

**Minutes**  
**Neill Public Library**  
**Public Forum**  
**“Which library services matter most?”**

**July 19, 2012**  
**Hecht Meeting Room**  
**7:00pm**

**Attendance:**

William Brock, Elizabeth Hindman, Judy Busch, Robert Rembert, Joanna Bailey, Sarah Morrison, Kathleen Ahern, Randi Adams, Rezina Emmons, James Morasch, Dana Ellis, and 22 members of the public

**Introductions:**

Joanna briefly introduced members of the board and library management team. She then encouraged the public to ask the presented members questions and to share which library services they value most. Their comments were to be limited to 3 minutes.

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson William opened the meeting at 7:06pm.

**Discussion:**

Jaime Brush asked if the board and management are sure that the library will get cut. William responded that it is almost inevitable that the library will get cut. He encouraged Jaime to attend the meeting on July 31 to share her thoughts with the council.

Barbara Petura stated that preserving open hours is more essential than purchasing materials because the library's collections are already good as they are. Children's programs also have a high priority as children clearly enjoy the library. Public computers and WiFi are vital to the community, especially for the underprivileged who could not access these resources elsewhere.

Aaron Moe spoke on behalf of Daphne, his daughter, who regularly attends the library's storytimes. He said that Kathleen is "an absolute genius". Children, and their parents and carers as their teachers, benefit from attending children's programs because they learn how to read, often in untraditional ways. The library is also a community hub. It is a focal place for families to meet. He hopes that the children's programs continue to flourish. He thanked Kathleen for her outstanding work.

Robert Zinna is a student originally from South Carolina. He stated that open hours (specifically weekends and evenings) and Internet connection are essential library services. He drew this conclusion from his personal experience. When he moved to Pullman, the library was instrumental for him to get started. He prefers going to Neill Public Library than to WSU libraries because it provides quiet study environment with personable staff and is more accessible.

Karen Aberth called herself a "ferocious reader" and said that the library is her most favorite place in the world. She has lived in many states and Neill Public Library is the best library she has ever used.

Tracy Jones has a family of four. When she first moved to Pullman, they did not have cable TV so they borrowed DVDs from the library. She thinks the following library services are the most important: public computers, children's programs, and access to wide variety of collections (including those reachable through interlibrary loans). She shared she prefers the library to have a larger print collection than an extensive DVD collection.

Dan Morrison is a former WSU student and the husband of Sarah Morrison, Adult Services Librarian. He agreed with the previous statement: Neill Public Library is the best library he has come across. Dan is a media lover and a big fan of public computers with Internet connection. He then spoke on behalf of his son, Nicholas. He would like him to have an opportunity to become an avid reader through continuing children's library services, just like he did when he was a child. He also added that staffing changes at the library have affected his life. As a result of deferred hiring at the library, his wife has to work inconsistent shifts, which affects his work schedule and ultimately their family's livelihood.

Erin Robey thinks the most important service is access to the Internet. She added it saddened her to see that the CD collection got recently significantly cut.

Karen Weathermon advocated for convenient open hours as they are most important to those who work. It does not matter how good the library's collection is if people cannot access it.

Carolyn Cress observed that Pullman has a well-educated, wealthy community, but it also has the underprivileged and single moms. For these people, Internet access and children's programs are vital. She called Neill Public Library a "jewel in our community". The library is important to the community's quality civic life and she encouraged everyone to advocate for it at the council meeting. She said that the City of Pullman can do without beautification projects but it cannot do without a library.

Zuma Lee Staba has been using the library since 1973. According to her, Neill Public Library is a lot more accessible than WSU libraries. She loves to hear children enjoying themselves every time she visits the library. She supports the following services: public computers with Internet access, WiFi, book reviews, book club kits, newspapers, and public meeting rooms. She would rather have a large collection of materials in adequate condition than a smaller collection in pristine condition. She appreciates that the library offers ESL classes and hopes it will offer computer classes to the public in the future.

Lynn Pollock put a word in for the adult collection. She would also like to see more books in the library's collection in good condition than fewer in excellent condition.

Charlotte Iiams echoed what everybody had said and agreed that this library is the best library she'd ever used and she had been using libraries since she was 4. She said she is "roadkill on the information highway" and she depends heavily on the help of the information desk. The information staff had gone well beyond what she asked them for. She also appreciates convenient open hours and coming down to the library to listen to the children when she feels down. She does not care if the library gets loud with children; she loves to see them excited to be at the library. She is also thankful for the music CDs as she cannot afford to buy them on her own.

Jayne Reiber appreciates the staff, someone who can teach her children how to ask questions about books. She also likes the library to have Internet connectivity as she lives in the country and has no Internet access. DVDs and magazines are expensive and she is glad to have access to them through the

library. She and her children also attend children's programs. She loves learning how to read literature to her children. She stated that the library is the city's core service.

Ingrid Johansen asked what else members of the public can do to raise their voice for the library. Joanna clarified that there will be two public input opportunities in council chambers on July 31 and August 14. Ingrid encouraged forum attendees to write letters to Mayor Johnson. Ingrid then shared her ideas about what the library could do to attract public attention to the library's cause and what the Friends of Neill Public Library could do to supplement its funding. She then encouraged attendees to donate via Friends of Neill Public Library.

Discussion followed about how the library's fines and fees are handled by the city.

Karen Weathermon said that every little contribution to the library makes a difference and this is another way to help the library. She called the library "a delightful place" and library services "citizens' right and necessity".

William explained that the library is 100% dependent on the General Fund. And as such the library is a particularly fragile target when budget cuts are discussed.

Robert said the reality is that we are competing with other very important services, such as fire and police. But the reason he is here advocating for the library now is because he remembers the time when he joined the library board the city was implementing budget cuts and the children's librarian's position was taken and remained unfilled for a year.

Joanna read Janet Maguire's letter (who was not able to attend the forum) in support of the library's services.

She then read a letter from Eileen Macoll (who was not able to attend the forum) in support of the library's services.

Jaime Brush first started coming to the library when she was pregnant with her daughter who is now 10. She values everything at the library: books, internet, computers, WiFi, conference rooms and the ability to make conference calls. She does not use all of the library's services but thinks all of them are valuable. She encouraged everyone to attend the council meeting and speak up for the library. She felt the only services missing at the library are programs for middle-schoolers and high-schoolers.

William summarized what he heard from the public. Neill Public Library is an amazingly used library and a tremendous resource in the city. He restated that the library is particularly vulnerable in times of budget cuts as it solely relies on the General Fund. He encouraged everyone to come to the council meeting on July 31.

**Adjournment:**

William adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.

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Chair

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Attest