

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: August 18, 2026: Regular Board Meeting• Library performance & activity measures: August 2026• Financial reports
Claims: August 2026
YTD report: August 2026 | 5 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) | 10 min |

Time check: 3:50

6. Central Library renovation update	10 min
Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations; Caleb Savage, Public Works Project Manager; Carol Rofkar, Public Works Assistant Director – Internal Services	
7. 2027 Budget development Level of Service funding update	10 min
Rebecca Judd, Director; Rebecca Craven, Board Chair	
Time check:	4:10
8. Day Center update	
Rebecca Judd, Director; Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services; Deborra Garrett, Trustee	5 min
9. Board recruitment - Discussion	
Rebecca Craven, Board Chair	5 min
10. Fundraising Committee update	
Kristi Van Ness, Trustee	5 min
11. Library Director review update	
Shirin Deylami, Trustee	5 min
Time check:	4:30
12. New business	3 min
13. Agenda items for next meeting	2 min
14. Adjourn	

Accessibility:

The Bellingham Public Library Lecture Room is ADA accessible. Elevator access to the lower 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, October 20, 2026 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Lecture Room, Central Library, 210 Central Avenue Bellingham, Washington

Communications & FYI

September 2026 Board Meeting

- *Forbes* | September 1, 2026 | [Political Attacks Are Pushing Public Libraries To 'Breaking Point'](#)
- *PEN America* | September 1, 2026 | [Out of Circulation: Expanding Censorship in Public Libraries](#)
- *Salish Current: Community Voices* | August 27, 2026 | [We Must Save Our School Libraries at all Costs](#)
- *City of Bellingham* | August 24, 2026 | [Docket of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments](#)
- *The Seattle Times** | August 23, 2026 | [King County now has the nation's largest library sorting machine](#)

* Article is linked to the NewsBank database. To access, you will need to log in with your Barcode Number and Password/PIN.



Participate in Democracy

Civic Engagement Programs and Information at the Library

The Bellingham Public Library is hosting a variety of programs focused on civic engagement this fall. Representatives from the Whatcom County League of Women Voters and the Office of the Secretary of Washington State will share information about how elections and local and federal government work and how to get involved. We've also curated online resources for more information. Program descriptions, dates, times and locations are listed on the back of this page.

Note: Pre-registration is requested for some events.



Voter Registration and Information with the League of Women Voters

The Whatcom County League of Women Voters will visit the SkillShare Space at the Central Library in September and October to register voters, update addresses, and answer questions about the November 3rd local election. The LWV are non-partisan.

**Register to vote online, update your information
and check your ballot at VoteWA.org**



Civic Engagement Series from the Office of the Secretary of State

Participate in interactive workshops exploring how our government works and various ways to engage at different levels. Attend any or all of the events! Pizza will be provided and registration is requested. 🍕



Our Community, Our Democracy

September 2026

Federal Civics 101: How Should We Celebrate America at 250?

Wednesday, September 9
4:00 - 5:30 pm
Lecture Room
Central Library



This interactive workshop will explore the words and legacies of the Declaration and what it means to us now.
Registration requested.

Civil Discussion: Should Washington Rivers Have Rights?

Thursday, September 10
4:00 - 5:30 pm
Lecture Room
Central Library



Join us for a community conversation about the idea of granting legal rights to rivers.
Registration requested.

Voter Registration & Information

Monday, September 14
11:00 am - 1:00 pm
SkillShare Space
Central Library

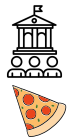


The League of Women Voters will register voters & answer questions about the local election on 11/3.

October 2026

Local Civics: How Do Local Governments Work & How Can I Engage?

Friday, October 16
4:00 - 5:30 pm
Lecture Room
Central Library



Learn about the forms & functions of local government, special purpose districts, advisory boards, & commissions.
Registration requested.

Civil Discussion: Voting in Local Elections

Saturday, October 17
12:00 - 1:30 pm
Lecture Room
Central Library



This discussion examines the possibility of letting local jurisdictions adopt Ranked-Choice Voting.
Registration requested.

Voter Registration & Information

Saturday, October 17
2:00 - 4:00 pm
SkillShare Space
Central Library



The League of Women Voters will register voters & answer questions about the local election on 11/3.

November 2026

VOTE!

Tuesday, November 3
Visit VoteWA.gov to find
ballot box locations in
Whatcom County



Votes must be submitted or postmarked by 8:00 pm
November 3, 2026.

Civic Trivia

Monday, November 9
12:00 - 1:30 pm
Bellis Fair Library
Multipurpose Room



Join us for a 90-minute interactive game. Play on your own or in teams of up to 4. Prizes! Fun!
Registration requested.

Civil Discussion: Data Center Expansion

Tuesday, November 10
12:00 - 1:30 pm
Bellis Fair Library
Multipurpose Room



Join us for a balanced conversation about whether Washington should place limits on future development.
Registration requested.



Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees

Tuesday, August 18, 2026 – Central Library Lecture Room, 3:30 pm

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, Kendra Bradford, Shirin Deylami
City Council Library Liaison	Dan Hammill
Library Management Staff	Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Jennifer Vander Ploeg, Hillary Thomsen
Friends of BPL Representative	Carol Comeau
Guest Presenter	N/A

Call to order and introductions

- Chair Rebecca Craven called the regular session to order at 3:32 p.m.

Approve/modify agenda

- Shirin Deylami moved to approve the agenda. Kendra Bradford seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public comment

- No public comments were made.

Consent agenda

- Kendra Bradford motioned to approve the consent agenda. Shirin Deylami seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Board Chair report

- The Board Chair had no updates to report.

Board member reports

- Board members had no updates to report.

City Council liaison report — Dan Hammill:

- The City Council passed the removal of parking minimums. At the state level, Senate Bill 5481 limits minimum parking requirements for new residential and commercial developments and will go into effect in January 2027.
- The Regional Fire Authority (RFA) planning committee will be holding a public hearing on Monday, October 19, at 6:00 p.m. specifically setting forth its proposal to impose a fire benefit charge. The proposed funding model combines a property tax of up to 80 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value with a benefit charge based on building square footage and fire risk, which will go to a public vote in February 2027, pending approval. This required public hearing on the benefit charge satisfies the legal prerequisite to place the combined measure on the ballot, where it triggers a 60% supermajority requirement to pass.

Friends of BPL report — Carol Comeau:

- The book sale held at Wander Brewing generated over \$800 in sales. These funds will be directed toward the renovation project. The event received excellent feedback from both the hosts and attendees.
- The Friends of BPL September book sale is scheduled to take place from Sept. 24 through Sept. 26.

Library Director report — Rebecca Judd:

- A representative from the Office of Secretary of WA State is coming to do a series of Participate in Democracy workshops at the Central Library in September and October, followed by two additional programs in November in the new Bellis Fair Library Multipurpose room.

Renovation report — Jennifer Van VanderPloeg:

- New project estimates now include furniture and shelving, which are currently being reviewed to ensure architectural drawings are complete. Caleb Savage is awaiting cost estimates for hazardous materials testing to finalize the bid packet materials.
- Detailed planning for Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E) will continue once the bid packet progresses further.
- A cleaning contract is officially in place for the new temporary library space at Bellis Fair.
- The clean-out of Central Library spaces is underway to dispose of unneeded items prior to relocating for the renovation.
- The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the 1% for the Arts project has been published, with a submission deadline in mid-September.
- The fireplace at the Fairhaven branch is now fully operational.

2nd Quarter Action Plan — Rebecca Judd:

Renovation-Related updates include:

- The library is establishing temporary storage and operational spaces at Bellis Fair for the Friends of the Library, collections, and Children's services.
- Bethany Hoglund, Annette Bagley, and staff are organizing programming spaces at Barkley Village, the Maritime Heritage pavilion, and the Bellis Fair Library multipurpose room. The team is determining locations for Skillshare programs, setting final dates for meeting room reservations, and transitioning programs to alternative sites. September storytimes will begin in the new Bellis Fair space.
- Significant efforts are being directed toward the Major Donors campaign. While monthly donor events were paused in August, a large-scale event is scheduled for Sept. 29 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Central Library building.
- A youth representative from the teen committee will serve on the selection jury for the 1% for the Arts project to ensure youth input.

Non-Renovation-Related updates include:

- Q2 efforts focused on updating Level of Service (LOS) standards, alongside compiling a gap analysis and formal funding requests.
- Staff learning hours, developed by Staff Development Coordinator Kate Dunphy, are being implemented to formalize self-directed training.
- Bethany Hoglund and Jon McConnell are managing the transition to new vendors and preprocessing workflows following the closure of Baker & Taylor. Onboarding with Ingram is nearly complete.

Fundraising committee update — Kendra Bradford:

- The upcoming donor anniversary event will feature historical photo albums, renovation floorplans, and behind-the-scenes tours. Additional details will be provided as they are finalized.
- The committee did not meet this month but reported an updated fundraising total of over \$2.6 million toward the \$3.5 million campaign goal. Matching donation opportunities are currently being negotiated with potential donors.

2027 Budget development & strategic planning update — Rebecca Judd:

- The library submitted its budget proposal last month. The City requested a 3% reduction scenario, which the library fulfilled; very few additive requests were submitted city-wide, and the library had none. The budget remains with the Mayor's office through the end of August before moving to City Council in September for review and adoption.
- Rebecca Judd met with the Mayor on August 11 to present the Level of Service document (page 19 of the packet) and discuss pathways for expanded level of service. To meet the Library's level of service goals, \$5.5M (total) in additional operating funding will be required over the next 10 years, which averages \$550,000 in additional funding per year for the next 10 years. On the capital side, to meet the Library's level of service goals for facilities, \$30M (total) in additional capital funding will be required over the next 10 years, which averages \$3 million per year for the next 10 years.

- Discussions with the Mayor also explored whether this level of service increase could be fully funded via the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) or a combination of the RFA and a future library levy.
- Board Chair Rebecca Craven noted that the promotional flyer should state "additional funds needed" to ensure clarity.
- Melissa Moran, Communications Director at the City, is handling communications regarding the RFA, with further updates to follow.

Day Center update — Rebecca Judd

- The proposed Pacific Street Day Center project will not move forward. Bart Hunter from Road2Home indicated that they are still pursuing a day center model with private backing, as they were unable to finalize contractual terms with the City.
- The Library is discussing the long-term need for behavioral health support at the library following the discontinuation of the HEART program. We have reached out to Lake Whatcom Center to explore partnership logistics. Essential services previously assisted by HEART remain critical, ongoing needs.
- Kendra Bradford inquired about HEART funding. Rebecca Judd clarified that while the City provided partial funding, more than half came from the county Health Department, whose budget constraints forced the program's end. Reinstating the program independently would require closing a deficit of over \$100,000. We are evaluating private funding and operational logistics for the closure period.

Trespass appeal update – Rebecca Judd

- Rebecca Judd, alongside Board members Deborra Garrett and Shirin Deylami, convened with Katrina Buckman, Cam Birman, and Sarah Chaplin under the newly established review process to evaluate an active trespass appeal.
- The panel voted to reduce the one-year trespass penalty issued to Juan Perez to three months. Mr. Perez will be permitted to return to the library on October 18, 2026.
- A procedural adjustment was proposed (page 21 of the packet) to add the Head of Security to the Appeal Committee as an advisory reviewer. Under this proposal, the formal voting members would consist of the Library Director and two members of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees proposed no edits to these changes.

New Business: No new business.

Agenda items for next meeting: None discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:17 pm.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting:

September 15, 2026 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 pm.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST



Performance & Activity Measures - August 2026

Holdings - Number of materials in the library's collection					
Holding Type	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Physical copies added to the collection	1,291	1,182	12,402	9,794	-21.0%
Electronic copies purchased by BPL	160	51	876	548	-37.4%
Physical copies withdrawn from collection	-364	-350	-14,506	-17,667	21.8%
Total physical holdings	-	-	180,272	175,201	-2.8%
Total electronic holdings available to BPL	-	-	169,625	192,470	13.5%
Total Holdings (Physical and Electronic)	-	-	349,897	367,671	5.1%

Circulation - Number of items checked out or renewed; includes Interlibrary Loan					
Physical Materials Circulation	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Central Library Adult	37,637	35,852	310,084	281,318	-9.3%
Central Library Youth	43,918	41,748	327,175	296,781	-9.3%
Sub-Total Central	81,555	77,600	637,259	578,099	-9.3%
Fairhaven Branch Adult	5,066	5,094	39,283	39,094	-0.5%
Fairhaven Branch Youth	3,022	3,627	22,848	23,949	4.8%
Sub-Total Fairhaven	8,088	8,721	62,131	63,043	1.5%
Barkley Branch Adult	4,766	4,578	36,431	37,157	2.0%
Barkley Branch Youth	5,343	5,928	40,090	39,981	-0.3%
Sub-Total Barkley	10,109	10,506	76,521	77,138	0.8%
Bellis Fair Branch Adult	1,464	1,515	11,039	11,497	4.1%
Bellis Fair Branch Youth	2,154	1,567	15,597	13,695	-12.2%
Sub-Total Bellis Fair	3,618	3,082	26,636	25,192	-5.4%
Bellingham Technical College Adult	38	36	308	307	-0.3%
Bellingham Technical College Youth	2	3	40	13	-67.5%
Sub-Total BTC	40	39	348	320	-8.0%
Whatcom Community College Adult	112	149	1,382	1,066	-22.9%
Whatcom Community College Youth	8	14	192	98	-49.0%
Sub-Total WCC	120	163	1,574	1,164	-26.0%
Western Washington University Adult	162	170	2,069	1,826	-11.7%
Western Washington University Youth	59	154	556	964	73.4%
Sub-Total WWU	221	324	2,625	2,790	6.3%
Total Physical Circulation	103,751	100,435	807,094	747,746	-7.4%
Digital Materials Circulation	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Kanopy - Video Streaming	1,912	2,188	15,925	16,152	1.4%
WA Anytime Library Overdrive - eBooks and eAudiobooks	40,895	40,870	326,031	329,236	1.0%
Overdrive- eMagazines	8,788	8,998	62,667	72,512	15.7%
Total Online Circulation	51,595	52,056	404,623	417,900	3.3%
Total Digital and Physical Circulation	155,346	152,491	1,211,717	1,165,646	-3.8%
Holds Activity	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Holds shipped and shelved	49,213	68,911	405,825	528,499	30.2%

Services					
Visitors (Door Counts)	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Central Library	31,360	29,628	260,168	227,499	-12.6%
Fairhaven Branch	3,126	3,264	25,900	27,406	5.8%
Barkley Branch	3,028	3,233	21,795	22,429	2.9%
Bellis Fair Branch	2,384	1,918	16,288	15,806	-3.0%
Total Persons Visiting	39,898	38,043	324,151	293,140	-9.6%
New Borrowers Registered	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Central Library	643	482	4,695	4,320	-8.0%
Fairhaven Branch	43	28	302	237	-21.5%
Barkley Branch	24	24	227	193	-15.0%
Bellis Fair Branch	50	48	339	306	-9.7%
Total New Borrowers Registered	760	582	5,563	5,056	-9.1%
Programs - Library sponsored or co-sponsored	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Programs	82	69	859	816	-5.0%
Attendees	1,532	2,745	20,397	26,084	27.9%

Electronic Resources					
Website Visits	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Website Visits - Number of visits to www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org	41,787	43,007	336,755	357,390	6.1%
Bibliocommons Visits - Number of visits to online catalog	27,959	33,131	208,996	232,238	11.1%
Total Website Visits	69,746	76,138	545,751	589,628	8.0%
Computer Usage - Number of sessions	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Central Library - Adult & Teen (28 terminals)	3,408	3,229	27,274	24,192	-11.3%
Central Library - Children (3 terminals)	138	103	793	675	-14.9%
Fairhaven Branch (7 terminals)	291	311	1,880	2,302	22.4%
Barkley Branch (4 terminals)	133	196	1,041	1,183	13.6%
Bellis Fair Branch (4 terminals)	197	123	1,114	1,150	3.2%
Total Computer Usage	4,167	3,962	32,102	29,502	-8.1%

Community Partnerships					
Friends of BPL	Aug-25	Aug-26	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % Change
Volunteer Hours	307	372.5	3,476	3,787	8.9%

Board Claims, August 2026*

*Due to the early date of the September 2026 meeting, not all expenses for August have been processed.

**LIST OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES & THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM
TO BE CONSIDERED AND APPROVED AT THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF
SEPTEMBER 15, 2026, IN ACCORDANCE WITH RCW 27.12.210 AND 27.12.240.**

General Fund Claims		
Interfund Claims		
Description	Vendor	Amount
Computer Replacement	City of Bellingham	20,125.58
Custodial Services (Central)	City of Bellingham	Aug. not yet processed
Custodial Services (Fairhaven)	City of Bellingham	Aug. not yet processed
Facilities (Central)	City of Bellingham	12,906.82
Facilities (Fairhaven)	City of Bellingham	7,060.40
Fleet Rent & Services	City of Bellingham	Aug. not yet processed
IT Services	City of Bellingham	Aug. not yet processed
Radio Communications	City of Bellingham	609.41
Risk Management	City of Bellingham	9,740.95
Security Services	City of Bellingham	Aug. not yet processed
Technology Replacement	City of Bellingham	8,954.51
Telecom Services	City of Bellingham	3,383.15
Total Interfund Claims		\$ 62,780.82
Physical & Digital Collections Materials Claims		
Description	Vendor	Amount
Books	Amazon	49.04
Books and preprocessing	Ingram	17,361.84
CDs, DVDs, Audiobooks, Preprocessing	Midwest Tape	Aug. not yet processed
E-Books and E-Audiobooks	Overdrive	4,288.23
CultureGrams	Proquest LLC	674.88
Lost Interlibrary Loan Books	Seattle Public Library	39.98
Periodicals	Seattle Times	Aug. not yet processed
Total Physical and Digital Collection Materials Claims		\$ 22,413.97
Equipment, Supplies, and Services Claims		
Description	Vendor	Amount
Custodial Services (Barkley)	Action Cleaning Service	812.00
Supplies; Minor Equipment; First Aid	Amazon	1,153.32
Dues/Membership	American Library Association	215.00
Bellis Fair lease (original branch space)	Bellis Fair Mall Territories	5,357.00
Software Subscription	BiblioCommons Database	14,098.79
Pest management	BioBug	220.46
Natural Gas (Bellis Fair)	Cascade Natural Gas	63.36
Natural Gas (Central & Fairhaven)	Cascade Natural Gas	79.02
Banking/Credit Card Fees	City of Bellingham	26.34
Water/cooler rentals (Barkley & Bellis Fair)	Clearwater Systems	81.22
Copies (Fairhaven)	Copiers Northwest	34.28
Business cards	Copy Source	97.19

Equipment, Supplies, and Services Claims

Description	Vendor	Amount
Security Monitoring (Central & Fairhaven)	Guardian Security	163.76
Copier leases and copies	Kelley Create	1,443.53
Waste service (Bellis Fair)	L&L Mall Facilities	112.82
Fuel	Nelson-Reisner	299.06
Paper and tissues	ODP Business Solutions	377.10
Bellis Fair internet (reflects two months)	PogoZone	734.98
Electric (Central & Fairhaven)	Puget Sound Energy	Aug. not yet processed
Postage	Quadient	648.93
Custodial Services (Bellis Fair)	Sealx	Aug. not yet processed
Digital subscription	Seattle Times	Aug. not yet processed
Barkley lease (reflects two months)	Talbot Services	1,066.66
Viewscan	Technology Unlimited	340.70
Mailing supplies	Uline	604.13
Hotspot Service	Verizon Wireless	1,600.40
Water/Sewer/SSW service (Central)	via City of Bellingham	2,466.57
Water/Sewer/SSW service (Fairhaven)	via City of Bellingham	419.05
Drivers Abstracts	WSDOL	15.00
Total Equipment, Supplies, and Services Claims		\$ 32,530.67
TOTAL GENERAL FUND CLAIMS		\$ 117,725.46

Gift Fund Claims

Description	Vendor	Amount
Family Program Supplies	Amazon	13.08
Bellis Fair temporary space lease	Bellis Fair Mall Territories	1,500.00
Audiobooks	Midwest Tape	Aug. not yet processed
Summer Reading program	Out of Print (online shop)	106.40
Projector and screen for Book Club Social (deposit)	Whatcom Sound	175.00
Salmon for "Growing Community Through Food" event	Whiteswan Environmental	200.00
TOTAL GIFT FUND CLAIMS		\$ 1,994.48

Total General Fund & Gift Fund claims	\$ 119,719.94
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Budget to Actual, August 2026*

*Due to the early date of the September 2026 meeting, not all expenses for August have been processed.

67% YTD

GENERAL FUND BUDGET TO ACTUAL				
GENERAL FUND REVENUES				
Description	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Grants	3,163	0		
Print and Copy Fees	15,385	15,000	(385)	103%
Lost, Damage & Non-resident Borrower Fees	6,960	11,100	4,140	63%
Miscellaneous Revenues	831	0	(831)	
Total General Fund Revenues	26,339	26,100	(239)	101%
GENERAL FUND EXPENSES				
Description	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Salaries, Wages, and Benefits	3,478,246	5,115,262	1,637,016	68%
Interfund	1,286,194	2,103,588	817,394	61%
Physical and Digital Collection Materials	406,117	613,465	207,348	66%
Equipment, Supplies, and Services	378,411	594,164	215,753	64%
Total General Fund Expenses	5,548,968	8,426,479	2,877,511	66%
GIFT FUND BUDGET TO ACTUAL				
GIFT FUND REVENUES				
Description	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Donations	105,655	400,000	294,345	26%
Total Gift Fund Revenues	105,655	400,000	294,345	26%
GIFT FUND EXPENSES				
Description	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Gift Fund Expenses	49,604	400,000	350,396	12%
Total Gift Fund Expenses	49,604	400,000	350,396	12%



DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR September 15, 2026



On Oct. 7, all Library staff will be gathering at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal for a day of learning and team building. The theme of the day will be "Next Stop, Everywhere!" – certainly a fitting one with the renovation year ahead. Offerings will include glimpses of BPL history from the archives of the Whatcom Museum, a renovation-inspired group activity, guided nature walks from Wild Whatcom, and three breakout sessions led by BPL colleagues. [Animals as Natural Therapy](#) will return for visits during lunch, and an optional flu and vaccine clinic will be available at the end of the day. A big thank you to the Staff Events Committee for their many months of planning: Alex Alonzo, Lorena Lytle, Suzanne Carlson-Prandini, Jenni Johnson, Miranda LeonJones and Kate Dunphy. (Rebecca Judd, Library Director)

WELCOME & INCLUDE

Welcoming WWU: Twenty-six staff from WWU Libraries toured Central on Sept. 10 as part of their staff day. The tour covered staff and public spaces and focused on the upcoming renovation, popular programs and spaces, and statistics. Staff were engaged and enthusiastic (especially about the sorter) and asked great questions. It was a pleasure opening our space to our partners at Western. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

Security Update: Nathan Chaokhruembong gave notice and has worked his last day with the Security Team. Nathan was a great addition to the team and will be missed. Cam has worked with the team to arrange coverage and will be adding the position to the hiring cue as soon as he is able. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

Public Service Referrals Project: This fall, we will be reaching out to over twenty community providers and partners, as well as Bellingham Connections libraries at WWU, WCC, and BTC, to share details about the upcoming renovation and the anticipated needs that our community will be facing during the closure of Central. We will be asking about current services that may overlap with these needs, whether there are plans or capacity to expand current services, and if there are other providers to whom we can reach out and refer patrons. We hope to create a thorough list of options for our staff and our patrons leading up to and during the renovation. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grant Conditions: The City of Bellingham is currently a plaintiff in two federal grant funding lawsuits, [King County v. Turner](#) and [SCC v. Noem](#). These lawsuits were filed in response to the federal government's attempts to attach new funding conditions referencing immigration enforcement, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), reproductive rights, and abortion to

federal HUD, DOT, and DHS/FEMA grants. The City has been successful so far in obtaining preliminary injunctions in those cases stopping the federal government from adding the conditions in question to grants issued by these agencies. On June 15, 2026, City Council authorized the City to join a new federal lawsuit, which would challenge similar grant conditions in grants issued by other federal agencies. The Library has identified a state grant funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services that may be included in the new lawsuit to ensure that the Library may still continue to seek grant funding from IMLS. More information can be found on the City website: [Protecting the rights and dignity of all - City of Bellingham](#). (Rebecca Judd, Library Director)

READ & LEARN

Summer Reading Success: Thank you to the staff and community for another fun and engaging Summer Reading program.

- Summer Reading for children had 1,541 finishers, age birth – 6th grade.
- Summer Reading for teens had 198 activity cards turned in by youth in 7th – 12th grade, which is 76 more than last year!
- Summer Reading for adult had 325 finishers, including 31 staff participants.



Summer reading is made possible by the generosity of the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library and our many prize partners. Special thank you to all the staff who enthusiastically promoted and awarded Summer Reading prizes from June 1 – August 31. Also, Pageturnicus, the Summer Reading dragon in Children's, will remain up through fall. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)

Programming for Adults: Our fall programming began with a special Participate in Democracy Series, featuring Michael Bowman, Rural Civic Engagement Specialist for the Office of the Secretary of State of Washington. Pre-registrations for the first two events were 25 people for Sept. 9, *Federal Civics 101: How Should We Celebrate America at 250?*, and 38 people for Sept. 10, *Civil Discussion: Should Washington Rivers Have Rights?* Additional events in the series are:

- Oct. 16, *Local Civics: How Do Local Governments Work and How Can I Engage?*
- Oct. 17, *Civil Discussion: Voting in Local Elections.*
- Nov. 9, *Civic Trivia*
- Nov. 10, *Civil Discussion: Data Center Expansion*

(Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

Whatcom READS Title Selection for 2028: Adult Services Librarian Suzanne Carlson-Prandini successfully lead the Whatcom Reads Selection Committee through the 5-month process of selecting a 2028 title. This committee, which Suzanne has continuously led for eight years, is comprised of 13 stakeholders including representatives from the academic and public libraries in Whatcom County, the Friends of the Bellingham Public Library, Village books and two community members. This endeavor translates to an enormous amount of reading and listening on their personal time. The committee read and evaluated 40 suggested titles, meeting three times to discuss and narrow selections. This committee presented their top 4 picks to the Whatcom Reads Steering Committee for reading, discussion and final selection in November. Huge thanks to Suzanne for leading this committee, and to all members for their careful, thoughtful and intentional work on selecting an engaging title for the community. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)

INFORM & INVOLVE

Happy Birthday Central Library! Sept. 29 is the 75th anniversary of the Central Library's original dedication in 1951. To celebrate we are working with BTV on a video about the building's past and present. We are also planning a donor engagement birthday party in the Lecture Room on Sept. 29, 2026, 3:30 – 5:30, to include cake, photos, tours of the ground floor, renovation plans and fundraising updates. Invitations have gone out by mail and email, and the Capital Campaign Committee is working on logistics for the festive afternoon. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)



Whatcom Community Foundation: Jenn Daly, who has been our mentor at WCF and has been assisting us through our capital campaign, will be leaving at the end of September. We wish her well and thank her for her invaluable guidance. Our new WCF contact is Shannon Elmendorf, Director of Community Resilience & Opportunity. We look forward to our continued partnership. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)



Banned Books Week (Oct. 4-10): Banned Books Week was launched in 1982 in response to a surge in book challenges in libraries, schools, and bookstores - aiming to highlight the importance of free and open access to information and ideas. The event is promoted by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Banned Books Week Coalition, and it brings together librarians, educators, authors, publishers, booksellers, and readers to advocate for intellectual freedom. This year, Banned Books Week will be celebrated Oct. 4-10 with the theme 'Let Books Be: Celebrate the Freedom to Read.' ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) tracked 4,235 unique titles challenged in 2025, the second highest ever documented by ALA. The highest ever documented was 4,240 in 2023. Of the unique titles challenged in 2025, 1,671 (40%) represent the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people and people of color. (Rebecca Judd, Library Director)

THRIVE & GROW

Polaris Upgrade: WCLS and BPL have scheduled an upgrade of Polaris, our shared catalog system, for early on the morning of Oct. 7. Remote authentication and patron accounts will be offline for around 3 hours early that morning. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Renovation Update: The final review of the plans, project specifications and bid package have been completed and turned over to the City's Purchasing Department with the intention of the project being posted the week of Sept. 14. We plan to accept bids for four weeks. The 1% for the Arts public Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be accepting submissions until Sept. 18. The jury will be reviewing submissions the first week of October. An optional site walk-through was scheduled for prospective artists on Sept. 3 and was attended by a large number of interested parties. We look forward to reviewing artist submissions! Staff are continuing to clean out workstations and common areas at the Central Library, as we prepare for the temporary relocation of services and people during construction in 2027. (Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations)

Bellis Fair Multipurpose Space: We did a final clean-out to remove some large items that were left in the space by the previous tenant. A weekly cleaning service has been engaged to take care of the multipurpose space. The gate between our unit and the mall is having some minor repair work done before programs begin to be hosted in the space. Signage is scheduled to be installed on Sept. 17 at the location. (Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations)

City Phones Migration: The timeline for the project to retire the City's existing internal phone system with Microsoft Teams has been extended by a year to expect completion by the end of 2027. ITSD and some early adopters are currently using the new system. We're not expecting the Library to migrate until spring or summer of next year. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

City Point-of-Sale Migration: The project to switch to a new payment system is moving along. The City has contracted with Paymentus, and integration development is expected to begin in October for Finance Enterprise with additional systems, including Polaris, starting shortly after. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

City HR Migration: The project to migrate employee HR information and timekeeping to WorkDay is on-track to launch initial capabilities Dec. 16, 2026. Communication from the project team to all employees was shared earlier this month, with training planned for December. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Judd