



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, February 21, 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, Rebecca Craven, Kristy Van Ness and Melissa Morin

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

Others Present: 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: Rebecca Craven moved to approve the agenda. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No comments.

Consent agenda: Rebecca Judd pointed out that January 2023 is the first month we can truly compare to pre-pandemic 2019 statistics. To make this comparison easier, the 2019 column has been moved from the month-over-month comparison to the Year-to-Date section. Rick suggested it would be useful to adjust the '% of change YTD' column to instead compare % of change between 2023 and 2019. We will make this shift for the February statistics. Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the January 17, 2023 Regular meeting minutes and the January 2023 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Rick will report in later agenda items.

Board member reports:

- Kristy Van Ness reported that she and Annette Bagley had the opportunity to visit the Fairhaven auditorium during a contra dance held by the Bellingham Country Dance Society. She said it was a fun, good experience to see this unique community.

- Rebecca Craven reported that she recently attended a conference in New Orleans. At the venue, she saw a display that included a plaque from the Friends of the Library USA.

City Council liaison report:

- No report.

Friends of BPL report:

- Jennie reported that a pop-up sale was held on February 11 in the Lecture Room. The attendance was good, and most people were still wearing masks (encouraged, but not required). The next pop-up sale will be for Library Giving day on April 5. Full 4-day book sales are scheduled for May and September. There is still the possibility of a pop-up sale in November.

Library Director report:

- Rebecca announced that Mayor Fleetwood has rescinded the vaccine mandate for City staff, board members, and contractors.
- The new Pacific Street Operations Center will be hosting tours on March 1. Boards and Commissions are invited from 3-4:00 p.m. The tour is open to the public from 4:00-6:00 p.m. The building, which is all electric, will house operations for Parks and Public Works.
- Rebecca attended the Washington State Library Directors' retreat in Seattle on February 2-3. Seattle Public Library (SPL) staff presented on trauma-informed care in the workplace. The presented materials, developed over 2 years, are meant to support staff in a high-stress environment, including incident debriefs and communication. This dovetailed with the needs expressed in the facilitated staff meetings held at BPL in 2022. Other timely topics included intellectual freedom, collection development policies, expanded access outside libraries, and legislative agenda items.

Open Public Meetings Act:

- Wendy provided an overview of this law and its requirements: "The Washington Open Public Meetings Act, codified in chapter 42.30 RCW, requires that all meetings of governing bodies of public agencies, including cities, counties, and special purpose district, be open to the public."

Trustees are required to take OPMA training within three months of taking office and to take refresher training every four years. To accomplish this, Wendy emails links to video and PowerPoint training options, the Trustee views the training, signs and returns a certificate acknowledgement, and Wendy updates a tracking spreadsheet.

Community Drop Boxes:

- Annette reminded the Board that the 2022 Library Giving Day proceeds were designated for Building Community projects including Community Drop Boxes and Community Voices Kits (now circulating). She screenshared a PowerPoint presentation (*see Attachment #1 for Community Drop Boxes presentation. All attachments are at the end of the minutes*) that provided information about the project team, the scope of the project, the selection criteria that was developed, and the preferred locations:
 1. Barkley village/Regal Cinemas

2. Sehome Village
3. Bakerview Fred Meyer
4. Alternate – Sunset Square

Annette is currently working on making contact with property owners. She and Jen have already ordered drop boxes for the mall – one internal and one drive-up external drop. She added that they did consider locations that were mentioned in the Facilities Master Plan, but none met the developed criteria.

Safety Concerns & Response:

- Rebecca reported that since reopening after the pandemic, there has been an increase in security incidents and an assault on a staff member. Going into winter, we had many positive pieces in place including filled staff vacancies and reorganization of the Librarian team to ensure Help Desk coverage. But we were not fully prepared for the rapid rise in behavioral health and substance abuse issues. We are updating planning and response in many areas:
 - Rebecca is working with the Mayor's office to add 1.5 FTE for additional security to change to a two-person model during open hours at Central. This would include more hours for current security staff as well as an additional Security & Information attendant.
 - Bethany and Michelle are investigating additional security training for staff.
 - Rebecca is working on a contract with RSU for after-hours patrols at Fairhaven. We will absorb this cost rather than request a budget modification.
 - We are working with City legal on a process that would allow staff, on a volunteer basis, to receive training to administer Narcan. More information will be shared as we move through this process.
 - Rebecca has been working with City staff and a consulting team to develop a scope of work for a social services needs assessment.

Rebecca requested board input for the FTE increase and any other topic.

Rick pointed out there is an article in the packet concerning how these issues are impacting libraries across the nation, [Why US libraries are on the frontlines of the homelessness crisis | US news | The Guardian](#). He added he supports the additional FTE as well as the other steps being taken.

Rebecca Craven said she also was very supportive of the FTE request. For the Narcan administration, she feels strongly that it be volunteer, that there is legal review, and liability protection for the volunteers.

Kristy commented that she is impressed by the current Security & Information attendants and the amount of work they do and fully supports the additional FTE.

Jennie commented that she has seen the attendants in action de-escalating incidents – staying amazingly calm and quietly talking people down.

2023 Action Plan & Public Services:

- Rebecca screenshared the Action Plan that is included in the packet, highlighting the few changes that were made based on last month's board conversation:
 - Under Welcome & Include, "at Central and Fairhaven" was added at the end of "Research software and best practices for community meeting spaces" and "Develop new Welcome brochure to orient new patrons to Library services" was added as a 5th bullet.
 - Under Access & Opportunity, "Increase accessibility for all patrons, with a focus on recruiting bilingual staff, improving translation services, and improving access for patrons with visual and hearing impairments" was added.

Melissa Morin moved to approve the 2023 Action Plan. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Facilities Committee update:

- Rick reported that the RFQ for design of the Central Library renovation (including an HVAC system) closed on January 24. The committee (Rick, Rebecca, and Jen from the Library plus 3 Public Works staff) is in the process of reviewing the responses and determining which firms to interview. Rick added that we received a strong response to the RFQ from firms who have worked extensively with public libraries. Interviews will start the week of March 6.
- Rebecca provided an update on the new Bellis Fair Branch: in January we finalized the lease agreement and the design. February has been focused on procurement, purchase orders, and contracts -- including electrical, data, ISP, demolition and custodial contracts. An opening date has not yet been finalized.

Fundraising update:

- Rick provided an overview of the donation documents included in the packet: 2022 Donations to the Library Gift Fund, 2022 Friends of the Library Donations, Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF) fund report and the 2022 Annual WCF Designated Grant Distribution.
- Not noted in the packet is the 2022 distribution for the Robert Bragg & George Muldrow Endowment for the Bellingham Public Library: the 2022 distribution of \$173,398 has been added to the spendable portion of the fund, bringing the total available funds to \$473,556.43. Rick explained the Bragg-Muldrow endowment stipulates that funds may not be used to supplant regular operations funded by the City. There are big facilities projects now and hopefully, in the future: a permanent northside branch and updates to the current Fairhaven and Barkley branches. The Braggs-Muldrow funds have already been helpful; for instance, these were used to fund the Facilities Master Plan consultants.
- The Fundraising committee is moving ahead with developing a planned giving program. RM + Co's owner, Rachel Myers, will be meeting with the committee starting in March. She will be invited to the April or May board meeting to provide an update.
- At last month's meeting, the board moved to have the focus for 2023 Library Giving Day proceeds be the Bellis Fair branch, with a preference for the children's area. Bethany and Annette have been exploring early learning interactive installations. They are requesting a bid from the Burgeon Group, a vendor dedicated to high quality early learning installations that are sold solely to public libraries. They incorporate the 5

early learning practices – Talk, Sing, Read, Write & Play – into unique, visual, interactive pieces. We are looking at wall installations that fit the current spaces at Bellis Fair branch and that can be moved. Annette will provide language that Trustees can share with their contacts.

New Business:

- No new business

Meeting adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

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

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: Community Drop Boxes presentation

Community Drop Boxes

Library Giving Day Project

1

Project Team

- Library Director (Rebecca)
- Head of Community Relations (Annette)
- Head of Public Services and Operations (Jen)
- Supervisor of Materials and Handling (Shelley)
- Supervisor of Public Services (Michelle)
- Administrative Assistant (Wendy)

2

Scope of Project

- Place 3 external Community Drop Boxes in convenient locations within City limits in 2023.
- Scope does NOT include: Drop Boxes at Bellis Fair Branch, renegotiating Food Co-op Drop Box, developing a strategy for all drop boxes in the future, expanding services at drop box locations.

3

Criteria of Importance

- At least one is drive-up
- Delivery truck access and safe parking (not too busy)
- Places where people are already doing errands
- Visibility
- Located throughout the City
- Not next to other free services such as voting boxes, UPS, USPS or garbage cans
- Reasonably well-lit and feels safe
- Reaches residents with low Library service coverage

4

Preferred Locations

5

1. Barkley Village/Regal Cinemas



6

1. Barkley Village/Regal Cinemas



7

2. Sehome Village



8

3. Bakerview Fred Meyer



9

Alternate - Sunset Square (Safeway side)



10

Alternate - Sunset Square (Goodwill side)



11

Current Status

- Attempting to make contact with property owners.

12