



**Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Monday, July 8, 2024 – Central 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.

Board Members Present: Rick Osen, Rebecca Craven, Kristy Van Ness, and Deborra Garrett
City Council Library Liaison: Hannah Stone
Library Staff: Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins
FOBPL Representative: Carol Comeau, Friends of BPL Board Liaison

Call to order and introductions: Special 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.

2025 Budget modification requests:

Rick explained the purpose of today’s meeting is to discuss the 3 primary Option drafts and approve them for submission by Rebecca Judd to the City’s Budget office.

Rebecca Judd screenshared Library 2025 Draft Budget Proposal (*see Attachment #1 – attachments are at the end of the minutes*). As the introductory paragraph states, “this document outlines the options that are responsive to budget instructions provided by Mayor Kim and the Finance Department to provide options that address essential needs as well as identify options for budget reductions targeting 5% for all non-public safety General Fund spending.” Rick added that the City is not looking at furloughs or staff reductions. Rebecca Judd pointed out that the format for each option is derived from the Budget Modification request form.

- Option 1, Targeted increase for Library services. Rebecca pointed out that this is not a robust increase request but, in response to current budget concern, includes 2 top needed increases:
 - 1) conversion of two Regular Non-Benefitted (RNB) Library Assistant positions to Part-Time Library Assistant positions.
 - 2) An increase to the training and staff development budget lines.

Comments and suggestions made during discussion include:

- Is Library Assistant (LA) conversion a City priority? Rebecca responded that the Budget office has supported this in the past – currently 14 of our 32 LA positions are Part-Time. There is significant turnover for RNB positions requiring numerous hiring processes and training which impacts multiple departments. There is less turnover for Part-Time positions so the City, as well as the employee, benefits.
 - In addition to the cost increases the Library will be absorbing that are listed in item 5, it was noted that even with a stagnant budget there will be fewer new materials due to inflation.
 - It is important to keep in mind that when a library purchases digital materials, they are often only 'leased' for two years, then they need to be leased again (whereas when an individual purchases a digital item, they pay once and own it forever).
 - The increase in training and staff development would enable a yearly All Staff Learning Day, and fund some state and national conference attendance for all levels of Library staff. For national conferences, with this budget, Managers, Supervisors, and Librarians would attend one national conference every 4 years.
 - To clarify, all 3 Options will be submitted to the Budget office. At their meeting with the Mayor, Rick and Rebecca outlined the 3 Options and received an invitation to move ahead with this plan – even in lean years, it is important to understand department needs.
- Option 2, Targeted reduction in Library services. Rebecca mentioned that, following the last round of RNB to Part-Time LA conversions, we have 32 LA positions, but with more of them working Part-Time, we only have a need for 30 total positions. The Deputy Finance Director, Forrest Longman, confirmed that two of the currently vacant positions can go towards a possible targeted reduction. Rebecca will adjust the Options with this update. Other comments include:
 - Consider using "impacts" rather than "risk."
 - Consider substituting the \$30,000 materials reduction with the \$30,000 reduction in 2 vacant LA positions.
 - Option 3, 5% reduction in Library services. Comments and suggestions include:
 - Make necessary adjustments resulting from the additional \$30,000 reduction in 2 vacant LA positions.
 - At last month's Board meeting, Trustees requested staff calculate the Library's security costs as well as related safety items and subtract this number (~\$400,000) from the budget total. Perhaps clarify this more in Option 3.
 - It would be less confusing with only one budget table rather than two in the graph.
 - Clarify that by 'materials' we are referring to physical and digital materials purchased for circulation by the public. Perhaps combine the two into one total materials cost.

- Use stronger language in item 1. d. – “would require the library cut the materials budget by 41%.”
 - In the 1st bullet of item 5, use stronger language – rather than “foregoing annual Level of Service increases in Library materials” use “would severely drop the Level of Service standard to below what it was 8-10 years ago.”
 - Strengthen the impact of this reduction on our long-standing partner agency, WCLS.
 - Move the most impactful to the top of the list.
 - Is the City aware that the Friends of the Library feel strongly that they shouldn’t supplant General Funds?
- Library 2025 Draft Budget Proposal – Postage. Rebecca explained that this is a separate request (*see Attachment #2*). Rather than a requested increase, this is intended to correct an unanticipated reduction in Library budget due to the City moving mail processing from the City warehouse to the Finance department.

Rick made a motion to approve Rebecca moving forward with submitting the 2025 Budget modification requests, incorporating suggested changes. Deborra Garrett seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – July 16, 2024 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: Library 2025 Draft Budget Proposal
- Attachment #2: Library 2025 Draft Budget Proposal - Postage