

# Bellingham Public Library



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees**  
**Tuesday, November 27, 2018 – Central Library Lecture 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 McConnel, Katie Bray, Suzanne Carlson-Prandini and Wendy Jenkins

**Others Present:** Dana, homeless advocate

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**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen. Rick introduced Katie Bray, Public Services Librarian.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Rebecca Craven moved to approve the agenda. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

**Consent agenda:** Rebecca Craven moved to approve the October 23, 2018 Regular meeting minutes and the October 2018 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

**Board Chair report:**

- On November 8, Rachel, Jim, Rick and 5 library staff members attended the Whatcom Literacy Council breakfast with librarian, author and literary critic Nancy Pearl.
- There is one small change to the 2019 Board Meeting dates that were discussed last month: the May meeting will be held at Fairhaven Branch Fireplace Room because the Friends will be using the Lecture Room for book sale set-up.
- Rick and Rebecca Judd had a positive meeting with Mayor Kelli on November 13 – the Mayor feels the Library is working smoothly and Rick commended the staff for this.

**Board member reports:**

- Jim reported that Rebecca Judd did a nice job presenting to the Cordata Neighborhood Association.
- Rachel commented that the Whatcom Community Foundation is planning a page in the upcoming Community Report dedicated to telling the story of Bob and George, the donors who recently established a \$2.5 to \$3 million dollar endowment fund for the Library. Rachel will bring copies to the next meeting.

**City Council liaison report:** No report.

**Friends of BPL report:** No report.

**Library Director report:**

- The ILS has been front and center this past month. Jon will provide more detail later in the meeting, but Rebecca pointed out that staff have been building out four tracks:
  - 1) Implementation of the actual system.
  - 2) Staff training with emphasis on December 3 and January 2 – the two days we will be closed for intensive training. We have communications out in multiple places.
  - 3) Limited service from January 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup> – we will be finished with Horizon, but not online with Polaris until January 8. We want to make sure we have the best service available during this time. Patrons will not be able to place holds, renew books, or access their accounts. They will be able to check out and have access to digital services. This will need to be communicated to the public.
  - 4) Staff support after the go-live day.
- The Lecture Room will be serving as an Emergency Cold Weather Day Center this winter. Our participation in this City initiative is grounded in two principles: on the coldest days of the year we all need to work together to support our most vulnerable neighbors and, as a department of the City, we are looking for ways to align our priorities. We will get 24-hour notice to work out the details about the best use of space. City partners will be providing staff and food. The Library will not serve as an Emergency Cold Weather Day Center during the FOBPL book sale.

**Whatcom READS:** Katie Bray reported that the 2019 Whatcom READS title is *The Big Burn, Teddy Roosevelt & the Fire That Saved America*, by Timothy Egan. Egan will be in Whatcom County March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> – at the Mount Baker Theatre at 7:00 p.m. on the 7<sup>th</sup> and at Mount Baker High School in Deming at 8:30 a.m. on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Whatcom READS has a huge slate of programming beginning in January. Three programs will be hosted here at Central Library: Escape the Flames: The Big Burn Escape Room on February 4 and 11 from 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.; Triple Nickel will feature “Bob” Bartlett, a member of the first all-black paratrooper unit which fought the 1945 Mt. Baker fire; and Wildfire and Resilience, featuring local author Leslie Wharton who was caught in and survived a wildfire. Katie said Whatcom READS is also one of the first non-profits participating in Bellingham Cocktail Week, the first week in February, by having a book discussion at one of the participating locations – details are still being finalized. The 2020 title will be announced at the Mount Baker Theatre event. More information can be found at the website [whatcomreads.org](http://whatcomreads.org).

**2019-2020 Budget update:** Rebecca reported that December 10 is the day that City Council will approve the final reading of the budget. We are not anticipating any changes.

**Facilities Committee report:** The Committee is reviewing a draft of the RMC Architects final report. It should be available to distribute in December. Rick said the report summarizes the process, notes that this is the first step, and provides cost estimates. The estimate for the work to do the main floor project is within a million dollars. Jim added that the ‘rule of thumb’ of \$100 a square foot is pretty accurate.

**Integrated Library System (ILS) update:** Jon reported that so far we are on track to go-live with Polaris on January 8. The training plan is well underway. One thing that hasn't been mentioned yet is that one of the third-party systems – Class Point of Sale – needs custom work to adjust it to work with Polaris. IT is working with a vendor consultant and they expect it to be ready on January 14. From January 1-14 we will not be able to take payment for fines on accounts. Overall, we know there will be discoveries after we go-live, but the team is doing a good job now of finding and solving issues.

**OnBase option for agenda packet – discussion:** Jon explained that the Library has been offered the opportunity to use a different method of pulling together agendas and minutes. The City uses OnBase software for a variety of tasks and uses the Agendas and Minutes modules for City Council and other departments, boards and committees. Jon showed the website – meetings.cob.org. Benefits to going with this system are we would no longer have to host the data ourselves, OnBase automatically would fulfill state-wide retention requirements, and it would provide the opportunity to review and update how board packets look and what we include. Initial set-up would require quite a bit of work for IT, but once set up, OnBase could provide a more efficient work flow. If we have personnel changes, it could be easier to train compared to our current manual process. Janice added that this would make decision making and records more visible – the Board is a governing body of the City of Bellingham. The implementation deadline is flexible, perhaps beginning work in the spring and going-live July 1. Rick asked the Trustees to think about this and, after the first of the year, the Board will consider what they would like to see in the packet.

**Strategic plan update:** Rachel reported that the Committee met on November 14. Rebecca Judd collected 20-25 examples of strategic plans from similar sized libraries, local libraries and libraries that had used the Transforming Communities framework from the Harwood Institute. The Committee members – Rick, Rachel, Rebecca J. and Janice – have been going through the examples, ranking the top 10. Once the Committee has narrowed the examples down to 5-10, they will share with the whole Board and the M-team. Rachel has found the process thought provoking and valuable as we think about how we want to shape and communicate our process. Rebecca J. clarified that Elisabeth, the Capstone student from Western, did a lot of work researching and gathering links for the examples. Jim asked if, concerning the north side, the Board should consider developing a Level of Service standard based on location, adding that, for example, the Parks & Recreation Space Plan has a LOS standard objective to have a neighborhood park within 0.5 miles and a community park within 1 mile. Rick recalled that early in the Library's LOS project this was considered, but they found that very few libraries used location as a criteria. Rick added that the strategic plan definitely needs to consider services to the north side. Jim said that at Rebecca's presentation to Cordata, she stressed we need to understand what services everybody needs and then look at how the strategic plan can accomplish this within our resources. Rachel expects to be able to have more information at the next board meeting.

**Policies review:**

- Eligibility for Library Service – discussion: Bethany referred to the materials provided in the packet: current Eligibility for Library Service policy; draft update of the policy; matrix of pros and cons used to develop the draft updated policy. She provided talking points in the decision-making process:

- We strive to serve all in the community. We've stated that aspirational goal when describing our community, but our current policy doesn't match our words. This recommended update aims to raise the equity of library card acquisition as well as to further align our policies and procedures with WCLS.
- According to the policy as it stands, only those able to provide proof of address in Bellingham are eligible to get a BPL library card and have borrowing privileges.
- About 18 months ago, WCLS changed their procedures – photo ID is required to verify identity, but verification of address is not required.
- It was fine to have our libraries be different on this policy and procedure until we began issuing library cards according to a patron's resident location. We now issue WCLS cards to greater Whatcom County residents and BPL cards to Bellingham residents – this now creates an awkward situation where we require some to show proof of address, but not others. This appears preferential to some patrons.
- Additionally, our goal is to serve our community regardless of their housing status. Adjusting the policy and accompanying procedures to meet this service philosophy is the major policy revision in this recommendation.

Proposed policy changes are:

- The Scope as been expanded from “This policy applies to all visitors to the Bellingham Public Library online, and at physical locations” to “The Bellingham Public Library provides circulating materials for public use. This policy defines who is eligible for a Bellingham Public Library card and any limitations to borrowing privileges of physical or digital materials. The Library Board of Trustees authorizes the Library Director to develop and implement effective procedures and guidelines in accordance with the policy.”
- In section 1, the 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet has been changed from “Rent meeting rooms” to “Reserve community space.” A 5<sup>th</sup> bullet has been added, “Sign on to free wifi.”
- Section 3 is where the meat of the changes to this policy are. Current policy reads:

**“Library cards are available at no charge to residents of Bellingham and Whatcom County.**  
Individual adults must provide photo ID and proof of their current address.

Parents or legal guardians must provide photo ID and proof of their current address when requesting a library card for youth.

New residents without proof of residency may be offered one-time, limited borrowing services.

Individuals who work in Bellingham or Whatcom County must provide photo ID, proof of their current address, and proof of employment in Bellingham or Whatcom County.

Institutions or businesses must provide written approval from the owner and/or an official authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of the organization.

Library card holders of the Whatcom County Library System may use their cards to access materials and services at Bellingham Public Library locations.”

Updated draft reads:

**“Library cards are available at no charge to residents of Bellingham with verification of identity and eligibility.”**

The following individuals and groups are eligible for borrowing privileges:

- Individuals who live in Bellingham, their spouses and underage dependents.
- Individuals who work, own property or attend school in Bellingham, their spouses and underage dependents.
- Youth under 18 with a parent or guardian signature. Youth under 18 without a parent or guardian signature may apply for a limited use card. Youth under 18 who are demonstrably free of parental control can apply for a full use card without a parent or guardian signature.
- Individuals taking responsibility for the borrowing activity of schools, day care, and non-profit organizations located in Bellingham.

Applicants can obtain more specific information on verification of identity and eligibility on the Library's public website and/or by asking a Library staff member.

Appropriate arrangements will be made for those who are unable to sign for themselves or who are physically unable to come to the library.

Library card holders of the Whatcom County Library System may use their cards to access materials and services at Bellingham Public Library locations and vice versa.”

➤ A new section was added, section 7 reads:

**“Borrowers are normally expected to present their card for checkout.”**

Borrowers are normally expected to present their library card each time they wish to borrow materials from the library. In lieu of the library card, a borrower may check out on their account in person with ID. However, if the computer system is down, borrowers are required to present their cards to borrow materials.”

Bethany summed up stating that the goal is to introduce and discuss the revision at this meeting and adopt a revised policy at the December Board meeting.

Rebecca Craven suggested numbering all headings – currently Scope, Policy/Conditions, and Definitions at the start of the policy are not numbered. She also commented that in section 1 there is no reference to Reference Librarians and, in section 3, bullet 3 doesn't make reference to residency while the first two bullets do – she suggested using “resident youth” in bullet 3. She voiced support of the draft.

Jim asked if the draft update mirrors WCLS philosophically and procedurally? Bethany responded that it does.

Rachel commented that the draft update improves access to people who could benefit from access.

Rebecca Craven asked how the draft update aligns with the School District student accounts project that is currently in process. Bethany explained that ConnectED will provide cards to every school student, but it won't provide for homeschooled students or unenrolled youth. The adjusted policy draft will be presented at next month's meeting.

- Rules of Conduct – review/possible action: Rebecca Judd pointed out that there are two proposed changes:
  1. Under Definitions, the Person in Charge (PIC) has been adjusted so that there isn't one model for the main floor and another model for the Children's

Department. The proposed change reads, "If the incident originates at the Central Library: The Security and Information Attendant on duty is the Person in Charge. In their absence, the Person in Charge (PIC) at the Help Desk is responsible."

2. In section 1, a sentence has been added at the end, "Exceptions must be authorized by the Library Director or designee." This addition was precipitated by the Public Comment from last month's meeting. Rebecca Judd and Rick met and discussed this and determined, rather than changing the whole policy, adding the possibility for an exception by the Director would allow for unique, emergency situations. Rebecca Judd also had a conversation with a local veterinary clinic to see if a person could leave a pet for short periods of time – this issue with the crated cat isn't just a library issue, but a broader issue. Rebecca Judd commended Suzanne Carlson-Prandini for her work on this policy. Rebecca Craven commented that this is an elegant way to solve the policy matter, with the stipulation that if, over time, it consumes too much of the Director's time, it should be revisited.

Jim McCabe moved to approve the revised policy. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

#### **New Business:**

- Rick referred to the Guiding Principles document in the packet regarding public and staff spaces. This was drafted by the Management Team and vetted by staff. Rick invited the Board to weigh in on the document. It will go into the final RMC Architects report. Our Level of Service (LOS) standards will also go into the report.

#### **Action items for next meeting:**

- Election of Board officers
- Strategic Plan samples
- RMC Architects final report
- Eligibility for Library Service policy

**Public comment:** Dana, a homeless patron and advocate, arrived after Public Comment but requested to speak on the Eligibility for Library Service policy. Dana asked the Board to consider, on top of the removal of the need for address verification, also allowing, at the Director's discretion, the need for photo identification as the process to obtain ID can sometimes take months. Dana also commented that if a child is homeless, or not an enrolled student, or without guardianship, they can currently be denied library service. The Library can be a lifeline – we don't want people to feel isolated.

**Meeting adjourned** at 4:45 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – December 18, 2018** at the Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Library Lecture Room – at 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees