

**BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

**NOTICE OF MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
of TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2025, 3:30 p.m.**

Publication of the agenda and the approximate times are a guide to, and not a limitation on, the activities of Trustees. Order of agenda items may be adjusted.

**Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, Washington
Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.**

AGENDA	TIME (approx.)
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We acknowledge that we gather on territory that has been the traditional and ancestral homeland to the Lhaq'temish (the Lummi People), the Nooksack People, and other Coast Salish tribes of this region Since Time Immemorial.

We honor our shared responsibility to this land and these waters, we commit to learning from Indigenous wisdom, and we strive to repair and deepen our relationships as neighbors and friends.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Call to order and introductions | 1 min |
| 2. Approve/modify agenda | 1 min |
| 3. Public comment
This time is set aside for members of the public to make comments.
Remarks will be limited to three minutes. | 3 min |
| 4. Consent agenda (see packet materials)
All matters listed on the consent agenda are considered routine and may be approved in a single motion. A trustee may ask that an item be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications and FYI• Minutes: January 21, 2025: Regular Board Meeting• Library performance & activity measures: January 2025• Financial reports
Claims: January 2025
YTD report: January 2025 | 2 min |
| 5. Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Chair• Library Board members• City Council liaison• Friends of Bellingham Public Library• Library Director (see packet materials) | 8 min |

Time check: 3:45

6. OPMA and PRA Training Announcement	5 min
• Madeline Rosenvinge, Administrative Assistant	
7. Staff Safety and Mental Health/Welcoming Public Space update	10 min
• Rebecca Judd, Director	
8. Budget Planning update	10 min
• Rebecca Judd, Director	
	Time check: 4:10
9. Central Library Renovation update	10 min
• Rebecca Judd, Director	
10. 2025 WCF Disbursements – Action Item (see packet materials)	10 min
• Rebecca Judd, Director	
	Time check: 4:30
11. 2025 Board Committees - Discussion	15 min
• Rebecca Craven, Board Chair	
12. New business	3 min
13. Agenda items for next meeting	2 min
	Time check: 4:50
14. Adjourn	

Accessibility:

The Bellingham Public Library Board Room is ADA accessible. Elevator access to the upper floor is available at the Central Avenue entrance. If you require a sign interpreter or other accommodation, please allow the library 48 hours' notice. For additional accommodation, contact the Administrative Assistant at 360-778-7220 in advance of the meeting.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Lecture Room, Central Library, 210 Central Avenue
Bellingham, Washington



Where is Bellingham's day shelter? Strained service providers say there's an 'urgent need'

By Rachel Showalter

February 14, 2025 11:07 AM | 



Many unhoused individuals seek daytime shelter at local libraries, which are often operating beyond capacity. Warren Sterling
The Bellingham Herald

***In the Spotlight** is a [Bellingham Herald series](#) that digs into the high-profile local issues that readers care most about. Story idea? Email*

newsroom@bellinghamherald.com.

Without an operational cold weather day shelter and enough overnight shelter facilities in Whatcom County to fulfill the need, local service providers say they are stretched thin trying to support unhoused community members.

“We don’t want to see another winter like this. It’s too hard for our people that are out there,” said Recovery Café Bellingham Operations Director Amy Kenna at a Whatcom County Council meeting on Tuesday.

The Recovery Café in Bellingham is a peer-support nonprofit focused on [helping individuals move through addiction recovery](#). It’s not a day shelter but many of the individuals seeking support at the Café are experiencing homelessness or are housing insecure. The Recovery Café has stepped in to partner with local service providers at the space to help guests navigate available resources such as additional treatment support, medical care, shelter availability and housing opportunities.

Kenna told members of the Whatcom County Council that staff and volunteers at the Café have seen a need for more overnight sheltering this year and advocated for an additional seasonal shelter next year.



The Recovery Café is open to guests and members on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from noon to 4 p.m. at 110 Flora Street. Rachel Showalter *The Bellingham Herald*

“We commend the work that the Lighthouse Mission is doing and we are also grateful for the severe shelter. However, a number of us have noticed that there is not a seasonal shelter this year,” Kenna told the council. “That might take away some of the capacity burdens.”

Hundreds of overnight shelter beds are available locally during extreme weather conditions between Whatcom County’s severe weather shelter, Ferndale’s severe weather shelter and the Lighthouse Mission Ministries shelter operations. Still, people are turned away from shelter as demand is greater than capacity.

In years past, the city of Bellingham has operated a temporary daytime warming shelter and has funded various forms of overnight winter shelters as an emergency response to severe weather conditions. The shelters have been staffed by city leadership, members of the Homeless Outreach Team and Bellingham Public Schools staff — something the city says is only sustainable during extreme conditions such as significant snow accumulation or single-digit daytime temperatures, which have not yet occurred this winter.

Without a daytime shelter this year, unhoused individuals struggle to find a place to go between overnight operations.



A sign is posted on State Street directs individuals to Whatcom County's overnight severe weather shelter, which operates from 4 p.m. to 9 a.m. when temperatures fall below 32 degrees. Rachel Showalter *The Bellingham Herald*

Whatcom County Health and Community Services Director Erika Lautenbach previously told The Herald that the lack of a day shelter in the community this year is “[one of the key gaps](#)” in shelter services.

“The truth is it’s really cold still and folks don’t have a place to go,” Lautenbach said.

Many unhoused individuals seek daytime shelter at local libraries, which are often operating beyond capacity, according to Bellingham Public Library Director Rebecca Judd.

The Central Library’s main floor seating area has seats for 64 individuals intended for reading and research. That space is often filled and sometimes overfilled, Judd said.

“During the fall and winter seasons, the [Bellingham Central Library](#) sees an increase in visitation and length of stays. This winter, in particular, we have seen an increase in the number of people who are needing a place to get out of the rain, snow, or cold during the day,” Judd said. “There is an urgent need in our community for a day shelter.”

Two behavioral health specialists from [Lake Whatcom Center](#) are embedded at the library to help support the various needs of individuals. Still, the needs of those seeking shelter at the library often extend beyond what staff are able to offer, Judd said.

With needs ranging from storage, meals, and beds to case management and a place to keep pets, the library is unable to address them all.

“It’s been a very challenging fall and winter for the library, for library staff who care deeply about serving our community, and for those in need. Right now, the Central Library is providing a truly unsustainable level of daytime shelter. There are many more people in need in our community than there are adequate facilities available for people during the day,” Judd said.

City of Bellingham Communications and Community Relations Director Melissa Morin told The Herald that funding for emergency shelter operations is distributed by the state to Whatcom County, which allocates the available resources. The city has

historically financed shelter operations using money from its general fund, according to Morin.



Cots are cleaned and prepared for guests at the Whatcom County Severe Weather Shelter in the Central Lutheran Church at 925 N. Forest St. The shelter has space for up to 70 people. Whatcom County Health and Community Services *Courtesy to The Bellingham Herald*

“We continue to be supportive of the county leading on the issues of shelter in our community, and we recognize the needs are beyond the capacity of local government,” Morin told The Herald. “To expand the services in our community to include a daytime option would require additional resources.”

One of the main limiting factors for operating a seasonal or year-round shelter is trained staff and volunteers, Morin said.

“For any type of day shelter to be feasible, there would need to be a qualified, experienced organization to run it,” Morin said.



Rachel Showalter

The Bellingham Herald



360-715-2212

Rachel Showalter graduated Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in 2019 with a degree in journalism. She spent nearly four years working in radio, TV and broadcast on the West Coast of California before joining The Bellingham Herald in August 2022. She lives in Bellingham.

Bellingham's winter shelter causing 'disruption' - Bellingham Herald, The: Web Edition Articles (WA) - February 9, 2025 - page 1
February 9, 2025 | Bellingham Herald, The: Web Edition Articles (WA) | Rachel Showalter, Bellingham Herald

Neighbors of Whatcom County's severe weather shelter held a public meeting Thursday evening to air concerns about the shelter's impact on surrounding businesses and residences.

More than 30 people attended the Feb. 6 meeting, including service providers, law enforcement, neighborhood residents and business owners, shelter operators and guests, and leaders from the Bellingham City Council, Whatcom County Council and Whatcom County Health and Community Services.

Local business owner Adam Bellingar

organized and hosted the meeting hoping to find solutions to some of the issues they are experiencing while still supporting Bellingham's unhoused community members, he said.

"I've been here a long time and I've seen a lot of anger build up over the years when things haven't worked out. I want to open this dialogue to try to diffuse that, if possible," Bellingar told attendees.

He said since the severe weather shelter has been operating, neighbors have seen open drug use, violence, camping and trash on the streets and properties surrounding the shelter. He said it has impacted the public's perception of safety in the neighborhood.

Whatcom County Severe Weather Shelter .jpgCots are cleaned and prepared for guests at the Whatcom County Severe Weather Shelter in the Central Lutheran Church at 925 N. Forest St. The shelter has space for up to 70 people.

"We need these services in the community and I don't want to deprive us of those needed resources," Bellingar said in an interview with The Herald. "But at the same time, how do we provide those resources without causing disruption to the surrounding neighborhood?"

Some of these instances mentioned at the meeting have been documented and reported to police. An arrest was made in late January after a shelter guest was stabbed near the facility during an altercation.

Whatcom County Health and Community Services Director Erika Lautenbach

told meeting attendees that she understood and sympathized with their experiences. She said the organization is aware that the neighborhood has seen a disproportionate impact as a result of nearby services.

"One of the key gaps for this year is the day shelter option because the truth is it's really cold still and folks don't have a place to go. That ends up becoming a challenge for the neighborhood," Lautenbach said in an interview with The Herald.

Whatcom County Health and Community Services Director Erika Lautenbach

.JPGWhatcom County Health and Community Services Director Erika Lautenbach

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The city of Bellingham has operated a daytime warming center during cold spells in years past. Without one this year, shelter guests struggle to find a place to go between overnight operations.

"Having the warming centers in conjunction with the severe weather shelter at night is important - they work in tandem," Bellingar said. "We need them at the same time."

WCHCS has temporary measures in place to help mitigate some of the impacts, Lautenbach said. Additional

trash cans have been added to the neighborhood and shelter staff take time to pick up waste on nearby streets. The agency also offers some transportation options for shelter guests.

Map: Whatcom County Severe Weather Shelter

Bellingar said he also wanted to see expanded transportation options and better security in the area to protect vulnerable individuals seeking services.

The severe weather shelter has changed locations each year depending on available space and partner organizations. This year, WCHCS is partnering with Lutheran Community Services Northwest to operate the shelter at the former Central Lutheran Church building on N. Forest Street . An LCSN representative at the meeting said the organization hoped to be able to take on shelter responsibilities in future years, which could mean continued operations in the same location.

"Our department has work to do and, certainly, if this becomes a long-term shelter there will be much more work to mitigate impacts to the neighborhood," Lautenbach said. "We're hopeful this can be a long-term partnership with Lutheran Community Services."

Bellingham Herald Source Form

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Rachel Showalter, Bellingham Herald, 'Bellingham's winter shelter causing 'disruption' for surrounding neighborhood, residents say', *Bellingham Herald, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 9 Feb 2025 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.bpl-wcls.idm.oclc.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/19EA495B712D8210>>

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Whatcom County shelters house hundreds as winter - Bellingham Herald, The: Web Edition Articles (WA) - February 4, 2025 - page 1

February 4, 2025 | Bellingham Herald, The: Web Edition Articles (WA) | Rachel Showalter, Bellingham Herald

Various facilities and organizations across Bellingham and Whatcom County are working to shelter hundreds of unhoused community members during an early February cold spell that has brought snow and freezing temperatures.

Both the Bellingham and Ferndale severe weather shelters have been consistently full on their open nights, according to Whatcom County Health and Community Services Communications Specialist Marie Duckworth

"Right now, the Bellingham shelter is scheduled to be open through Thursday night and will likely continue operating into the coming weekend," Duckworth told The Bellingham Herald . "We are monitoring the weather forecasts and checking with staff about extending operations if overnight temperatures are expected to be 32 degrees or below."

The county does not currently operate the shelter during daytime hours due to staffing and location challenges. During the day, the shelter is cleaned and prepared for overnight sheltering, which includes laundry, supply deliveries and cleaning of high-contact areas, the kitchen and bathrooms, according to Duckworth.

severe weather shelter sign.jpgA sign is posted on State Street in Bellingham on Jan. 24 , directing individuals to Whatcom County's overnight severe weather shelter, which operates from 4 p.m. to 9 a.m. when temperatures fall below 32 degrees.

"We are committed to operating a safe overnight shelter, and we hate that there are not more options for people to stay warm during freezing daytime hours," said Ann Beck

, Community Health and Human Services Manager at Whatcom County Health and Community Services in a statement to The Herald. "Health and Community Services can't do this work alone, and ultimately we would like to partner with another government entity or a local nonprofit that can provide daytime warming support for our unhoused neighbors during severe winter weather."

Lighthouse Mission Ministries has also been providing food and shelter to unhoused individuals at its new facility during the winter storm.

Lighthouse Mission new build exterior.JPGThe Lighthouse Mission's newly built homeless shelter and services center at 1312 F Street .

The building currently offers 234 beds under regular weather conditions and expects to reach its permitted total of 300 beds upon hiring enough staff to operate the facility's behavioral health dorms.

Lighthouse Mission also offers 60 more emergency overnight shelter beds on a walk-in basis. Not all of the beds were full Sunday night, according to Lighthouse Mission Ministries president and CEO Hans Erchinger-Davis

. An extra 15 to 20 severe weather beds are offered each night, depending on staffing.

Guests can stay on-site during the day while the cold snap continues, Erchinger-Davis told The Herald.

"Due to safe staffing limitations, we are unable to bring in those just seeking day shelter into our building as we prioritize community members who require a full range of shelter services. We are always willing to take people on a case-by-case basis for any and all services if they are especially vulnerable, such as children, elderly or disabled people," Erchinger-Davis said in a statement.

6.7.21 Public Library5.jpgThe Bellingham Public Library .

Many unhoused community members are also seeking daytime shelter at the Bellingham Public Library , which invites all community members inside during its open hours. The library was open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday . Daytime temperatures in Bellingham reached a high of 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Rachel Showalter, Bellingham Herald, 'Whatcom County shelters house hundreds as winter snow, freezing temperatures hit region', *Bellingham Herald, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 4 Feb 2025 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.bpl-wcls.idm.oclc.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/19E88FEECEE69EF8>>

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Business owners near severe weather shelter decry - Cascadia Daily News (WA) - February 10, 2025 - page 1

February 10, 2025 | Cascadia Daily News (WA) | Isaac Stone Simonelli | Enterprise/Investigations Reporter

Neighbors of Whatcom County's severe weather shelter in Bellingham said "biohazards," vandalism and trespassing issues have been on the rise since the temporary shelter was opened at its new location this winter.

The shelter's capacity is set at 80 beds, though there are nights where more than 100 people have shown up, with some of them being turned away, said Erika Lautenbach, director of the Whatcom County Health and Community Services. The shelter is located at 925 N. Forest St., previously Central Lutheran Church. The building is now owned by Lutheran Community Services Northwest.

Community members, including public officials and a few facing housing insecurity, gathered on Thursday, Feb. 8, to "work towards getting some better solutions," explained organizer Adam Bellingar, who owns a business in the area.

"While I feel it important to provide the service, it will not be sustainable if the operation continues to destroy the livelihoods of the people in the neighborhood," Bellingar wrote in a letter to county officials.

Bellingar has detailed ongoing concerns from business owners about increased trash, including used drug paraphernalia, and at least one open fire, in his letters to the county.

"It's so important that we're talking about this and figuring out solutions," Misty Flowers, the chair of the Whatcom Republican Party, said during the meeting. "There's huge gaps in how our services are working for this community."

Lautenbach acknowledged that the shelter's neighbors were disproportionately impacted by the facility, while also articulating the steps the department is taking to mitigate those impacts and serve some of Bellingham's most vulnerable people.

The county, which runs the shelter, struggled to secure a location this year.

Lutheran Community Services Northwest, which agreed to rent space for the operation, was the eighth location the health department approached.

"My coworkers are running the shelter and working overnight shifts instead of being part of intensive case management services for human services programs," Lautenbach said, noting that there are also lots of volunteers helping with the shelter.

The shelter has only been closed one night due to insufficient staffing.

She explained that the department was providing services beyond a place for people to sleep, offering access to street medicine nurses, intensive case managers and nourishing meals.

Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu, who was at the meeting, applauded the work of Lautenbach and her team.

"The limited resources the county has, we recognize it's not enough. We understand that," Sidhu said, but said that based on the resources available, the county council has been "very generous."

Bellingham City Council member Michael Lindquist asked if local officials had discussed a day warming center, a place for people to be when the severe weather shelter is closed.

Lautenbach noted that had been the city's responsibility in the past.

The issue of limited public restrooms for those who don't have shelter during the day or are turned away

from the shelter because of capacity issues was also raised during the meeting. The city added two Portland Loos in 2024.

Lt. Claudia Murphy, with the Bellingham Police Department, reminded property owners they can have a trespass authorization letter on file with the department, which allows officers to issue a trespassing citation for people unwilling to leave the premises.

She noted that often the threat of calling the police is enough to "motivate people to leave."

If it's necessary to call the police, Murphy told the audience they need to be specific with their language: Asking police to "move people along," will not get a response from officers, but a request to trespass people who refuse to leave the property will.

In situations where trespassers fail to be compliant, they can be arrested.

The shelter is located at 925 N. Forest St. in Bellingham. Check-in is from 4-9 p.m. and checkout is at 9 a.m. the following morning. Dinner and breakfast are provided.

A previous version of this story misidentified the owner of the building that houses the severe weather shelter. This article was updated at 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 10, 2025. Cascadia Daily News regrets the error.

Isaac Stone Simonelli is CDN's enterprise/investigations reporter; reach him at isaacsimonelli@cascadiadaily.com; 360-922-3090 ext. 127.

CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Isaac Stone Simonelli | Enterprise/Investigations Reporter, 'Business owners near severe weather shelter decry rise in vandalism, trespassing', *Cascadia Daily News* (online), 10 Feb 2025 <<https://infoweb-newsbank-com.bpl-wcls.idm.oclc.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/19EA9F5840048C10>>

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Connecting across the community: Small buoys painted by participants in several workshops throughout the county over discussions of the featured Whatcom READS book, Erica Bauermeister’s “No Two Persons,” will be incorporated in a large art installation that will be displayed at the 2025 SeaFeast celebration. (Courtesy photo)

January 31, 2025

Whatcom READS builds a community of readers

MARGARET BIKMAN

CULTURE

building community libraries reading Whatcom READS

SHARE:

What better way to get people together than to talk about a book, ask organizers of Whatcom READS. For 17 years, the program has connected people across the county for a profound — and fun — experience.

“I don’t think you can ever predict what someone else will react to — in a book or in life — and writing to that end will only give you a half-hearted book,” observes best-selling author **Erica Bauermeister**.

“I think as writers the only thing we can do is find characters who speak to us, and then let them speak through us, going as deep as they need to.”

The Port Townsend resident is the author of **“No Two Persons,”** the 2025 selection for **Whatcom READS**. The Whatcom County program that encourages everyone to read and discuss the same book is in its 17th year. It began in 2009 with Sherman Alexie’s “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.”

Mary Vermillion, community relations manager for Whatcom County Library System (WCLS), also serves on the Whatcom READS steering committee and the programming and publicity committee.

She believes readers can go deeper when they react to a book together.

“The shared experience of reading one book together introduces us to different perspectives,” she said. “Reading and discussing a book with others can be a profound experience. It can also be a lot of fun.”

Claire McElroy, adult programming coordinator for WCLS, and a member of the Whatcom READS Steering Committee, said that the program “brings people across Whatcom County together in a way that enriches our lives as county residents.”

“What better way to unify and get people together than to talk about a book. How wonderful is it to think about people in Point Roberts discussing the same book as the folks in Maple Falls?”

Bethany Hoglund, deputy library director for Bellingham Public Library and current Whatcom READS board chair, agreed that while Whatcom READS is about story, more importantly it’s about connecting our community to each other *through* story.

“Shared experiences are powerful, as is a shared reading of a book,” Hoglund said. “We all bring a different perspective to the reading of a story and Whatcom READS encourages community members to come together to share their experience and listen to others.”

Neil McKay, the online experience coordinator for WCLS, manages the Whatcom READS website and works with the Whatcom READS Steering Committee and the programming and publicity committee by including filming events, posting them on YouTube and interviewing the featured authors for podcasts.

“A healthy community makes a strong effort to support the arts, share common interests, participate in large and small group discussions, encourage diversity and generally hang out together in friendly settings” McKay said.

“Whatcom READS provides free opportunities to do all that while promoting literacy and learning.”

Voracious reader India Nishi of Bellingham said that she’s enjoyed participating in Whatcom READS for many years.

“Just some of the benefits include celebrating literacy, community building and promoting local authors,” she said. “Two of my favorite aspects are discussions of the books with my local book group, and attending author events to learn firsthand about their writing process.”

Six weeks of events

Dawn Hawley, executive director of library, eLearning and academic support at Bellingham Technical College, serves on the Whatcom READS Steering Committee and helps make final book selections and plan yearly events, as well as on the Whatcom READS Board, enjoys the variety of events and activities throughout the county that explore the book’s themes.

Although there will be dozens of community events through mid-March in conjunction with Whatcom READS, the annual favorites are the in-person visits with Bauermeister. Advance registration is necessary for some of the events.

Whatcom READS **events begin this Saturday**, Feb. 1, with a Make a “Meander Book” workshop at the WCLS Everson branch library.



A few Whatcom READS 2024 partners gather backstage at the Mount Baker Theatre; from left: Claire McElroy (Whatcom County Library System), Mary Vermillion (WCLS), Rebecca Mabanglo-Mayor (Northwest Indian College/Lummi Library) and Miranda LeonJones (Bellingham Public Library). Whatcom READS is presented by local public library systems: Bellingham Public Library and Whatcom County Library System; the libraries at Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College; and community partner Village Books and Paper Dreams. (Courtesy photo)

She'll come to Bellingham on March 12 for Life Between the Pages, a five-course meal inspired by "No Two Persons" at Evolve Chocolate + Cafe, on the second floor of Village Books in Fairhaven. She'll also talk at the Lummi Island Grange hall, Bellewood Farms and Village Books.

Bellingham SeaFeast is teaming with Whatcom Reads this year to provide a series of buoy-painting workshops at county libraries. These all-ages events celebrate the community's — and the book's — connection to the water. Each attendee will be given a small buoy to decorate while participating in an informal fluid discussion of the book. The buoys will be incorporated in a large art installation to be displayed at the 2025 SeaFeast celebration in September.

Miranda LeonJones, events coordinator for Bellingham Public Library, has the lead responsibility of coordinating the premiere event at Mount Baker Theatre at 7 p.m. March 14: "An Evening with Erica Bauermeister and Friends."

A new feature at the event will be special guests and local musicians from **Bushwick Book Club Seattle**, joining Bauermeister on stage to play original music inspired by the book.

Making characters real

During the pandemic, some people saw fiction, and maybe nonfiction, as more real than the "real" world, since we couldn't interact as much with actual people.

Bauermeister said that "writing 'No Two Persons' during COVID was that experience on steroids because it was just me and the characters, every day.

"They kept me thinking and feeling and learning new things. I was grateful for them and the journeys they took me on, and I think that may be why they speak to others."

She said, "I didn't search for characters so much as I looked for topics I wanted to learn about, be that free-diving, or intimacy coordination, ghost towns, unhoused teenagers, audiobook narration, death with dignity, leap seconds — you name it.

"And what I found was that each time I dug into the research, a character would bloom out of it, become a story where before there were just facts. The trick then was finding each character's larger purpose within my book, and how they were connected to each other.

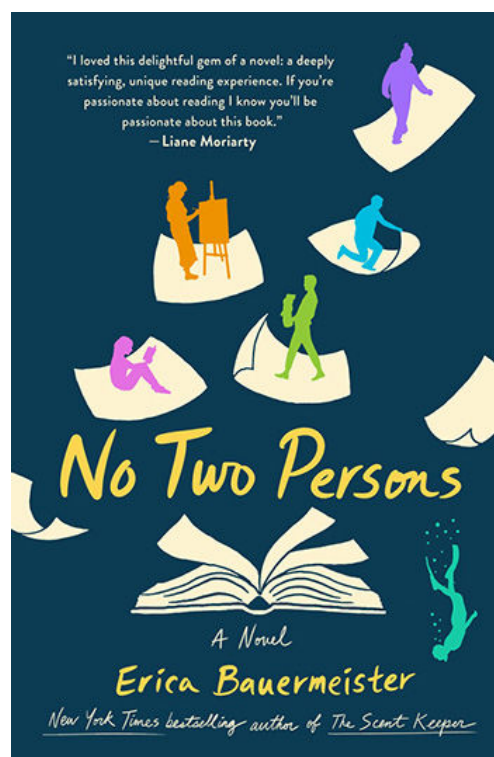
Another event in conjunction with Whatcom READS is **Whatcom WRITES**, which invites writers of all ages and experience levels to explore a theme inspired by "No Two Persons." Top entries have been selected for publication in annual Whatcom WRITES anthology and contributors are invited to read at a public presentation.

The Whatcom WRITES theme for 2025 is "The Book That Changed My Life." For Bauermeister, that life-changing read was short story by Tillie Olsen. " 'I Stand Here Ironing' made me believe I could be a writer. Before that, books were all about big white whales and war, and I not only knew nothing about those things, I really didn't care if I did.

"But then here was this story about an ordinary human being, living a life that was somehow made extraordinary through the attention of the writer. And THAT I wanted to do. I was willing to work as long as I had to, grow up as much as I needed



Events March 12 through 15 featuring Port Townsend author Erica Bauermeister are highlights of the Whatcom READS 2025 schedule. (Courtesy photo)



Characters "bloomed" out of research as Erica Bauermeister wrote "No Two Persons" (St. Martins Press, 2023).

to, get rejected as often as it took, to get there.” The Whatcom READS website provides a calendar of events and information on how to register.



— By Margaret Bikman

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• • •

WRITTEN BY:



Margaret Bikman was entertainment news coordinator at The Bellingham Herald for 27 years, a contributor to Entertainment News NW for four years, and to Cascadia Daily News for two years. She's also a reference and instruction librarian at Whatcom Community College, and she's an interviewer for KMRE Community Radio 88.3. She enjoys performing and visual art events of all kinds, dancing, hiking, and traveling to exotic places like Cuba, Alaska, the Yucatan, Nova Scotia, and New Orleans. Margaret and her husband, Jay Saxton, have two grown children and one granddaughter, who all live in Portland.



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, January 21, 2025 – 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, Kendra Bradford and Deborra Garrett
City Council Library Liaison:	Not present
Library Management Staff:	Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Bethany Hoglund, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Madeline Rosenvinge
FOBPL Representative:	Carol Comeau, Friends of BPL Board Liaison
Guest Presenter:	None

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:29 p.m. by Chair, Rebecca Craven.

Approve/modify agenda: Deborra Garrett moved to approve the agenda. Kristy Van Ness seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: None

Consent agenda: Rick Osen moved to approve the December 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes and the December 2024 Performance and Activity Measures and financial reports. Kendra Bradford seconded. Motion carried.

- Rebecca Judd noted a correction on page 42 of the Board Packet. Under 4th quarter gift balances, the Bragg Muldrow endowment should be \$657,176.67 for the end of 4th quarter. The current number on the report reflects the 2025 total balance.
- Rebecca Judd pointed out a new section at the bottom of the Quarterly Donation Report called "Capital Fund Donations for Lower Floor Renovation" that was added to keep a running total of donations to the Central Library capital effort. Rebecca Judd asked if this new section was a helpful addition and Rebecca Craven said yes. Some edits were suggested including changing the title to make it more general to all renovations for the Central Library and

including the \$1 million in secured private fundraising, authorized by the Trustees at a special meeting last year.

- Rebecca Craven was happy to see the number of new borrowers registered increasing on the Performance and Activity Measures Report.

Board Chair report:

- None

Board member reports:

- None

City Council liaison report:

- None

Friends of BPL report:

- The Friends are working with library staff to categorize community distributions of book donations. Kathie Wilson and Scout Mitchell met with Liz Hendershott and Suzanne Carlson-Prandini to discuss donating books to Lake Whatcom Center, The Food Bank, Brigid Collins, Unity Care, and several elementary schools. They are also setting aside books for Liz and Suzanne to distribute via Outreach Services, and for the HEART program. Carol Comeau has been distributing books to Little Free Libraries in low-income areas and was just contacted by Skookum Kids Foster Care as well.
- The Friends Board met and approved \$75,000 for BPL to use in 2025 for materials, programming, community relations, and Wi-Fi hotspots. In March they will meet to discuss how much they can pledge to the renovation project.

Library Director report:

- Former Administrative Assistant Wendy Jenkins has agreed to return during Madeline Rosenvinge's parental leave.
- The Library will be pausing Outreach Services for a longer period of time, and folding the discussion about the position into the 2026 budget process.
- Annette Bagley and Bethany Hoglund shared their experience at the MLK event put on by The Community Consortium for Cultural Recognition. They said it was a great event, with student moderators and excellent speakers discussing the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and what leadership looks like in our community.
- The Pickford did an independent screening of Free For All, a documentary about the history of libraries. The film discussed how libraries serve their communities and the powerful women that shaped what libraries are today. Thank you to The Pickford for choosing to highlight this film!
- Today is salmon egg arrival day! Library staff care for them in a 55-gallon tank in the Children's Department and then release them into Whatcom creek on March 29 at 4pm. There is a live salmon camera for anyone who would like to tune in online.
- Library Legislative Day is on Wednesday, February 5 and Wednesday, October 8 will be Staff Learning Day.

- Shirin Deylami's appointment as Board Trustee was confirmed on Jan 13. Her first meeting will be February 18.
- Tickets are now available at the Mount Baker Theater for the Whatcom Reads event with Erica Bauermeister, author of this year's book selection, *No Two Persons*. An Evening with Erica Bauermeister and Friends will be March 14 from 7-9pm.

Celebrating Rick Osen's 10 years of service

- Rebecca Craven went back through historical board minutes and noted that Rick's list of accomplishments and the crises he navigated is astounding. Since his appointment in 2015, Rick has led the board through the process of hiring a new director, adopting levels of service, and navigated the difficult decision of whether to merge with WCLS. He guided us through the installation of a new sorter and the main floor renovation as well as Covid closures, facility master planning, foregoing late fees, and the opening of the Bellis Fair branch. Plus much, much more!
- Rebecca Judd read a Letter from the Mayor thanking Rick for his service.
- Rick Osen expressed gratitude for his time being here and working with everyone. The accomplishments he was most proud of included developing the level of service standards, hiring Rebecca, and the building renovation.

2024 Action Plan - Year End Review (see packet materials)

- Rebecca began by thanking everyone on staff for their incredibly hard work in 2024.
- In the 4th quarter, the Library completed and distributed a new welcome brochure and updated rules of conduct handout, incorporated awareness of the library facility and service needs into the COB comprehensive plan, and hosted All Staff Learning Day which was a success for everyone.

2025 Action Plan – Action Item (see packet materials)

- Rebecca Judd made the recommendation to vote to approve the 2025 Action Plan with a slight amendment about printing and reiterated that we will continue to communicate the urgent need for a day shelter in our community.
- The board agreed they would like to add the following standing items to the agenda:
 - Staff safety and mental health/ welcoming public space
 - Budget planning
 - Central Library Renovation
- Kristy moved to approve the 2025 Action Plan, Rick Osen seconded, motion carried.

Central Library Renovation Update

- Rebecca Judd noted that with the General Fund stretched thin, we need to get creative about moving this project forward. For the interior renovation (\$7M estimate) we have three buckets: City funding, State funding, and Private funding (\$3.5M is our private fundraising goal, of which we have secured approximately 1.5M).
- Rebecca Craven asked if there was any word from legislators. Rebecca Judd responded that she hasn't heard of any issue regarding the LCIP grant funding. She added we will be submitting a Local and Community Project request for \$1M through Rep. Joe Simmons's office.

Fundraising Update

- Jenn Daly and others from Whatcom Community Foundation will be attending the February Board meeting to talk about ideas for securing funding for the project.
- Library Giving Day is April 1. This year we will focus on raising money for the renovation project. We are looking at April 1 as the launch for a longer-term fundraising campaign.

New Business:

- None

Agenda items for next meeting:

- WCF discussion
- Board committees for 2025:
 - Fundraising
 - Personnel policy, including Library Director evaluation
 - Facilities

Meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting February 18, 2025 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

2024 Annual Action Plan**WELCOME & INCLUDE: We offer welcoming, safe places and experiences, where connections and understanding flourish.**

- **Q4** Develop new Welcome brochure to orient new patrons to Library services
- Q3 Design and implement an All-Staff Learning Day in October 2024
- Q1 Prioritize recommendations from Security Assessment and develop implementation plan
- Develop a plan on critical incident debriefing, to clarify who is responsible for convening a debriefing, who should be involved, what is the process, what happens afterwards, and how and what do we communicate with those who were not directly involved
- Q3 Update Emergency Management procedures
- Develop a 'Learning Hours' system for all library staff
- Q2 Build and implement a robust training/conference system for library employees that is equitable, transparent, easy to understand, and that requires minimal supervisor oversight. Add new trainings in active shooter/lethal threat; situational awareness and de-escalation, and fire/emergency drills
- Q1 Build and manage an onboarding system that also connects to staff training and ensures a shared foundation and knowledge of current policies and procedures among staff regardless of their tenure at the Library
- Implement community care and wellness practices that help staff at all levels manage and mitigate any current or long-term burnout, and that helps prevent new burnout from developing

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY: We connect people with opportunities and resources to solve problems and help them achieve their aspirations.

- Negotiate locations of Community Drop Boxes. Purchase, wrap and install Boxes
- Q1 Onboard Behavioral Health team, with attention to clarifying roles and building relationships with staff and patrons
- Q1 Promote community mental health and well-being with new collection of circulating Light Therapy Lamps

- Q3 Research options for whether we can serve the needs of clients who need to make emergency phone calls
- Q2 Improve access to Library and City services by participating in City-wide Language Access work group

READ & LEARN: We inspire a lifetime of reading, learning, curiosity, and discovery.

- Q2 Purchase and install additional components for Automated Materials Handling System
- Q1 Partner with Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Agency to build community awareness around the salmon lifecycle

INFORM & INVOLVE: We provide information and activities to stay abreast of community issues and events, fostering informed, active participation in civic life.

- Q3 Partner with city and community leaders to foster public education and involvement in issues that matter, with a 2024 focus on climate action, anti-racism, homelessness, substance use & civic engagement
- Q4 Build awareness of Library facility and service needs into City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan

THRIVE & GROW: We are a valued community partner and trusted city service, playing a central role in Bellingham life.

- Complete design and successfully bid Central Library renovation project
- Q1 Complete and submit Washington State Library Capital Improvement Grant for Central Library renovation project
- Q3 Develop and present 2025-2026 operational and capital budget requests to Mayor's office and City Council
- Q2 Evaluate and update Level of Service standards for Materials and Open Hours
- Q3 Complete repair of Central Library main passenger elevator
- Q2 Complete Bellis Fair Branch assessment at 1-year mark
- Implement Planned Giving program for the Library
- Q3 Implement a replacement for DEMCO Spaces & SignUP
- Q1 Update Polaris MOU with WCLS; consider changing parameters for print notices
- Establish a system for knowing which Library staff are on-site

2025 Annual Action Plan**WELCOME & INCLUDE: We offer welcoming, safe places and experiences, where connections and understanding flourish.**

- Focus on two key goals identified by Library staff:
 - Top internal goal: stronger advocacy for employee/staff safety and mental health
 - Top external goal: make the Library feel safe for everyone
- Support the transition of Security to a Citywide division
- Update Emergency Management plans and procedures for all Library locations, addressing fire, lethal threats, inclement weather, hazardous materials, and air quality

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY: We connect people with opportunities and resources to solve problems and help them achieve their aspirations.

- Evaluate service priorities and develop strategies to maximize community access to library services in a period of limited fiscal and staffing resources.
- Finalize the purchase and installation of the Barkley Community Drop Box to improve community accessibility
- Research options for allowing patrons to print on devices connected via WiFi and provide recommendations
- Update the confidentiality policy to ensure clarity and alignment with best practices
- Enhance website accessibility as part of a Citywide project

READ & LEARN: We inspire a lifetime of reading, learning, curiosity, and discovery.

- Plan and host two large-scale events for adults focused on important community topics

INFORM & INVOLVE: We provide information and activities to stay abreast of community issues and events, fostering informed, active participation in civic life.

- Collaborate with the City planning team to develop programming for the mens' soccer World Cup, fostering community engagement through cultural events
- Deliver a National Library Week presentation to the City Council

THRIVE & GROW: We are a valued community partner and trusted city service, playing a central role in Bellingham life.

- Finalize the design and successfully bid the Central Library renovation project
- Establish a "Learning Hours" system to support ongoing staff education and professional development
- Complete annual performance reviews for all benefitted Library staff
- Develop and implement funding strategies focused on capital projects and planned giving, including an expanded Library Giving Day campaign to support the Children and Teen remodel
- Develop a schedule of Board training sessions, including a collaborative session with WCLS Trustees
- Track achievements from the 2020-2025 strategic plan and report on trends in preparation for 2026 strategic planning

Bellingham Public Library - Performance & Activity Measures, January 2025

	January		Year to Date		YTD comparison	
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025 with 2024	
Holdings - Number of materials in the library's collection						
Physical copies added to the collection		1,887	1,699	1,887	1,699	11.07%
Electronic copies purchased by BPL		96	104	96	104	-7.69%
Physical copies withdrawn from collection		(392)	(363)	(392)	(363)	7.99%
Total physical holdings			183,295	179,596	2.06%	
Total electronic holdings available to BPL			166,068	154,278	7.64%	
Total Holdings (Physical and Electronic)			349,363	333,874	4.64%	
Circulation - Number of items checked out or renewed; includes Interlibrary Loan and Outreach activity						
Central Library						
Adult		41,356	39,102	41,356	39,102	5.76%
Youth		40,804	36,508	40,804	36,508	11.77%
Sub-Total Central		82,160	75,610	82,160	75,610	8.66%
Fairhaven Branch						
Adult		4,869	4,732	4,869	4,732	2.90%
Youth		2,514	2,194	2,514	2,194	14.59%
Sub-Total Fairhaven		7,383	6,926	7,383	6,926	6.60%
Barkley Branch						
Adult		4,810	4,533	4,810	4,533	6.11%
Youth		4,754	3,856	4,754	3,856	23.29%
Sub-Total Barkley		9,564	8,389	9,564	8,389	14.01%
Bellis Fair Branch						
Adult		1,351	1,017	1,351	1,017	32.84%
Youth		1,989	1,552	1,989	1,552	28.16%
Sub-Total Bellis Fair		3,340	2,569	3,340	2,569	30.01%
Bellingham Technical College						
Adult		35	0	35	0	
Youth		4	2	4	2	100.00%
Sub-Total BTC		39	2	39	2	1850.00%
Whatcom Community College						
Adult		188	147	188	147	27.89%
Youth		15	17	15	17	-11.76%
Sub-Total WCC		203	164	203	164	23.78%
Western Washington University						
Adult		274	159	274	159	72.33%
Youth		89	69	89	69	28.99%
Sub-Total WWU		363	228	363	228	59.21%
Sub-Total Physical		103,052	93,888	103,052	93,888	9.76%
Online Services						
Kanopy		2,017	2,214	2,017	2,214	-8.90%
NW Anytime Library Overdrive		43,209	42,679	43,209	42,679	1.24%
Overdrive Magazines		7,735	7,771	7,735	7,771	-0.46%
Sub-Total Online		52,961	52,664	52,961	52,664	0.56%
Total Circulation		156,013	146,552	156,013	146,552	6.46%
Holds Activity						
Items placed on hold shelf		56,011	56,144	56,011	56,144	-0.24%
Services						
Persons Visiting - Number of persons counted as they enter the libraries						
Central Library		35,843	28,008	35,843	28,008	27.97%
Fairhaven Branch		3,290	2,850	3,290	2,850	15.44%
Barkley Branch		2,802	2,609	2,802	2,609	7.40%
Bellis Fair Branch		2,327	2,227	2,327	2,227	4.49%
Total Persons Visiting		44,262	35,694	44,262	35,694	24.00%
Website Visits						
Number of visits to www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org		42,496	46,945	42,496	46,945	-9.48%
Bibliocommons Visits						
Number of visits to Bibliocommons		26,338	28,179	26,338	28,179	-6.53%
Total Website Visits		68,834	75,124	68,834	75,124	-8.37%
Computer Usage - Number of sessions						
Central Library						
Adult & Teen (30 terminals)		3,888	3,001	3,888	3,001	29.56%
Childrens (3 terminals)		82	56	82	56	46.43%
Fairhaven Branch (7 terminals)		212	201	212	201	5.47%
Barkley Branch (4 terminals)		144	162	144	162	-11.11%
Bellis Fair Branch (4 terminals)		133	116	133	116	14.66%
Total Computer Usage		4,459	3,536	4,459	3,536	26.10%
New Borrowers Registered						
Central Library		771	778	771	778	-0.90%
Fairhaven Branch		47	32	47	32	46.88%
Barkley Branch		41	32	41	32	28.13%
Bellis Fair Branch		65	60	65	60	8.33%
Total New Borrowers Registered		924	902	924	902	2.44%
Programs - Library sponsored or co-sponsored educational, recreational, or cultural programs						
Programs		85	75	85	75	13.33%
Attendees		2,124	1,635	2,124	1,635	29.91%
Volunteer Hours		807	910	807	910	-11.36%

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Library Trustees

JANUARY 2025 CLAIMS

LIST OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM TO BE CONSIDERED AND APPROVED AT THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF FEBRUARY 18, 2025, IN ACCORDANCE WITH RCW 27.12.210 AND 27.12.240.

	VENDOR	AMOUNT
Materials, Equipment and Supplies		
Books; DVDs; supplies; child masks	Amazon	1,225.95
Periodicals	Ebsco Subscription Services	9,296.00
Books	Gale	5,244.75
Books	Keiths Frame of Mind	31.44
Office supplies	ODP Business Solutions	84.89
Materials, Equipment & Supplies Sub Total		\$15,883.03
Services and Interfund Charges		
Bellis Fair Branch cleaning	Advantage Building Services	1,477.66
Memberships; PLA Stats; webinar; PLA registrations	American Library Association	640.00
Bellis Fair Branch lease	Bellis Fair Mall Territories	5,357.00
Pest management	Biobug	81.75
Bellis Fair Branch natural gas	Cascade Natural Gas	13.83
Computer replacement allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	20,635.92
Facilities allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	84,446.93
Fleet Services	City of Bellingham Interfund	1,510.00
Postage	City of Bellingham Interfund	292.25
Qualified Energy Conservation Bond sinking fund	City of Bellingham Interfund	3,517.00
Radio Communication Allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	685.76
Risk Management	City of Bellingham Interfund	8,430.72
Technology replacement allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	8,784.76
Telecom Services	City of Bellingham Interfund	2,525.32
ASL Module	Creative Empire	5,003.02
Databases	Grey House Publishing	2,595.00
Alarm system	Guardian Security	174.14
Video streaming service	Kanopy	38,784.00
Copier leases and copies	Kelley Create	1,226.64
Databases	InfoUSA	1,144.50
Polaris Integrated Library System	Innovative Interfaces Inc	58,958.64
Elf subscription	Jandi Enterprise	528.00
Freegal subscription	Library Ideas	23,500.00
Databases	Newsbank	9,486.00
eBooks, eAudiobooks	Overdrive Inc	608.54

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Library Trustees

JANUARY 2025 CLAIMS

Memberships, training	PLW	1,662.24
Bellis Fair internet service	Pogozone Wireless	367.49
Databases	Proquest	9,708.98
Digital subscription	Seattle Times	19.96
Barkley Branch operating costs	Talbot Services LLC	533.00
Security uniform sewing	Tommy the Tailor	185.00
Door Count software	Traf-sys	1,914.88
Interlibrary Loan postage	USPS	5.82
Hotspot service	Verizon Wireless	1,236.46
Overdrive platform fee	WA Secretary of State	76,388.18

Services and Interfund Charges Sub Total	\$372,429.39
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Gift Fund

Kits, program supplies	Amazon.com	449.02
Whatcom Reads Event	Bushwick Players	1,000.00
Adult program	Peter Ali	400.00

GIFT FUND OUTLAYS Sub Total	\$1,849.02
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Total General Fund claims \$388,312.42

Total General Fund & Gift Fund claims \$390,161.44

Library - Budget to Actual - General Fund

January 2025 8.5% YTD

	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Revenues				
Grants		0		
Print and Copy Fees	1,201	15,000	13,799	8%
Lost, Damage & Non-resident Borrower Fees	1,078	16,100	15,022	7%
Fairhaven Auditorium Rental Fees		5,000	5,000	0%
Miscellaneous Revenues	(1)	0	1	
Total Revenue	2,278	36,100	33,822	6%
Expenses				
Salaries and Wages	296,519	3,369,234	3,072,715	9%
Personnel Benefits	118,818	1,368,283	1,249,465	9%
Physical Materials, Equipment and Supplies	1,527	307,932	306,405	0%
Services, Digital Materials and Interfund	385,544	2,672,160	2,286,616	14%
Total Expenditure	802,408	7,717,608	6,915,200	10%

Library - Budget to Actual - Gift Fund

January 2025 8.5% YTD

	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Revenues				
Donations	71	150,000	149,929	0%
Total Revenue	71	150,000	149,929	0%
Expenses				
Gift Fund expenses	1,849	50,000	48,151	4%
Total Expenditure	1,849	50,000	48,151	4%

DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR February 18, 2025

On January 31, Mayor Lund hosted a One City gathering at the Mount Baker Theatre for City staff. One City is a vision of government centered on working together for the betterment of our community as one team. It was wonderful to see over 400 staff from across the City in one place. The program included icebreaker activities, recognition of City staff achievements, an Improv sketch from Upfront Theatre, a presentation from the Mayor, and Q&A with City leadership. Chris Roselli from Western served as emcee. (Rebecca Judd, Library Director)

WELCOME & INCLUDE

Library Assistant Staffing: We received approval to fill our vacant 19-hour Library Assistant position from within the team, and Justin Keefe was moved from a 16-hour position into this vacancy. (Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations)

Security Supervisor: The Security Supervisor position was posted on Friday, February 14th. The position will be open for two weeks. Library staff are represented on the application review team and on the interview panel. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

BPD Bike Patrol: Library staff met with Sergeant Aspesi, who supervises the four bike patrol officers. Following this conversation, the Library submitted a Trespass Authorization form which allows bike patrol officers to issue trespasses for people who utilize the closed Plaza space while the Library is not open. This is in addition to the laws and Library Rules of Conduct (posted on our outdoor signs) which are already being enforced. Sergeant Aspesi graciously worked with us to limit the times of day these trespasses will be issued as well as the duration of the trespasses. We appreciate the adaptation to their standard trespass procedures, allowing greater enforcement of our Plaza closure while encouraging patrons toward compliance, so they can maintain access to vital Library services. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

Additional Newsbank Content: In January we had Newsbank enable a new edition of the Bellingham Herald. "Today's Edition" is a pdf-based Image edition consisting of what is essentially a daily snapshot of the current articles on the Herald's website. It gives patrons a chance to read more articles sooner, including some articles that don't make it to a print edition. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

WiFi Hotspot Refresh: The Friends donated \$5,000 to support swapping out our current batch of WiFi Hotspots for new devices this year. The existing devices are all over 3 years old and are showing their age after being checked out constantly for all that time. Due to the timing of contract dates we'll start with the

Verizon devices this winter, and the MobileBeacon/T-Mobile devices will follow in summer & fall. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Outreach: All of the facilities who receive Outreach Services have been offered a menu of three options to continue providing their residents with access to Library materials during our extended pause. These include 1) a rotating collection of items that exclusively travels between facilities, 2) providing materials to facility staff through agency cards, similar to Classroom accounts, and 3) having residents or staff place holds for pick-up by facility staff or the friend or family member of the resident. More than half of the facilities have reached out to discuss these options further. We are hopeful about working with facilities staff to maintain some level of services. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

Monthly Visits to Childcare Facilities: Each month, Children's Services staff visit childcare facilities to bring stories, songs and engagement to children ages birth – 5 years. Children's Librarian Ali Kubeny visits Seedlings Early Learning Center and Franklin Academy and Children's Specialist Mande Palmer visits the Heart House and Millworks locations of YMCA Early Learning Centers. This outreach provides an opportunity to connect with and build relationships with Early Childhood Educators and young children alike. Both Ali and Mande report how excited the kids are when they enter their classroom, and are eager to hear which stories they'll share. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)

READ & LEARN



Head of Community Relations)

Whatcom READS: Community events celebrating the 2025 Whatcom READS title *No Two Persons* by Erica Bauermeister are underway this month. Details are at WhatcomReads.org. To date, 360 free tickets have been reserved for [An Evening with Erica Bauermeister and Friends](#), at the Mount Baker Theatre, Friday, Mar. 14, 2025. New this year: Bushwick Book Club Seattle will open the event with original music composed by local musicians and inspired by *No Two Persons*. Following the music, the author will provide a talk about the book and will then be in conversation with Kelly Evert and Paul Hanson, co-owners of Village Books and Paper Dreams. (Annette Bagley,

Somos Comunidad: The event scheduled for April 26 to celebrate the recent digital stories created with Monica Koller of Connecting Community has been postponed to Fall 2025. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)



Learning Together Forums: The spring season of our popular Learning Together Forums kicked off Feb. 5 in partnership with the WWU's Sustainability Engagement Institute and the Center for Community Learning. Despite a snowy day we had an attendance of 34 participants in the Lecture Room. The theme for the next session is "Life Below Water" on Wed., Feb. 19, 3 – 4:30 pm in the Lecture Room. All are welcome. No registration required. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

Salmon Love: The chum salmon eggs have hatched and transformed into alevin! The community is invited to watch the library's [online salmon live stream camera](#) or stop by in-person to see if you can spot their wiggly tails. Children's Specialists Lesley Norman and Mande Palmer, in collaboration with Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Agency staff will present two Salmon Storytimes for Kids on Thursday, Feb. 20. Additionally, a special program about Fish Passage Restoration in Bellingham takes place on Wed., Mar. 26 at the Central Library, presented by Sara Brooke Benjamin, Environmental Coordinator with the City of Bellingham. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)

INFORM & INVOLVE

Meeting in a Bag: the Planning Department's 'Meeting in a Bag' kits have served their purpose, with the public comment period for that phase of The Bellingham Plan wrapping up at the end of January. The 5 kits had 21 checkouts since August, and are now being withdrawn and will be returned to Planning. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Collection Services (CS) Visits – Several Collections Services staff visited the WCLS Administrative Services building in January to meet colleagues and see how processes are organized by our partner. Also, the morning of Thursday, Feb. 13, the whole Collections Services team took a field trip to the new library building in Mount Vernon. We met with their collections team after a tour of the facility. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Free for All: Inside the Public Library Documentary: On Sunday, January 19, the Pickford Film Center hosted a free viewing of the documentary Free for All: Inside the Public Library. This documentary explores the history of the public library, highlights the instrumental people who worked to make libraries free and accessible to all, and explores some of the contemporary issues and opportunities facing public libraries today. Following the showing, BPL staff led a discussion with the audience about the impact of libraries in their own lives, and provided information about the Bellingham Public Library. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)

Media requests: This month, Bellingham Public Library responded to media requests from Rachel Showalter of the Bellingham Herald regarding the Library's capacity for daytime shelter needs, and from Whatcom Community College student Dana Ringler regarding the Campus Connections service. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

Fundraising – BPL staff are continuing to work with Whatcom Community Foundation staff on details related to fundraising for the Central Library Renovation project. Webpages have also been created and updated this month with information for prospective donors to Bellingham Public Library, including: [Planned Giving: Join the Bellingham Public Library Legacy Society](#), and [Library Giving Day](#). (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

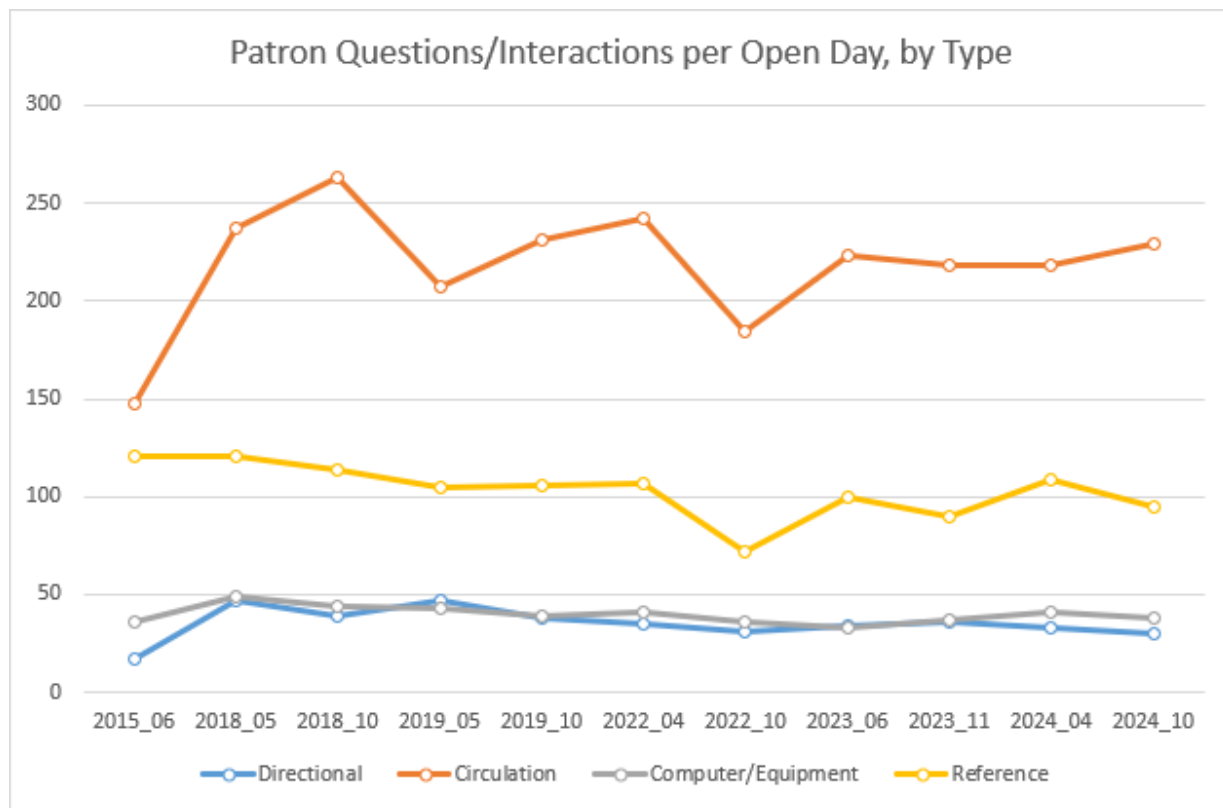
THRIVE & GROW

Polaris Upgrade: On Tuesday, Feb. 4, our enterprise software, Polaris, was upgraded by the vendor to the latest version. We had skipped the previous release so this brought us two cycles of updates. The upgrade process started 45 minutes earlier than expected and ended 15 minutes later than hoped, but still we had the system back up and running for staff and patrons before 9am. Apart from continuing to develop full functionality in their browser-based interface, especially for cataloging and acquisitions, the main feature additions are:

- batch waiving fines
- control over whether certain conditions generate popups for staff
- additional fields are searchable
- enabling shift+click in search results
- session search history
- a bug fix for a problem that made some hold slips printed by our sorter show incorrect information
- A bug fix for a problem that hid phone notices from the staff view of Notice History

(Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Patron Inquiry Tally Week: Despite moving our collection instruments to a new platform, results from the October Tally Week were fully consistent with other weeks in 2023 and 2024. We are planning to fully review the process before the next tally week, expected in April. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)



LibCal Single Sign-On – ITSD enabled an authentication link between the City’s network accounts and Library staff accounts in LibCal, our new Event Calendar and Reservation system. Staff can now click a link on the LibCal login page to have their authentication done behind-the-scenes without needing to re-enter their username and password. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Facilities Update: The main elevator had more repairs done recently to fix minor issues with the door. We hope that the need for repairs becomes less frequent over time. Representatives from Parks and the Library will be meeting before the end of February to kick off the concept design project for Lee Memorial Park (funded by Parks). We are still waiting for the purchase of a replacement camera in the Japanese Garden space; the request is making its way through contracting. (Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations)

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Judd



WHATCOM
community
FOUNDATION

1500 Cornwall Ave., Suite 202
Bellingham, Washington 98225
360.671.6463 whatcomcf.org

January 30, 2025

Rebecca Judd
Bellingham Public Library
210 Central Avenue, CS 9710
Bellingham, WA 98227-9710

RE: Annual Designated Grant Distribution

Dear Rebecca:

Thank you for the important work you and the Bellingham Public Library team do on behalf of the community. The Whatcom Community Foundation has approved your annual designated distribution totaling \$9,296.29 from the following fund(s) as noted below.

Grant #41339 2025 Annual Designated Distribution for \$2,850.93 from the **Bayview Fund**

Grant #41349 2025 Annual Designated Distribution for \$3,362.93 from the **Bellingham Public Library Designated Endowment Fund**

Grant #41366 annual designated grant, 80 percent for the purchase of travel related books, Spanish language books, and/or to establish and maintain a reading nook at BPL. 20 percent of these items to benefit the Fairhaven Library branch. for \$3,082.43 from the **Dorothy and Harris Gonsalves Bellingham Public Library Endowment**

Our check for \$9,296.29 payable to Bellingham Public Library is enclosed. To complete our records, please send a receipt for this amount. Please include the grant number on any correspondence regarding this grant.

If you have an agency fund and would prefer to return all or some of your distribution so that your agency fund will grow faster, please send a check for the amount you would like to go back into your fund, made payable to Whatcom Community Foundation with the Agency Fund name in the memo section. The amount will be considered a new gift and added to the historic value of the fund.

As a reminder, if you have an agency or designated fund with us you may login to our Fund Holder Portal at: <https://wcf.fcsuite.com/erp/portal> to view your December 31 fund statement. Please let us know if you need assistance accessing your online fund information.

By accepting this disbursement, your organization certifies to the Whatcom Community Foundation that no tangible benefit, goods, or services are received by any individual or entities connected with the fund. Should the gift ever be acknowledged publicly, it should be listed as a gift from the respective fund noted above of the Whatcom Community Foundation.

Thank you for playing an important role in helping this community flourish. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you.

Sincerely,

Mauri Ingram
President & CEO
Whatcom Community Foundation

2025 Brass-Muldown Endowment
Spendable Portion : \$239,626.87