



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees**  
**Tuesday, September 19, 2023 – Fairhaven Branch Library, Northwest 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.

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**Board Members Present:** Rick Osen, Jim McCabe and Kristy Van Ness  
**Board Members Absent:** Rebecca Craven  
**City Council Library Liaison:** Kristina Michele Martens  
**Library Staff:** Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Bethany Hoglund, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Wendy Jenkins  
**FOBPL Representative:** Carol Comeau, Friends of BPL Board Liaison  
**City Staff:** Sarah Chaplin, Assistant Senior City Attorney

**Call to order and introductions:** Regular session was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair, Rick Osen.

**Approve/modify agenda:** Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the agenda. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

**Public comment:** No comments.

**Consent agenda:** Jim McCabe moved to approve the August 15, 2023 Regular meeting minutes and the August 2023 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

**Board Chair report:**

- Rick reported that the meeting will end with an Executive Session to determine the name(s) to recommend to the Mayor for filling the Board vacancy. No further agenda items will be addressed after the Executive Session.
- Rick thanked Kristy, Rebecca Craven and Rebecca Judd for reviewing a record number of applications (18) and selecting those to interview.
- Rick mentioned that the City's contract negotiations with Miller Hull for Central Library architectural services are nearing a conclusion. First meetings with the consultant team are expected for mid-October.

**Board member reports:**

- Kristy reported that she and Rebecca Judd attended a Trustee training held at the Burlington Public Library with State Librarian Sara Jones. Rebecca added that there were trustees from Mt. Vernon, La Connor, Burlington, and Sedro-Woolley in attendance.
- Jim recalled past Sister City exchanges with Tateyama, Japan and Port Stevens, Australia. Jim was inspired by a visit to the Vaasa Library in Finland in 2018. He suggested a library visit exchange with a Sister City.

**City Council liaison report:**

- Kristina reported that after a month-long break, the September 11 Council meeting was spent catching up on business.
- Kristina congratulated the Library for getting through the first steps in establishing behavioral health specialists at the library. This is a good step in the right direction.

**Friends of BPL report:**

- Carol reported that the September book sale to be held in the Lecture Room and lower lobby begins Wednesday, Sept 20. Wednesday and Thursday are full price days; Friday is half price; Saturday is fill-a-bag day. Masks are encouraged.
- The Friends have two new board members: Wendy Westgate (Member At-Large) and Jane Brooks (Publicity and Member At-Large).

**Library Director report:**

- Rebecca reported that King 5 and Q13 Fox News have reached out to discuss the behavioral health specialist position. An interview with King 5 was scheduled with Rebecca and Malora Christensen, from Whatcom County Health and Community Services.
- Rebecca mentioned that the joint State Library/Goodwill/Veterans Administration digital navigator grant was not selected for funding.
- Rebecca congratulated all the staff who worked on the 2023 Summer Reading program. It was a great success – and wonderful to see so many activity sheets posted in the Children’s Library.
- Rebecca noted that preparations are underway for Banned Books Week, October 1-7.
- Rebecca mentioned that John Danneker, the new Dean of Libraries at Western, has joined the Whatcom READS board.
- Rebecca noted that one of the Burgeon Group interactive wall panels has been installed in the Children’s area at Fairhaven Branch. Bellis Fair Branch panels are scheduled for installation in October.
- Rebecca thanked Jen for all of her project work on the air quality sensors. They have been installed in all four Fairhaven Branch bathrooms. The Central library installations are currently underway, followed by Barkley.
- Rebecca noted that we received a \$20,000 donation from a long-time patron through the Whatcom Community Foundation. The donation is for a variety of collection materials.
- Jen provided an update on the freight elevator – the backordered part has been received and work has re-started. She noted that she hopes it will be back in service by the end of October.

**Planned Giving project update:**

- Kristy reported she is working with Rachel Myers on editing documents. Rebecca Judd added that Bainbridge Island Library shared their planned giving documents.

**Policy update:**

- Board of Trustees Bylaws: Rick recommended that this update and reorganization of the Bylaws be removed from the set of Library Policies.
- Rick provided two additional suggested updates:
  1. Date of Approval at the bottom of the bylaws should be changed to reflect today's date, if approved today.
  2. Appendix 3, Public Comments: suggest combining bullets 3 & 4 to read, "All meetings of the Board are open to the public, and public comment is accepted during the public comment period on the agenda. There is a three (3) minute limit for an individual to make a public comment. Total comments are accepted for a maximum of 30 minutes at each meeting, unless otherwise ruled by the Chair."
- Rick made a motion to approve the updated Bylaws and appendices, including the changes provided at this meeting. The Bylaws will no longer be part of Library Policies. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

**Strategic Plan 2020-2024 discussion:**

- Rick began the discussion by noting that our current Strategic Plan was completed at the end of 2019 to cover a time-period of five years, 2020-2024. Those who took part in its development can remember what an undertaking it was.
- Rick proposed an extension of the current plan for two more years to take it through 2026, for the following reasons:
  - At the outset of the plan's time frame, the Covid pandemic hit and severely affected both library operations and library staffing for at least two years, thus inhibiting implementation of the plan.
  - Board membership and leadership will be turning over. It would be helpful to get new insight into the planning process with new Board members taking part.
  - The library renovation will demand a lot of attention over the next two years, especially for library management and also for the board.
  - Updating the Materials and Hours Level of Service standards needs to be completed, which will also take time and upon completion will aid in planning direction.
  - The two-year extension aligns with the city's biennial budget process.
  - Our current plan was meant to be flexible. The strategic directions of Welcome & Include, Access & Opportunity, Read & Learn, Inform & Involve, and Thrive & Grow are just as valid today as they were in 2020.
- Jim commented that, in the process of developing the current Strategic Plan, staff and board reviewed 17 Strategic Plans from across the nation. He added that the pandemic changed things and it will take some time to see the effects of the changes. He said he would be happy to extend the current plan.
- Kristy appreciated the thought that new trustees be included in the next process and agreed that updating the LOS standards is critical.

- Rebecca Judd talked with Rebecca Craven prior to the meeting and Rebecca C. was also supportive of extending the current plan.
- Rick moved to extend the current 2020-2024 Strategic Plan through 2026. Jim McCabe seconded. Motion carried.

**New Business:**

- No new business.

**Agenda items for next meeting:**

- Facilities Committee update

**Executive Session:**

The Board went into Executive Session at 4:15 p.m. to determine a recommendation to the Mayor for the Trustee vacancy. The group decided on a candidate to recommend. They returned to Regular session at 4:41 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned** at 4:41 p.m.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting – October 17, 2023 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.**

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees