

Bellingham Public Library



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, August 20, 2019 – 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, Rebecca Craven, Jim McCabe and Vernon Damani Johnson

Library Staff: Rebecca Judd, Bethany Hoglund, Janice Keller, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg, Suzanne Carlson-Prandini and Wendy Jenkins

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

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

Approve/modify agenda: Rebecca Craven moved to approve the agenda. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No comments.

Consent agenda: Rick provided an update to the article in the packet about Seattle Public Library (SPL) proposing to eliminate overdue fines – SPL's August 6 property tax levy was passed by a resounding 76%. The approved levy is for 7 years, starting in 2020, and it allows SPL to eliminate overdue fines as well as increase services and improve facilities. In early 2017 when we started work on the Sustainable Funding study, we invited Marcellus Turner, SPL Executive Director, and Andrew Chanse, Spokane Public Library Executive Director, to share their information and experience about sustainable funding. Both library systems opted for a levy to supplement city General Funds. Rebecca offered a round-up of other election results – Spokane County passed a new operating levy by just 53%; Pend Oreille County voted to restore an operations levy; College Place was annexed into the Walla Walla system.

Jim noted that, in the performance and activity measures, circulation is up yet holds activity is down. Jennifer Vander Ploeg explained that Horizon and Polaris count some things differently, so we are not able to replicate a straight across measure for holds activity. Jim also clarified that the McKay's Taphouse expense for Teen programming was for pizza and not beverages. Rebecca Craven noted that, in the YTD financial report, Services are at 78%, while we are only 59% of the year. Rebecca Judd explained that certain expenses, in this case Polaris, are invoiced and paid for once a year rather than monthly. Jim McCabe

moved to approve the July 16, 2019 Regular meeting minutes and the July 2019 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report: Rick reported that he will be out of town next month and Rachel will chair the September board meeting. He reminded the Trustees that we have called for a Special Meeting on October 8 for Strategic Planning. Rick and Rebecca have invited Mayor Kelli to the November board meeting.

Board member reports: Damani shared that he is also on the Whatcom Human Rights Task Force and, in response to some malicious harassment incidents occurring in Whatcom County, he wanted to share an Op-Ed article from the August 9th edition of the Bellingham Herald that Damani and WWU colleagues wrote, '*No community is safe from atrocities borne of hatred, racism ... and divisive politics*' (See Attachment #1. All attachments are located at the end of the minutes). Damani also distributed a copy of the WHRTF *Declaration Against Threats of Violence and Hate Speech in Whatcom County* (See Attachment #2). He urged everyone, in light of strategic planning and the language of equity and inclusion from the Community Conversations, to go to the WHRTF website and sign the declaration.

Jim commented that Lynn Sterbenz, the Office of Emergency Management Manager, is going to be facilitating meet & greet meetings between a variety of emergency management organizations and, after participating in one of our Community Conversations, she has decided to use the Community Conversation questions to gather information at the meetings.

Janice reminded everyone that the Regular October board meeting date was changed from October 15 to October 22.

City Council liaison report: April encouraged everyone to watch the afternoon meetings of the Justice Committee and the Planning Committee. They had visitors speak on the potential of an anti-hate campaign. City Council is interested in seeing what it would look like to have programming focused on first learning about whiteness and decentering whiteness in a predominately white community. Our youth are becoming more racially diverse. April suggested there are opportunities for the library to partner with organizations such as the WHRTF.

The Generations Forward work, through the health department, is progressing towards a possible children's levy in 2020 or 2021. April encouraged the library to stay involved in this work. Bethany confirmed that Julie Mauermann, Children's Specialist, is actively involved with this group.

April has repeatedly heard from citizens that they are not getting the information they need. The Council is supportive of the City improving communications with the public. One suggestion April heard was for the Library to be the hub for City communications. Jim added that, along those lines, Seattle Public Library has a course offered on fake news.

Friends of BPL report: Faye announced that the next book sale starts on September 25.

Library Director report: Rebecca reported that procedures are in place for the non-commercial use of the meeting rooms. This project involved many staff members and Rebecca thanked Janice for spearheading the effort. Janice explained that 3 rooms – the Lecture Room, the Fireplace Room, and the Northwest Room – are now available for non-commercial use, free of charge, during library open hours. There is a phone number and an email address that people can use to place reservation requests. Organizations are allowed usage once a month and can place reservations up to 3 months in advance.

Bethany reported that a longstanding patron contacted her to inform her that his wife, Karen Gilda, had passed away and they wanted to direct all memorials to the Children's Library. The Karen Gilda Memorial Fund has been created and we have received over \$1,000 in donations so far.

American Library Association (ALA) Conference report: Suzanne Carlson-Prandini, Public Services Librarian, attended the annual ALA Conference in Washington D.C. this past June. She provided a visual presentation highlighting some of the information she gleaned from the conference (See Attachment #3 at the end of the minutes for *Suzanne's slides on ALA 2019*). Suzanne thanked the Friends of the Library for funding that made this opportunity possible and expressed that "This conference did everything a conference should do: It upheld the values of the profession, underscoring how those are mirrored in the values of our culture; it challenged attendees to consider whether library user experiences across the board live up to those values; and it offered ideas on how to address any identified gaps between our ideals and experience."

Publisher changes in digital purchasing models: Rick pointed out that there are four articles in the packet concerning this topic and he also mentioned that there has always been some tension between libraries and publishers as a publisher's business model is different from a library's service model. Digital items are different in that a copy isn't owned but has access rights. Rick suspects that the general public do not realize that libraries pay more per digital copy than an individual pays. Rebecca reported that Cascadia Weekly will be running the editorial, that is included in the packet, in tomorrow's edition. Rebecca thanked Janice and Mary Vermillion, WCLS Community Relations Manager, for their work on the article. The purpose of the article is three-fold: 1) raise awareness about pricing; 2) inform patrons they will experience delays and provide the reasons why; and 3) a call to action – show support by getting and using a library card. Also included in the packet is a copy of the letter, signed by numerous Washington State library directors, that was sent to Macmillan Publishers concerning the changes the publisher is putting into place on November 1. Jon asked if ALA is considering trying to get Congress to apply first sale doctrine to digital goods. Rebecca does not know if that is part of the national campaign. Patron questions can be directed to Rebecca.

Facilities Committee report: Rick pointed to the timeline included in the packet. There have been two major project meetings. We are currently in the Schematic Design phase which involves fine-tuning the design developed during the space study. Additional money was included in the budget for the purpose of adding two gender-neutral restrooms to the main floor, which requires some space adjustments. Space decisions are being finalized this month and then the more detail-focused Design Development phase will begin and go until October. The Documentation phase, scheduled to begin early in October, takes the design

and turns it into bid specifications. Permitting will begin in December, with bids following in January.

Rick is hopeful that these changes will be improvements for both patrons and staff.

Rebecca Judd added that we will have a series of public meetings in the fall to provide updates about the scope of the project.

Jon reported that the Automated Materials Handling System team visited Coquitlam Public Library City Center Branch to see their MK Solutions materials sorter in action – it is a neat, quiet machine, with robust hardware, and just-adequate service response. They were able to offer contract development advice from their experience.

Strategic Planning update: Janice first outlined the timeline and next steps:

- August & September: finalize the Community Conversations report and curate library trend spotting materials which will inform our strategic plan – build reading 'packets' for trustees (as well as management team and Council liaison).
- September board meeting: trustees will receive a list of possible strategic directions to consider; Jen Vander Ploeg will present on library usage trends; an overview of decision-making process will be provided.
- October 8 Special work session: review and refine a list of possible strategic directions.
- October 22 board meeting: discuss, prioritize and finalize the list of strategic directions.
- Early November: review strategic directions with the Mayor, City Council and some Department Heads.
- November board meeting: consider any final changes to the strategic directions.
- December board meeting: final draft of Strategic Plan.
- January 2020 board meeting: adopt Strategic Plan.

Janice reported that a curated list of relevant reading has been put together including national articles and reports and local/regional reports that describe the demographics and needs of our community. The reading materials have been divided into three groups: top priority (must reads); 2nd tier important and interesting (please read if you have time); and 3rd tier if you have time and you are really interested.

In addition to the above reading materials, Janice will email Trustees a draft of the Community Conversations report which she is hoping to finalize by the end of the month. Comments and suggestions can be directed to Janice or Rebecca Judd.

Janice then introduced a PowerPoint presentation – *Community Conversations Report to the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees August 2019* (See Attachment #4 at the end of the minutes) – calling the process a remarkable experience with interesting, rewarding and inspiring conversations that will provide important context for our strategic plan.

Budget updates: Rebecca Judd reported that budget modification requests are due this Friday. We have two proposals: a new Children's Librarian position and the elimination of library fines. The Mayor will prioritize the proposals and share them with City Council in October.

New Business: No new business.

Action items for next meeting:

- Strategic plan
- Facilities update
- Policy to review – Library Accounts Receivable

Executive Session: The Board went into Executive Session at 4:57 p.m. for the Annual Performance Review of the Library Director. The meeting was called back into Regular session at 5:20 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – September 17, 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

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: *'No community is safe from atrocities borne of hatred, racism ... and divisive politics'*
- Attachment #2: *Whatcom Human Rights Task Force Declaration Against Threats of Violence and Hate Speech in Whatcom County*
- Attachment #3: *Suzanne's slides on ALA 2019*
- Attachment #4: *Community Conversations Report to the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees August 2019*

<https://www.bellinghamherald.com/opinion/article233665607.html?fbclid=IwAR2PvwY1kXt-VdNUaScQGPwN5IJBbDm-PegCXhLwcETMT2zU-iaax9wLuWw>

‘No community is safe from atrocities borne of hatred, racism ... and divisive politics’

BY LARRY ESTRADA, VERNON D. JOHNSON, KAREN DADE AND VICTOR NOLET FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

AUGUST 09, 2019 05:00 AM, UPDATED AUGUST 09, 2019 06:59 PM

The events that transpired during the past week in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, reiterate the fact that no community is safe from atrocities borne of hatred, racism, provocative media and divisive politics that feed off of xenophobic fears.

Over the past few years we have seen a gradual deterioration of moral leadership in this country that has allowed for the vilification of citizens and immigrants, and demonization of political opponents along racial lines, while provoking the flames of racial hatred and fear long embedded in the roots and history of our nation.

Some of us can still remember the days of rampant Ku Klux Klan activity, the John Birch Society and the American Nazi Party, as well as national leaders such as George Wallace, Strom Thurmond and Richard Nixon.

What few of us would have fathomed is that we are now seeing the open return to that same type of leadership gripping the nation in fear and trauma.

This type of hatred has additionally wedded itself to decades of failed efforts at the national level to attain any type of meaningful control of gun ownership by Congress or the Supreme Court. This has set off an era of mass mayhem in a broad spectrum of communities across our country.

What we are now witnessing is a country that has the moral leadership and courage of an ostrich that consistently sticks its head in the sand as the slaughter continues.

We might have assumed that Bellingham and Whatcom County are long past this sort of hatred and ethnic animosity. However, recent events have proven that we are as susceptible as any other community in the country.

Recently, a noted African American educator in our community was threatened and verbally assaulted while eating her dinner at a local marketplace. The assault was predicated upon the fact that she is African American. The store responded quickly, and had a safety protocol in place. In addition, they offered to stand as a protective shield until police arrived to apprehend this person before he could act upon his impulses. This speaks volumes of what a community can do to assure safety for all of its members.

However, awareness, intolerance, and safety mechanisms were not in place for other recent incidents such as when a young Latina woman, a legal resident, was driving to work on a local street, was pulled up to by an elderly white man in a pick-up, given the one-finger salute, and told to "Go back to Mexico, you scum."

And on July 27 in Ferndale we witnessed a float in the "Old Settlers Grand Parade" flying the Confederate flag. Along the street, fliers were posted by the white nationalist "Patriotic Front" calling upon citizens to "Keep America American. Report any and all illegal aliens. They are criminals."

As community members of color we could share more stories that illustrate the many racial assaults as well as micro-aggressions that are commonplace in Bellingham.

Whether predicated by racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism or xenophobia, we are held hostage.

Community members and local institutions must be vigilant in recognizing the potential for hatred seething in our midst and reporting such evidence to law enforcement and elected officials. Together we must "join hands against hate!"

This commentary was written by recent or current faculty of Western Washington University: Larry Estrada, professor emeritus, Fairhaven College; Vernon D. Johnson, professor of Political Science; Karen Dade, professor of Secondary Education; and Victor Nolet, professor of Secondary Education.



Declaration Against Threats of Violence and Hate Speech in Whatcom County

Whereas, the revised Code of the State of Washington defines a hate crime as a criminal offense against a person or property motivated by an offender's bias against a group or persons due to their "race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, or sensory handicap" (RCW 9A.36.080);
Whereas, an increasing number of individuals are being targeted by harassment and hate crimes locally, as well as nationally;

Whereas, immigrants are under increasing threat of deportation, including being taken from their work places and communities, separated from their families;

Whereas, white nationalist posters have been placed in Ferndale and confederate flags have been seen in various places throughout the county, causing individuals experiencing these actions to live in fear of leaving their homes;

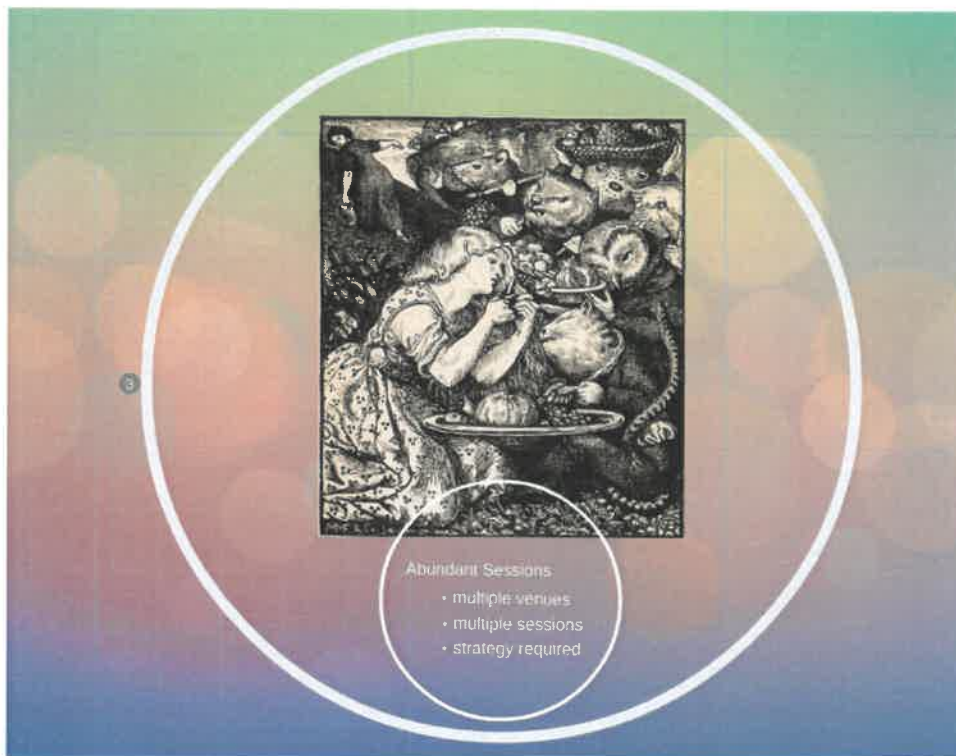
Whereas, there is an escalation of white supremacist activity nationally;

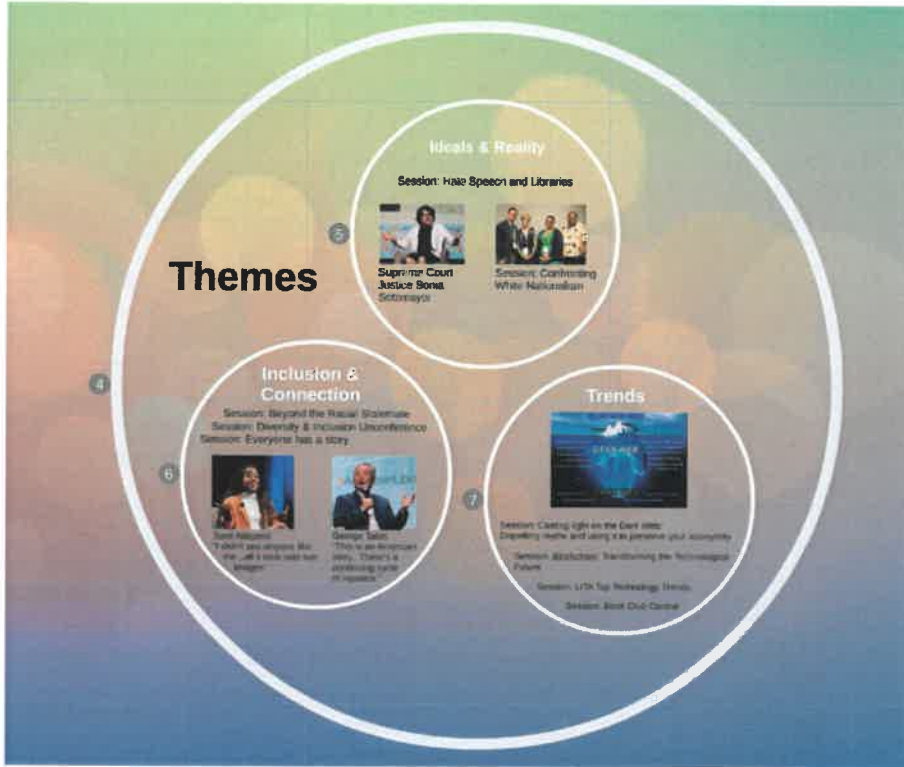
Whereas, every member of the human race has the right to be treated with dignity and to live without fear of violence, intimidation, or discrimination based on group identification or personal characteristics,

The Whatcom Human Rights Task Force calls upon our neighbors, educational institutions, businesses, religious leaders, government officials, and local law enforcement to develop strategies and actions to stop the rise of threats of violence and symbols of hate speech in our community, and to take further steps to ensure that Whatcom County is a place where citizens experience inclusion, acceptance and love.

We invite members of all communities in Whatcom County to sign on to this declaration online at: <https://whrtf.wpcostaging.com/>

Suzanne's slides on ALA 2019





Ideals & Experience

Session: Hate Speech and Libraries

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Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor



Session: Confronting White Nationalism

Inclusion & Connection

Session: Beyond the Racial Stalemate
Session: Diversity & Inclusion Unconference
Session: Everyone has a story



Tomi Adeyemi
"I didn't see anyone like me...all it took was two images"



George Takei
"This is an American story...There's a continuing cycle of injustice."

Trends



Session: Casting light on the Dark Web:
Dispelling myths and using it to preserve your anonymity

Session: Blockchain: Transforming the Technological Future

Session: LITA Top Technology Trends

Session: Book Club Central

Extra Curricular



Professional Tour
of the Library of
Congress'
Jefferson
Building

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Visit to the
Smithsonian Museum
of African American
History



Favorite Quotes

"Don't assume the worst in people when you see something you don't understand."
Sonya Sotomayor

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"If everything I didn't understand or agree with were legislated, we would live in a very dark world."

Chatty Cathy's Grandmother

"The best librarians talk with you and help you think through what you're learning"

Sonya Sotomayor



1

PROJECT GOALS

- Incorporate diverse voices
- Offer many opportunities to participate
- Gather quality feedback
- Inspire new partnerships
- Create a positive vibe



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Three-month project
- Spoke with 343 people
- Hosted 35 group meetings
- Held 79 individual interviews
- Staff facilitation team of 12
- Toolkit created by the American Library Association and the Harwood Institute



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

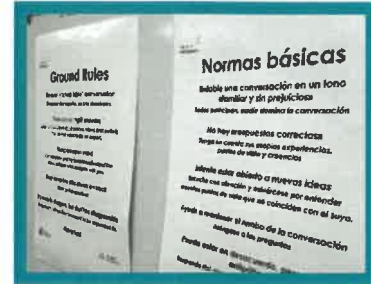
PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE	EXPERT KNOWLEDGE
Comes from authentically engaging with people about their aspirations, their concerns, how they see their community.	Comes from professional analysis and reporting of statistics, trend data, poll data, audience and market studies.
In plain language that everyone can understand.	Often in language only professionals understand.

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WHAT WE ASKED

- What kind of community do you want to live in?
- Why is that important to you?
- How is that different from how you see things now?
- What are some of the things that need to happen to create those changes?
- What groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?



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COMMUNITY STORY TEMPLATE

COMMUNITY NARRATIVE STORY TEMPLATE

People want (aspirations), but they are concerned that (main concerns). As people talk more about those concerns, they talk specifically about (specific issues). They believe we need to focus on (actions) and if (groups/individuals) played a part in those actions that folks would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.

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OUR COMMUNITY STORY

But they are concerned that our community could be more inclusive, safe, and sustainable, with resources and opportunities more equitable and prevalent for all.



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OUR COMMUNITY STORY



As people talk more about those concerns, they talk about the need for authentic connections that strengthen our understanding of each other's diverse experiences, that bridge inequities in access to community resources and economic opportunity, and that reduce divisions and feelings of exclusion.

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OUR COMMUNITY STORY



They say we need to focus on building a welcoming and safe community with well-funded public spaces, where relationships and connections can flourish, where reliable information is accessible to everyone, and where barriers to opportunity are acknowledged and reduced.

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OUR COMMUNITY STORY

And if non-profits, faith-based organizations, people in leadership positions, our government, and our good and creative neighbors played a part in those actions, folks would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.



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WORDS THAT MATTER

- Safe/safety
- Poverty/inequity/access
- Racism/intolerance/discrimination



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NEXT STEPS

- Publish and post final report
- Share with participants and others
- Further study what we heard
- Find ways the library can have the greatest impact
- Incorporate into strategic plan



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QUESTIONS?

