



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, June 16, 2020 – 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, Rachel Myers, Rebecca Craven, Jim McCabe and Vernon Johnson

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

Others Present: Hollie Huthman, City Council Liaison

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

Approve/modify agenda: Jim McCabe moved to approve the agenda. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No email comments.

Consent agenda: Rick referenced the Seattle Times article included in the packet, [Disconnected in isolation: How the coronavirus pandemic shed light on the digital divide](#), which highlights an important issue we are currently working on. Jon outlined how he tested the drive-up wifi access at Central and Fairhaven and steps that are in process to expand wifi so that it has broader drive-up accessibility. Jim McCabe moved to approve the May 19, 2020 Regular meeting minutes and the May 2020 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rachel Myers seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report: Rick reported that he and Rebecca Judd had a short Zoom meeting with the Mayor last week.

City Council approved funding for the library remodel project at the June 8, 2020 meeting. This includes REET (Real Estate Excise Tax) funding for all alternate project elements. Rick added that there was enthusiastic Council support for the library.

Rick thanked the management team for their hard work on the 2021-2022 Budget cuts exercise (report coming later), commenting that this is difficult work. He said the team made

a solid case for the need to maintain library services and illustrated the adverse effects of cuts.

Rick asked Trustees to begin thinking about trustee recruitment as Rachel's 2nd term will be up at the end of the year. He would like to post the opening in August so that the Board can get a recommendation to the Mayor by year end.

Board member reports: Rachel stated she was proud of the Library's decision to make so many anti-racist materials available with no wait. Bethany added that these are digital materials available through WA Anytime Library – librarians, in collaboration with WCLS, identified 15 titles that are available in an anytime-checkout model. In two weeks, there have been 2100 checkouts, primarily *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo and *How To Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi.

Rebecca Craven echoed Rick's thanks to Rebecca Judd and the management team for their work on the budget cut exercises.

Damani thanked Rebecca Judd for coming up with a sensitive way to move the memorial to George Floyd from along the front of the library to the flag plaza.

City Council liaison report: No report, but Hollie invited Trustee questions at any time on Council issues.

Friends of BPL report: In Faye Hill's absence, Rebecca Judd reported the Friends held a board meeting last week. They discussed impacts of Phase 2 & 3 and the remodel – the Friends will miss at least two book sales. They voted to pull from their reserves to fund \$45,000 to the library for 2020. Funding will go towards remodel furnishings, hotspots, wifi routers, staff development, book club kits, Whatcom Reads and Books for Babies. Rebecca expressed gratitude to the Friends for their generosity.

Rebecca added that the Library is unable to accept book donations during Phase 2.

Library Director report: Rebecca thanked the management team for their enormous effort getting ready for Phase 2. The library opened the return bins last week and began curbside service this week.

Rebecca thanked Damani for acting as liaison for the community group who organized the George Floyd memorial.

Rebecca reported that Cindy Aden, who has been a terrific advocate for libraries, is stepping down from her State Librarian roll to take on a teaching position at the University of Washington iSchool.

Rebecca also commented on the *Disconnected in isolation* article mentioned by Rick. Her favorite quote was at the end of the article, "The reason we're concerned about the digital divide is not because of the digital divide in and of itself, but because it fosters other divides... It fosters educational divides and economic divides and health outcome divides."

Rebecca added that she and Jon attended a Connect Whatcom Broadband meeting focused on doing a better job connecting people to the services they need to survive today.

Covid-19 update: Rebecca Judd reported that, with Phase 2, our call center hours are expanded to Monday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Central return bins are open and curbside service from Central has begun. Jen detailed how curbside service works and explained that we have a dedicated phone line specific to curbside services. On the first day we received 550 calls and checked out 1350 items to 200 patrons. Last week, prior to curbside service beginning, we processed and placed 7000 holds on the shelf, adding to the 3000 that were already shelved. Jon has been coordinating staggered release of hold notices so that staff are not overwhelmed with too many patrons calling for pick-up at the same time.

Rebecca continued that staff are making plans for the pivot needed for Phase 3 which will include patron computer access.

Rebecca has applied for three Cares Act grants through the Institute of Museum and Library Services:

- 1) 20 Verizon hotspots and \$8,000 in connectivity (for short term access)
- 2) PPE, up to \$3,000 for bags and boxes used for curbside and return's quarantine
- 3) People's Perspective outreach

The grant applications will begin to be reviewed on June 19.

Rebecca Craven asked if the library is providing PPE for staff. Rebecca Judd responded that the City has a supply on hand which we purchase with library budget funds. She added that staff have also sewn masks for staff use.

Remodel update: Rick commented that we will have an update once the contract has been signed with the vendor, Tiger Construction. How the remodel will coordinate with Phase 3 will be a discussion point.

Bethany reported that, with the help of the Public Works department, the middle mezzanine closed stacks have been cleared of thousands of pounds of old metal shelving, along with broken chairs and many miscellaneous items that had been stored for decades. This created room for materials from the main floor to prepare for the remodel.

2021-2022 Budget update: Rebecca Judd explained that the Mayor requested that all departments funded by the General Fund prepare proposals outlining the impacts of 5%, 10% and 15% budget cuts. These proposals, along with an introduction, have been submitted to the Mayor's office. The Mayor will do an initial budget review mid-June through July. In August, department's will be notified of the Mayor's prioritizations with a final review in September. The budget proposal will be presented to City Council October 1.

People's Perspective: Rebecca Judd shared her screen showing the [Peoples' Perspective web page on the WCLS.org website](#). Rebecca explained that she first reached out to WCLS. Mary Vermillion and Neil McKay worked on the website and Mary helped pull together a group of people to work on the project, including Councilperson Hollie. The goal of the

project is to preserve for future generations a multi-media archive of the community's Covid-19 experience. This multi-partner project provides a variety of opportunities to contribute including voice recording, photography, Dear History letter writing, zine diaries, interviews and more. Rebecca has also reached out to the UW iSchool for a student intern to help with research and development for digital archiving. There is the possibility of a 2nd internship in the fall for the actual digital archiving.

New Business:

- No new business

Action items for next meeting:

- Covid-19 update
- Remodel update

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – July 21, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. – location to be determined

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees