

# Bellingham Public Library



**Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees**  
**Tuesday, October 8, 2019 – Central Library – Library Board 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.

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- Board Members Present:** Rick Osen, Rachel Myers, Rebecca Craven, Jim McCabe and Vernon Johnson
- Library Staff:** Rebecca Judd, Bethany Hoglund, Janice Keller, Jon McConnell, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins
- Others Present:** April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of Bellingham Public Library President
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**Call to order and introductions:** Special session was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

**Strategic Planning work session:** Janice Keller introduced the subject by first reviewing the Bellingham Public Library's Mission:

Connecting  
our community  
with each other  
and the world.

Followed by the Community Story developed from the Community Conversations:

People want to be connected, safe, valued, respected, and accepted by others, with opportunities to be engaged and ever-learning together.

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

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.

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.

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.

Rebecca Judd outlined the timeline for the Strategic Plan: following this meeting the committee will meet and draft strategic directions to present, for the Board's consideration, at the October 22 regular Board Meeting. The committee will fine-tune the draft for the November and December Board meetings, with a goal of approving a final Strategic Plan in January 2020.

Rachel facilitated the Board and management team providing answers to the four questions that were provided to offer direction while reading through the curated sample Strategic Plans:

**What themes do you find interesting or compelling?**

- Need for funding for needed/desired services
- Financial Literacy – role of library
- Spaces to meet and gather and skillshare
- Reliable place/hub to get trusted information
- "Equity" shows up all over – different meanings & approaches
- Idea of connection and belonging and inclusions
- Concern & curiosity of the other – Respect & Safety
- Personal responsibility – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)
- Interacting with other humans
- Healthy youth & family – accessible/school support/parent support/early learning
- Need for coordination between agencies
- Economic opportunity – job, job skills, small business
- Social connection for seniors
- Environmental awareness and responsibility
- Social infrastructure – name for our role

**What information is important for the library to consider as we form our strategic directions?**

- City Legacies & Strategic Commitments – link outcomes & measures to our plan
- Levels of Service (LOS) – link outcomes & measure to our plan

- Berk report – information & data from funding models; majority of libraries receive supplemental non-government funds
- How to measure success and What outcomes
- Alice report – demographic changes – how do they impact library services
  - Millennials, young people – need for services and materials
  - Immigrants – need for services and materials
  - Older population is increasing
  - 19.5% Poverty Rate
- Staffing – how diverse & do we reflect the community we serve; cultural diversity retention
- How does BPL move into “essential service” role; do people know of the services we currently have? Outward facing dashboard.
- What are alternate funding options?
- Library filling the space for a community center
- Opioid crisis & mental health issues – impact on community
- Homelessness; home affordability
- Measures – PLA project outcomes; how are we reporting out to ourselves & community?
- Where we are now – work we already doing – sample of day in the life
- Despite increase, still behind on LOS; majority of dollars are spent moving books
- We have an active partnership with WCLS, which influences our activities
- Friends goals/alignment with
- How do people access the library – digitally, physically, transportation, hours, locations
- City-wide facility planning – where do we fit in the bigger city picture
- Leadership change at the city level
- Advancements in technology – access to; figure out funding
- Race generation gap – decrease in educational funding
- Strategic partnerships
- Lots of newcomers

**What community needs are identified that the library can help address?**

- Connection to information – reliable & trusted

- Connection to services & resources
- Social justice/generational connection to service/tech help
- Community center/gathering place
- Place to build relationship/community and trust
- Early learning & literacy
- Family engagement/parenting support
- Childcare support & services – going out to centers/developing relationships
- Emergency preparedness education
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place for people to 'be'
- Coordinator of community & social services/space
- Provide learning, information & resources (empathy is developed by reading fiction)
- Provide & grow collections (physical & digital) for community
- Responding to changing demographics – needs of communities of color
- Improving Civic Engagement
  - Help people to get engaged with local government (Int'l City Managers Survey)
  - Teaching respectful, civil debate
- Connect newcomers with BPL
- "You Belong Here" and "No one belongs here more than you" – radical hospitality
- 47 languages spoken in Bellingham schools – how to we define or introduce a library?
- Growing disabilities and needs
  - Accessibility
  - Aging population
- Learning about self and 'other' training

**What information raises further questions or need for additional research?**

- PLA Project Outcome or other models to track results
- What are we doing well? Circulation; storytimes; early learning; physical visits; Connections (universities, Haggen, etc.)
- What needs attention?
- What is struggling?

- Analysis of staffing deployment – now & after new positions filled & new sorter
- Analysis of what people know we offer
- How do we de-center whiteness in the library:
  - Training & learning
  - What is positive about our culture & what is isolating?
- “The road from access to inclusion leads through belonging.”

**Meeting adjourned** at 5:18 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting** – October 22, 2019 at the Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Lecture Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees