify agenda: Rachel Myers moved to approve the agenda. Rick Osen seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No public comment.

Mayor Kelli Linville: Chair, J. Gordon, welcomed Bellingham Mayor Kelli Linville. Mayor Kelli noted there are two items in particular she wanted to discuss: Trustee appointments and plans for upcoming studies regarding library needs and sustainable funding. She also wanted to update the Board on city-wide challenges.

- **Trustee appointments:** Mayor Kelli described next steps for considering and appointing Trustees for the full-term vacancy created by Marilyn Mastor's term expiring, as well as for the vacancy created with Tom Barrett's resignation. She described her process for reviewing and forwarding candidates for City Council approval, and described the interview process she held recently with candidates for Planning Commission vacancies. She acknowledged that two candidates were recommended by the Library Board in November, and said she anticipates meeting with these candidates soon.
- **Library Sustainable Funding Study:** Mayor Kelli described her interests in the planned study to determine library needs and sustainable funding strategies, and noted she has \$50,000 earmarked in her budget for a study consultant. Her interests include taking a global look at library needs and sustainable funding, using experienced and objective consultants. She noted a similar study was completed for the Whatcom Museum, and she wants a similar, objective, third-party analysis of our library and what our future library might look like.

- Rick Osen described the efforts underway to identify and adopt library level of service standards, including a standard for materials currently under development. J. Gordon noted that these level of service standards are intended to be part of an objective review, and that the Library Board may choose to use some other resources available to supplement funds budgeted by Mayor Kelli to expand the scope of the consulting work. Rachel Myers asked to receive a copy of the Museum study. Rick noted that he is working with Brian Heinrich in the Mayor's Office to outline a project brief and determine the scope of the study, and said it also ties in with library strategic planning anticipated in 2018.
- **City-wide challenges:** Mayor Kelli described several key funding challenges, including: an estimated \$250 million in capital needs and deferred maintenance on many buildings; costly required environmental cleanups such as those on the waterfront; jail funding needs as well as services to prevent incarceration and recidivism; millions of dollars in unfunded liabilities such as retirement funds for police and fire employees; and millions of dollars for things that had to be set aside during the recession. She also described the results of a recent city survey that identified three key areas of concern for city residents: homelessness, housing and jobs, and she asked that the library be part of the conversation about solutions, especially with our experience with low income and unsheltered people.

With regard to capital needs and deferred maintenance, she noted that sustainable funding models are being looked at within all city departments. She said she is trying to reduce silos and duplication, increase consolidation and explore many ideas such as a levy lid lift, metropolitan park district, cultural levy, and more.

Consent agenda: Rick Osen moved to approve the consent agenda items, which include minutes for January 18, 2017, and the January 2017 financial report and library performance and activity measures. Tom Barrett seconded. Motion carried.

Financial report for 4th quarter 2016: Library Director Nancy Kerr clarified for the Board that the \$42,000 remaining unspent from the Library budget in 2016 is returned to the General Fund, and does not carry over into the Library budget. Rick said he wonders if we can advocate for those funds going toward materials.

Board member reports: Rick Osen said he would be attending the Cornwall Park Neighborhood Association meeting, and noted that public involvement would be an important element of the sustainable funding strategy and strategic planning.

City Council liaison report: City Council member April Barker described the council's work on proposed sanctuary city ordinances and the policy steps the council recently adopted to clarify that the city would not use city resources to enforce federal immigration laws. She noted the council has been discussing when they should get involved in big state and federal issues and how best to make sure important local issues get the focus they need.

Friends of the Bellingham Public Library report: Faye Hill, President of the Friends, reported that March 2-4 is the Friends Spring Book Sale at the Central Library.

Library Director Nancy Kerr's report:

- Nancy noted her first impressions have continued to be correct. We have crowded buildings, limited seating space, and happy patrons!
- Nancy acknowledged several recent donations, including \$1,300 for Children's materials and \$39,650 from the Friends for Collection Support, Display Space materials, Teen programs, Summer Reading, a charging station, and a youth author event. Nancy also noted two donations to our funds at the Whatcom Community Foundation, one being \$170 from the Staff Association in honor of Pam Kiesner.
- Nancy attended the Director's conference held January 19-20 in Federal Way, which included:
 - Importance of lobbying for public libraries, changes in WLA
 - Marketing presentation by Red Rock, from their experience with WCLS
 - Online presentation by EveryLibrary.org
- Nancy noted she is working with Beth Farley and Rick Osen to compile data on comparable libraries and deciding what data to include in the level of services work for materials now underway.
- Other key projects Nancy highlighted include:
 - Core Competencies and Expectations for Library staff
 - Hiring Madeline Sheplor to do ILS training with Beth and Lola
 - Library partnering with the Bellingham/Whatcom League of Women Voter's Forum "Sifting Fact from Fiction." Nancy will provide an introduction on the importance of libraries in a time when we need help discerning fact from fiction.

Gift Funds update: Library Director Nancy Kerr distributed a document listing the various fund totals.

Whatcom Community Foundation distribution: Rachel Myers, on behalf of the Whatcom Community Foundation, described definitions and requirements of each fund in that agency's portfolio. Tom Barrett described his interest in spending the distribution funds on Children's materials. April Barker noted her support for this expenditure. Nancy Kerr described the library's Children's materials as dated. Rick Osen moved to expend the distribution and dedicate it to buying Children's materials during 2017. Tom Barrett seconded. Rachel Myers abstained. Motion carried 3-0-1.

Library Board of Trustee member transitions: In follow up to the discussion with Mayor Kelli about next steps, J. Gordon noted he would contact the Mayor to make sure the process continues to move forward.

Level of Service – Materials: Rick provided background that he had met several times with Pam Kiesner, former director, and Beth Farley, Head of Collection Services, and then with Beth and Nancy Kerr, current director. These conversations helped narrow the focus of these standards to look at materials expenditures per capita and collection size per capita. Nancy Kerr added that library statistics are not consistently collected and reported nation-wide, so

all comparisons are ballpark. She also described how our own stats show our library is "over-performing" and described our numbers as "miracle numbers," noting that "people are checking out everything we've got, regardless of condition." Rick noted that more discussion is planned, with more information and recommendations expected the next and future meetings.

2017 WCLS Interlocal Agreement: Rick Osen moved to approve Whatcom County Rural Library District Mutual Extension of Borrowing Privileges and Services. Tom Barrett seconded. Motion carried.

Action items for next meeting:

- Level of Service Standards – Materials

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – March 21, 2017 at the Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Library Board Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees