



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, October 19, 2021 – 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, Vernon (Damani) Johnson and Kristy Van Ness

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

Others Present: Elizabeth Monahan, Human Resources Director; 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: Jim suggested rewording his comment in the September Board Minutes, under Facilities committee update, to better reflect his intent: rather than, *"In comparison, our Level of Service for square footage per capita is in good shape, despite being at the minimum Level of Service,"* it would be more accurate to say, *"Our Level of Service for square footage per capita, despite being at our minimum Level of Service, is comparable with many major library systems."*

Jon commented that the high borrower registration statistic for September is due to the influx of new student accounts through our ConnectED program with Bellingham School District.

Rebecca Judd thanked Rebecca Craven for the suggestion to include a 2019 column in the Performance & Activity measures and asked if it would be helpful to keep the 2019 column for next year's measures as well. There was consensus.

Rebecca Craven moved to approve the September 21, 2021 Regular meeting minutes as amended and the September 2021 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Rick and Rebecca met with Mayor Fleetwood for their standing first Thursday meeting. They discussed the RFP for a Facilities Master Plan consultant, which the mayor supported.
- Rick and Rebecca Craven, representing the Policy Committee, reviewed two outdated policies that Rebecca Judd brought to their attention – Satellite Use Policy (from 1999 – we have not had a satellite for many years) and Outreach Services Policy (from 2008 – procedural rather than policy). Neither policy has been published on our website and the committee approved retiring the two policies.
- In reference to the Quarterly Donation Report, Rick noted that the \$5,000 donation to the Fairhaven Branch materials fund at Whatcom Community Foundation was from someone who grew up in Bellingham.

Board member reports:

- Rebecca Craven commented on the beautiful fish sculpture in the main floor lobby. Rebecca Judd explained the artwork is the result of a wonderful collaboration with Whatcom Museum.

City Council liaison report:

- No report.

Friends of BPL report: From Leigh Ann Giles

- Following the request to restrict book donations from the community to books published in or after 2010, children's books and Pacific Northwest books, donations tapered off dramatically.
- The Friends will begin contributing to the library eNewletter, beginning with a "Friends – Who We Are" article for the November issue. Doing research for the article, they learned that the Friends organization began around 1951, and the first book sale was held in 1972 (coming up on 50 years).
- Kate Frazee, Friends' volunteer and former library staff member, has agreed to work as the new bookkeeper for the organization.
- For National Friends of Libraries Week, membership coordinator Myra Harmer and Jennie hosted a membership and information table in front of the SkillShare space. Myra has also been tabling at the Farmer's Market. As a conversation started, they asked "What do you like best about the remodel?" Many features were mentioned, such as lighting, carpet, upstairs bathrooms, comfortable chairs in the computer area, as well as the library staff. Jennie will gather all comments and send to Rebecca.
- The Friends next board meeting is November 17.
- Rick praised the Friends organization; through their good stewardship of funds, they have been able to support the library despite the pandemic.

Library Director report:

- The city requires all employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19; this requirement extends to volunteers and city contractors. Rebecca will send a link to the Trustees and Friends that will allow them to upload proof of vaccination.

- The Public Library Association (PLA) biannual conference will be held March 23-25 in Portland Oregon. The conference will also have a virtual attendance option. Rebecca invited Trustees to let her know if they would like to attend.
- Whatcom Literacy Council (WLC) will be virtually hosting the 2021 Annual Literacy Breakfast with Nancy Pearl on Friday, November 5, 2021 from 8-9 a.m. Rebecca will send a registration link to the Trustees.
- Rebecca referred to the 1-page WCLS Strategic Goals 2022-2025 document in the packet. Within the document is a link to the full strategic plan. Rebecca offered congratulations to WCLS for synthesizing a lot of information and coming up with great strategic directions despite it being a challenging time to plan ahead.
- Reopening more hours is dependent on staffing – the new Assistants are continuing their training; the hiring process for Clerks (7 positions resulting from vacancies, retirements, and internal movement) is underway; interviews for the part-time Librarian and Children's Librarian are scheduled. The target is to be able to expand hours early in 2022, as well as open meeting rooms, tech coaching, and programming, as COVID safety allows.
- Jim asked if Jon's comments in the Director's Report about the decline in DVD usage following curbside service means we are moving towards retiring that collection. Rebecca responded that we have made no plans to sunset the DVD collection.
- Damani mentioned that a time was not listed for the Althea Wilson event on November 4. *Revitalizing Cultural Knowledge and Honoring Sacred Waters* will be at 6 p.m. Rebecca will send Trustees a link to the event. Kristy noted that a link to the event is on the library website calendar as well.

National Friends of Libraries Week, October 17-23, 2021:

- In honor of the Friends of Bellingham Public Library, Rick read aloud *A Resolution Commending the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library* (see Attachment #1 – all Attachments are located at the end of the minutes).

Introducing Elizabeth Monahan, Human Resources Director:

- Rick welcomed Elizabeth Monahan, Human Resources Director, and invited Trustees to introduce themselves. Elizabeth then provided a brief history of her work before beginning with the city six months ago. She worked at Western Washington University as the Labor Relations Manager followed by 11 years as the HR Manager, then HR Director for the Port of Bellingham. Her vision for HR includes hiring more staff, including a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion position. She has ties to the library, knowing past Library Director Pam Kiesner and past Trustee J. Gordon. She is also a proponent for Ryan Dowd's homelessness training, thinking this fantastic training has a broad range of applicability.

Mid-biennium budget & ARPA funding update:

- Rebecca reported that Forrest Longman, Deputy Director of Finance, presented the Mid-Biennium adjustment proposal to City Council on October 11. Library requests that were incorporated into the proposal are:
 - \$30,000 in additional materials
 - \$24,000 annual cost for Wi-Fi hotspots, allowing for expansion from 55 to 75 devices

- \$9,500 annual cost for digital programs MyLibro (used for curbside service and soon, meeting room reservations) and Omeka S (software for the COVID-19 digital archive)
- \$6,000 for Barkley Branch custodial service
- 2.5 FTE dedicated to restructure 4 Assistant positions to 25-hr rather than 16-hr
- 0.25 FTE increase for 10 extra Clerk hours a week
- 1 FTE ITSD Library Analyst position

One Library request that did not get included was the \$4,500 yearly Fleet cost for the anticipated Hybrid Outreach vehicle. We were invited to resubmit this request for the new 2023-2024 budget cycle.

If City Council approves the \$24,000 in annual cost for Wi-Fi hotspots, this will free up approximately \$7,000 in gift funds that can be used for another purpose.

- On Friday, we received approval for an ARPA grant from the Washington State Library, for \$28,528 dedicated to the Hybrid Outreach vehicle. We are in the process of executing the contract.
- For City ARPA funds, on September 27, City Council approved a number of buckets for the funding. One bucket, focused on climate resiliency, includes plan to invest \$5 million in heating and cooling systems in municipal buildings to provide 'respite facilities' during smoke and heat events. The library is being considered as one of the municipal buildings. This could include HVAC upgrades to the Central Library. Rebecca Craven mentioned that the mayor called out the library as a highly likely candidate in a press release today. *(see Attachment #2 for Bellingham's mayor proposes these climate measures, including \$5 million investment).*

Mayor Seth Fleetwood – topics for November meeting:

- Rick requested topic ideas for the mayor's guest visit in November to make the most efficient use of his time. Jim suggested HVAC as it relates to disaster preparedness and an update on the Broadband Advisory Workgroup actions. Rick requested any other ideas be emailed to himself and Rebecca by November 1.

Facilities committee update:

- The Committee has been meeting regularly to work on the RFP for a Facilities Master Plan consultant. The background and scope of the draft RFP was shared at last month's board meeting and Purchasing Manager Connie Allen has reviewed the draft. The document will post on Thursday, October 21. Submittals are due November 23. We hope to select a consultant before year end, with an early January start date. The Board, and other stakeholders, will be involved in the process. Ideally, the work will be complete by May 2022.

Fundraising committee update:

- The Committee reviewed the Donations Policy at last week's meeting. There are a few details to work out with Whatcom Community Foundation before a draft update is presented to the Board.
- Planned giving was briefly discussed.

- Plans were made to meet with a core groups of Friends early next year to develop ways to work more closely together.
- Rick would like the Trustees to discuss ideas for 2022 Library Giving Day (LGD) proceeds at the November meeting and make a decision at the December meeting. Rebecca reviewed that the \$15,183 in 2021 LGD proceeds were used for digital storytelling (\$7,000), Anti-racist reading materials (\$5,000) and Spanish language materials (\$3,183).

3rd Quarter update:

- Rebecca screen-shared and talked through the 1-page document from the packet, *2021 Action Plan: Quarter 3 update*, highlighting the accomplishments from July-September 2021.

New Business:

- No new business

Action items for next meeting:

- Guest Mayor Fleetwood
- 2022 Library Giving Day proceeds discussion
- RFP update

Meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – November 16, 2021 – Zoom meeting – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: A Resolution Commending the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library
- Attachment #2: Bellingham's mayor proposes these climate measures, including \$5 million investment



**A Resolution Commending the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library
October 2021**

Whereas, the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library is an all-volunteer non-profit organization, dedicated to their mission of supporting and advocating for our library; and

Whereas, the Friends raise money for library needs, sponsor programs for all ages, encourage community support for the library, and support literacy by making free reading materials available and offering inexpensive materials at regular book sales; and,

Whereas, our Friends' long-time support of the Bellingham Public Library is an example of the vital role volunteers play in our community; and

Whereas, our Friends' dedication is a demonstration of their commitment to the library and the library's mission to connect our community with each other and the world; and,

Whereas, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our Friends continued to fully support the Library's summer reading program, Whatcom READS, and other programs, as well as new initiatives such as WA state park backpacks, digital storytelling, and WiFi hotspot lending; and

Whereas, many improvements and enhancements in our library, such as the recent remodel of the Central Library main floor, have only been possible because of the support provided by our Friends; and

Whereas, we join libraries across the nation in celebrating their strongest and most dedicated supporters – their Friends organizations -- during National Friends of Libraries Week October 17-23, 2021 and throughout the year.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees joins the library staff and the Bellingham community to commend our Friends of the Bellingham Public Library and urges everyone to join us thanking the Friends for all they do.

Passed by Library Board action this 19th day of October, 2021.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Osen", written over a horizontal line.

Rick Osen, Chair

Jim McCabe, Vice-Chair

Rebecca Craven

Damani Johnson

Kristy Van Ness

Bellingham's mayor proposes these climate measures, including \$5 million investment

BY YSABELLE KEMPE UPDATED OCTOBER 19, 2021

Two proposed investments by Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood would tackle climate change from both sides of the problem. One proposal would reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions by requiring all new housing projects using federal pandemic relief funds to be fully electric and not rely on natural gas, a fossil fuel. This proposal is an example of climate change mitigation, which are actions taken to reduce emissions and avoid further warming of the atmosphere. Electrification is viewed by many climate and energy experts as a crucial step in preventing further climate change, since electricity can be generated with clean sources such as wind, solar and hydropower.

The mayor's second proposal would invest \$5 million in electric cooling and ventilation systems in municipal buildings, which could then serve as locations where community members can escape wildfire smoke and high temperatures. The region has firsthand experience with both of these health threats in recent months, with a record-breaking heat wave in June followed by a smoky August. City staff are still evaluating which buildings would be best-suited to become respite facilities, but Bellingham Public Library is being considered in early discussions, said city Communications Director Janice Keller in an email to The Bellingham Herald. As opposed to mitigation, this second proposal is a climate change adaptation measure, which is taken to adjust to the consequences of a warming planet. It is intended to "protect our most vulnerable community members," according to the City of Bellingham. The proposed investments will primarily rely on funding from the American Rescue Plan, Keller said. This federal act allocates billions of dollars to local governments to manage and recover from the pandemic.

The proposals will be discussed by City Council in the coming months, during the 2022 biennial budget adjustment process and in discussions about individual projects being considered for American Rescue Plan funding, Keller said. Some local housing and environmental advocates welcomed the proposals. "It's a step in the right direction," said Simon Vickery, climate and energy policy manager at RE Sources. "I'm pleased the City is moving forward with some of its climate action plan goals relatively quickly." The city created a Climate Protection Action Plan in 2007 and updated it in 2018. Vickery commended the proposal for all-electric cooling centers in municipal buildings, saying it wisely integrates climate action into necessary public safety measures. "That's a great way of thinking about climate and local government. They aren't separate," Vickery said. "Climate can be part of everything local government does. We just need to acknowledge and plan for it."

The mayor's proposal to require some new housing to be all-electric is in line with the work already being done by the Opportunity Council, a local nonprofit that develops affordable housing, said the organization's Executive Director Greg Winter. Two of the Opportunity Council's newest projects — affordable housing for seniors and a residential addiction recovery program — do not use fossil fuels for space and water heating. There are currently 140 nonprofit-developed housing units in the design phase in Bellingham and Whatcom County, city Communications Director Keller said. These projects get funding through a variety of sources, including American Rescue Plan dollars. "Those housing partners have been notified that our expectation is that those housing units are fully electric," Keller told The Herald. "At the City of Bellingham, we are all in on climate action to help slow climate change that is damaging our health and environment," said Mayor Fleetwood in a YouTube video posted by the city in September as part of this year's ALL IN for Climate Action week. "Our committed goal in Bellingham is to become a fully carbon-free city," Fleetwood said. "Toward this end, we believe it's imperative to take continuous action." Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood has proposed requiring all new housing projects using federal pandemic relief funds to be fully electric and invest \$5 million in electric cooling and ventilation systems in municipal buildings.