

Bellingham Public Library



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, May 21, 2019 – Fairhaven Branch Fireplace 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 and Jim McCabe
- Board Members Absent:** Rebecca Craven and Vernon Johnson
- Library Staff:** Rebecca Judd, Bethany Hoglund, Janice Keller, Jon McConnel and Jennifer Vander Ploeg
- Others Present:** April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of BPL; Bill Fly, citizen
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Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

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

Public comment: Bill Fly encouraged the library to move newspapers at the Central Library from ground-level to higher shelves to ease accessibility and to consider replacing the San Francisco Chronicle subscription with the LA Times. Additionally, he voiced disappointment that sometimes the NY Times issues are missing; encouraged Fairhaven to have more periodicals such as the Atlantic and Economist; and overall, he uses the library a lot and feels as if it is a wonderful asset to the community.

Consent agenda: Rachel Myers moved to approve the April 16, 2019 Regular meeting minutes and the April 2019 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report: Rick thanked the members of the Dewey Decimators (Jon, Anthony and Howard) for their performance at the Whatcom Literacy Council's Trivia Bee. Library Trustees should've received an invitation to the Mayor's Boards and Commission Reception on June 12; he encouraged everyone who is able to attend. Rick thanked Faye Hill and the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library for their annual meeting festivities in April where Rebecca Judd and Public Services Librarian Katie Bray presented. Rebecca and Rick attended their monthly meeting with Mayor Kelli, which also included Forrest Longman from Finance. Rick and Rebecca felt encouraged to put forward a staffing proposal for the midterm adjustment and

are currently working on a possible request which will be brought to Board at the June meeting. This proposal will also incorporate the elimination of overdue charges, which the Mayor supports.

Board member reports: Jim McCabe reported that at the Cordata Neighborhood meeting there was a presentation regarding North Cordata, a new housing development just north of the Kline Road. The developer talked about the possibility of incorporating a commercial and/or community area into the plans. A visual representation of a possible library garnered much enthusiasm from the attendees. Jim also reported there is a Community Conversation around the topic of Emergency Preparedness in June.

City Council liaison report: April Barker reported that:

- Council completed a retreat that addressed the topic of homelessness and restorative versus punitive measures for incarceration. April was hopeful this retreat would be a deep dive into the City's capital facilities needs but other topics were addressed.
- Council is working to bring food access to the level of infrastructure in the Comp Plan.
- Work is being done to preserve as many manufactured housing sites as possible. Currently there are over 900 manufactured homes in the city.
- April also gave a reminder that the library was in Mayor Kelli's top 5 commitments for the year.

Friends of BPL report: The book sale begins tomorrow, May 22!

Library Director report: Rebecca reported that there is success for libraries in the State budget that includes investments to increase access and coverage of broadband, funding for an upgrade to the State Archives building and allocations for capital funds for libraries. For 2019-2021, \$12 million is allocated; Rebecca recommends we track this for BPL's future capital projects as both the House and Senate agreed that future capital funding should remain at the \$10 million per biennium level.

The Fountain Community Church will not host a women's shelter during the winter of 2019/2020. Planning for winter 2019/2020 is underway city and county wide.

Winners of the Sue C. Boynton poetry contest were celebrated at an event and the winner's poetry will be placed on plaques on display on the Central Library grounds.

2018 Washington Public Libraries Annual Report: Jon McConnell reported that the state requests all public libraries in Washington compile and submit data annually. The data is then compiled at the state level and reported at the federal level. The data BPL submitted is included in the board packet. Of note, Jon highlighted that there was a large increase of account holders from last year due to the new ConnectED accounts. The data in the submitted report will be used for BPL's 2018 statistical data and can be used to compare BPL with other libraries in Washington. Additionally, BPL subscribes to PLDS (Public Library Data Survey) which compiles public library statistics nationally; we can use the service to find comparable metrics with other libraries.

Facilities Committee report: Rick reported the contract between the City and the architect has not yet been signed. Work is being done on the sorter project; the planning will occur in 2019 and the sorter will be purchased in 2020.

Strategic Planning update: Rachel reported that she and Rick met with Rebecca Judd and Janice. Community Conversations are continuing to be held and the focus is on themed conversations. She reviewed the success goals developed by the board earlier this year, specifically: How are we talking to community members we have not talked to before? And are we talking with diverse voices? One bonus of the Community Conversations is that new partnerships have been forged and/or strengthened in the process. Rachel also applauded Rebecca, Janice and the rest of the team that is making Community Conversations happen, as it is a huge effort. At the end of the conversations, the facilitators and notetakers will regroup and theme all the responses.

Rebecca echoed kudos to Janice for her exemplary project management with a short timeline. The public data we're receiving is very rich and meaningful.

Janice reported that, as of yesterday, we've spoken with about 195 people, and this number changes daily. The facilitation team is made up of 14 people and Janice estimates we will have talked with 300 people by the end of the process. There have been a few challenges, which include having a few meetings with no attendance and a few sessions where citizens came to talk about specific library items. Both are to be expected and adjustments to the facilitator's schedule were made to help incorporate specific library ideas.

Janice provided some examples of aspirations, concerns and summary statements gathered thus far:

ASPIRATIONS:

- Safe and scenic places to walk and recreate
- Sense of belonging and purpose for everyone
- Affordable living and greater job availability

CONCERNS:

- Veil of progressiveness in Bellingham that doesn't appear to be true
- Inequity in Bellingham
- Affordability
- Lack of resources for marginalized communities
- Lack of inclusion and intersectionality

Each facilitation/notetaker team creates a conversation summary. Here are some examples:

- People want to feel safe in their community and that their kids are safe in their schools, but they're concerned that violence, crime and racism prevent that. As people talk more about those concerns, they talk about teachers not believing their kids in school, the fear of their children losing trust in educators and getting involved with drugs and weapons, and that families don't have health care options or basic information about nutrition. They believe we need to focus more on police visibility in the community for security and for there to be a rehabilitative rather than punitive focus at school. If

pastors, the mayor and parent groups within schools played a part in those actions, folks would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.

- People want a community that is affordable, safe, environmentally sustainable and economically strong, and that is welcoming, diverse and proactive in fostering community. But they are concerned that rapid growth and economic shifts have led to imbalances in resources that leave some people behind. As people talk more about those concerns, they talk specifically about lack of affordable housing, food and other basic needs, climate change, increased polarization, and lack of information and connection between groups. They believe that lack of community-building makes weathering change difficult, and that we need to invest time and resources to strengthen our connections with each other. If various civic groups, government and non-profit agencies, and elected officials played a leadership role in informing and connecting people, folks would more likely trust the effort and step forward.

Janice added that timeframe has been adjusted to accommodate the completion of all the Community Conversations. The updated timeline is:

- June/July: Complete the Community Conversations
- August: Present Community Conversations report and research packet to the Board.
- October 8 is a tentative date for a Board work session to complete the analysis and identify strategic directions.
- November Board Meeting: Review draft of strategic plan
- December Board Meeting: Review second draft of strategic plan
- January 2020 Board Meeting: Adopt the new strategic plan

Rates & Fees structure: Rebecca Judd reminded us that at the April Board meeting, the quorum voted in favor of the library working with WCLS regarding eliminating fines and fees. There is support from Mayor Kelli for this initiative. The Board Policy Committee met with BPL staff to discuss the topic and process, and the Management Team will use the May 22nd Joint Management Team meeting with WCLS to work through some collaborative project details such as timeline and communications strategy. Rebecca reminded trustees that this topic will be a regular agenda item for the next few months as we aim for implementation at the end of the calendar year.

2019 Summer Reading for Adults, Teens and Kids: Bethany Hoglund reported that Summer Reading for all ages begins June 1st! Summer Reading is again a joint BPL and WCLS collaboration in bingo-card format. There are four separate cards: early childhood, kids, teens and adults. All community members are encouraged to read, or listen to books, this summer and earn fun prizes.

New Business:

- April Barker shared she recently learned about website accessibility and was unaware of some of the needs from community members. She inquired about overall accessibility of the library website and what barriers are present to ensuring full accessibility, especially for people with visual impairments. Janice reported that when the website was built in 2016, the accessibility features were identified, and some were completed; those not completed are due to a lack of staff time and monetary

resources. Jon added that our library catalog vendor puts a very strong emphasis on accessibility.

Action items for next meeting:

- No action items.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting June 18, 2019 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