



**Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, December 16, 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:	Rebecca Craven, Kristy Van Ness, Kendra Bradford, Deborra Garrett, and Shirin Deylami
City Council Library Liaison:	Hannah Stone
Library Management Staff:	Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Bethany Hoglund, 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 3:31 p.m. by Chair, Rebecca Craven.

Approve/modify agenda: Rebecca Judd noted that the Draft Action Plan and Trustee Selection headings should be dated 2026 instead of 2025. Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the agenda. Deborra Garrett seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: No public comment.

Consent agenda: Shirin Deylami moved to approve the November 2025 Regular meeting minutes and the November 2025 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Kendra Bradford seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report: Rebecca Craven referred to the Year in Review summary (*see Attachment 1*).

Board member reports: Kristy Van Ness attended the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee meeting with Rebecca Judd to discuss Library Board advocacy for a day shelter. She also attended the Civic Athletic Complex Master Plan Open House and noted that an online survey is available through the end of December.

City Council liaison report: Hannah Stone reported on the Civic Athletic Complex Master Plan Open House, noting that a library branch was mentioned as a future possibility. She thanked the Board for their hard work and stated that while she may not serve as liaison next year, she remains a resource and advocate for the Library.

Friends of BPL report: Carol Comeau shared that the Ridwell partnership resulted in over 300 children's books being distributed to Little Free Libraries. She praised staff collaboration and noted that another book sale is scheduled for late January.

Library Director report: Rebecca Judd reported on three recent Council votes: 2026 budget approval, Comprehensive Plan ratification, and Kristy Van Ness's reappointment to the Library Truestees. She shared that future board packets will include article links rather than full text, with NewsBank access for paywalled content. Parking passes from 2025 will remain valid until new passes arrive. Rebecca also noted efforts to streamline meeting minutes using Copilot as a tool and invited feedback. Kendra Bradford commended the extensive adult programming schedule.

2026 Board Trustee Officer Elections – Action Item

Debora Garrett moved to approve Rebecca Craven as Chair and Kristy Van Ness as Vice Chair. Shirin Deylami seconded. Motion carried.

2026-2027 Bridge Strategic Plan (see packet materials) – Discussion

Rebecca Craven introduced the Bridge Plan, explaining its purpose during the renovation period. Rebecca Judd outlined four priorities: renovation, advocacy for a community day shelter, updating service standards for open hours, and developing a sustainable funding model. Board members discussed challenges, the need for consistent branch hours, and revisiting the 2017 BERK funding study. The Bridge Strategic Plan will return to the Board for a final vote in January.

2026 Draft Action Plan (see packet materials) - Discussion

Rebecca Judd presented the draft Action Plan, noting its focus on the Central Library interior renovation. Key areas include:

- **Welcome and Include:** Supporting staff through changes
- **Access and Opportunity:** Maintaining core services and expanding branch hours
- **Read and Learn:** Programming and collection access
- **Thrive and Grow:** Advocacy for day shelter, sustainable funding, and updating level of service standards for open hours.

Staff Safety and Mental Health/Welcoming Public Space update: Debora Garrett reported on advocacy efforts for a community day shelter. The informal working group (Debora, Rebecca, Carol, Kristy) is meeting with City and County staff to learn more and explore solutions. Encouraging news includes potential County funding. Board members discussed examples from other communities and emphasized the urgency of addressing shelter needs.

2026 Budget Update: Rebecca Judd reported that the final City budget was approved December 8. She expressed concern about salary savings estimates and noted the impact of Sunday closures.

Central Library Renovation Update: Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Caleb Savage continue weekly project meetings. Work includes budget planning, Bellis Fair space evaluation, grant preparation, and design revisions with Miller Hull. A detailed timeline is expected in January. Bethany Hoglund is forming a youth advisory group for input on the renovated space. Fundraising efforts are ongoing, with a capital campaign kickoff scheduled for January.

New Business:

- None.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- None.

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting January 20, 2026 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

2025 year in review

This past year saw us say farewell to our outgoing Chair, Rick Osen, and completing the application process and appointment of Shirin Deylani who joined us in February.

In February, we discussed at length how we could leverage the earnings from the Bragg-Muldrow endowment held by the Whatcom Community Foundation to be used for the Central Library renovation. We requested that WCF facilitate this by transferring \$1,589,093 (or the current value) from the endowment's earnings account into a short-term investment account, ensuring funds are available for project-related expenses if/when needed. The documents setting up that agreement were signed in March.

Whatcom Reads was again a successful effort, incorporating music for the first time into the Whatcom reads events.

March also gave us the first wave of budget related decisions, forecasting some lean budget years for the foreseeable future. We met in a special meeting to go over the Mayor's request for budget reduction exercise and the Central Library renovation. We learned of the impacts of the elimination of federal Institute for Museum and Library Services funding on the Washington State Library. By June, that request had morphed into a request for 5% and 10% reduction exercises.

Library Giving Day saw the highest amount donated on any Giving day yet – a great start to fundraising for the Central Library renovation.

We hosted a presentation from Christine Perkins, the Director of WCLS, who talked about their upcoming levy increase request and the impacts to services if it were to fail. Spoiler alert: It did not fail!!

BPL was awarded grants of \$2M and \$1,030,000 for the Central Library renovation.

Library Board and staff and members of the Friends worked on getting library services and needs and day shelter needs into language included in the City's latest comp plan update.

The efforts of our Fundraising committee, Rebecca and former trustee Rachel Myers brought about establishment of a process and set of forms for individuals who might be interested in making bequests to the library in their estate planning.

We entered into a license agreement for additional space in Bellis Fair Mall for a short-term expansion during the Central Library renovation to provide additional collection space and storytime/programming space.