

**BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

**NOTICE OF MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
of TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2019**

Publication of the agenda and the approximate times are a guide to, and not a limitation on, the activities of Trustees.

**Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, Washington
Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.**

AGENDA	TIME (approx.)
1. Call to order and introductions	2 min
2. Approve/modify agenda	1 min
3. Public comment This time is set aside for members of the public to make comments or ask questions. We ask that remarks be limited to three minutes.	3 min
4. Consent agenda All matters listed on the consent agenda are considered routine and may be approved in a single motion. A trustee may ask that an item be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately. • Communications and FYI • Minutes May 21, 2019: Regular board meeting & Special board meeting • Library performance & activity measures May 2019 • Financial reports Claims: May 2019 YTD report: May 2019	4 min
5. Reports • Board Chair • Library Board members • City Council liaison • Friends of Bellingham Public Library • Library Director	10 min
Time check: 3:50	
6. Mid-biennium adjustments • Rebecca Judd, Director	10 min
7. Facilities Committee report • Rick Osen, Board Chair	5 min
8. Strategic Planning update • Rebecca Judd, Director and Janice Keller, Communications, Community Relations & Programming Manager	10 min
Time check: 4:15	

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 9. New business | 5 min |
| 10. Action items for next meeting | 2 min |
| 11. Adjourn | Time check: 4:22 |

Next Regular Library Board Meeting: Tuesday, July 16, 2019 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Lecture Room, Central Library, 210 Central Avenue
Bellingham, Washington

The library meeting rooms are ADA accessible; however, if you require a sign interpreter or other hearing accommodation, please allow the library 48 hours notice. Order of agenda items may be adjusted.

The New York Review of Books

In Praise of Public Libraries

Sue Halpern
APRIL 18, 2019 ISSUE

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

by Eric Klinenberg

Crown, 277 pp., \$28.00

The Library Book

by Susan Orlean

Simon and Schuster, 319 pp., \$28.00

Ex Libris

a film directed by Frederick Wiseman

Years ago, I lived in a remote mountain town that had never had a public library. The town was one of the largest in New York State by area but small in population, with a couple thousand residents spread out over about two hundred square miles. By the time my husband and I moved there, the town had lost most of its economic base—in the nineteenth century it had supported a number of tanneries and mills—and our neighbors were mainly employed seasonally, if at all. When the regional library system's bookmobile was taken out of service, the town had no easy access to books. The town board proposed a small tax increase to fund a library, something on the order of ten dollars per household. It was soundly defeated. The dominant sentiments seemed to be “leave well enough alone” and “who needs books?” Then there was the man who declared that “libraries are communist.”



Haizhan Zheng/Getty Images

Bates Hall, the reading room at the Boston Public Library, 2017

By then, through the machinations of the town board, which scrounged up \$15,000 from its annual budget and deputized me and two retired teachers to—somehow—turn that money into a lending library, we had around three thousand books on loan from the regional library consortium tucked into a room at the back of town hall. We'd been advised by librarians at the consortium that five hundred library cards would take us through the first year. They took us through the first three weeks. Our librarian, whose previous job was running a used bookstore, turned out to be a master of handselling, even to the rough-and-tumble loggers and guys on the road crew who brought their kids in for story time and left with novels he'd pulled for them, and then came back, alone, for more. Books were being checked out by the bagful; there were lines at the circulation desk. Children especially, but sometimes adults, couldn't believe it was all free.

By year's end we had signed up about 1,500 patrons, and there was a book club, a preschool story hour, movie night, and a play-reading group. High school students, many of whom did not have Internet access at home, came in the afternoon to do their homework. People pressed books into the hands of strangers who did not stay strangers for long. And it occurred to me one Saturday, as I watched quilters sitting at our one table trade patterns and children clear the shelves of *The Magic School Bus* series, racing to check them out, that the man who had said that libraries were communist had been right. A public library is predicated on an ethos of sharing and egalitarianism. It is nonjudgmental. It stands in stark opposition to the materialism and individualism that otherwise define our culture. It is defiantly, proudly, communal. Even our little book-lined room, with its mismatched furniture and worn carpet, was, as the sociologist Eric Klinenberg reminds us libraries were once called, a palace for the people.

Klinenberg is interested in the ways that common spaces can repair our fractious and polarized civic life. And though he argues in his new book, *Palaces for the People*, that playgrounds, sporting clubs, diners, parks, farmer's markets, and churches—anything, really, that puts people in close contact with one another—have the capacity to strengthen what Tocqueville called the cross-cutting ties that bind us to those who in many ways are different from us, he suggests that libraries may be the most effective. “Libraries are the kinds of places where ordinary people with different backgrounds, passions, and interests can take part in a living democratic culture,” he writes. Yet as Susan Orlean observes in her loving encomium to libraries everywhere, aptly titled *The Library Book*, “The publicness of the public library is an increasingly rare commodity. It becomes harder all the time to think of places that welcome everyone and don't charge any money for that warm embrace.”

As Klinenberg points out:

“Infrastructure” is not a term conventionally used to describe the underpinnings of social life...[but] if states and societies do not recognize social infrastructure and how it works, they will fail to see a powerful way to promote civic engagement and social interaction, both within communities and across group lines.

To glimpse what he means, one need only dip into Frederick Wiseman’s epic and inspirational three-hour-and-seventeen-minute documentary *Ex Libris*, a picaresque tour of the grandest people’s palace of all: the New York Public Library system, a collection of ninety-two branches with seventeen million annual patrons (and millions more online). Wiseman trains his lens on the quotidian (people lining up to get into the main branch or poring over books), the obscure (a voice actor recording a book for the blind), and the singular (Khalil Muhammad discussing the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture), and without saying so explicitly (the film is unnarrated), he shows the NYPL to be an exemplar of what a library is and what it can do. Here we see librarians helping students with math homework, hosting job fairs, running literacy and citizenship classes, teaching braille, and sponsoring lectures. We see people using computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, and, of course, books. They are white, black, brown, Asian, young, homeless, not-so-young, deaf, hearing, blind; they are everyone, which is the point. If you want to understand why the Trump administration eliminated federal funding for libraries in its 2018, 2019, and 2020 proposed budgets, it’s on display in this film: public libraries dismantle the walls between us.

This is by design. A statement issued by the Public Library Association in 1982 called “The Public Library: Democracy’s Resource” said:

The public library is unique among our American institutions. Only the public library provides an open and nonjudgmental environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information.... The uses made of the ideas and information are as varied as the individuals who seek them. Public libraries freely offer access to their collections and services to all members of the community without regard to race, citizenship, age, education level, economic status, or any other qualification or condition.

Free access to ideas and information, a prerequisite to the existence of a responsible citizenship, is as fundamental to America as are the principles of freedom, equality and individual rights.

The public loves the public library. Klinenberg cites a Pew Research Center study from 2016 that showed that more than 90 percent of Americans consider the library “very” or “somewhat” important to their community. Pew researchers also found that about half of all Americans sixteen and older had used the library in the past year. Even so, libraries are often convenient targets for budget cuts. After the financial crisis, in the years 2008–2013,

for example, New York City eliminated \$68 million from the operating budget of the New York Public Library, which resulted in a dramatic drop in staff hours and in its acquisition budget. (A fair amount of *Ex Libris* is given over to poignant behind-the-scenes discussions about budgets.) But it wasn't just the New York Public Library that was suffering. A study by the American Library Association around the same time found that twenty-one states reported cuts in library funding.

This had happened before, and is happening today: libraries, which are supported by local, state, and federal monies, as well as by private donations, are chronically underfunded and subject to the whims of politicians and philanthropists. In a 1972 letter published in these pages, a group of scholars and writers including Hannah Arendt, William Buckley, Ralph Ellison, and Betty Friedan, among many others, decried budget cuts that were curtailing services at the main branch of the New York Public Library:

At one time the Library's doors were open to the public thirteen hours a day, on 365 days of the year; then the working man, the untrained, unmatriculated scholar could use freely and anonymously, at no cost to himself, the riches of the reference collections. A year ago, however, the Library's financial crisis forced early closing of the reference division at 6 PM, and complete closing on weekends and holidays.

The signatories were asking for readers to contribute to the library's research and reference collections. The letter ran under the headline "Crisis in the NY Public Library." (The main branch is now open on Sundays for four hours; most of the smaller branch libraries are closed that day.)

In 2008 the private-equity billionaire Stephen Schwarzman donated \$100 million to the cash-strapped NYPL. The library's flagship Beaux-Arts building on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, which opened in 1911 and took sixteen years to complete at a cost of \$9 million (plus \$20 million for the land on which it sits), now bears his name. One hundred million dollars is a lot of money, but it pales in comparison to the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie, the patron saint of libraries (and rabid industrialist), whose \$55 million largesse—the equivalent of \$1.6 billion today—funded 2,509 libraries worldwide, 1,679 of them public libraries in the United States, between 1886 and 1919. Sixty-seven of them were in New York City, sixteen of which are still in use.

Carnegie's devotion to libraries was long-standing. His father helped found the Tradesmen's Subscription Library in Dunfermline, Scotland, where he was a weaver and a member of the failed Chartist Movement. When industrialization cost him his job, the family emigrated to the Pittsburgh area, and at thirteen, after only five years of formal schooling, Carnegie was sent out to work, first as a bobbin boy in a cotton factory and later as a messenger for a telegraph company. Working boys were allowed to borrow one book a

week from the private library of Colonel James Anderson, a successful local iron manufacturer and veteran of the War of 1812. Carnegie wrote in his autobiography:

It was from my own early experience that I decided there was no use to which money could be applied so productive of good to boys and girls who have good within them and ability and ambition to develop it, as the founding of a public library in a community which is willing to support it as a municipal institution. I am sure that the future of those libraries I have been privileged to found will prove the correctness of this opinion.

Carnegie's first American library, in Braddock, Pennsylvania, was built about a hundred years after the founding of the first public library in what would become the United States. In 1790, the residents of Franklin, Massachusetts, chose to allow a collection of books donated to the town by its namesake, Benjamin Franklin, to be circulated among its residents without charge. In so doing, they chose not to follow Franklin's lead: in 1731 he had founded a subscription library in Philadelphia. Massachusetts was also the site of the first major public library system, Boston's, founded in 1854. Carnegie's Braddock library was different from these: in addition to books, it had a 964-seat, velvet-curtained theater, a basketball court, and a swimming pool. Its mission was to exercise both mind and body. These days, the Braddock library, an imposing, turreted building up the hill from Carnegie's shuttered steel mill, has fallen into disrepair, and a group is attempting to raise \$10 million for renovations—not from a person of great wealth, but one billion pennies donated by the public. (They've raised \$40,000 so far.)

Carnegie libraries stretch from one end of the country to the other, the 106 in New York State eclipsed by 142 in California. Six of these were in Los Angeles, a city of just over one hundred thousand at the turn of the twentieth century when Carnegie made his grants; three are still in use. No Carnegie money was used to build what would become the city's Central Library. Founded in 1872 as a small fee-based organization whose five-dollar annual subscription was out of reach for most citizens, by 1933 it was circulating more books than any other library in the country.

Orlean nimbly documents this phenomenal growth, moving backward from the fire that roared through Central Library in 1986, while roving through the library as it is today, "an intricate machine, a contraption of whirring gears." In so doing, she achieves on paper what Wiseman does on film: by acquainting the reader with the library's actual infrastructure—the shipping department that sends 32,000 books around the city every weekday; the photography and map collections; the reference librarians on call to answer questions about, say, Pussy Riot, obituary etiquette, and the life span of parrots; the staff members who teach coding to children and connect homeless patrons with much-needed services—she reveals why it is such a valuable community resource and a perfect example of what Klinenberg is talking about when he extols the benefits of social infrastructure.

When the Los Angeles Central Library caught fire, it burned at 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit for seven hours. Four hundred thousand books were destroyed, among them the library's entire collection of American and British plays, all the books about the Bible and church history, 45,000 works of literature, 18,000 social science books, 12,000 cookbooks, every bird book, 5.5 million patent listings dating back to 1799, and more, none of it covered by insurance. Orlean pursues in a desultory way the mystery of who—if anyone—started the fire, and why. Book burning, in her view, is a kind of genocide, a way to wipe out the collective memory of a people: Mao (a librarian himself), the Nazis, book-burning festival-goers during the Spanish Inquisition, and, just last year, a religious zealot who burned a number of LGBTQ children's books he'd checked out from an Iowa public library—all engaged in "libricide" to incinerate ideas and erase whole swaths of history. If the Central Library fire was deliberate, to what end?

Like others who have investigated the fire, Orlean sets her sights on a mostly out-of-work actor and ne'er-do-well named Harry Peak, who may or may not have been in the building the morning of the fire, bumped into an older patron rushing out, been the young man shooed out of the staff room where he'd helped himself to a cup of coffee, been the same young man who was told to leave one of the library's restricted areas, or been the blond young man in the picture drawn by a sketch artist after hearing descriptions of the person who had done these things. Arson turns out to be difficult to determine, especially in an aging building known to have faulty wiring, and Peak, who died in 1993, turned out to be a distinctively unreliable narrator. More than once he claimed to have been in the library that morning, yet at other times said he'd been nowhere near it. His alibis twist and turn and twist again, which was little surprise to those who knew him (his sister called him "the biggest bullshitter in the world") but flummoxed law enforcement, who spectacularly failed to pin the crime on him, arresting him but eventually releasing him for lack of evidence.

Despite her best efforts, Orlean, too, is unable to solve the case. "The Central Library fire confounded me," she writes. "As hard as I tried, I couldn't completely convince myself that Harry started the fire." For readers entertained by Peak's peregrinations, this is of little consequence. His story is a sidebar to a bigger and more enchanting mystery: how a library rose out of almost nothing to become, as its name suggests, central to the residents of the second-largest city in the country, lending more than 900,000 books a year, answering six million



Library of Congress

A bookmobile at the Rockville Fair in Maryland, 1928

reference questions, and welcoming 700,000 patrons. This nut Orlean easily and delightfully cracks.

The growth of Central Library mirrored the growth of Los Angeles. In 1873, when the subscription library opened, California had been a state for less than twenty-five years and Los Angeles had a population of fewer than 11,000 people. By 1904, the population had grown tenfold, and the library was circulating nearly 800,000 books a year. Fewer than twenty years later, when the number of residents was over half a million, one thousand books were being checked out each hour, about three million annually. Indeed, plotted on a graph, population growth and library circulation figures would appear coterminous. If this seems obvious, it's only because we have come to assume the importance of libraries and their services to all members of the community.

What makes Central Library unique, and its story so entertaining, are the people who shepherded it through its metamorphosis. Many were women, well before librarianship became a female domain. Orlean introduces readers to Mary Foy, who in 1880, at eighteen years of age, took over Central Library's forerunner, the subscription library that at the time didn't allow women to borrow books and relegated them to a separate "Ladies' room." Two female librarians succeeded her, and then a third: a newspaper reporter from Ohio named Tessa Kelso, a short-haired, cigarette-smoking woman who was described at the time as "unconventional."

Kelso had the foresight to anticipate the library as we now know it, imagining it to be a repository not only of books but of sporting equipment and board games and "the whole paraphernalia of healthy, wholesome amusement that is...out of the reach of the average boy and girl." Before she could see that vision through, Kelso was pushed out of her job for adding to the collection *Le Cadet*, a novel by the French author Jean Richepin, which was considered risqué by some of the city's arbiters of morality. She sued one of them, a Methodist minister named J.W. Campbell, for slander, and though she won (the church settled) she still lost her job.

Then there was Mary Jones, who was summarily dismissed in 1905 when the library board suddenly decided it would rather have a man running the library. Jones fought the decision, rallying a thousand women to petition the mayor and library board on her behalf, and, when that got no response, to take to the streets. She eventually gave up, moved east, and became head librarian at Bryn Mawr.

Orlean has the most fun recounting the misadventures and peccadillos of Jones's successor, a bon vivant named Charles Lummis. Lummis was a writer whose first book, *Birch Bark Poems*, was published on birch bark he'd peeled and stitched together himself, and who gained national fame when he chronicled his walk from the east coast, where he'd dropped out of Harvard, to California, where he was to take up a position at the *Los Angeles Times*.

His penchant for disappearing for weeks at a time to go tramping or to preside over orgiastic bacchanals eventually cost him his job at the newspaper and did not abate when he took over the library. Still, Orlean credits him with making the library “the institution it is today...[pushing] for it to become a serious research center for scholars” and establishing its photography collection, as well as collections of Spanish and Californian history. “His ambition was to make the library completely accessible—‘a workshop for scholars including every painter’s apprentice or working boy or streetcar man who wishes to learn, just as much as it includes the Greek professors or the art dilettante,’” Orlean writes, quoting Lummis. “His attitude of inclusiveness was unusual for the time. He campaigned to bring in patrons who hadn’t considered using the library before.” This is the essence and the calling of the public library today.

Last July an economics professor at Long Island University published an article in *Forbes* arguing that public libraries should be closed because they had outlived their usefulness now that Netflix streams movies, Starbucks offers free Wi-Fi, and, most conveniently, electronic books are instantly available from Amazon. Closing libraries in favor of Amazon would be a win-win, he said, because taxes would go down while Amazon’s share price would go up. The professor was especially enamored of the company’s cashierless storefronts, which, in his estimation, “basically combines a library with a Starbucks.” The “library” being referred to, it should be noted, is a commercial enterprise that sells books.

The reaction to the article, once readers realized that it wasn’t satire, was outrage and ridicule, and *Forbes* removed it from its website about seventy-two hours after it was posted. But the funny thing was that, inadvertently, the writer had made a strong case for the value and continued existence of the public library:

There was a time local libraries offered the local community lots of services in exchange for their tax money. They would bring books, magazines, and journals to the masses through a borrowing system.... They also provided residents with a comfortable place they could enjoy their books. They provided people with a place they could do their research in peace with the help of friendly librarians....

Libraries slowly began to service the local community more. Libraries introduced video rentals and free internet access. The modern local library still provides these services, but they aren’t for free. [Rather they are] financed by taxpayers in [the] form of a “library tax.”

Libraries, of course, were never “free” any more than public schools or public roads or public health nurses are free. One might expect a professor of economics to know this. Or for him to do the math: the per capita “library tax” for the Los Angeles County library system, for example, is only \$32.77—or about nine medium-sized Starbucks lattes. There

are nine Amazon Go stores in the United States and 16,568 public libraries, many in places where Amazon or Starbucks will never venture, like the branches in the far reaches of the Bronx and Los Angeles where Wiseman and Orlean take us, or the rural outpost where the library I helped found is located.

That library now has about 40,000 items on its shelves, including games and puzzles and sporting equipment, just as Tessa Kelso envisioned well over a century ago. Though small and lacking some of the amenities of a better-resourced community, it is a worthy successor to the libraries Carnegie funded. Those, it should be noted, were not “free” either: before he would make a grant, Carnegie required each town to commit to covering 10 percent of a library’s annual cost as well as supplying its building site. Grantees also had to agree to provide library services at no cost to patrons.

Perhaps the most definitive rebuke to the idea of trading libraries for Amazon and coffee shops comes from a former Starbucks employee whom Klinenberg met at a branch of the New York Public Library, where he is now an “information specialist”: “At Starbucks, and at most businesses, really, the assumption is that you, the customer, are better for having this thing that you purchase. Right?” he said. “At the library, the assumption is you *are* better. You have it in you already.... The library assumes the best out of people.” What we learn from *The Library Book*, *Ex Libris*, and *Palaces for the People* is that we are all better off, too, when people assume the best out of libraries.

RELATED

BellinghamPublicLibrary



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees Tuesday, May 21, 2019 – Fairhaven Branch Fireplace 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, Rachel Myers and Jim McCabe
Board Members Absent:	Rebecca Craven and Vernon Johnson
Library Staff:	Rebecca Judd, Bethany Hoglund, Janice Keller, Jon McConnel and Jennifer Vander Ploeg
Others Present:	April Barker, City Council Liaison; Faye Hill, Friends of BPL; Bill Fly, citizen

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:33 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

Approve/modify agenda: Jim McCabe moved to approve the agenda. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: Bill Fly encouraged the library to move newspapers at the Central Library from ground-level to higher shelves to ease accessibility and to consider replacing the San Francisco Chronicle subscription with the LA Times. Additionally, he voiced disappointment that sometimes the NY Times issues are missing; encouraged Fairhaven to have more periodicals such as the Atlantic and Economist; and overall, he uses the library a lot and feels as if it is a wonderful asset to the community.

Consent agenda: Rachel Myers moved to approve the April 16, 2019 Regular meeting minutes and the April 2019 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report: Rick thanked the members of the Dewey Decimators (Jon, Anthony and Howard) for their performance at the Whatcom Literacy Council's Trivia Bee. Library Trustees should've received an invitation to the Mayor's Boards and Commission Reception on June 12; he encouraged everyone who is able to attend. Rick thanked Faye Hill and the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library for their annual meeting festivities in April where Rebecca Judd and Public Services Librarian Katie Bray presented. Rebecca and Rick attended their monthly meeting with Mayor Kelli, which also included Forrest Longman from Finance. Rick and Rebecca felt encouraged to put forward a staffing proposal for the midterm adjustment and

are currently working on a possible request which will be brought to Board at the June meeting. This proposal will also incorporate the elimination of overdue charges, which the Mayor supports.

Board member reports: Jim McCabe reported that at the Cordata Neighborhood meeting there was a presentation regarding North Cordata, a new housing development just north of the Kline Road. The developer talked about the possibility of incorporating a commercial and/or community area into the plans. A visual representation of a possible library garnered much enthusiasm from the attendees. Jim also reported there is a Community Conversation around the topic of Emergency Preparedness in June.

City Council liaison report: April Barker reported that:

- Council completed a retreat that addressed the topic of homelessness and restorative versus punitive measures for incarceration. April was hopeful this retreat would be a deep dive into the City's capital facilities needs but other topics were addressed.
- Council is working to bring food access to the level of infrastructure in the Comp Plan.
- Work is being done to preserve as many manufactured housing sites as possible. Currently there are over 900 manufactured homes in the city.
- April also gave a reminder that the library was in Mayor Kelli's top 5 commitments for the year.

Friends of BPL report: The book sale begins tomorrow, May 22!

Library Director report: Rebecca reported that there is success for libraries in the State budget that includes investments to increase access and coverage of broadband, funding for an upgrade to the State Archives building and allocations for capital funds for libraries. For 2019-2021, \$12 million is allocated; Rebecca recommends we track this for BPL's future capital projects as both the House and Senate agreed that future capital funding should remain at the \$10 million per biennium level.

The Fountain Community Church will not host a women's shelter during the winter of 2019/2020. Planning for winter 2019/2020 is underway city and county wide.

Winners of the Sue C. Boynton poetry contest were celebrated at an event and the winner's poetry will be placed on plaques on display on the Central Library grounds.

2018 Washington Public Libraries Annual Report: Jon McConnell reported that the state requests all public libraries in Washington compile and submit data annually. The data is then compiled at the state level and reported at the federal level. The data BPL submitted is included in the board packet. Of note, Jon highlighted that there was a large increase of account holders from last year due to the new ConnectED accounts. The data in the submitted report will be used for BPL's 2018 statistical data and can be used to compare BPL with other libraries in Washington. Additionally, BPL subscribes to PLDS (Public Library Data Survey) which compiles public library statistics nationally; we can use the service to find comparable metrics with other libraries.

Facilities Committee report: Rick reported the contract between the City and the architect has not yet been signed. Work is being done on the sorter project; the planning will occur in 2019 and the sorter will be purchased in 2020.

Strategic Planning update: Rachel reported that she and Rick met with Rebecca Judd and Janice. Community Conversations are continuing to be held and the focus is on themed conversations. She reviewed the success goals developed by the board earlier this year, specifically: How are we talking to community members we have not talked to before? And are we talking with diverse voices? One bonus of the Community Conversations is that new partnerships have been forged and/or strengthened in the process. Rachel also applauded Rebecca, Janice and the rest of the team that is making Community Conversations happen, as it is a huge effort. At the end of the conversations, the facilitators and notetakers will regroup and theme all the responses.

Rebecca echoed kudos to Janice for her exemplary project management with a short timeline. The public data we're receiving is very rich and meaningful.

Janice reported that, as of yesterday, we've spoken with about 195 people, and this number changes daily. The facilitation team is made up of 14 people and Janice estimates we will have talked with 300 people by the end of the process. There have been a few challenges, which include having a few meetings with no attendance and a few sessions where citizens came to talk about specific library items. Both are to be expected and adjustments to the facilitator's schedule were made to help incorporate specific library ideas.

Janice provided some examples of aspirations, concerns and summary statements gathered thus far:

ASPIRATIONS:

- Safe and scenic places to walk and recreate
- Sense of belonging and purpose for everyone
- Affordable living and greater job availability

CONCERNS:

- Veil of progressiveness in Bellingham that doesn't appear to be true
- Inequity in Bellingham
- Affordability
- Lack of resources for marginalized communities
- Lack of inclusion and intersectionality

Each facilitation/notetaker team creates a conversation summary. Here are some examples:

- People want to feel safe in their community and that their kids are safe in their schools, but they're concerned that violence, crime and racism prevent that. As people talk more about those concerns, they talk about teachers not believing their kids in school, the fear of their children losing trust in educators and getting involved with drugs and weapons, and that families don't have health care options or basic information about nutrition. They believe we need to focus more on police visibility in the community for security and for there to be a rehabilitative rather than punitive focus at school. If

pastors, the mayor and parent groups within schools played a part in those actions, folks would be more likely to trust the effort and step forward.

- People want a community that is affordable, safe, environmentally sustainable and economically strong, and that is welcoming, diverse and proactive in fostering community. But they are concerned that rapid growth and economic shifts have led to imbalances in resources that leave some people behind. As people talk more about those concerns, they talk specifically about lack of affordable housing, food and other basic needs, climate change, increased polarization, and lack of information and connection between groups. They believe that lack of community-building makes weathering change difficult, and that we need to invest time and resources to strengthen our connections with each other. If various civic groups, government and non-profit agencies, and elected officials played a leadership role in informing and connecting people, folks would more likely trust the effort and step forward.

Janice added that timeframe has been adjusted to accommodate the completion of all the Community Conversations. The updated timeline is:

- June/July: Complete the Community Conversations
- August: Present Community Conversations report and research packet to the Board.
- October 8 is a tentative date for a Board work session to complete the analysis and identify strategic directions.
- November Board Meeting: Review draft of strategic plan
- December Board Meeting: Review second draft of strategic plan
- January 2020 Board Meeting: Adopt the new strategic plan

Rates & Fees structure: Rebecca Judd reminded us that at the April Board meeting, the quorum voted in favor of the library working with WCLS regarding eliminating fines and fees. There is support from Mayor Kelli for this initiative. The Board Policy Committee met with BPL staff to discuss the topic and process, and the Management Team will use the May 22nd Joint Management Team meeting with WCLS to work through some collaborative project details such as timeline and communications strategy. Rebecca reminded trustees that this topic will be a regular agenda item for the next few months as we aim for implementation at the end of the calendar year.

2019 Summer Reading for Adults, Teens and Kids: Bethany Hoglund reported that Summer Reading for all ages begins June 1st! Summer Reading is again a joint BPL and WCLS collaboration in bingo-card format. There are four separate cards: early childhood, kids, teens and adults. All community members are encouraged to read, or listen to books, this summer and earn fun prizes.

New Business:

- April Barker shared she recently learned about website accessibility and was unaware of some of the needs from community members. She inquired about overall accessibility of the library website and what barriers are present to ensuring full accessibility, especially for people with visual impairments. Janice reported that when the website was built in 2016, the accessibility features were identified, and some were completed; those not completed are due to a lack of staff time and monetary

resources. Jon added that our library catalog vendor puts a very strong emphasis on accessibility.

Action items for next meeting:

- No action items.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting June 18, 2019 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

**Bellingham Public Library
Performance & Activity Measures, 2019**

	May-19	May-18	Year to Date 2019	2018	% of change YTD
Holdings - Number of materials in the library's collection					
Physical copies added to the collection	2,970	1,944	13,098	10,876	20.43%
Electronic copies added to the collection	1,029	1,054	6,459	5,225	23.62%
Physical copies withdrawn from collection	(803)	(3,690)	(3,367)	(16,574)	-79.69%
Total physical holdings			187,341	187,057	0.15%
Total electronic holdings			92,091	64,545	42.68%
Total Holdings (Physical and Electronic)			279,432	251,602	11.06%
Circulation - Number of items checked out or renewed; includes Interlibrary Loan and Outreach activity					
Central Library					
Adult	56,139	56,763	284,447	294,889	-3.54%
Youth	44,101	39,460	223,836	208,565	7.32%
Sub-Total Central	100,240	96,223	508,283	503,454	0.96%
Fairhaven Branch					
Adult	7,636	7,688	36,117	38,329	-5.77%
Youth	2,773	2,293	12,751	11,870	7.42%
Sub-Total Fairhaven	10,409	9,981	48,868	50,199	-2.65%
Barkley Branch					
Adult	5,792	5,665	26,491	28,320	-6.46%
Youth	3,956	3,294	17,213	16,265	5.83%
Sub-Total Barkley	9,748	8,959	43,704	44,585	-1.98%
Bellingham Technical College					
Adult	93	41	357	354	0.85%
Youth	28	7	81	76	6.58%
Sub-Total BTC	121	48	438	430	1.86%
Whatcom Community College					
Adult	359	405	1,714	1,808	-5.20%
Youth	128	87	494	418	18.18%
Sub-Total WCC	487	492	2,208	2,226	-0.81%
Western Washington University					
Adult	600	516	2,657	2,401	10.66%
Youth	321	293	1,428	1,218	17.24%
Sub-Total WWU	921	809	4,085	3,619	12.88%
Online Services					
Kanopy (Soft launched May 2019)	351	0	351	0	
NW Anytime Library Overdrive	21,737	17,096	105,152	83,472	25.97%
RBDigital	2,447	1,174	12,051	7,003	72.08%
Sub-Total Online	24,535	18,270	117,554	90,475	29.93%
Total Circulation	146,461	134,782	725,140	694,988	4.34%
Holds Activity					
Items placed on hold shelf	47,461	54,135	225,946	268,540	-15.86%
Services					
Persons Visiting - Number of persons counted as they enter the libraries or visit remote website					
Central Library					
Adult	38,566	40,687	194,627	204,807	-4.97%
Childrens	9,099	10,313	50,261	55,892	-10.07%
Fairhaven Branch	6,673	6,728	33,365	35,875	-7.00%
Barkley Branch	4,705	4,084	22,405	20,741	8.02%
Total Persons Visiting	59,043	61,812	300,658	317,315	-5.25%
Website Visits					
This count reflects number of visits to www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org	40,027	40,476	210,347	209,935	0.20%
Bibliocommons Visits					
This count reflects number of visits to Bibliocommons	11,712	11,418	59,100	61,294	-3.58%
Total Website Visits	51,739	51,894	269,447	271,229	-0.66%
Computer Usage - Number of sessions					
Central Library					
Adult & Teen (30 terminals)	5,184	5,327	26,075	26,647	-2.15%
Childrens (3 terminals)	131	128	737	794	-7.18%
Fairhaven Branch (6 terminals)	557	524	2,526	2,877	-12.20%
Barkley Branch (4 terminals)	307	264	1,426	1,347	5.86%
Total Computer Sessions	6,179	6,243	30,764	31,665	-2.85%
New Borrowers Registered					
Central Library	355	470	1,989	2,111	-5.78%
Fairhaven Branch	41	41	212	164	29.27%
Barkley Branch	26	33	127	146	-13.01%
Total New Borrowers Registered	422	544	2,328	2,421	-3.84%
Programs - Library sponsored or co-sponsored educational, recreational, or cultural programs					
Programs	93	95	576	575	0.17%
Attendees	2,431	2,539	12,953	15,539	-16.64%
Volunteer Hours	874	903	2,937	3,240	-9.34%

LIST OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM TO BE
 CONSIDERED AND APPROVED AT THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF JUNE 18, 2019, IN
 ACCORDANCE WITH RCW 27.12.210 AND 27.12.240.

	VENDOR	AMOUNT
ADMINISTRATION		
Key copies	Accurate Lock & Security	86.82
Creative Cloud software	Adobe	391.19
Adjustable desk frame	Amazon.com	776.17
Hold shelf dividers	Applied Digital Imaging	94.57
Brawny wipes	Bay City Supply	160.96
Security clothing logos	Bergen & Company	45.65
Kid's Summer Guide	Cascadia Newspaper	275.00
Lunch presentation	City Club	13.00
Email newsletter	Constant Contact	364.15
Printing; copier paper	Copy Source	1,035.31
Water @ Barkley Branch	Crystal Springs	31.06
Sign-up & Spaces calendar software	Demco	4,770.60
Lecture room audio/projector screen repair	Dimensional Communications	1,035.58
Phantom PDF software	Foxit Software Inc.	281.95
Library Elf	Jandi Enterprises	480.00
Lost Interlibrary loan item	Kennesaw State University	53.99
Security attendant jacket	Land's End	73.91
Book ends	Library Store	164.19
Stampers	Minuteman Press	59.79
Security software	Ninite.com	21.74
Copier lease and copies (2 months)	Oasys Inc.	2,314.78
Office supplies; copier paper; toner	Office Depot	711.69
Truck fuel	Reisner Distributor	201.20
Barkley operating costs	Talbot Services LLC	533.33
Microfiche machine lease	Technology Unlimited	339.14
Migration storage boxes	U-Haul	112.77
ILL mailers & labels; mendery supplies	Uline	820.02
Debt collection service	Unique Management Services	537.00
Lost Interlibrary loan item	University of Wyoming Libraries	39.00
Interlibrary loan item postage; Call Service bin	USPS	708.00
Children's room couch	Wayfair	507.61
Receipt paper	WCP Solutions	1,197.87
Borrower notices - 1st quarter	WCLS	2,191.68
B & O taxes	WSDR	23.10
ADMINISTRATION Sub Total		\$20,452.82
PUBLIC SERVICE		
Library materials returned	Library Refunds	281.36
PUBLIC SERVICE Sub Total		\$281.36
TECHNICAL SERVICES		
Book processing	Baker & Taylor	8,112.81
CD & DVD processing	Midwest Tape	946.78
ILL & tech services	OCLC	2,269.24
TECHNICAL SERVICES Sub Total		\$11,328.83

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Library Trustees

MAY 2019 CLAIMS

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

Books, recorded books, CDs, DVDs	Amazon.com	54.18
Books	Baker & Taylor	26,383.61
Books	Grey House Publishing	(529.43)
Video streaming service	Kanopy, Inc	6,500.00
Books	Manufacturers' News	145.55
DVDs, CDs, recorded books	Midwest Tape	8,742.61
eBooks, audiobooks	Overdrive Inc	2,670.85

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS Sub Total \$43,967.37

GIFT FUND

Books	Baker & Taylor	4,355.27
Books	Center Point Large Print	145.90
OLA/WLA Conference - Vancouver, WA	Comfort Inn & Suites	1,164.29
Staff reimbursement	Emerald City Comic Con	285.15
Community Conversation supplies	FedEx Office	281.28
Teen programming	Fred Meyer	88.76
Books	Gale	197.54
Community Conversation translation services	Language Exchange	1,066.60
Summer Reading materials	Lynden Tribune printing	1,647.77
IUG Conference reimbursement	Jon McConnel	185.00
Teen programming	McKay's Taphouse	35.18
Staff reimbursements	OLA/WLA Conference	679.80
Teen programming	Rudy's Pizzeria	20.00
Community Conversation supplies	Smart Foodservice	189.76

GIFT FUND ACQUISITIONS Sub Total \$10,342.30

TOTAL GENERAL FUND \$76,030.38

TOTAL CLAIMS \$86,372.68

GL787

WKD - MONTHLY REPORT - GF

Report Format 712

Acc.Period 5 ending May 31, 2019

Transaction status 1
Rounding to Whole Dollars

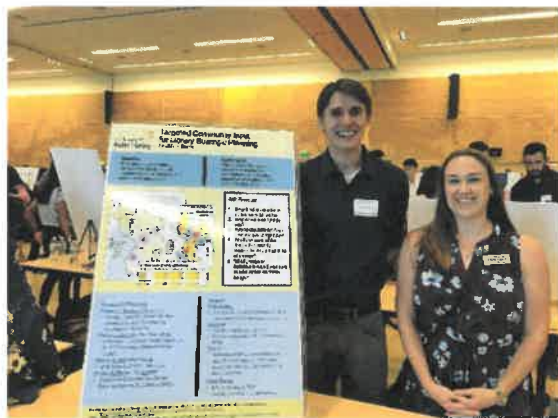
		YTD Actual	Adopted Budget	Revised Budget	Variance From Revised	%% Complete
Dpt 0190	LIBRARY					
Grp 191	LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION					
ExO 010	SALARIES & WAGES	116,438	269,649	269,649	153,210	43.2
ExO 020	PERSONNEL BENEFITS	53,317	130,025	130,025	76,708	41.0
ExO 030	SUPPLIES	21,063	82,785	82,785	61,722	25.4
ExO 040	SERVICES	248,012	359,493	359,493	111,481	69.0
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Grp 191	LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION	438,830	841,952	841,952	403,122	52.1
Grp 193	LIBRARY SERVICES					
ExO 010	SALARIES & WAGES	867,213	2,188,711	2,188,711	1,321,498	39.6
ExO 020	PERSONNEL BENEFITS	408,394	1,074,991	1,074,991	666,597	38.0
ExO 030	SUPPLIES	208,755	643,465	643,465	434,710	32.4
ExO 040	SERVICES	10,159	66,035	66,035	55,877	15.4
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Grp 193	LIBRARY SERVICES	1,494,520	3,973,203	3,973,203	2,478,682	37.6
Grp 195	LIBRARY FACILITIES					
ExO 040	SERVICES	242,620	578,583	578,583	335,962	41.9
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Report Final Totals	2,175,970	5,393,737	5,393,737	3,217,766	40.3
		=====	=====	=====	=====	=====

Bellingham Public Library

Rebecca Judd, Director



Our People



Congratulations! Library Clerk Rob Werner and Library Assistant Jordan Sterland graduated from the University of Washington iSchool on June 8. Youth Services manager Bethany Hoglund, Librarian Suzanne Carlson-Prandini, and I attended the June 4 iSchool Capstone night, where we cheered on Jordan, who presented a poster on his community mapping project, and Rob, who created an online summary of his work on library service to the homeless. We also enjoyed learning about Capstone projects from other students, including a virtual reality camp for incarcerated youth in Snoqualmie Valley (with King County Library

System), Exploration kits to help patrons connect with the natural world (with Kitsap Regional Library), and research about the ways a public library can play a vital community role during episodes of poor air quality (with Spokane Public Library). **Photo: Jordan and Bethany at the University of Washington iSchool Capstone night, June 2019**

Librarian Suzanne Carlson-Prandini will be attending the American Library Association annual conference in Washington D.C. June 20-25. She will be sharing highlights from the conference with the Board at the July meeting.

We are looking forward to celebrating Beth and her many accomplishments at the Library! Please mark your calendars for a retirement party on Thursday, June 27 from 4-5 pm in the Library board room.

Our Services

From Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services:

Work is picking up on several projects, specifically: evaluating self-check-out software; evaluating automated materials handlers in preparation for an RFP later this year; and evaluating people counters. ITSD staff have begun deploying computers purchased in the spring bulk-buy, including replacing all the computers in our laptop lab. Polaris reporting is coming along, with quite a few staff working in the reporting tools as part of their workflow. BPL, BPS, and I believe we finally have all the information we need to facilitate regular updates to Connected student accounts via a semi-automated process.

While the State Legislature funded Microsoft Imagine Academy and Lynda.com for the next biennium, recent changes to the service announced by Microsoft are calling into question its continued applicability to library patrons. The library world is abuzz with consternation over how to proceed.

From Beth Farley, Head of Collection Services:

Bellingham Public Library

Rebecca Judd, Director



This past month has been a whirlwind of meetings and trainings as I hand off my collection and security responsibilities. It has been my pleasure to meet with staff, answer lots of questions and provide support in preparation for my departure. It feels terrific to know that I will be leaving with everything in very capable hands!

There were over 3,000 visits to the Kanopy site in May, with 229 accounts created and 351 play credits charged to the Library.

From Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Public Services and Operations:

The Library received over 160 applications for the ten open Library Assistant positions. Thirty-six candidates were offered interviews, and we plan to start training in early July. Public Services staff have also been participating in two large projects for the Library: purchasing our new materials sorter and drafting procedures for our fines and fees proposal.

From Janice Keller, Manager of Communications, Community Relations, and Programming:



Summer Reading for adults, kids and teens officially began June 1, but of course work has been underway behind the scenes for months getting ready. Printing and distributing B-I-N-G-O cards, event planning, book talking at schools, website and social media posts, gathering prizes and more; it's all part of the fun! **Photo: Katie, Bernice, and Jennifer celebrate the start of Summer Reading**

The Community Conversations team has been fully engaged in planning and hosting group discussions during the past month. We have reached an estimated 240 people in group and individual conversations, and we anticipate by the end of June (which is the end of these conversations ... for now) we will reach more than 300 people. The feedback we are gathering continues to be revealing and rewarding, and we look forward to using these voices to shape our strategic directions for the years ahead. As we wrap up the community engagement portion of our strategic plan, we are beginning the next steps, including establishing review and decision timelines and gathering other information necessary for the project. **Photo: Rebecca leads a Community Conversation in the Cordata neighborhood.**



Popular programs in our **SkillShare** space continue, including Home Item Repair Workshop, Experience Brain Fitness, Small Looms Clinic, English Conversation Class, and Master Gardener Diagnostic Plant Clinic during spring and summer. As always, check the library website calendar for time/date and other details.

Bellingham Public Library

Rebecca Judd, Director



From Bethany Hoglund, Head of Youth Services:

Summer Reading has begun! Youth Services staff remain busy conducting class visits and book talks both offsite at schools and at library locations. Jennifer Lovchik is book talking to all 6th graders in Bellingham Public Schools and Bernice and Bethany have conducted visits with all students at both Columbia, Birchwood Elementary schools and a large portion of Roosevelt Elementary students. We all enjoy getting youth excited to read and listen to stories over the summer; we've even had a nice handful of Summer Reading finishers already! The summer session of storytimes and programming begins the week of June 17th and continues through early/mid-August. Additionally, Children's programming staff attended a webinar and in-person training in Bellevue titled, "Let's Talk about Race in Storytime" as part of the ongoing work to increase diversity in youth programs and collections.

Our Community



Youth Pride: Library staff hosted a table at the Youth Pride event on Sunday, June 9. By all accounts this inaugural celebration, held at Bellingham High School following a parade downtown, was a jubilant experience. Attendees thanked the Library for being present, and Children's Clerk Lesley Norman noted that she had many meaningful conversations with parents and teachers looking for resources. She and Library Clerk Rob Werner also connected with youth and young adults who expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the Library. It was through our materials and supportive environment that they were able to find belonging and discover their authentic selves.

Photo: Library table at Youth Pride event

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Judd