

**SAN JUAN ISLAND LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING**

Field Trip:

La Conner Regional Library,
Burlington Public Library, Anacortes Public Library
August 19, 2015

Members Present: Fred Henley, Barry Jacobson, Mark Madsen, Lynn Weber/Roochvarg

Members Absent: Glenna Hall

Staff Present: Laurie Orton

Visitors Present: None

Call to Order: Lynn Weber/Roochvarg called the meeting to order at 8:15 am.

Public Access: None

Purpose of Meeting

In support of the Board's review and evaluation of the Library's current building, the Board visited four area libraries of similar size to view facilities and discuss with the Library Directors their facilities and related issues.

La Conner Public Library (partial-county taxing district library)

Joy Neal, Library Director and Susan Macek, Director of the La Conner Library Foundation, provided historical and political background to the development, complex taxing issues, and facility challenges of the Library. Community and Library building and use data were detailed as well as plans, now delayed, for a new library building that will be double the size of the current 2,200 sq. ft. facility. Lack of floor space, seating, and public workspace dictates that even the limited number of programs must be scheduled outside of Library open hours. Ms. Neal described the activities and venue for the Thrift Shop operated by the Friends of the La Conner Public Library and the local Kiwanis Club as a fund-raising project. Ms. Macek offered details of the goals, structure, and operations of the La Conner Library Foundation and her role in development and fundraising and as a 19 hour/week Library employee.

Discussion included the Library's work with Miller-Hull, a Seattle architectural firm that was hired to do some public visioning activities and, based on the results of those activities, to develop some first-level concept plans for a new building. Prior to involving the architect, the Library had invited the public to two presentations at which the Board of Trustees and Library Director had outlined the need for a new Library facility noting the over-crowding of the current building which is severely hampering the Library's ability to provide basic, needed services to the community including, especially, youth and teens. Additional needs included

quiet spaces and space for technology. Public response was positive and supportive of planning for a new building on the site, already purchased, of the Thrift House. An unexpected and abrupt change in the property tax base has had major impact on the Library's budget, and further planning for the new building, while on-going, has slowed while issues of budget stability are addressed. The Board made a brief visit to the Thrift House before leaving La Conner.

The meeting was suspended for a break at 12:00 noon.

The meeting resumed at 1:30 pm.

Burlington Public Library (city library)

In 2007 The Burlington Public Library moved into a new 22,000 sq. ft. facility after many years in a 4,000 sq. ft. brick building across the street. Library Director Sarah Ward, who is new to the Library, and long-time employee Janet Brown offered a tour of the facility, designed by Lewis Architects of Seattle, and discussion of the planning process and financing. A strong tax base, willingness of the city to provide financing, recognition by the then Director of the need for a new Library building, and enthusiastic community support for the project were key. The property had already been purchased by the city and was partially being used for office space.

The city fully financed the \$6.7 million building, but generous contributions by many residents were evident in the abundant plaques naming donors on most special spaces (e.g. the copy center, study rooms, meeting rooms) as well as furnishings, shelving units, art, and special equipment. The building included a large meeting room that can be divided into two separate spaces, each with sink, refrigerator, and counter space, and a separate smaller meeting space. All "wish list" items at the time of building were included, but there is current desire for more staff space, more outlets in staff area, and a bigger copy center space, visibility into area behind back door, and a mechanism to summon additional staff help for public area. It was noted that there is not extensive ILL activity and little after-school influx of young users. The open space concept has been very well received by the community.

Anacortes Public Library (city library)

Rather than take an afternoon break, the Board decided to make a very brief, unscheduled stop at the Anacortes Public Library on the way back to the ferry, as most Board members had not previously visited there. The Library, 28,000 sq. ft., serves a population of just over 16,400. The building was developed between 1998 and 2003 and began with an extensive community study resulting in a 100-page report. The Library is two stories with magazines and fiction stacks as well as administrative offices on the upper level, and non-fiction, children's services and a teen area on the ground level. Just off the lobby is a meeting room as well as a large shop of used books and other items operated by the Friends of the Anacortes Public Library. Although the Board had not made an appointment, Anacortes Library staff were helpful and informative. Library Director Sheri

Miklaski graciously made time for a tour of staff spaces, acquisition and processing, and administrative areas.

Board Discussion

The Board noted the vast differences in the approach taken by the libraries to new building development, primarily because of funding sources, timing of the projects in changing economic times, and community needs and dynamics. In all libraries visited, however, certain needs and concerns were universal.

All of the Library Directors noted the need for more quiet spaces for individual work and small group study. Space and numerous outlets for using technology (both library and personal) are essential. Providing adequate staff and collection development/maintenance and ILL workspaces, all properly equipped, was a struggle in all of the libraries visited, if to different degrees. Programming and meeting spaces were important for both library and community use; most of the communities visited had few other available community spaces.

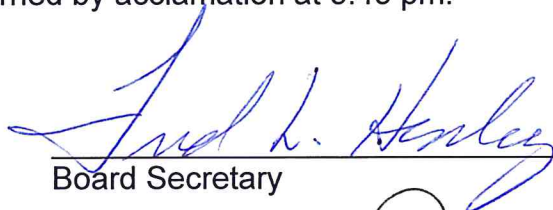
All of the librarians discussed the need for flexible spaces that could meet many, changing needs. The Board noted the impact of environmental factors such as natural light, large windows to connect to the outdoors, attractive landscaping, art features, wide aisles in stack areas, a fireplace for warm ambience, and the atmosphere and activity flow fostered by ample open spaces and absence of clutter. Careful placement of auxiliary areas such as rest rooms, Friends areas, meeting rooms for after-hours use, etc. need consideration in facilities planning as well as siting of children's services, teen areas, and seating areas. The Board appreciated all the time and information provided at each of the libraries visited.

No Board action was taken.

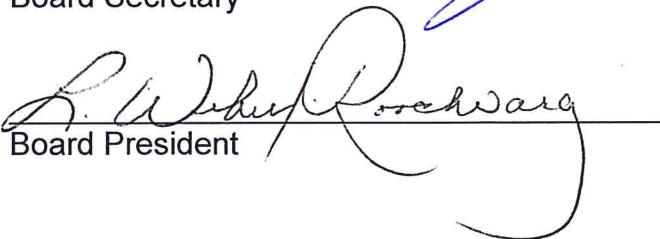
Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted:


Board Secretary

Approved:


Board President