

# Bellingham Public Library



## Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees Tuesday, February 20, 2018 – Central Library 4:00 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:** Rick Osen, Rachel Myers, Rebecca Craven, Jim McCabe and Vernon Johnson
- Library Staff:** Nancy Kerr, Janice Keller, Jon McConnel and Wendy Jenkins
- Others Present:** April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of BPL; Chris Deile, library patron
- 

**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Rebecca Craven moved to approve the agenda. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Public comment:** Chris Deile explained that it would be beneficial to have volume control on the catalog and database computers (distinguished from the internet computers) for patrons who would like to access the Mango Languages database. Chris also expressed that allowing presentations within the library space makes it hard for other patrons to read and concentrate. He suggested holding presentations in the meeting rooms to honor silence for patrons.

Jon, in response to Chris's first comment, clarified for everyone present that the internet computers are set up for Mango Languages, but use is limited to an hour a day so multiple patrons have access. The catalog and database computers are designed for brief searches for materials or information. Mango Languages is not an intended use at those terminals, so the volume is not set up. Considering the levels of use for all of the computers, it is not recommended to change that setting. Chris questioned why Mango is there if it can't be utilized. Jon acknowledged that he doesn't disagree with Chris's point, but it is complicated to remove one database. Jon said he would look further into this, but can't promise a change will be made. Chris expressed that he is extremely disappointed with the response.

Rick added that this issue is primarily caused because we simply do not have enough computers.

**Consent agenda:** Rachel commented on the significant increase in circulation statistics. Nancy noted that a portion of that is due to auto-renewals. Rick added that holds and visits are both up which adds to the circulation as well. Nancy pointed out the recent boost in Children's materials is also reflected in that increase. Jim commented on the large increase in volunteer hours. Wendy added that this is due to the Friends book sale that was held in January rather than December. Rebecca Craven moved to approve the January 16, 2018 Regular meeting minutes and the January 2018 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rick Osen seconded. Motion carried.

**Board member reports:**

- Jim reported that he did not have home internet service for 3 weeks and he appreciated the use of the WiFi available in the library.
- Rick updated the Board on the Director search process. Kara Turner, an independent HR consultant, has been hired to handle the search. The Personnel Committee, Rick and Rebecca, will be working with her. The rough timeline is to post the position on March 2, for 5 weeks; review the applications by the end of April; hold semi-finalist Skype interviews on April 27; and host on-site finalist interviews on May 21 and 22, with an anticipated start date of July 1. Rick met with the management team last Wednesday and will be attending the All Staff meeting on February 22 to fill staff in on the reasoning and process. Rick provided a little background – when Pam announced her retirement, the City had already notified us that they wanted us to study annexing to WCLS to see if it, or other funding options, would be cost effective. The decision was made to hire an Interim Director until the study was completed. The Sustainable Funding study was accomplished last year, with the determination to retain the Library under City funding and work towards enhancing funding to the Library. So the Board determined it was time to hire a Permanent Director.
- Rick reported that he and Nancy met with the Mayor this morning and let her know we are finishing another Level of Service (LOS) standard. They also talked in general about the budget. Rick added that the budget will be a major topic for the next few board meetings.
- The March meeting will be held the second Tuesday of the month, rather than the third, and it will start at 4:00 p.m.
- Rachel reported that she and her daughter attended the Whatcom READS event *Songs of Action & Compassion with Tracy Spring* at the Firehouse Performing Arts Center. She said it was a moving kickoff to Whatcom READS events and that Janice did a lovely job of hosting. Rick added that there will be lots of events in March, including the author events on March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Rick introduced and welcomed Damani Johnson, our newest Trustee, who was appointed by City Council on February 12.

**City Council liaison report:** April reported that Council approved the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings of a Protections for Residential Tenants ordinance. 3<sup>rd</sup> and final readings will be at next week's meeting, so hopefully those protections can go into effect in June.

When April first joined the Council, the Ban the Box ordinance was put into place. Ban the Box means that when you apply for a position you do not have to check the box about criminal issues – after you have been offered a position, then a background clearance is processed. This method is now being considered by the State of Washington.

Tomorrow high school students are having a walk out at 11:30 a.m. to come to City Hall and protest gun violence. April shared how proud she is of our youth to arrange and navigate this for themselves.

**Friends of BPL report:** Faye was happy to report that the Friends made \$13,000 at last month's book sale. She also reported that their Vice President, Chris, is working, very successfully, at getting a volunteer background check completed for every volunteer. Their policy is that a volunteer cannot work at the May book sale if they have not had a background check. The Friends are also working on training more people to work in the back rooms.

**Library Director's report:**

- Staffing: The ILL position is still in the hiring approval queue and will be advertised when it makes it to the top. We are now looking for an additional Adjunct Librarian which was posted last Friday.
- Building and Operations: Our new delivery truck is here, albeit with a few things, such as the back-up camera, that need to be tweaked. The wrap will also be installed in the near future. The old truck will be available through Fleet when this one has to go in for maintenance, so no more renting the refrigerated trucks when ours is out of service. The elevator job had to be sent out for bid, delaying repair for several more weeks.
- Board Training: Plans are firming up for a joint BPL Board/WCLS Board mini-retreat on Net Neutrality, with Christine Perkins working to find a date with a speaker from UW's I-School, Susan Hildreth. The topic will be "Information Equity: Leadership and Responsibility in the Information Age."
- Budget for 2019-2020: Department Heads received a basic timeline last Thursday for the budget planning process for 2019-2020. The overall City policy priorities will be set by the Mayor. Council will discuss and provide feedback, and then it'll be up to Departments to review and update work plans for submission to the Mayor prior to developing their detailed budget requests. Capital and operating requests will be separated into two different categories.
- Service Animal Policy Clarifications: Having suddenly had a rash of patrons showing up with cats at our libraries, we've been working to clarify our Service Animal policy. Staff may only ask whether or not the animal in question is a pet, and what the animal has been trained to do for the patron. At this point, for library purposes, dogs and miniature horses fall in the service animal category, while cats do not. We have ordered new signs which specify that only service animals, not pets, are welcome in the library. Service animals do not include emotional support animals.
- Signage: We have also ordered signs that clearly indicate that people cannot block our ramp out in front of the library, nor can they block the book returns.
- Foliage around the Library and Safety: Nancy walked completely around the library grounds and the park accompanied by James and two staff members from the Parks Department. We have a lot of overgrown bushes and shrubbery which are contributing to a health and safety hazard, providing hiding places and restroom areas for the homeless, as well as areas littered with needles and trash. Parks staff were very attentive to our needs, and will address them as they can once their seasonal staff returns. In some cases, bushes will be trimmed back drastically or replaced with smaller plants to provide fewer hiding places.

**Whatcom Community Foundation:** Rick suggested postponing decisions about the distribution we have received until the board has been able to discuss budget prioritizing. At this morning's meeting, the Mayor encouraged us to think about capital expenses we might have. Rick and Nancy talked earlier today about perhaps engaging an architectural consultant to provide some ideas. Rachel added that ideas concerning ADA compliance are needed.

**2017 Financial report:** Jim commented that we were right on target for the year.

**Policy update and changes:**

- Meeting Room Policy progress update: Rick, Nancy and Janice met and discussed implementation issues related to the new policy. Nancy commented that it might look like we are being strict, but this policy is in line with what most libraries do. If we allow groups or individuals to schedule every week, we are limiting use for others. The dance groups that use Fairhaven's auditorium have been grandfathered in through 2018. We have been helping other users to find alternate venues. Janice reported that to enable the transition to new software we are currently not accepting new reservations. We are still accommodating library, co-sponsored, and city department events. The goal is to implement the policy and to open the reservation system back up on April 1.
- Rules of Conduct Policy changes: the changes have been sent to the Legal Department for review, then they will be brought to the Board for approval. Nancy pointed out some of the significant changes:
  - Make sure we have a designated Person in Charge (PIC) so if there are any incidents, staff know who that person is
  - Change to the behavior portion applied to meeting room use
  - Camping out in the library expanded to include outside of the building
  - Appropriate behavior of service animals

Jim asked, in relation to the board review appeal process for trespasses that are for 5 years or more, if this happens very often. Nancy responded no – when she asked staff about this they could only recall one time that an appeal was brought to the board.

Rebecca added that she has some questions about the policy and asked Nancy if they could meet. Nancy and Rebecca will arrange a meeting.

**City email account for Trustees discussion:** Jon asked IT if City email accounts were an option for Trustees – the answer was yes, at a cost of \$181.53 per account, per year, for a total of \$907.65. The benefit of a City account is that it would be strictly for board business so that, in the case of a Public Records Request, Trustees would not need to turn over personal email accounts for Legal to review and redact. After discussion, it was decided that it would be good to have a conversation with the Mayor before deciding.

**Level of Service standard, Staff FTE:** The Board has approved three standards so far which establish low/minimal, medium/operational, and high/optimal Levels of Service: Facilities square footage; hours of operation; and materials. All are based on reviews of peer libraries around the state and country with similar sized communities and library services. Currently

we are working on a Staff FTE LOS. In the packet is a draft that Rick and Nancy have developed. Nancy distributed three FTE Comparison spreadsheets (attached):

- 1) FTE per 1000 capita: with a range of 0.4175-1.0672 FTE per 1000 capita, we are at .5589. Per capita was used in the first three standards so is included here, but staffing is complicated – the more use the library has, the more staffing is required, but it is not related to population.
- 2) Visits per FTE 2016 data: with a range of 4,895-17,057 visits per FTE, we top the chart at 17,057.
- 3) Circ per FTE 2016 data: with a range of 6,859-39,355 circs per FTE, we are near the top at 31,961.

With the first three standards we were at the low/minimal level. With this one, at 47.4 FTE, we are not at the suggested low/minimal level of 50 FTE. If someone is sick or on vacation, we cannot fully staff all desks.

Rick explained the goal is to tie them all together to help determine budget priorities so we can show the City how we plan to get to level 2. Rebecca questioned if the draft defines low too low – would another 2.6 staff (to bring the current up to 50) be enough to operate the buildings safely? Nancy responded that we have a list of needed positions, but they have not yet been prioritized. Rick added that we are not implying that low is operational, by definition low is unsuitable. April asked if all of the standards would be interfaced, so that, for example, if we want to get to a certain number of hours, a certain number of FTEs would be required. Rick responded that he envisions another document will interface them as a package. Rebecca suggested wording added to the FTE standard to clarify that it reflects the current level of hours, which are low. It was decided to consider this more and to vote next meeting.

**New Business:**

- April came across a self-assessment organizational tool from the Coalition of Communities of Color. She offered to send it to Nancy to consider if this might be a good subject for a board retreat.

**Action items for next meeting:**

- FTE Staffing LOS – tying into budget discussion

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:41 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – Tuesday, March 13, 2018** at the Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Lecture Room – at 4:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees