



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, July 18, 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, Rebecca Craven, and Kristy Van Ness
City Council Library Liaison: Not present
Library Staff: Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg, Kate Dunphy and Wendy Jenkins
FOBPL Representative: Carol Comeau, Friends of BPL Board Liaison
Guest Presenters: Sara Jones, Washington State Librarian; Rachel Myers, RM+Company

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: A member of the public gave public comment.

Consent agenda: Jim noted that public computer use is down almost 50%, yet we recently installed new replacement computers. He asked about the long-term plan for public computers. Jon responded that computer replacement is on a scheduled cycle determined by IT and is funded through a city interfund account. Decisions about how many public computers we maintain is on a different track. We eliminated a few public computers with the main floor remodel. The plan is to monitor use post-pandemic to determine usage trends before making future decisions. Jim also referred to the Patron Use of Databases spreadsheet and asked if there is established criteria to justify keeping a database. Jon responded that we do track cost per use, but the databases are very different in how they function, so it is difficult to have set rules. In the past, we have dropped databases because of cost analysis. Rick added that some databases are grouped together and sold as a reduced-price package. Jon identified a correction for the minutes: in Meet & Greet with Police Chief Rebecca Mertzig, under the second bullet, the length of time for academy training is 18 weeks, rather than 18 months. Kristy noticed the \$810 donation from Attic Salt and learned that this Bellis Fair Mall store held a fundraiser to benefit the library. Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the June 20, 2023 Regular meeting minutes

and the June 2023 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Rebecca Craven seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- Rick reported that we hope to post the vacant Trustee position by month's end, and then a recruitment timeline will be developed.
- Rick said the Facilities project contract is getting closer to completion. The difficulty stems from determining what, of the large number of projects, can be accomplished within the project budget.

Board member reports:

- Kristy participated in the Pride Parade with the library on July 9, calling it joyful. She thanked Jenni Johnson for her work organizing library participation in this event.
- Jim shared that Julianna Guy passed away June 25. Before she died, she had shared that one of her crowning achievements was the Bellis Fair Branch.

City Council liaison report: None given.

Friends of BPL report:

- Carol Comeau announced Wander Brewery will be sponsoring a small book sale at their establishment on August 5, from 12-5 p.m. Proceeds will go to the Friends of the Library.
- The next big book sale will be September 20-23 in the Lecture Room.
- The Friends are helping to fund Sam Quinones' in-person event August 1.
- The Friends also helped with the two Summer Reading Parties in the Park, giving away free books to attendees.
- Carol shared that Julie Guy's service will be at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, July 22 at Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship.

Library Director report:

- Rebecca reported the elevator down-times continue. She and Jen are working with Public Works on next steps.
- Narcan training was provided to library staff the last week of June, on a voluntary basis. It was well received and timely as the library experienced a suspected overdose the following week. Discussion is ongoing about best responses after such occurrences.
- The Opioid Summit was held June 27-28. Rebecca and Annette were able to attend both days, and other library staff were able to attend portions of the summit. Many ideas were shared and generated. Next steps are in the works.
- Read and release copies of Sam Quinones' book *The Least of Us, True Tales of America and Hope in the Time of Fentanyl and Meth* have been distributed. Annette has been working hard to get the word out about the August 1 in-person event at Bellingham High School. Registration is not required, but people can sign up at [Chuckanut Health Foundation](#) to receive email updates about the event and submit questions.

- Rebecca has been working with Planning & Community Development to arrange an in-house behavioral health specialist at the Central library. Whatcom County Health Department will issue the RFP, with funding (still to be approved) from both the City and County.
- Jim asked if the Baker & Taylor book delivery pause affected WCLS. Jon responded that WCLS uses Ingram Book Company for most of their book purchases, so they were not affected.
- Jim asked if the Contract queue referred to in the Director's Report is a summer thing. Jen answered no, the queue is always in place on a first come, first serve basis.
- Jim recalled that the local Sister City group attended a board meeting recently and asked if they have provided a follow-up proposal for the Japanese Friendship Garden. Rebecca clarified that the garden is part of the Parks department, and that the Sister City group will be a stakeholder in the remodel. At this time, it is unknown if the Sister City group has funding for the Friendship Garden project.

Planned Giving project update:

Rachel Myers reminded the Board that she has been hired as a consultant to support developing a planned giving program for the library. She has been working to craft strategy and define the pieces of the project. One piece is clarifying the roles of Trustees, library staff and Whatcom Community Foundation (who manages endowed and non-endowed funds for the library). At last month's meeting, Trustees discussed a name for the legacy – in developing the documents, Rachel has used Bellingham Library Legacy Society.

Rachel requested suggestions for explaining to people why it's a good idea to donate to the library, what would a gift support? Ideas offered where:

- Lifelong learning for all community members.
- Early learning – free activities for all kids.
- City has competing funding needs (police, fire) – the library is chronically underfunded to meet our level of service needs.
- Libraries change lives – life-long learning/open to all/welcoming spaces/support children and early learning.
- A shout-out at the Pride Parade: Libraries saved my life!
- Opportunities for the community to come together.
- Libraries proven flexible to meet changing need of the community.
- A place to connect with technology – help with learning and borrowing.
- Private support can leverage public support – honor the community commitment.
- How to respond to comments that the library is a department of the city – the city should support? The library is underfunded because of competing needs (police, fire, parks). Parks has Greenways support.
- Libraries offer so many different kinds of things – a donor can fund unique things they can't fund elsewhere; align dollars with personal interests.
- Many comments have a connection theme which is unique to libraries – we have spaces, resources, materials and opportunities to connect socially.
- Julie Guy is a profound story of what a legacy means.
- Access to stories, information and inspiration.
- Libraries can be your mechanic, therapist or math teacher.

- Annette recalled a quote from All-Hands Whatcom, “the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, but community.” The library is at the epicenter – we are the cross section.

Rachel will take these ideas and weave them into a statement of why someone would choose to leave a gift to Bellingham Public Library. Rebecca Craven suggested we add in the word ‘public’ to the legacy name, so it reads Bellingham Public Library Legacy Society. Others agreed it would be good to be consistent with the Library name.

Policy retirement:

Public use of Library Exhibit Areas and Display of Works of Art: At this time, the Bellingham Public Library does not offer exhibit space as a public offering. The Library curates two exhibit spaces: by invitation, the Friends display items in the downstairs case and our local museums display items in the case in the stairwell. If the Trustees would like to change this practice at any time, an exhibits policy can be drafted. The library administration, in consultation with City legal, recommends that the Board retire the *Public use of Library Exhibit Areas and Display of Works of Art* policy. Any language about art donations can be added separately to the Library’s Donation policy.

Rebecca Craven moved to retire the *Public use of Library Exhibit Areas and Display of Works of Art* policy. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

2023-2024 Mid-Biennium Budget Modification summary: Rebecca asked if there were any questions or comments about the list in the packet. Jim asked if the automated materials handler request was for hardware or software. Jon responded hardware – with our new branch and a new WCLS branch coming soon, the enhancement will provide more granularity and therefore more efficiency. This is a one-time expense with a little more additional cost for maintenance.

2nd Quarter Action Plan review: Delayed until August board meeting.

Protecting the Right to Read:

- Sara Jones, Washington State Librarian, provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the role of the State Librarian, intellectual freedom, current book ban attempts and censorship. (see Attachment #1 for *Protecting the Right to Read*).

New Business: No new business

Agenda items for next meeting: None

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.


Next Regular Library Board Meeting – August 15, 2023. Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST


Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments: Attachment #1: Protecting the Right to Read




**WLFFTA - WA
Library Friends,
Foundations,
Trustees &
Advocates**

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO READ



**July 16, 2023
Sara Jones, MLS,
Washington State Librarian**



WASHINGTON
Secretary of State
Washington State Library

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Around the country and here in Washington

Secretary of State, Steve Hobbs and Sara Jones, Washington State Librarian

Thank you, thank you for your articulate and welcome words on book bans being an egregious form of censorship. Indeed libraries are an extraordinary source of information, knowledge and certainly should continue to “offer a variety of materials that encompass a variety of diverse few points and subjects” as you and Steve Hobbs write. Enlightenment, valid research and truthful information on any subject is not a danger to anyone. Thank you again for your brilliant article.

Columbia County Rural Library District & other places

WA schools became a battleground over books by [Venice Buhain](#) / December 26, 2022 Crosscut. Public and school libraries faced a growing number of book challenges in 2021 and 2022, according to the [American Library Association](#), including more than 600 challenges in the first eight months of 2022. Many of those [challenges have been fueled by conservative groups](#) objecting to descriptions of [sex and LGBTQ+ themes](#).

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State Librarian RCW

The state librarian shall be responsible and accountable for the following functions:

(15) Assisting individuals and groups such as libraries, library boards, governing bodies, and citizens throughout the state toward the establishment and development of library services;

(16) Making studies and surveys of library needs in order to provide, expand, enlarge, and otherwise improve access to library facilities and services throughout the state;

Findings – 2006 c 199: "The state of Washington recognizes that an informed citizenry is indispensable to the proper functioning of a democratic society.

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10 MOST BANNED BOOKS IN AMERICA

1. ***Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe**
Reasons: Banned, challenged, and restricted for LGBTQIA+ content, and because it was considered to have sexually explicit images
2. ***Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison**
Reasons: Banned and challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and because it was considered to be sexually explicit
3. ***All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson**
Reasons: Banned and challenged for LGBTQIA+ content, profanity, and because it was considered to be sexually explicit
4. ***Out of Darkness* by Ashley Hope Perez**
Reasons: Banned, challenged, and restricted for depictions of abuse and because it was considered to be sexually explicit
5. ***The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas**
Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity, violence, and because it was thought to promote an anti-police message and indoctrination of a social agenda
6. ***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**
Reasons: Banned and challenged for profanity, sexual references and use of a derogatory term
7. ***Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews**
Reasons: Banned and challenged because it was considered sexually explicit and degrading to women
8. ***The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison**
Reasons: Banned and challenged because it depicts child sexual abuse and was considered sexually explicit
9. ***This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson**
Reasons: Banned, challenged, relocated, and restricted for providing sexual education and LGBTQIA+ content.
10. ***Beyond Magenta* by Susan Kuklin**
Reasons: Banned and challenged for LGBTQIA+ content and because it was considered to be sexually explicit.



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Foundations of Intellectual Freedom



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Intellectual Freedom

“The right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored.

(ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom)

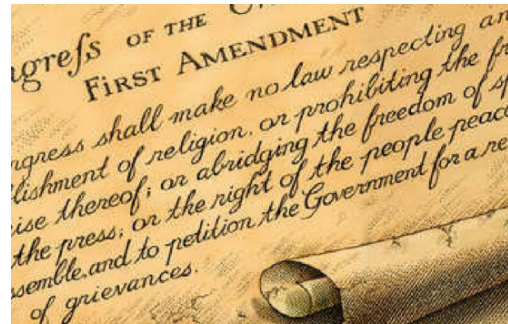


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US Constitution

Five Freedoms of the First Amendment

- Freedom of Speech
- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom of the Press
- Freedom of Assembly
- Right to Petition the Government for Redress



14th Amendment

- Equal protection under the law

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Challenges in schools vs. libraries

In loco parentis (school library)

In loco parentis is a Latin term meaning "**in [the] place of a parent**" or "**instead of a parent.**"

The term refers to a common law doctrine which denotes the legal responsibility of some person or organization to perform some of the functions or responsibilities of a parent.

Public library

Does not act in place of the parent- but the public has a constitutional right to enter and use

Defining "Relevance" as universal based on curriculum and standard, age, origin, identity

Defining "Appropriate" and "Inappropriate" as particular to a family choice

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Miller Test for Obscenity

Miller Test guidelines for a jury or judge to determine if an item is obscene:

- (1) whether the average person applying contemporary community standards would find the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest;
- (2) whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law;
- and
- (3) whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

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US Civil Rights

Title II of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, and national origin in places of public accommodation.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin by programs that receive federal financial assistance.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, and religion by state and local government employers

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Washington **RCW 49.60.010**

Purpose of chapter.

This chapter shall be known as the "law against discrimination." It is an exercise of the police power of the state for the protection of the public welfare, health, and peace of the people of this state, and in fulfillment of the provisions of the Constitution of this state concerning civil rights.

The legislature hereby finds and declares that practices of discrimination against any of its inhabitants because of race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, families with children, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability are a matter of state concern, that such discrimination threatens not only the rights and proper privileges of its inhabitants but menaces the institutions and foundation of a free democratic state.

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Definitions.

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Aggrieved person" means any person who: (a) Claims to have been injured by an unfair practice in a real estate transaction; or (b) believes that he or she will be injured by an unfair practice in a real estate transaction that is about to occur.

(2) "Any place of public resort, accommodation, assemblage, or amusement" includes, but is not limited to, any place, licensed or unlicensed, kept for gain, hire, or reward, or where charges are made for admission, service, occupancy, or use of any property or facilities, whether conducted for the entertainment, housing, or lodging of transient guests, or for the benefit, use, or accommodation of those seeking health, recreation... or any public library or educational institution, or schools of special instruction, or nursery schools, or day care centers or children's camps:

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Freedom from discrimination—Declaration of civil rights.

(1) The right to be free from discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability is recognized as and declared to be a civil right. This right shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) The right to obtain and hold employment without discrimination;

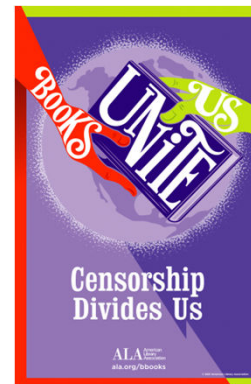
(b) The right to the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges of any place of public resort, accommodation, assemblage, or amusement;

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Censorship

Censorship, the suppression of words images or ideas that are “offensive”, happens whenever some people succeed in imposing their personal political or moral values on others. Censorship can be carried out by the government as well as private pressure groups. Censorship by the government is unconstitutional.

American Civil Liberties Union



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Organizations that provide support

- [ARSL- Association for Rural and Small Libraries](#)
- [United for Libraries/ ALA- Unite Against Book Bans](#)
- [EveryLibrary](#)
- [Pen America](#)
- [Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\)](#)



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Voter Perceptions of Book Bans in the United States

- ➔ Our latest research shows that 75% of Voters love librarians and rank librarians as twice as favorable as their governors, the Democratic Party, the GOP, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden. 95% of Democrats, 80% of independents, and 53% of Republicans are against book bans and will consider book bans when voting.
- ➔ MINORITY RULE: Just 8% of voters believe "there are many books that are inappropriate and should be banned."
- ➔ 31% of Republicans think there is absolutely no time when a book should be banned.
- ➔ MINORITY RULE: Only 18% of voters support book banning on issues of race and CRT. More than 90% of voters are against banning the hundreds of classic novels and children's books that extremist groups have targeted for banning.
- ➔ More than 90% of voters are against book banning and are willing to consider book banning when going to the voters this November.
- ➔ MINORITY RULE: Only one-third of voters support bans on books that discuss sexuality.
- ➔ 75% of voters will consider book banning when voting in November.
- ➔ More than 50% of voters are concerned about legislation being created to regulate Americans' access to books

Source EveryLibrary Institute
<https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/bookbanpoll>

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Founded in early 2021 in Florida, Moms for Liberty (M4L) has expanded since then and now has over 200 county chapters nationwide in 35 states. The organization currently claims over 200,000 members.

Originally focused on opposing mask mandates in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, Moms for Liberty quickly expanded its agenda to oppose LGBT positive policies in schools, LGBT-themed materials in school libraries, alleged critical race theory in curricula, and many other diversity-positive issues related to schools and students.

They are organized in 9 counties in WA –Snohomish, Kitsap, King, Pierce, Chelan, Douglas, Benton, Whitman & Spokane

Moms for Libraries is a program of Moms for Liberty Foundation, a 501c3 Non profit Organization.



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Practical Applications-

Updated and known collection development policy- all staff are aware of procedure for reconsideration of materials request

Meeting room policy

Public comment in Board meetings

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Questions

WASHINGTON



Secretary of State
Washington State Library