



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, April 19, 2022 – 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 and Kristy Van Ness

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

Others Present: Kristina Michele Martens, 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: Jim McCabe moved to approve the agenda. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: no comments.

Consent agenda: In the Performance & Activity Measures, Kristy noted that the YTD 2022 'physical copies withdrawn from the collection' statistic was formatted differently. Wendy responded she would review the spreadsheet to see if the number was accurate (upon review, the number is accurate, but the formatting needed to be changed). Wendy shared two changes Jon had noted in advance of the meeting: Jon attended the March meeting so should be added under Library Staff; and in the first sentence under Pandemic Response, 'mandated' should be changed to 'mandate.' Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the March 15, 2022, Regular meeting minutes as amended and the March 2022 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Referring to the Director's Report, Rick said he was impressed with all the activities happening and offered kudos to Library staff for the high level of service they provide to the community.
- Rick commented that he is interested in the new storytimes at the mall and how they might inform the Facilities Master Plan that is underway. Rick thanked Bethany,

Annette, and staff for providing this service. Bethany added that the first storytimes took place today with a mix of returning and new storytime attendees, as well as people who happened to be at the mall near the play area. Staff issued new library cards, checked out books, and built new relationships. Annette added that the space is great, and she had counted over 150 people by the time she left.

- Rick thanked the Friends for having the idea of holding a pop-up sale on Library Giving Day and generously donating the proceeds.
- In the absence of updated City direction on Boards and Commissions, Rick said we will assume the May board meeting will be virtual.

Board member reports:

- Jim reported that three Bellis Fair Mall representatives attended the recent Cordata Neighborhood Association meeting. He anticipates they will provide feedback about the mall hosting storytimes at the next meeting.
- Rebecca Craven pointed out that there have recently been a number of stories about public libraries and boards coming under scrutiny and questioned if this is something the board should discuss. Rebecca Judd affirmed that public library boards across the country are responding to book challenges and the politicizing of boards. She added that this was discussed at PLA which she will report on later in the meeting.

City Council liaison report:

- Kristina reported that City Council is determining the best use for the climate action funds. She provided a link for the [Climate Action Fund Community Feedback](#) form and invited everyone to share their thoughts.
- Council is also working on a new plan for Post Point. She is looking forward to a tour of the Edmonds hydrothermal water treatment plant on Thursday. This option negates the worry about soil and water contamination.

Friends of BPL report:

- Leigh Ann reported that the Library Giving Day pop-up book sale raised \$2,400. Prices were raised from \$1 to \$2. There were no negative comments from customers about the price, so the Friends will continue this pricing for upcoming book sales. Four additional pop-up sales are planned for the second Saturday of each month, through August. There is also the possibility of a sale in September. The next pop-up sale date is Saturday, May 14.
- Leigh Ann announced that the Friends Annual Membership Meeting, on Zoom, is this Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This year marks the 70th anniversary for the Friends organization and the 50th anniversary of the first book sale. Rebecca Judd and Kristy Van Ness will be speaking. Jeff Jewel, Photo Archives Research Technician for Whatcom Museum, will be presenting a photo history of Bellingham Public Library, and Katie Bray will be providing a book talk.

Library Director report:

- Rebecca reported that this has been a busy month, joyful in many ways as we reopen services – particularly storytimes after a 2-year wait. Annette screenshared a selection of photos from this morning's storytimes at Bellis Fair Mall (*see Attachment #1 for two of the shared photos. All attachments are at the end of the minutes*).

- Jon screenshared a corrected version of the Number of Overdue Items chart that was included in the Director's Report. Jon explained that the weekly snapshot is at 11 a.m. on Mondays, rather than 10 a.m., and that the numbers have been fine-tuned. Jon added that the data shows that going fines-free did not have a significant impact on the number of overdue items, but that not billing during the first year of the pandemic did have a significant impact (*see Attachment #2 for the corrected version*).
- Rebecca reminded everyone that the Ryan Dowd training, *Skills for Interacting Confidently and Compassionately with Individuals in Crisis*, will be held at the Mount Baker Theatre on Friday, May 20. The morning and afternoon sessions are offered in partnership with the City and Unity Care NW. As of yesterday, there were 428 registrations. Everyone is welcome to register from the Library website or the Mount Baker Theatre [website](#).

Public Library Association (PLA) Conference round-up:

- Rebecca explained that the biennial conference was held in Portland, OR this year, which offered an opportunity to send more people than typical to a national conference – 7 staff members and 1 trustee. Rebecca invited the board meeting attendees who went to the conference to share highlights of their experience.
- Kristy Van Ness said she focused on trustee workshops. Overall, it was very fun and a great learning experience. She enjoyed traveling with the librarians. One take-away: our current board should get a pat on the back for new trustee training, focusing on education, communication, engagement and not bombarding a new Trustee with too much information at once. Kristy thanked Jon for providing the data that shows what the Library has accomplished. Also of note, at the conference Junior Youth Board representatives were discussed at one of the sessions – Kristy suggested this would be good to consider. Another take-away idea was a retreat to continue board education. Censorship was a topic, underscoring the importance of having updated policy and procedures.
- Bethany echoed that it was wonderful to spend time with others and noted the importance of looking at what other libraries are doing with a fresh mind. Many ideas discussed are things we already have in place, such as going fines-free. She enjoyed attending some of the bigger library presentations, such as one by Denver Public Library, where she got ideas about supporting staff and morale wellbeing. The librarians who attended reported to Bethany that they enjoyed speaking to other librarians and that all sessions provided some takeaway ideas. Bethany and Bernice Chang, Children's Librarian, spent time at the recruitment table, promoting the open Librarian position. Overall, Bethany found the conference energizing and inspiring.
- Annette reported the conference was great for her – she was hired during the pandemic, so it was nice to have one-on-one interactions with staff and others in the library world. There were many informative sessions. Annette was struck by how many things we do right and on a small budget. She has attended many conferences in previous jobs, and she noted that the library world has a collaborative energy rather than a competitive energy – everyone is willing to share what they are doing and learning. One conference attendee Annette spoke with was surprised there wasn't a lot of talk about how the pandemic has changed the library world – perhaps we are still learning how the library has and will be affected. Annette attended sessions on marketing, strategic planning, patron mapping, and how to handle challenges and concerns.

- Rebecca also mentioned how meaningful it was to attend an in-person conference and appreciated how challenging it must have been to organize the conference without knowing if it would be in-person or virtual. Most sessions she attended focused on two themes – First Amendment challenges and digital equity. The need for strong, updated policies and staff training was mentioned in multiple sessions. Charlotte Mecklenburg library, highlighted in a recent board packet article, presented at PLA and Rebecca was excited to hear about the expanded work they are doing connecting people with digital service.
- Jim, referring to the Junior Youth Board representatives Kristy mentioned, added that he has sat on other boards that provided Western Washington University students with a learning experience on board membership. Rick recalled a Western student who attended a couple of our board meetings and then wrote an article for the Western Front.

2022 Action Plan – 1st quarter report:

- Rebecca screenshared and read through the Quarter 1 2022 Action Plan that is included in the packet. The bullet points listed are projects, pulled from the 2022 Action Plan, that have either been completed or had significant progress made in the first quarter of the year.

Library hours proposal:

- Rebecca screenshared and explained the Open Hours proposal and timeline that is included in the packet. The Board gave direction at the December 2021 meeting to move forward with expanded evening hours and year-round Sundays. Rebecca proposed expanding evening hours at Central, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, beginning Monday, June 6. She anticipates the Security Attendant vacancy will be filled in May. The proposal also included bringing back Sunday hours beginning September 11 at Central and making them year-round. Branch hours would remain the same. There was Board consensus to go ahead.

Facilities committee update:

- Rick reported that three members of Godfrey's team: Dick Waters, Brad Waters, and architect Alex Lamis, were here on March 27 and 28. Rebecca provided a tour of Bellingham on Sunday and the Facilities committee met with them on Monday. Ongoing virtual meetings are scheduled for the first and third Fridays of each month. There will also be a virtual meeting this week to explore what GIS data is available to us. Jon McConnel and Chris Behee, Planning Senior GIS Analyst, will join in this conversation. The next site visit is scheduled for May 2-6. Five members of Godfrey's team will focus on stakeholder community engagement, including individual meetings with Board and Council members, and 8 focus groups. Godfrey's will also be providing a monthly written report on progress.
- Jim added that he was impressed with comments from the group when they met March 28 – there were many ideas about use of space and programs. Jim believes the Godfrey's team has the right experience to help us plan for facilities going into the future.
- Rebecca Judd added that, in addition to the stakeholder interviews and focus groups, there will be a community survey on the [Engage Bellingham](#) platform. Rebecca

screenshared a draft of the survey (see Attachment #3 for Bellingham Public Library Community Survey).

- Kristy asked if all questions are required or are some optional. Rebecca answered that the Engage Bellingham platform has asterisks by default, but answers are optional.
- Rick asked how long the survey would be posted. Rebecca responded that she hopes to launch it soon and keep it up until May 23. Print versions will also be available.
- Kristina asked if any other languages will be available. Rebecca answered that there will be a Spanish language version.

Fundraising committee update:

- Rick announced Library Giving Day donations were roughly \$11,762, including \$2,400 donated from the Friends' pop-up sale. The Fundraising committee will compare data from this year to last and see if there are any future suggestions we can glean.
- Included in the packet is the first quarter donation report. Rick pointed out that the FOBPL (Friends of Bellingham Public Library) donations come through requests made by Rebecca, and the first three WCF (Whatcom Community Foundation) donations are the annual distributions we receive. The large WCF donation is from the Bragg-Muldrow Endowment – we are using a portion of the distribution to fund the Facilities Master Plan.
- Jim mentioned that some organizations allow for a company matching program and wondered if the city has a mechanism for this, for instance donating to the Parks department. Rick commented that part of this year's committee agenda is to make our relationship with WCF clear. Though the Museum has their own foundation, we are the only city department with a relationship with WCF. Jon commented that it is clear on our website how to donate to the library.
- Rebecca Craven asked for an update on the City's ARPA grant funding, specifically if HVAC for the library is still planned. Rebecca Judd responded that there is no new information.

Board trustee recruitment:

- Rick outlined the timeline for recruitment:
 - Formal advertisement for the trustee vacancy opens this Friday, for someone to finish out the remainder of this term and renew for the 5 years that follow.
 - The Personnel committee (Rick, Rebecca C. and Rebecca J.) will begin to review the applications on May 23.
 - A June 1 meeting is scheduled to decide who to interview the week of June 7. Rick invited Kristy and Jim to email him individually any characteristics they would like to see in a candidate.
 - An Executive Session will be held at the end of the June 21 board meeting to determine a recommendation to send to the Mayor.
 - If the recommendation is accepted, an appointment will go to Council early in July.
 - Rebecca Judd will send the vacancy announcement to all attending the board meeting so that this information can be shared with possible candidates.

New Business:

- No new business

Action items for next meeting:

- No action items

Meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – May 17, 2022 – Zoom meeting – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: Storytime at Bellis Fair mall
- Attachment #2: Updated Overdue Items Snapshot
- Attachment #3: Bellingham Public Library Community Survey



**Items borrowed by Patrons Registered at BPL branches that are Overdue:
Snapshot Mondays at 11am**

		Average # Patrons with Overdue Items	Average Count of Overdue Items	Overdue Items per patron
Fines in place	Dec. 2019	1,520	3,195	2.1
Fines-Free pre-pandemic	Jan. - Mar. 2020	1,355	2,559	1.9
Pandemic - Billing pause	Jul. 2020 - Jul. 2021	2,911	10,067	3.5
Pandemic - Billing resumed	Jul. 2021 - Mar. 2022	1,455	3,563	2.4



Bellingham Public Library Community Survey
Opens April 20, 2022 | Closes May 23, 2022

We want to hear from you! The Bellingham Public Library has engaged Godfrey’s Associates, Inc., a public library consulting firm, to assist in planning for the future. We invite you to respond to this survey and share your thoughts about Bellingham Public Library service and facilities. You do not need to have a Bellingham Public Library card or active account to participate. The survey is 16 questions and should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and feedback. It is valued and appreciated.

1. Do you have a library card from the Bellingham Public Library? Note: Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) is a separate organization. Check Only One

- Yes
- No
- I have a Library card from Whatcom County Library System, but not Bellingham Public Library
- Do not know

2. If you have a Bellingham Public Library card, how many times have you used it for print or digital content, or other uses such as computers or Wi-Fi hotspots in the past year? Check Only One

- Every day
- Two or three times a week
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Three to five times a year
- Once or twice a year
- I have not used my Bellingham Public Library card in the past year
- I do not have a Bellingham Public Library card
- Do not know

3. Which library or libraries in Bellingham do you prefer to use? Check All That Apply

- Central Library
- Fairhaven Branch
- Barkley Branch
- Bellingham Technical College (BTC) Connection
- Western Washington University (WWU) Connection
- Whatcom Community College (WCC) Connection
- None of the above
- Do not know
- Other (please specify) _____

4. How many times have you visited a Bellingham Public Library location in the past year, including curbside pickup? Check Only One

- Every day
- Two or three times a week
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Three to five times a year
- Once or twice a year
- None
- Do not know

5. During the past year, which of the following Bellingham Public Library services did you use? Check All That Apply

- Searched the online catalog
- Checked out books, audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs or hot spots
- Checked out eBooks, eAudiobooks, or accessed streaming services such as Kanopy or Freegal
- Accessed Bellingham Public Library computers for the Internet, email, etc.
- Consulted a librarian
- Attended a virtual Library program
- Accessed subscription database services such Consumer Reports or Mango language learning
- Do not know
- Other (please specify) _____

6. Here is a list of services the Bellingham Public Library provides. Please read the list and check whether each service is very important, somewhat important, slightly important, or not at all important to you.

	very important	somewhat important	slightly important	not at all important	do not know
Storytimes, Summer Reading & other learning and activities for children	<input type="radio"/>				
Print books for borrowing	<input type="radio"/>				
eBooks and digital audiobooks for borrowing	<input type="radio"/>				
Outreach services for residents who are unable to visit the library in person	<input type="radio"/>				
Computers with internet access and word processing	<input type="radio"/>				
Printing, copying, and scanning services	<input type="radio"/>				
Online research tools such as Consumer Reports and Mango language learning	<input type="radio"/>				
Meeting & conference rooms for community groups & public activities	<input type="radio"/>				
Study rooms for individuals or small groups	<input type="radio"/>				
One-on-one technology coaching	<input type="radio"/>				
In-person classes, lectures, book discussions & other programs for adults	<input type="radio"/>				
Virtual classes, lectures, book discussions & other programs for adults	<input type="radio"/>				
Activities, discussions & programs for teenagers	<input type="radio"/>				
Play spaces for children and families	<input type="radio"/>				
Free Wi-Fi at Library facilities & Wi-Fi hotspot lending	<input type="radio"/>				

7. What improvements would you like to see at the Bellingham Public Library? Check All That Apply

- Open more hours
- More print books
- More eBooks, digital audiobooks, or other digital content
- More storytimes, programs, and other activities for children
- More computers, software, & printers/scanners
- More in person or virtual classes and programs for adults
- More programs and other activities for teenagers
- More Bellingham Public Library branch libraries
- More study rooms for individuals or small groups
- More meeting and conference rooms
- More play spaces for children and families
- More outreach services for residents who are unable to visit the library in person
- More one-on-one technology coaching
- Do not know
- Other (please specify) _____

8. Overall, how important are the services provided by the Bellingham Public Library to you? Check Only One

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not too important
- Not at all important
- Do not know

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Bellingham Public Library? Check Only One

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not too satisfied
- Not at all satisfied
- Do not know

10. How would you rank the benefits of the Bellingham Public Library as compared to the benefits of other tax-supported services, e.g. schools, parks, roads? Check Only One

- At the top of the list
- In the middle
- At the bottom
- Do not know

11. If you live in the City of Bellingham, how many years have you lived here? Check Only One

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 – 3 years
- 3 – 8 years
- more than 8 years
- I do not live in the City of Bellingham

12. If you used the public library at your place of residence prior to moving to Bellingham, how would you say the library services there compared to public library services in Bellingham? Check Only One

- Did not use the public library in my former place of residence
- Much better in my former place of residence
- Better in my former place of residence
- About the same
- Better in Bellingham
- Much better in Bellingham
- Do not know

13. You are between the ages of... Check Only One

- 17 or younger
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 49
- 50 to 64
- 65 or older
- Prefer not to answer

14. Which Bellingham neighborhood is your current place of residence? Check Only One

<input type="radio"/> Alabama Hill	<input type="radio"/> Edgemoor	<input type="radio"/> Puget	<input type="radio"/> Sunnyland
<input type="radio"/> Barkley	<input type="radio"/> Fairhaven	<input type="radio"/> Roosevelt	<input type="radio"/> Whatcom Falls
<input type="radio"/> Birchwood	<input type="radio"/> Happy Valley	<input type="radio"/> Samish	<input type="radio"/> Western Washington
<input type="radio"/> City Center	<input type="radio"/> Irongate	<input type="radio"/> Sehome	<input type="radio"/> York
<input type="radio"/> Columbia	<input type="radio"/> King Mountain	<input type="radio"/> Silver Beach	<input type="radio"/> Outside Bellingham City limits
<input type="radio"/> Cordata	<input type="radio"/> Lettered Streets	<input type="radio"/> South	<input type="radio"/> Do not know
<input type="radio"/> Cornwall Park	<input type="radio"/> Meridian	<input type="radio"/> South Hill	

15. Are there children under the age of 19 living in your home? Check Only One

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

16. Other comments? Please note them here.

Thank you for your assistance