

Bellingham Public Library



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, October 23, 2018 – Central Library Lecture Room
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: Rick Osen, Rachel Myers, Rebecca Craven, Jim McCabe and Vernon Johnson

Library Staff: Rebecca Judd, Beth Farley, Bethany Hoglund, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins

Others Present: April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of BPL; Julie Guy and Beverly Jacobs, Cordata Neighborhood Association; Amy Glasser and Vanessa Duran, members of the public

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

Approve/modify agenda: Jim McCabe moved to approve the agenda. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: Amy Glasser, a social worker who works with clients who are homeless and who have mental health and physical disabilities, wanted to take the opportunity to educate and appeal to the Board to reconsider the policy to not allow crated emotional support cats in the library. A crated cat cannot be left in a tent or tied up outside. An emotional support animal cannot be trained in the three skills required for service animals, but they provide therapy and support by calming, being there, and providing structure by requiring care. If the American Disabilities Act allows mental health as a criteria for disability, then it is a concern that people with a mental health issue cannot access the library if they have a crated emotional support cat with them. They lose all of the great services the Library offers. They can't read, they can't print things out, they can't go to any of the classes. If you are homeless there is no place you can leave an emotional support cat.

Vanessa Duran, a recently homeless patron, also appealed to the Board to reconsider the policy. Vanessa's particular set of mental and physical disabilities is best served by a cat. Her cat provides stability, calming and alerts her to PTSD triggers. She keeps him in a clean, secure crate. Under the Fair Housing Act a cat qualifies as a type of service animal or as an emotional support animal. If she had a home, she wouldn't need to take him everywhere.

Beverly Jacobs, a member of the Cordata Neighborhood Association, feels that the Cordata neighborhood, which next year will be the largest neighborhood in Bellingham with 6000 people, deserves equitable services from the library. They have no place for a library, no place that a child can go, no place to work on a computer. She is fighting for recognition that this large group of people is not being served.

Julie Guy, from Cordata, stated that the Association has been working on this issue since 2005 and they are not giving up – one day there will be a branch library. They have found that there are businesses in the area that are willing to donate space for a branch. She is aware there is a 5-year comprehensive plan underway and requests that Cordata be on that plan. They would also like to be involved in the plan for a 500 square foot library presence in the Learning Center currently being built by Whatcom Community College. Julie talked to the Head of the Learning Center and he was not aware of the square footage designated for the public library. Beverly added that currently the library delivers holds for pick-up twice a week to WCC, but WCC is closed 20% of the year – they are requesting equitable service. Rick added that the Library Board has not been consulted about the plans for the Learning Center.

Consent agenda: Vernon Johnson moved to approve the September 18, 2018 Regular meeting minutes and the September 2018 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report: Rick commended Rebecca Judd for her well-received presentation to the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Council meeting. The rest of Rick's reporting will be covered under other agenda items.

Board member reports: Jim commended Bethany Hoglund and Deborah Brewer for participating in the Mount Baker Volcano Eruption Exercise.

Vernon encouraged everyone to attend the Ralph Munro Institute Seminar featuring Keynote Speaker David Bachman, from the UW's Jackson School of International Studies, at 7:00 p.m. today. Tomorrow there will be two panel discussion: *Global Citizens' Activism* at 2:30 p.m. and *Trade Policy in the Era of Trump* at 4:30 p.m.

Rebecca Craven attended the Humanities WA fund raiser. For this event, three authors were asked to produce short stories – “bedtime stories” – which they read aloud while attendees had dinner. Rebecca found it interesting and took the opportunity to talk about the library.

Friends of BPL report: Faye was pleased to report that at the last book sale they raised \$14,400 – the largest amount to date. She emphasized what a hard-working group of volunteers they have. Rick commented that their hard work is very much appreciated by the Board as well as the patrons.

National Friends of Libraries Week, October 21-27, 2018: Rick read *A Resolution Commending the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library* and then presented it, along with the *Mayoral Proclamation*, to Faye Hill, President of the Friends organization.

City Council liaison report: April commented that she appreciated the public comment on the issue of homelessness and emotional support animals – this can be a barrier to library services.

Council had their budget meeting – things are going well for the Library. April reiterated that developing the LOS documents was critical – they provide a clear vision of what the Library is trying to accomplish. The increased funding is the first step and April thinks the next step is equity of service, especially for our most-needy community members. April looks forward to working with the Library on this process. April commented that she sent the Trustees a document called *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*, hoping it will help with the process of looking at the Library's structure and organization.

April added that there isn't enough money in the budget to handle the homelessness issue this winter – this could impact the Library.

Library Director report: The ILS migration has been front and center with site visits from Ill Polaris, as well as a deep dive into settings and configurations.

The Library welcomed ten new pages in October to assist with materials handling – checking in, pulling holds, and re-shelving. With a circulation count of over 1.3 million items a year, this is no small task.

As Jim mentioned, Bethany and Deborah Brewer represented the Library in the 2018 Mount Baker Volcano Eruption Exercise this past week. The Library can play a part in public awareness.

The *Your Library at a Glance* document that is in the packet has good information when Trustees are asked questions about the library. The document is also posted on the Library's website.

Rebecca shared a book that was written by a group of teen girls and given to Teen Services Librarian, Jennifer Lovchik. First Rebecca read a statement from Jennifer:

"Visions is an in-patient treatment facility, located in Bellingham, for girls ages 14 through 17. During their stay at the facility, the girls have no access to technology or media other than approved films (watched as a group) and approved books. I visit 15-17 of these girls every 3 weeks to talk about what books they are reading and tap into what resonated with them in the books. I take questions and I return with answers at the next visit. I bring 5-8 books, mostly advance reader copies donated by Village Books, to add to their library. I also bring candy and read out loud to them. My visits to Visions, which started in May of this year, are a highlight of my job, and seeing the girls connect with and get excited about books and about my visits makes my heart soar!"

Rebecca then read a few excerpts from the book the girls created:

"Here (at Visions), I don't often go outside. Books allow me to travel without leaving. Thank you so much for coming, I look forward to it so often!"

"The candy was an addition, however, books are the better treat! Books open doors to new worlds and create a lot of room for vivid imagination."

"The books you bring help bring me to another world and take my mind off hard things. They make a huge difference in my recovery. Thank you so much!"

2019-2020 budget process overview & Gift Fund review: As April mentioned, the budget is being presented to council by each of the departments. Rick pointed out the Library Department document in the packet that was the basis of Rick and Rebecca's presentation to Council – it provides a brief overview and Rebecca provided narrative background information.

The draft budget funds both operational and capital increases for the Library:

- Operational:
 - The increased cost of the new ILS
 - Materials sorter (2020)
 - 1.5 FTE staff positions
 - Materials increases in 2019 and 2020
- Capital:
 - Funding for the Library, in conjunction with PW, to make building improvements on the main floor to improve access for the public and increase materials handling efficiency. These improvements are the first step towards meeting our LOS standards. If funded, the next step would be an RFQ for an architectural firm to do the design work, followed by a contractor bid process (2019), then the work could begin in 2020. Jon added that an RFP process would be required for the materials sorter.

Rebecca provided an overview of their Council presentation, mentioning the high use of the Library, the LOS standards for staffing, materials, facilities and hours, the Berk Sustainable Funding Study, the ILS system with WCLS, and the homelessness training all staff have received. For the work plan portion, Rebecca talked about the capital project at the library (pending approval), implementing the ILS system, working closely with community groups, stakeholders and diverse voices for the Strategic Plan, and implementing the LOS increases for staffing, materials and facilities.

Rick continued that the capital budget does not include any money for furnishings. There are a variety of funds – a Capital fund at Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF), funds remaining in the Planning bucket of the gift fund after we pay RMC for pre-design work, this year's distribution from the WCF Endowment Fund, and a recent \$35,000 donation – which Rick suggested should be held onto until we see how the space planning project works out. There might also be a need for funds for the Strategic Planning process. The Board agreed.

Rachel commented that this project has potential for fund-raising because it is an exciting, impactful project. She also asked for clarification about what a materials sorter does. Jennifer responded that the sorter will check the items in and then will sort them into bins for shelving/holds/delivery/etc. The sorter can also be programmed for a more refined, second

sort, for example, sort Children's items into fiction/non-fiction/early reader. This then frees up time for staff to more efficiently fill holds and re-shelve items.

Jim commented that if you look over the budget for the last 5 years, this is a significant increase. This is a result of having a good story to tell – the Berk study, the presentation to Council last year and the LOS standards are all coming together as a really good story. April added that there is momentum to take it to the next phase – how will we distribute equitably, will it be brick and mortar, or mobile as we reach out to the edges of new annexations.

Facilities Committee report: Rick reported that the committee met with the M-team and PW and determined it was best to consolidate the proposed capital funds and focus on the main floor.

Rebecca Judd added that the group came to a decision on 3 things:

- 1) To focus funding on reconfiguration/remodel of the main floor at Central
- 2) Determined the project goals and cost estimates were closely enough aligned that there wasn't the need to prioritize or eliminate elements, with the exception of:
- 3) Wanting to re-introduce the idea of a main floor public restroom and an AC unit on the main floor as part of the next phase of the project

As to timeline, we are probably looking at an RFQ for an architect this fall or winter (PW would be spearheading this phase); in 2019, completing the design work, going out for bid and hiring a contractor; followed by construction sometime in 2020. The sorter RFP would be in February after the migration is complete.

RMC Architects will be providing a final report summarizing the project goals before the end of November.

Integrated Library System (ILS) presentation & update: Jon presented a PowerPoint presentation titled *ILS 101*. Jon started from the angle of 'What does a library do?', because the ILS system is involved in so many parts of what a library does. The elements of running a library are quite similar from when libraries began to present day. Then and now we:

- Get stuff – acquisitions
- Keep track – cataloging
- Newspapers & magazines – serials (a separate process)
- Make items searchable – public catalog
- Know our patrons – patron records
- Loan items – circulation
- Report on these processes

The difference between then and now is that, in the beginning, all of these processes were done manually (handwritten) and now they are done electronically through the ILS system.

Jim asked if WCLS is separate or part of this same system? Jon responded that we share a single database between the two systems – shared catalog and patron records, but there are code indicators for ownership.

Rachel asked where Libby – the digital materials app – fits in. Jon responded that Libby is not in the ILS, but talks to the ILS through authentication.

Jon said that staff are currently testing the online database and the training team is solidifying the staff training schedule.

Strategic plan update: Rachel reported that the pre-planning committee met and started to scope the project. Rebecca Judd is working with a Capstone student who is researching 12-15 other library strategic plans, including libraries who have used the *Libraries Transforming Communities* framework. The committee has identified that they want the final product to be a compact, concise tool that can be frequently accessed, rather than something that fits in a 3-ring binder. The committee wants to be very thoughtful before reaching out to the community and stakeholders. Rick added that they are considering a Board retreat/work session after the first of the year.

2019 regular Library Board of Trustees meeting schedule: The proposed schedule in the packet is based on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. Rick added that the schedule could be subject to change. Jim McCabe moved to approve the schedule as proposed. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

2019 City of Bellingham holidays & other library closures: Rick pointed out this is for informational purposes only and reminded Trustees that the January 2 closure for all staff training was approved at last month's meeting.

New Business:

- Rick asked if all Trustees were getting comfortable with their City email accounts – there could be time sensitive communications and he wants to make sure they are read in a timely manner.

Action items for next meeting:

- Review policies related to service animals in light of today's public comment. Rick and Rebecca Judd will review some options, look at how frequently this is an issue, and consult the American Disabilities Act.

Meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – November 27, 2018 at the Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Library Lecture Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees