



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, November 16, 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, Jon McConnel, Katie Bray and Wendy Jenkins

Others Present: Mayor Seth Fleetwood; Hollie Huthman, City Council Liaison; Leigh Ann Giles and Jennie Tuckerman, Friends of BPL Co-Presidents

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: Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the October 19, 2021, Regular meeting minutes and the October 2021 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Rick reported that he enjoyed Whatcom Literacy Council's 2021 Annual Literacy Breakfast featuring Nancy Pearl on November 5. This year Nancy Pearl was awarded the National Book Foundation's 2021 Literarian Award for Outstanding Service to the American Literary Community. Rick also referenced an article in the Seattle Times: [Nancy Pearl, Seattle's most famous librarian, looks back on a lifetime of books | The Seattle Times](#)
- In past years, the Board has gathered for a social event after the last board meeting of the year. Rick suggested waiting until after the first in-person meeting of 2022.

Board member reports:

- No reports

City Council liaison report:

- Hollie reported on the proposed parking rates and hour changes. The parking rate is proposed to go from \$0.75 per hour to \$1.50 per hour. Hollie commented that this feels like a big jump, but the rate has not been increased for over a decade. The proposed hours for parking enforcement would change to include extended hours on weekdays and Saturdays. Comments can be made through the City's website.
- Damani asked if the food establishments' COVID-inspired outdoor eating arrangements will be permanent. Hollie responded yes, but that permits and yearly fees will be required. The city is starting to monitor which arrangements are not permitted – these will be dismantled.
- Kristy asked if the increased number of short-term parking spaces in front of the library, which were added at the start of the pandemic, will remain. Rebecca Judd replied that she has talked with Public Works, and they will remain.
- Rick congratulated Hollie on her re-election.

Friends of BPL report:

- Leigh Ann reported that book donations have continued to be low since the request to limit donations. On November 1, the Friends expanded the publish date of donated items to 2000 or newer.
- The Friends article in the Library's November eNewsletter brought in 15 new members. Leigh Ann thanked Annette for her help and for moving the Friends' link on the website to a more prominent place.
- Nearly New book sales continue to be strong. There were \$1,000 in sales in October. The Friends have added holiday books for all ages to the Nearly New bookshelves.
- The Friends have filled the glass case in the lower lobby with membership information, information about what the Friends fund, and high value books for sale.
- The Friends next board meeting is tomorrow, November 17 at 1:00 p.m.

Library Director report:

- Rebecca reported that the library remained open regular hours at Central and branches during the recent weather event. As some staff were not able to travel to work, it took teamwork to get through the last few days.
- Hiring and training: four new Clerks started work on November 1; four more will start on December 1; Rob Werner will begin his new role as Public Services Librarian on December 1; and we had eight new Assistants begin this fall. Rebecca said we are on a path to expand our hours early in the new year. The current target is to be open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday early in January. Curbside service numbers have continued to decrease but we will continue to offer the service one hour a week, from 4:30-5:30 on Saturday, while we remain in a state of emergency. In early February, Rebecca hopes we will be able to return to full pre-pandemic hours.
- Meeting spaces, Skillshare, and study rooms are on track to restart in January, as is Outreach to assisted living facilities. Baby and preschool storytimes will remain virtual for the time being. We are exploring creative ways to offer more tech coaching in a socially distanced way.

- Connections libraries (Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College and Whatcom Community College) have been accepting returns. The resumption of holds pickup will be dependent on those institutions' policies.
- Rebecca gave a short presentation on the Library's mid-biennium budget request to City Council on November 8. Pinky Vargas commented that she hopes we will soon be open more hours. Michael Lilliquist asked if our hotspot budget request will enable us to increase the number of hotspots available. Rebecca answered that we would be able to increase the number from 55 currently to 75 devices.
- The State of Washington contract for the Outreach vehicle American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant was sent to Olympia for final signatures. We will be able to order the vehicle once we receive the fully executed contract.
- The City of Bellingham, working with the Broadband Advisory Committee, will be sending out a community survey next week about access to broadband. We'll be including an invitation to participate in the Library's December eNewsletter, as well as making paper copies of the survey available at the Library through December 31.
- Rebecca offered copies of the 2022 Whatcom Reads title, *Greenwood* by Michael Christie, to Council and Department Heads. There was enthusiastic response to the timeliness of the subject matter.
- Jim commented that he noticed Annette's 'social media clicks' reporting in the Director's Report, asking if there were benchmarks to measure this against. Annette responded that there are no benchmarks, but it is a way to see what the public is interested in. The Althea Wilson event, *Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge and Honoring Sacred Waters* was especially popular.

2022 Holidays & closures:

- Rebecca screenshared the document from the packet, commenting that when a holiday falls on a weekend, the city observes the holiday on Friday or Monday. The library also closes on the actual holiday resulting in a 2-day closure. Changes this year include the removal of Easter from the library closure schedule and the addition of Juneteenth, pending Council approval.

2022 Board of Trustees meeting dates:

- Rebecca screenshared the document from the packet, commenting that we assume we will be able to meet in person, but we will make changes as needed.
- Damani Johnson moved that the 2022 Board of Trustees meeting dates be approved as written. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Welcoming Mayor Seth Fleetwood:

- Board meeting attendees introduced themselves to Mayor Fleetwood. Rick invited attendees to ask questions.

Jim commented that during the exceedingly hot weather in June, the Library was erroneously listed as a cooling place. Is there possible funding available for HVAC in the library? Mayor Fleetwood responded that the city received \$21 million in ARPA funds. It has been proposed to Council to set aside \$5 million for climate adaptation resiliency work. HVAC for the library has been identified as part of that work. No dates have been set yet.

Jim remarked that, with the pandemic, the need to work and study remotely, access Wi-Fi, and attend virtual meetings is high. What do you hope will come out of the Broadband Advisory Committee's work? Mayor Fleetwood responded that the hope is to expand access and funding. The Port is working on a regional plan for infrastructure. Michael Lilliquist is an active proponent for better digital access and he talked with the mayor early on in his administration. They decided to make progress on this issue and created the Advisory Committee to make recommendations to increase digital access in the city. The Committee hired a consultant to oversee the process. A survey will be coming out shortly which will help determine what access people have and what is needed. The survey will be available through the end of this year. Jim added that he heard the National League of Cities is working on broadband issues and wondered if Bellingham belonged to this group. Mayor Fleetwood responded he thinks it is and he will inquire about their broadband work.

Kristy asked what the ramifications will be of the two initiatives that passed in the recent election. Mayor Fleetwood pointed out that, for Initiative 2, Prohibit Facial Recognition and Predictive Policing Technology, we currently do not use this technology, and the initiative will bar against utilizing it in the future. There are some uses that do not do racial profiling and can be helpful with predictive policing, but the nature of initiatives is that they cannot be amended for 2 years. Initiative 3, Protect the Right to Organize, has practical questions that need to be resolved. The Mayor said that, once a broad summary of impacts is developed, he will make it available to Rebecca to share with the board.

The Mayor was asked for his broad observations about being mayor thus far. He responded he is looking forward to in-person meetings, he sees so much value in being in the same room. Information can be conveyed quickly in person. There are certainly benefits to virtual meetings, but he likes the human aspect.

Jim observed that one upside of the pandemic was being able to get the remodel done while the library was closed for in-house use. The Mayor asked if the remodel was complete. Rebecca answered that it is complete except for some surplus items that need to be removed. Rick clarified that we still need to remodel the top and bottom floors, but the goal with the current remodel was to do what we could at the time.

Mayor Fleetwood asked the board how they feel about the library as a place for respite care. Rick responded that, on the whole, the library wants to be supportive of the city but does not want it to involve curtailing regular library services. We'd like to be thoughtful about how it happens.

Rick thanked the Mayor for attending.

Planning for 2022: "Books, Bytes, and Belonging":

- Rebecca screenshared her presentation which illustrates where we have been and where we would like to go as we develop the 2022 Action Plan (*see Attachment #1 – all Attachments are located at the end of the minutes*).

Jim commented that we read through about 14 different strategic plans from across the nation while doing research for the development of our Strategic Plan. He doesn't recall seeing the word *book* in any of them and likes that books are included in our 2022 planning.

Rick asked if the trustees could be sent an updated copy of the Staff Directory.

Native American Heritage Month: Library Land Acknowledgement:

- Rebecca screenshared the document from the packet, which has been in the works since February. She thanked Annette for gathering examples of other institutions land acknowledgements. Rebecca requested board input on the current draft which the Library will then take to Teresa Taylor, Project Manager at Lummi Indian Business Council, for feedback. The library goal is to post the acknowledgement in a prominent space in the entry lobby.

Jim asked if there was a reason to capitalize *Since Time Immemorial*. Rebecca responded that they followed the lead on a template provided by Lummi Nation. Annette added that this also links with our Since Time Immemorial theme kits available for checkout by the community.

Rick asked if the City needs to approve the language because it will be placed in a city facility. Annette answered that she reached out to the City early in the process and was given the go ahead to develop the language.

Jim asked if there was a literal translation for the numeral 7 in *Nuxwsa7aq – Nooksack people?* Annette responded that she understands this to be from transcribed Nooksack language.

The Board will take a vote of approval when the final draft is available.

Facilities Committee update:

- Rick reported on progress for the published RFP for a Facilities Master Plan. Proposals from consultants are due back on Tuesday, November 23 at 11:00 a.m. The committee will then review the proposals. Ideally a choice will be made before year end so that work can start early in the new year.

Fundraising Committee update:

- The committee met and discussed updated language in the Donations Policy. A policy revision will be brought to the board in December or January.
- The committee will have a joint meeting with members of the Friends early in January to talk about possible collaboration between the board and the Friends. This year Rick has been attending the Friends' board meetings as a representative of the library board. He noted that the Friends have had a liaison attend the library board meetings for years.
- Library Giving Day is on April 6 in 2022. Rick requested ideas for the project or program that will be supported by the 2022 proceeds. Rebecca Judd has been gathering ideas and suggested a central theme of 'Building Community,' with two focuses:

new community drop boxes to replace the Haggen drop boxes and Community Voice theme kits, similar to the kits currently being developed by Children's staff.

Kristy recalled that one goal is to have a succinct project that is not an ongoing expense. Will the drop boxes have additional cost? Rebecca responded that we staff resources for four community drop boxes. If the facilities study determines we need more drop boxes, we would need additional staffing. Rick added that this is an opportunity to pilot a project. If successful, we can request a budget increase to cover the cost – similar to the successful Wi-Fi hotspots project.

Rebecca Craven moved to accept the suggestion of a Building Community theme with Library Giving Day proceeds to go towards community drop boxes and Community Voice theme kits. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

New Business:

- No new business

Action items for next meeting:

- Board Chair and Vice-Chair elections

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – December 21, 2021 – Zoom meeting – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: Books, Bytes, and Belonging PowerPoint presentation



1



2



Public Libraries are critical engines of our democracy

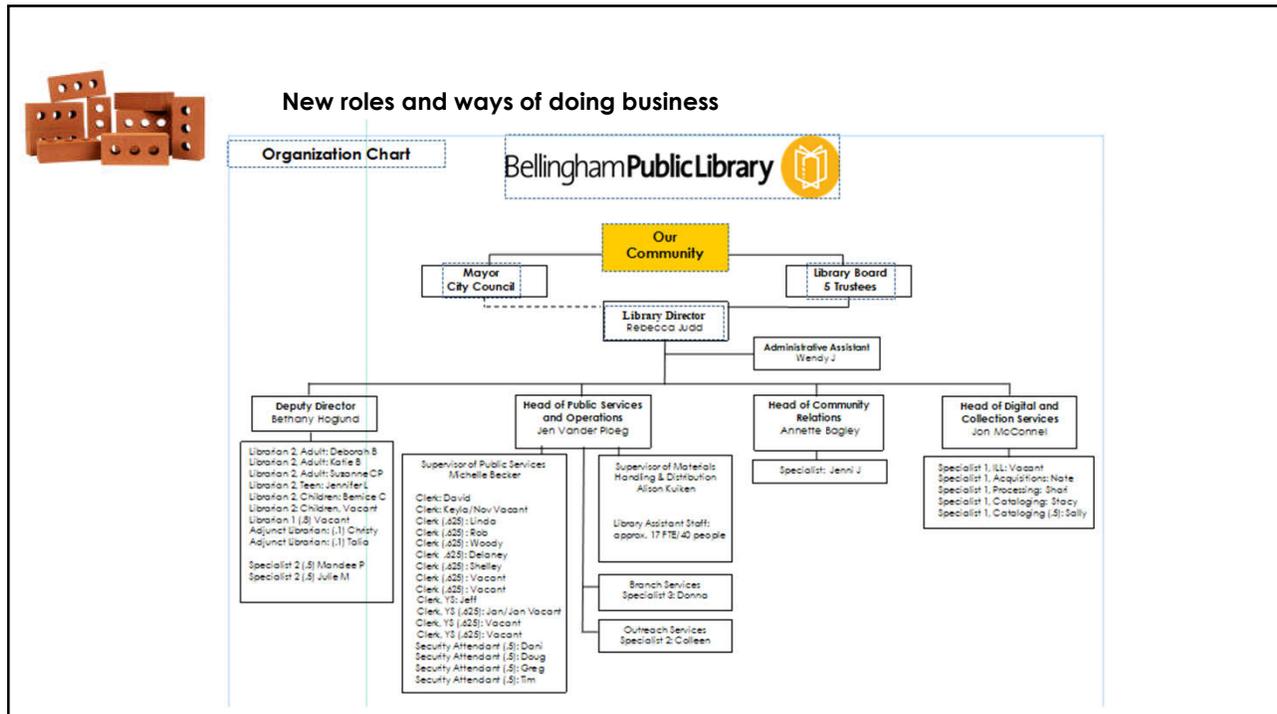


An informed citizenry is at the heart of a dynamic democracy.
- Thomas Jefferson

"Libraries stand and exemplify something that needs defending: the public institutions that – even in an age of atomization and inequality – serve as bedrocks of civil society. Libraries are the kinds of places where ordinary people with different backgrounds, passions, and interests can take part in a living democratic culture."

Eric Klinenberg, "Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life"

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4



New colleagues!



Robin



Catherine



Jeff



Kimber



Kian



Carolyn



Carl



Dave

5



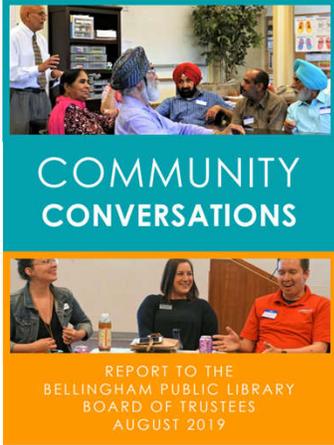
Level of Service Standards developed from 2016-2018

Approved Level of Service Standards						
Standard	Date of Adoption	Low/Minimal 1	Medium/Operational 2	High/Optimal 3	2021	
Library Facilities-- Square ft/capita	01/19/2016	0.6	0.8	1.0	.61	sf/cap
Open hours per week-- Central Library	06/21/2016	56	64	68	56	[Temp. 30 hrs/wk]
Open hours per week-- Branch Libraries	06/21/2016	28	36	40	28	[Temp. 24 hrs/wk]
Library Materials-- Expenditures/capita	03/21/2017	\$5.00	\$7.50	\$10.00	\$6.06	
Library Staff Total FTE	03/13/2018	50	58	64	50.6	

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Community Conversations, Spring 2019



OUR COMMUNITY STORY

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.

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.

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.

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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MISSION

Connecting our community with each other and the world.

SHARED VALUES

Our shared values reflect who we are, why our work matters, and what we believe as an organization. They describe, define, and inspire us.



BELONGING:
We believe in the power of belonging. When people belong, they are more able to learn, connect, survive, and thrive.

CHAMPIONS:
We are enthusiastic champions of public library values: freedom of speech and open exchange of knowledge and ideas, the right to read without judgement or restriction, and access to education and information free-of-charge and readily available to all.



COLLABORATION:
We are stronger because of our many partnerships, including two key relationships that form part of our foundation. As a department of the City of Bellingham, we are a valued city service and part of the fabric of community life. Our collaboration with the Whatcom County Library System strengthens our services in our community.

EQUITY:
Libraries are powerful forces for community change by promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. We work to foster understanding, accessibility, and to ensure all people see themselves and our city's diversity reflected in our collections, services, and facilities.

INNOVATION:
We embrace new ideas and new practices to meet the changing needs of our community.

INSPIRATION:
We inspire curiosity, discovery, and critical thinking which we believe can change a life, a family, a nation, and a planet.

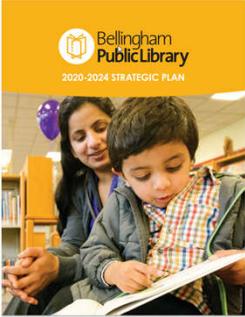
STEWARDSHIP:
Our focus on excellence includes reflecting and modeling careful stewardship of resources. We incorporate sustainable practices in our services and operations.



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2020-2024 Strategic Plan adopted December 2019



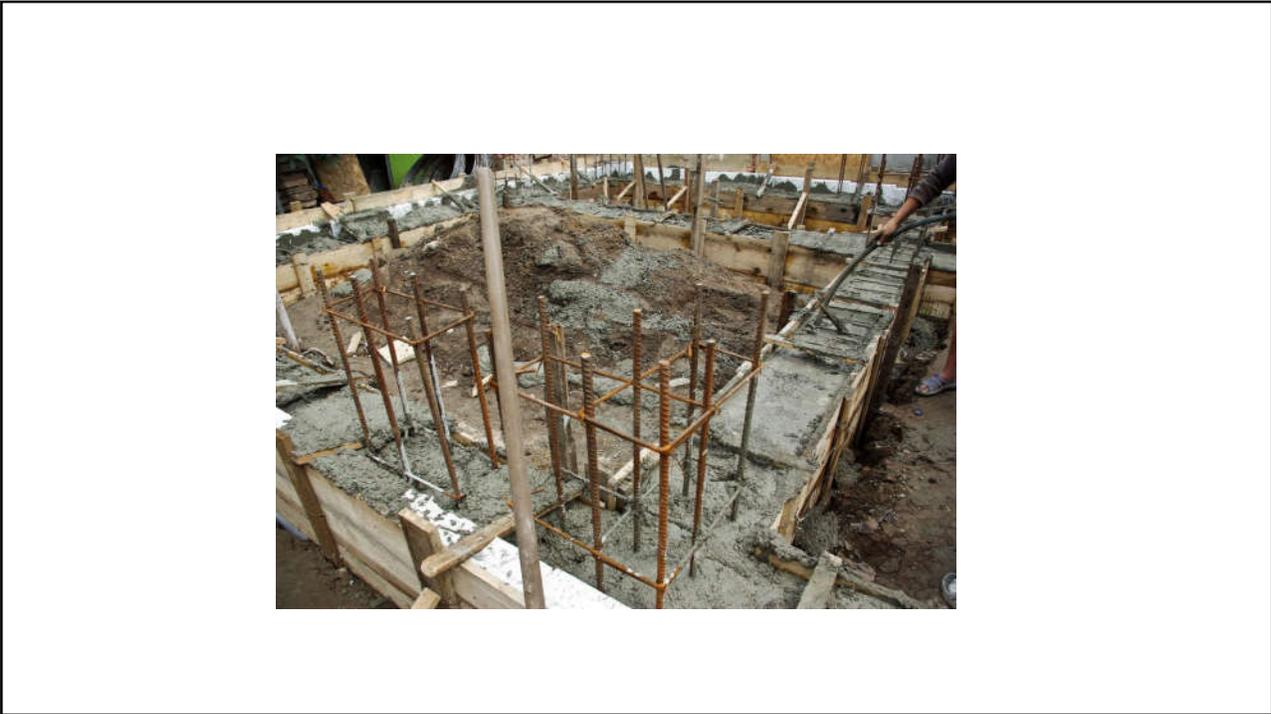
- WELCOME & INCLUDE**
We offer welcoming, safe places and experiences, where connections and understanding flourish.
- ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY**
We connect people with opportunities and resources to solve problems and help them achieve their aspirations.
- READ & LEARN**
We inspire a lifetime of reading, learning, curiosity, and discovery.
- INFORM & INVOLVE**
We provide information and activities to stay abreast of community issues and events, fostering informed, active participation in civic life.
- THRIVE & GROW**
We are a valued community partner and trusted city service, playing a central role in Bellingham life.

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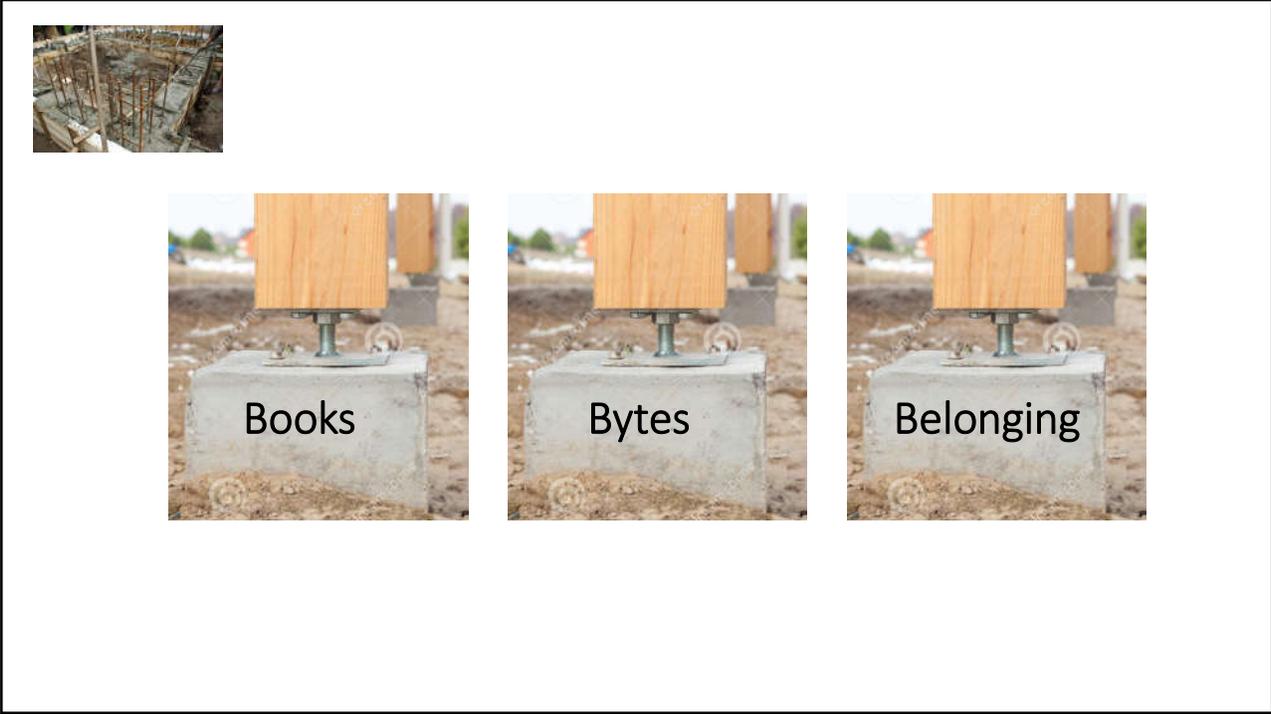
Our world, our community 2020-2021



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12



Information, Knowledge, Stories

Print Books, Digital Books, DVDs, Audio CDs, Music CDs, Magazines, Newspapers, Book Kits, Backpacks, Microfilm, Readers' Advisory, Storytimes, Summer Reading, Whatcom READS, Consumer Reports, Mango, CultureGrams, Newsbank, Research, Community referrals, AskWA

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Digital Literacy, Equity, Access

Public computers, Printing, Scanning, Video Relay Service, Wireless Access Points, WiFi hotspots, Tech assistance, Tech coaching, Reconnect, Northstar Digital Literacy

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Social Infrastructure



Showing up, Reaching out, Going the extra mile, "Pennies in the cup," Remembering names, Reducing barriers, Championing diversity, Listening, Worth the effort, Acknowledging, Empathizing, Building-up, Kindness, Without judgment, Allies, Representation, Free, Fostering relationships, Facilitating, Collaborating, Gathering together



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