



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, September 21, 2021 – Zoom meeting
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, Jim McCabe, Rebecca Craven, Vernon (Damani) Johnson and Kristy Van Ness

Library Staff: Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Bethany Hoglund, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg, Katie Bray and Wendy Jenkins

Others Present: Hollie Huthman, City Council Liaison; Leigh Ann Giles, Friends of BPL Co-President

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

Approve/modify agenda: Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the agenda. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No comments

Consent agenda: Rebecca Craven, commenting that 2020 was such an anomalous year, requested a 2019 column be added to the performance and activity measures to provide a more accurate comparison. Rebecca Judd confirmed we can do this. Jim McCabe moved to approve the August 17, 2021, Regular meeting minutes and the August 2021 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Rick and Rebecca Judd met with Mayor Fleetwood on September 10 and updated him on our gradual increase of open hours which has been limited due to staff vacancies. As noted in the Director's Report, the recruitment process is underway for all our vacant positions.
- The Mayor has been invited to the November board meeting.
- Rick and Rebecca Judd attended last week's Friends of Bellingham Public Library board meeting. Rick plans to continue attending regularly.

Board member reports: No reports

City Council liaison report:

- Hollie provided an update on the City Council public comment process. Public comment was halted several months ago due to the YouTube Policy User's Agreement which prohibits disseminating medical misinformation. If YouTube determines a video contains medical misinformation, they pull the video. If they need to pull videos multiple times, the account is deleted. To avoid this possibility, it was decided to halt public comment. To provide an alternate opportunity for public comment, Council decided to use Zoom to hold separate meetings on the Mondays that Council does not typically meet. To avoid a quorum, only 2 councilmembers attend at a time. There were approximately 45 attendees at this week's public comment meeting. The public can also provide comment on the Engage Bellingham website, as well as through email or phone.

Friends of BPL report:

- Leigh Ann reported they held 4 pop-up sales in August. Plans for a Children's book sale in September have been put on hold. The Friends' are tentatively planning for the next book sale to take place in the spring of 2022. Leigh Ann thanked staff for their help with the pop-up sales.
- Because the Friends are currently not able to hold sales, they need to control the inventory of donations. They are requesting donors only bring in books that are 2010 or newer, children's books, or Pacific Northwest books. A sign has been put up, a mailchimp email has gone out to all members, and Annette will be adding the new donation limits to the website.
- Nearly New in-library book sales are selling well.
- The Friends finished with the Village Book's *Round It Up* program, earning over \$2,000. Leigh Ann added that Village Books is a good partner for the Friends and the Library.

Library Director report:

- Rebecca pointed out the two Communications items in the board packet, one on the 2021 Washington State Book Awards and a news release announcing Dawn Eychaner as the acting director of the Washington State Broadband Office.
- The Mayor is finalizing his 2022 mid-biennium budget to be presented to City Council in October. Rebecca Craven asked for an update on the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding the City will receive, specifically if the HVAC for the Library is still on the table. Rebecca Judd responded that there will be a presentation to Council on September 27 about the ARPA funding. Currently, priority areas are being determined rather than specific projects.
- Referring to the WHATCOM READS publicity materials in the packet, Rebecca offered to provide copies of the 2022 selection, *Greenwood* by Michael Christie, to the trustees.
- Jim requested more information about the Land Acknowledgement statement mentioned in the Director's Report. Annette responded that this is a written, posted statement acknowledging that the library resides on the ancestral home of the Lummi and Nooksack People. Annette has been looking at a variety of statements (such as from Whatcom Museum and Western Washington University) and developing a recommendation for a library statement. Damani offered to review the draft recommendation.

Reopening update: Rebecca Judd reported:

- The public computers and microfilm machine re-opened this month. We are working on a microfilm booking system using MyLibro (the app that was so successful for curbside service). Self-checkout has been updated to allow typing in a barcode rather than scan only. Next IT projects include Teen computers, video relay service and a catalog station in the fiction area. Finance is still working with the vendor to get point-of-sale credit card terminals to work at the Adult Help Desk.
- The Friends' Nearly New book section has been successful – Rebecca thanked Leigh Ann for the Friends work on this.
- Due to the ongoing pandemic, in-person storytimes, community rooms and outreach to assisted living and care facilities are still on hold.
- On September 7, open hours at Central on Monday and Tuesday were extended to 6 p.m. We are looking forward to expanding open hours on other days once staff is hired and trained.
- We are busy reviewing applications and scheduling interviews for our vacant positions. The Children's Librarian posting closes on Friday.
- A staff Welcome Event is in the works so staff will have a chance to get to know our new employees.
- Over the last month, we are back to masks in all areas of the building – public and staff areas.

Introducing Sarah Chaplin:

- Rick introduced our new Legal Liaison, Assistant City Attorney Sr. Sarah Chaplin. Sarah explained she grew up in Bellingham and is excited to have Bellingham Public Library as a client – she has a long history of going to the library as a kid, even serving as the first President of the Teen committee and winning a Name that Book contest. She graduated from the University of Washington law school and worked for the State Attorney General's office, for a State Supreme Court judge, and for the Northwest Justice Project. Another area of her work for the city is Public Records Requests.

Fundraising Committee update:

- Rick reported the committee met on September 8. He referred to the link on the agenda which will lead the trustees to the Library's Donation Policy (the link is to the Donation webpage; policies can be accessed by scrolling down and clicking on the Policies link). He suggested Trustees review the Donation Policy.
- Rachel Myers, Philanthropic Advisor & Program Manager for Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF) and former Trustee, joined the meeting to provide fundraising advice.
- Rick provided a brief history of Library Giving Day (LGD). This fundraising project was started by Seattle Public Library and has spread across the nation. 2020 was the first year we participated, bringing in approximately \$2,000. In 2021, increased publicity brought in between \$15,000-\$16,000. For each of the campaigns, we identified a project to fund – emergent needs or new programs that are not currently in our budget. We would like to identify a project to fund for 2022 by year end so that publicity materials can be put together.
- Another topic of the meeting was how to involve the Friends in fundraising, perhaps encouraging them to publicize LGD.

- We are working on an internal database to help identify repeat donors.
- One of Rachel's suggestions is to encourage people to think about the library in their planned estate giving, such as the Bragg-Muldrow estate endowment.
- Jim asked if donor matching programs was a topic. Rick responded it was, adding we need to be cognizant of WCLS efforts to avoid confusion.
- Rebecca Craven asked for clarification of the limits of LGD donations – what if a donation comes in during other months? The LGD donation link is removed from the website, but there are links to the other WCF funds for the library. Rick noted that he and Rebecca Judd had a conversation with James Erb, City Attorney, and Andy Asbjornsen, Finance Director. They prefer donations go through WCF as there is a gray area around fundraising within public government. But we do also have a Gift Fund for private donations – when we receive funds, the donor typically specifies how they would like the funds spent. Rebecca Judd added that the LGD funds went into the Bellingham Public Library Unrestricted Fund at WCF. We are working with WCF to better clarify in 2022 whether a donation is intended for LGD or simply a donation to the Unrestricted Fund.

Facilities Committee update:

- Rick and Rebecca Judd met with Eric Johnston, Public Works Director, about the need for updated HVAC at the Library.
- The last page of the packet is a portion of the draft RFP the committee is working on for Facilities Master Plan consulting services. This portion of the draft includes Project Description and Scope of Work. The draft has been sent to Connie Allen, Purchasing Manager, for review. The cost of the consultant will be paid with distributions from the Bragg-Muldrow endowment. The aim is to find a consultant who specializes in libraries, to help develop a master plan for service and facility needs – a clear vision of where we want to go and how to get there. The hope is to advertise the RFP in October and hire a consultant to start by January or February.
- Rebecca Craven noted the draft is broad in scope – do we have the funding for it? Rick responded this RFP is for consulting, not building design, so should be comparable to the BERK study.
- Jim commented that the facilities plan from Omaha was a good reference document. Our Level of Service for square footage per capita, despite being at the minimum Level of Service, is comparable with many major library systems.
- The committee meets again on Friday. Rick invited Trustees to email any comments they have on the draft.

New Business:

- Rebecca commented that she just received a press release that the City is initiating a vaccine mandate for city employees. Board members may see mention of this in the paper.

Action items for next meeting:

- Guest - Elizabeth Monahan, Human Resources Director
- Decide specific topics for the Mayor's board visit
- Fundraising update
- Facilities update

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – October 19, 2021 – Zoom meeting – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees