

# Bellingham Public Library



## Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees Tuesday, August 15, 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.

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**Board Members Present:** J. Gordon, Rachel Myers, Rick Osen, Rebecca Craven and Jim McCabe

**Library Staff:** Nancy Kerr, Beth Farley, Janice Keller and Wendy Jenkins

**Others Present:** April Barker, City Council Liaison

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**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by Chair, J. Gordon.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Rick Osen moved to approve the agenda. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

**Public comment:** No comments.

**Consent agenda:** Rick pointed out that on page 7, second bullet under Board Member reports, there were actually two separate neighborhood association meetings rather than one, and suggested that removing the second sentence would correct the misconception. Rick inquired about the Omaha Public Library study that was mentioned in the minutes. Nancy received the study from Rebecca and will forward it to board members. Rebecca Craven moved to approve the July 18, 2017 Regular meeting minutes as amended and the July 2017 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Board Trustee reports:**

- While traveling, Jim visited a few interesting libraries: the National Library of Latvia in Riga, Latvia; the University of Helsinki Library in Helsinki, Finland; and the Vaasa City Library in Vaasa, Finland (a Bellingham sister city). The Vaasa City Library is similar to ours in collection size and budget, but has more square footage. Jim recalled that on a sister city visit in 2006 to Port Stephens, Australia, two Bellingham library staff, Bethany Høglund and Sandy Zell, were visiting at the same time.
- Rebecca shared information about WebJunction – a web site dedicated to library staff training.
- J. reported that he and Nancy met with Mayor Kelli. The Mayor is aware of the need for north side services as well as budget constraints for expanded service. J. asked her

if a library presence would be possible in the planned Cordata Park. The Mayor offered to talk with Lesley Bryson, Parks & Recreation Director. Nancy added that the Mayor also understood that we cannot expand services without more staff.

**City Council Liaison report:**

- April reported that affordable housing discussions continue. There is another homeless shelter site being looked at, one that is agreeable to the Lighthouse Mission. Other elements of the discussion are the lack of affordable housing because of a shift away from multi-plex building and no protection for manufactured home parks. Bakerview Mobile Estates alone has over 100 low-income children residing there.

**Friends of BPL report:** No report.

**Library Director's report:**

- We are fully staffed with Security Attendants. Thank you to Beth for all of her excellent training and to Tim for helping our new attendants learn the ropes. After interviewing several well-qualified internal candidates, we have filled our clerk/driver position. The Head of Digital Services position is posted and will close on September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- We are working with WCLS to determine if we want to issue an RFP for a new Integrated Library System (ILS).
- The roofing project is expected to reach "substantial completion" by the end of this month. The skylights are scheduled to go in August 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Fairhaven project is coming to a close. The book drop has been relocated and the changes have resulted in a park area in front. We have received positive feedback on how it looks. The library is now more prominent.
- This year's Washington Library Association Conference will be held in Tacoma the first week in November. An email has been sent to staff to gauge interest. We hope to send several people (carpooling and sharing rooms) to take advantage of this educational opportunity.
- Last Friday, Janice and Nancy met with Cordata residents Julie Guy and Bev Jacobs to tour the north end of Bellingham. It was very information. Julie and Bev know all of the developments and their history. The growth is explosive with limited services available in the area. April added that Council held an emergency meeting concerning school boundaries in order to keep 100 kids out of the overcrowded Cordata Elementary and move them into Alderwood or Parkview.
- The City plans to test the water in all buildings. This is not linked to the person who was protesting water quality outside of the library. The City is first testing buildings with high public use. We will receive the results about a month after the testing.
- We received a \$50 donation this month for the purchase of children's materials.

**2017/2018 Budget:**

- Materials budget history: Nancy handed out copies of our adopted LOS for Library Materials Collection as well as spreadsheets comparing us to other comparable libraries:
  - Dollars spent on collection per capita: we are 25<sup>th</sup> on the list
  - Percent of total expenditures spent on collection: 23<sup>rd</sup> on the list
  - Holdings per capita: 30<sup>th</sup> on the list
  - Circulation: 10<sup>th</sup> on the list

- Collection turnover rate: 1<sup>st</sup> on the list  
Jim added that we are 3<sup>rd</sup> from the bottom for staffing.
- Mid-biennium adjustment requests for 2018 (due August 21):
  - Two years ago we received an increase in pre-processing funds to purchase materials nearly shelf-ready. The increase was not carried over into the 2017/2018 budget. We need to request \$49,000 for 2018 to bring the funds up to the anticipated \$60,000 annual cost. If we do not receive the funds, it could potentially come out of materials.
  - We also need to determine the amount to request for materials. Our spending on materials has been inadequate and this is the main reason circulation has been going down. Rick suggested we use the LOS for Materials to determine the amount and then develop a plan to reach that goal. Nancy added that the Mayor said to ask for what we really need. After discussion, it was determined that to reach the medium, or operational, LOS, \$180,000 would need to be added to the materials budget. This amount could be phased in over 3 years – \$60,000, \$120,000 and \$180,000. Nancy, Rick and Beth will get together and finalize the request.
  - We also need to make official the lost revenue of \$158,000 that resulted from the discontinued Interlocal agreement with WCLS. This was removed from the 2017 budget, but remained in the 2018 budget.

**Sustainable Funding Consultant study update:** Rick reported that BERK is in the process of conducting "informant" interviews. The interview protocol consists of 7 questions:

- 1) How would you describe the Library's role in the Bellingham community?
- 2) What do you think are challenges of the current Library system?
- 3) From your perspective, in what ways do the following indicators meet and/or fall short of service level demands: size, comfort, and location of facilities, hours of operation, types and amounts of materials, meeting room and community space, programs for children, teens and adults, technology?
- 4) How do you see residents' demand for library service changing in the next 10 to 20 years?
- 5) What do you think are the benefits to Bellingham Public Library remaining an independent, City-funded library system? What are the challenges or drawbacks?
- 6) What key issues should the Library and the City consider when evaluating potential, sustainable funding strategies?
- 7) Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your hopes for this study or the future of the Bellingham Public Library?

BERK is planning to attend the September board meeting to provide their initial results.

**Meeting room service project and proposed policy revisions:** Nancy and Janice met with Rebecca and Rachel to look at how other libraries handle meeting room service and they determined that changes are needed. Nancy outlined some of the difficulties with our current policy and procedures which also are outlined in packet documents:

- Safety and security issues
- Significant staff time required
- Scheduling/payment software is expensive and not user-friendly

- Loose rules allow for multiple bookings which limits availability for other groups and for library programming
- Allowing bookings outside of library open hours is a huge security issue

Janice point out that in the packet are proposals for policy and procedure changes that would address many of these issues. Janice added that this is an opening discussion and requested board feedback and direction for moving forward.

Board feedback:

- Current policy/procedure is not manageable, nor sustainable
- It is not the best use of staff time; find a way to implement new policy and procedures that require minimal staff assistance
- There are significant safety and security issues
- City administration is supportive of changes to increase security and to reduce staff time investment
- Board is supportive of exploring working with other departments to help with some/all meeting room rentals; this would fit into City's interest in reducing different departments replicating same services
- Clarify definitions of "commercial use" and "non-commercial use"

Board questions:

- Are other meeting rooms available for commercial uses outside our open hours?
- How do other organization who rent meeting room handle after-hours use?
- Does renting meeting rooms to outside organizations limit library programs?
- What fees are currently collected? (Janice provided spreadsheet)
- What percent of current rentals are "commercial" vs. "non-commercial"?
- Can policy differentiate between Fairhaven and Central?

Nancy and Janice intend to pull in Rebecca and Rachel for at least one more meeting to discuss this further.

**Formation of Board Personnel Committee:** J. invited feedback concerning the formation of a Personnel Committee. Rick commented that WCLS has a board Personnel Committee. After a discussion with Brian Heinrich, he wondered if there could be an advantage to a 2-person committee. The Director reports to the Board, then is put in an awkward position with the Mayor. The board committee could act as a liaison. The committee could also guide director performance reviews. In the past this process was simply reviewing the director's self-evaluation. A 360-degree review could be implemented that would be performed by an outside person who HR hires. Rachel suggested the committee could also be useful as a staff liaison – when J. and Rick attended a staff meeting, it was a good, transparent interaction. Nancy added that she has had personnel committees before and it was helpful with tough staff issues. Jim suggested the committee might also serve as a liaison with HR. The committee could consist of the chairperson and another trustee who has a personnel interest or background. Nancy will check the by-laws to see how to develop a committee.

**Action items for next meeting:**

- BERK Consulting update
- Service to Bellingham's north side

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:10 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – September 19, 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