



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, January 17, 2023 – 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.

Board Members Present: Rick Osen, Jim McCabe, Kristy Van Ness and Melissa Morin

Board Members Absent: Rebecca Craven

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

Others Present: Kristina Michele Martens, City Council Liaison; Leigh Ann Giles and Jennie Tuckerman, Friends of BPL Co-Presidents; Christopher, library patron

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. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: A library patron who identified himself as Christopher commented on two items:

- A review he had entered into Bibliocommons was not publicly visible which made him question if this was an act of censorship.
- Christopher reported another patron verbally slandered him and that when he reported this to a Security Attendant, the patron was not confronted, and he was treated as if he had done the harassment.

Consent agenda: Rebecca Judd reported that the self-check configuration issue has now been corrected. Accurate statistics are showing in the December performance measures. On the December YTD report, Jim asked if the overage for Services and Interfund Charges is due to increased Interfund charges. Rebecca responded that the overage is due to an increase in digital media purchases which are now considered a Service rather than a Material that we own. Jim McCabe moved to approve the November 15, 2022 Regular meeting minutes and the November and December 2022 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Rick welcomed Kristina back for a second year as the City Council liaison to the Library Board. He also mentioned his appreciation that Melissa has been nominated by the Mayor for a full five-year term on the Board beginning in February. Her appointment is on the City Council agenda for January 23.
- Rick thanked the Board, Library Management team, Kristina, and the Friends for all their contributions in 2022, referencing the 2022 summary of Board Highlights in the packet. He especially noted the 2022 Facilities Master Plan and the work that was done to build on the 2018 Space Planning study.
- Rick gave an update on the Planned Giving proposal, noting that he, Rebecca J, and Kristy would be meeting with Rachel Myers later this month to finalize the project scope. Work on the project is expected to begin this Spring.
- In conclusion, Rick noted that his book club read *The Cold Millions*, by Jess Walter, for its monthly meeting in early January, and the book was widely praised. He mentioned that he had a chance to meet the author at an ALA conference in San Antonio in 2007, when he was promoting his new book at that time, *The Zero*. Annette added that Friday, March 3 is the date for the Whatcom READS author event at the Mt. Baker Theatre.

Board member reports:

- Melissa reported that, while in Spokane, she visited the community space called The Hive. She called it a lovely space and suggested visiting it if the opportunity arises.

City Council liaison report:

- Kristina reported there is a public hearing on Monday, January 23, about ADU (Accessory Dwelling Units), specifically related to owner occupancy.

Friends of BPL report:

- Jennie reported the next pop-up sale will be Saturday, February 11. The Friends are planning their first return to a big book sale in May.
- The Friends are recruiting new board officers to be voted in at their Annual Membership Meeting scheduled for April 22. They are in need of a Membership Chair.

Library Director report:

- Rebecca commented that she is looking forward to the Whatcom READS programming and that all of the programs can be found at whatcomreads.org.
- City Council has approved the 2023-2024 Biennium Budget.
- We have a short-term contract (through January) with RSU (Risk Solutions Unlimited) for an extra security presence on the lower floor due to a high rate of incidents. This is part of a larger contract the City has with RSU. Kristy asked if this would continue beyond January. Rebecca responded that next steps are still under discussion. We are using this as an opportunity to identify security coverage gaps and how best to fill them.

Election of 2023 Board officers:

- Jim nominated Rick to continue as Board Chair for 2023, adding that we have accomplished so much since 2017: the budget has increased from \$4.5 million to \$7.5 million during this time. After a drought of capital improvement, we had the 2020

remodel of the main floor and the upcoming remodel of the lower and top floors. Kristy seconded. Motion carried.

- Rick nominated Jim to continue as Board Vice Chair, commenting that Jim has contributed much to the Facilities committee. Melissa Morin seconded. Motion carried.

2023 Library Giving Day focus:

- Rick reminded everyone that at the November 2022 meeting, we discussed having the LGD focus be new furniture for the Children's area renovation at Central. Because of the timeline of the design work, this recommendation has been revised. Instead, it is suggested that we focus on an immediate need: the Bellis Fair Branch, perhaps for Children's activity equipment. Kristy commented that this is a good idea and targets a different audience. Rick moved to have the focus for 2023 Library Giving Day donations be Bellis Fair Branch project needs, with a preference for the children's area. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Facilities Committee update:

- Bellis Fair Mall:
 - Rebecca projected a map of the Bellis Fair Mall, highlighting the space we will occupy (the same space currently being used for storytimes). She also pointed out the possible location for an outside book drop located near the staff/delivery entrance to the space.
 - Rebecca is working with Legal, IT and PW on the license agreement with the new mall owner – it is close to completion.
 - The mall Project Plan is included in the packet to illustrate the variety of projects involved in opening this branch.
 - The name chosen is Bellis Fair Branch and open hours being discussed are Wednesday-Friday 2-6 pm, Saturday 11 am to 6 pm, and Sunday 1-5 pm. Anticipated opening is spring 2023.
 - Attendee suggestions included: using unique/funky Restore materials to combat the sterile environment of a mall (example of Restore use is Evolve Chocolate & Café inside Village Books); developing a community partnership with the next-door Maker Space; consider programs beyond storytimes; consider a Friends sale shelf.
- Criteria for locating a branch library: Rick explained that we chose the mall space as a temporary pilot location because it is available now. There has been long-standing vocal support for a north side branch. Because opportunities can come up unexpectedly, we want to have criteria in place for choosing a branch location. Jim commented that in the Godfrey's study, the consultants' detailed assessment of the current branches was only "fair." He suggested a criteria scorecard be developed to use when opportunities come up. Rebecca invited ideas, which included:
 - Safety and security
 - Proximity to other branches
 - Drive-time mapping
 - Fairhaven renovation
 - Community space with a coffee shop

- Consider collaboration with community partners or co-locating to tap into other funding, such as childcare
 - Programming space
 - On the scorecard have 'must haves' and 'like to haves'
 - Size – set a minimum of square footage to move towards our LOS (Level of Service) standard
 - Transit access, distance to bus line
 - Rick asked Trustees to continue to think on this and forward suggestions
- Central Library renovation:
 - Rick noted that an RFQ for design of the Central Library renovation [HVAC system for the entire floor, renovation of ground and mezzanine levels, design of exterior] was posted on January 9 and responses are due January 24. The RFQ (Request for Qualifications) process differs somewhat from the RFP (Request for Proposal) process we used for the Facilities Master Plan. We will specifically be looking for a firm that has public library design experience.
 - The timeline for this project is still fluid, but in general we expect design to take place in 2023, and construction to begin in 2024. Beginning in February, updates about the renovation project will be included as a standing agenda item.

Action Plan:

- 2022 Action Plan recap: Rebecca read through the accomplishments and highlighted the themes of restarting programming and reestablishing our level of service. We have also been restructuring as people retire, looking closely for gaps. Safety and security has been a major area of focus. The Facility Master Plan was finalized and now provides a framework for upcoming projects.
- 2023 Action Plan draft: Rebecca read through the draft included in the packet, commenting that there are many big projects this year.
- 2023 Public Services plan: also included in the packet is the Public Services Plan to Increase Safety and Ease for Staff and Customers that was developed over the course of three Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center (WDRC) facilitated discussion sessions. Melissa commented that in Action area #5, "hire more staff who are bilingual" feels quite different from the rest of the items which are focused on safety. Jen added that language barriers often block us from being able to provide help. Melissa asked if we have learned anything from WCLS's security breach experience. Jon responded that WCLS is still working with consultants to determine cause and establish corrective measures. Rebecca added that the City's data security arm is strengthening, and we are part of this conversation.

New Business:

- None

Action items for next meeting:

- None

Meeting adjourned at 4:56 pm

Next Regular Library Board Meeting – Tuesday, February 21, 2023 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees