
Location: Blaine Public Library, 601 – 3rd Street, Blaine WA 98230

(Note: “Library” refers to the Whatcom County Library System-WCLS.)

In Attendance

Trustees: Marvin Waschke, Chair; June Hahn, Vice Chair; Lori Jump, Board Secretary; Brad Cornwell and Erika Nuerenberg. Absent: none

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Lisa Gresham, Collection Support Manager; Thom Barthelmess, Youth Services Manager; Christina Read, Human Resources Manager; Lizz Roberts, Community Relations Coordinator; Jeanne Fondrie, Learning Coordinator; Debby Farmer, Blaine Branch Manager; Dana Klootwyk, Payroll Specialist; Darcy Riggins-Schmidt, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Paul J. Steere, Pat Jerns, Meg Olson, Sandra Bogen, Karen Bell, Cindy Leffel, Carroll Solomon

1. Call to Order

Marvin determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Open Public Comment

Carroll Solomon, President of the Friends of the Blaine Library, praised Blaine Library staff. She related an incident when an older couple came to the Blaine Visitor Information Center and raved about the excellent service they received at the Blaine Library.

Sandra Bogen, longtime Friend of the Blaine Library, reported on Friends fundraising efforts to raise money to update or replace the Blaine Library. They’ve held two concerts by ragtime pianist Bob Milne that earned over \$5,000. The Friends received an anonymous donation for \$10,000 and issued a successful challenge to match the grant. The Friends have issued a second challenge for an additional \$10,000 which has been partially reached and is expected to be fully met.

Meg Olson, a new member of the Blaine City Council and the new Council liaison to the library, introduced herself.

Paul Steere, a long-term library administrator who recently moved here from Seattle, came to observe the Board meeting today.

3. Tour of the Blaine Library and Building Project Update – Debby Farmer

Debby presented Blaine Library’s year in review, which was featured in this month’s (January 11-17, 2018) *The Northern Light* local publication.

Highlights particular to the Blaine Library included:

- Special story times offered on a WTA bus, with a SSC recycling truck, and with a John Deere tractor from Washington Tractors.

- Blaine staff continued to host monthly book groups and initiated new discussion groups in the community.
- An eighth public computer has been added to ease increasing demand for internet access and printing at the Blaine Library.
- Blaine Library issued goodbyes to several longtime staff members in 2017.
- The Friends of the Library continued strong with fundraisers, including a repeat concert by Bob Milne. Energized by anonymous donation of \$10,000, followed by two year-end matching gift challenges totaling close to \$20,000 more.

Christine expressed interest in hearing about the City of Blaine’s plans for capital projects. She asked Meg if she had any updates.

Meg said she’s still getting up to speed, but her understanding at this point is that library capital improvements aren’t in the budget. The Council knows that it is a pressing issue and there may be an addition down the line.

Debby said that the City of Blaine finalized reports based on the community survey and there was strong support for expanding the library. The City owns the property and it is a desirable location to be in the downtown core. Debby is encouraged that the project has a base of support with the Friends of the Library. She notes this is Blaine Library’s 30th anniversary at its current location. The building was converted from a public works garage.

Debby provided a tour of the premises. She discussed staff’s attention to diversity issues. Staff provide baskets for kids to easily return books in the children’s section. Staff work to maximize every inch of usable space but not block doors. The magazine racks are very popular. She noted the Library Hero shirts and buttons for sale, courtesy of the Friends of the Blaine Library.

Debby is the only full-time employee at the Blaine; she shares her office with the Friends of the Library as well as other staff, which can be challenging. The staff work area is also where deliveries are received. The staff breakroom is very small and only accommodates one person at a time. The staff bathroom is a converted closet.

The Teen section features booths salvaged from a Seattle restaurant that closed. Teens love it and so do adults.

The Friends and the City helped pay to add air conditioning to the building.

Follow up discussion after tour:

- Christine commented that part of the work that the City’s consulting firm did was conduct a massing study to see how big of an expansion could be accommodated on the current library site. They looked at other options, including renovating the old Fire Hall/City Hall to possibly include a library in that building along with public arts space.
- Christine said the benefit of that model is to have the library stay put during the renovation of the adjacent building. These options have been floated about but are not anything firm, just proposals. Both options would provide more space for library services.
- Marvin noted that compared to Lynden or Ferndale, the density of books on the shelves seems much higher in Blaine. He asked what WCLS’s currently philosophy is on this.
- Christine said we try to balance our collections; if the shelf is too full and people can’t pull a book out easily, they don’t. People don’t linger if shelves are too tight.
- Debby said we’ve also been mindful of mobility issues, so we try not to use the tallest shelves. We use the top and bottom shelves for face-out display, or for oversize books that can’t fit elsewhere. However in smaller libraries like Blaine we resort to packing things onto shelves to make sure there is enough space for people to be in the library not just to house library materials.

- Lisa acknowledged that staff are working to address limitations of the space, but the Blaine Library is highly used and requires a robust collection. Ideally we will continue to grow the collection by having more of it checked out. Staff regularly train people to use the catalog to put items on hold. Once auto renewals started, we gained some breathing room as more items are staying longer at people's homes.
- Marvin commented that people space is expensive, warehouse space is cheap. WCLS needs to offer both.

4a. Staff & Committee Reports: Executive Director

Christine supplemented her written report with the following:

- Christine invited trustees to participate in an online presentation by the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries: Re-Envisioning Your Library through Community Engagement on Thursday, April 12, 2018 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Ferndale Library.
- She reviewed a recent meeting with the Lummi Nation at the Birch Bay Library property. We are learning what it means to work thoughtfully and respectfully on traditionally native land.
- Christine mentioned the Friends of the Birch Bay Library Development Committee's fundraising plans, which may include named gift opportunities similar to what was done at the Burlington Public Library (e.g. the Rotary Community Meeting Room, or First Federal Bank Reading Area).
- The elimination of net neutrality protections is potentially a big issue for citizens in Whatcom County. It remains to be seen how much and how quickly it will affect us here. Libraries around the country are monitoring the issue very closely. There may be opportunities for libraries. Libraries may be the place everyone goes for unfettered access to Wi-Fi.
- Christine explained that the Early Learning Public Library Partnership (ELPLP) has run its course and is transitioning to a new organization: Public Libraries of Washington (PLOW). Our attorney Dan Gottlieb reviewed the paperwork to make sure it's legal and proper. It's important to ensure that we have good advocacy at the state level.

4b. Staff & Committee Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael highlighted the following:

- We've been hosting themed reading lists on our website since March, using our website for content marketing and it's been working.
- People can click through each list to place holds on the recommended titles. Based on our data, people who access the lists via our social media posts end up placing more holds.
- Ann McAllen, Adult Programming Coordinator, received a First Friends Award from the Whatcom Literacy Council. Christine noted that people with low literacy might also have issues with transportation or busy work schedules so having the ability to learn with a literacy tutor close to home at a WCLS library is invaluable.

Marvin asked Debby if literacy classes take place in the Blaine meeting room. Debby responded yes, and Christine noted that because the Blaine Library lacks small meeting rooms, the entire meeting room is occupied even if only one tutor and student are using it.

Michael gave an update about the Ask-WA – online reference service. Currently WCLS's obligation is to provide staff for three hours weekly. The public can ask questions 24 hours a day, which are answered by a network of people, not just WCLS staff. We are considering allocating more staff support so we can promote and grow the use of the service in Whatcom County.

4c. Staff & Committee Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom expanded upon his written report with a more thorough explanation of the CORE picture book project, our attempt at ensuring that key children's titles are available in every community in Whatcom County.

He gave an update about the Youth Services staff retreat. Staff looked at how WCLS serves children throughout their lifetime, at each branch and as a system.

Marvin noticed that Bellingham Public Library is adopting ConnectED in the Bellingham public schools. Thom credited Carmi Parker for her expertise advising Bellingham on how to handle the data transfer from schools to our library database.

4d. Staff & Committee Reports: Services Committee and Performance Measures

Michael pointed out that WCLS checked out more than 2 million items in 2017, a new record! Some of this success is due to the Courtesy Renewal Program.

Marvin asked about the possibility of a fine amnesty program. Michael said we have discussed this in the past and he will revisit the idea.

4e. Staff & Committee Reports: Community Relations Coordinator & Committee

Lizz reminded the Board about Sunil Yapa's visit to Whatcom County March 8, 9, and 10 for the Whatcom READS program.

Lizz reviewed plans to distribute 100 monthly WTA bus passes to library users. It's meant to show first time riders what it's like to travel regularly on the bus.

Red Rokk is helping us establish another community partnership, possibly with the Port of Bellingham.

The Community Relations Committee has finalized the 2018 Community Relations action plan. Lizz thanked the committee members for their input.

Lori asked for details about author Naomi Shihab Nye's visit in April. Thom said the Arbuthnot Lecture featuring Nye will be April 28; tickets are free but registration is requested. He will send trustees details when they're available.

4f. Staff & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

Brad introduced Paul Steere, who recently moved to Whatcom County and applied to serve on the library board. Marvin Waschke also applied to serve a second term. The Personnel Committee received a third application, from another new resident. Both new applicants have been encouraged to take a look at the Whatcom County Library Foundation and opportunities to engage there. Brad is encouraged that highly qualified people are interested in working with WCLS.

4g. Staff & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Brad reported that WCLF met Thursday. The group is starting to plan for the annual Branch Out fundraising event. It will be held at the Shuksan Golf Club on April 20. Brad encouraged all Trustees to attend.

The Foundation Board reviewed two initial WCLS applications for grants. The first request is for \$7,500 to honor and recognize WCLS's 75th anniversary in 2019. A planning committee is forming soon.

Christine presented a second request for \$2,500 staff innovation and opportunity fund for ideas that staff come up with that are not budgeted. Foundation members would like more details about how this grant would function and/or a more specific grant request.

These requests are in addition to ongoing Foundation projects supported annually: Books for Babies, Books Unbound program for teens, the Whatcom READS program, and a few other smaller projects.

Christine proposed that the Foundation consider a bigger project as a way of energizing donors and soliciting corporate support.

Thanks to Thom and crew for coming up with idea of Story Port, (as in Story Transport) where we'd have a special vehicle targeted at youth services that we could drive around and conduct story times, puppet shows, etc. with music coming out the back. It would be wrapped in blue and branded like our other vehicles. It would clearly let children know the library is here and that the library offers something very exciting.

Brad said Foundation members might think about grant opportunities or corporate sponsorships to fund the Story Port project. This idea is a step up for the Foundation and will help WCLF build momentum for even bigger goals.

Marvin asked about the program for Branch Out. Brad said it will be similar to the recent past, with Lightning Book talks, for a fun and festive atmosphere. Christine said feedback has been that people prefer lightning talks to longer speakers.

5. Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the December 19, 2017 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following expenditures:

General Fund:

- -December 1 - 15, 2017 Payroll: Nos. 1013777881 - 1013777894, (Voucher Nos. 534668 - 534817) Totaling \$174,712.95 and December 16-31, 2017 Payroll: Nos. 1013933472 - 1013933485, (Voucher Nos. 534823 - 534969) Totaling \$165,521.25
- -Claims 2017-34 G: Nos. 1045470-1045497 Totaling \$71,767.67
- -Claims 2017-35 G: Nos. 1047229-1047314 Totaling \$227,863.74
- -Claims 2017-36 G: Nos. 1048605-1048636 Totaling \$39,432.68

Capital Fund:

- -Claims 2017-25 C: No. 1045498 Totaling \$1,733.76
- -Claims 2017-25 C: Nos. 1047228 Totaling \$11,096.44
- -Claims 2017-25 C: No. 1048637 Totaling \$4,949.24

Management Leave Carry Forward:

- According to the Management Benefits and Leave Policy, accrued vacation leave in excess of 240 hours cannot be carried forward without prior approval from the Board of Trustees.
- The following vacation balances in excess of the carryover maximum are approved by the Board of Trustees for carryover and use in 2018:
- Gresham, Lisa – 1.25 hours vacation leave

- Perkins, Christine - 7.72 hours vacation leave

2017 Incident Report Summary:

- Damage/Theft of Patron Property on WCLS Premises: 1 incident at Everson
- Damage/Theft of WCLS Property: 2 incidents at Everson, 1 incident at Deming, 1 incident at Blaine, 2 incidents at Glenhaven Bookmobile site
- Disruptive Behavior: 1 incident at Blaine, 1 incident at Ferndale
- Graffiti: 0 incidents
- Harassment/Threat to Patron: 1 incident at Everson
- Harassment/Threat to Staff: 0 incidents
- Minor Left After Closing or Unattended: 0 incidents
- Patron Incident/Illness/Injury on WCLS Premises: 2 incidents at Lynden, 1 incident at Blaine, 1 incident at Ferndale
- Suspicious Activity/Object: 1 incident at Ferndale
- Other: 2 incidents at Blaine, 1 incident at Lynden, 1 incident at Deming

June asked why the incident report was part of consent agenda, and asked if there was anything in the incident reports that trustees should be aware of. Jackie said the incidents were fairly minor and reviewed by the Safety Committee.

Marvin noted that the Board of Trustees made a recent decision to put more on the Consent Agenda; he encouraged all trustees to carefully read the Consent Agenda in advance and ask to pull any items off the Consent Agenda if they had questions.

Brad moved to approve consent agenda as presented. Seconded; approved.

6. BREAK taken 10:35 – 10:42 a.m.

7. Financial Report and Resolutions

In addition to Jackie's written report she shared the following:

- The 2017 budget is not closed out yet; Jackie will report it at the February board meeting. We received notice from Whatcom County that our total levy would be \$50k more than budgeted. Then last week the County retracted \$8,000 of that because of a significant property appeal. We are still \$42K ahead of budgeted revenue.
- We wrapped up one more capital project, purchasing a hydraulic paper cutter. The project came in under budget, with a final cost \$6,700.

Resolution 01/16/18-01 Adjustment for Proficiency Increases for 2018

- Proficiency Increases policy calls for proficiency increases of 3% or 1%. This year the Board agreed to move positions to market value or provide a 1% increase, whichever is greater, in lieu of proficiency increases.
- Christine explained that the Board adopted this change for bargaining unit members but neglected to say it carries through for everyone.
- Christina confirmed that this adjustment was accounted for in the 2018 budget but it was not spelled out that it applied for all staff. We are presenting it here to make sure it's clear for housekeeping purposes.

Erika moved to approve Resolution 01/16/18-01 Adjustment for Proficiency increases for 2018 – Seconded; approved.

Marvin noted: This was a unanimous vote of four trustees. Lori stepped out for phone call and did not vote.

8. Memorandum of Understanding between WCLS and AFSCME Local 1581 regarding revisions to the current bargaining agreement for Washington State Paid Sick Leave Law and Job Audit Process

- Christine and Christina met with Union President Dianne Marrs-Smith and Dean Tharp, Union Representative. Dean announced he is retiring and AFSCME is seeking his replacement. We realized, with Washington State's new sick leave law, a few clarifications need to be made so we drafted this MOU. Our union contract reopens in the fall but need to make sure things are clear now. We worked out an updated process for assigning new positions to pay levels and evaluating existing positions to make sure they are in correct pay level. We documented the process and got approval from the union.
- Christina explained that Washington State paid sick leave law requires that paid sick leave hours accrue on all hours worked. Our current contract allows a maximum accrual of 960 hours and one-time payout of 8 hours each year the maximum is reached. This payout may seem to be discouraging use of sick leave, which is contrary to the intent of the law, so we need to discontinue this practice. The State requires a minimum of 40 hours of sick leave carryover over so our policy greatly exceeds that.
- June asked about financial implications of this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Christina replied it reduces liability for the 8 hours of sick leave payout. Currently we have 5 people eligible. On the other hand, if someone begins of year with 960 hours, they can continue to accrue up to 96 more over the year. If they take a huge leave at the end of the year, they could possibly be on leave more than 960 hours. This scenario is unlikely but not impossible.
- Lori asked about donating sick leave to other people.
- Christina explained that staff members can only donate sick leave if there is an active request. We don't allow donations to a shared pool, except at the end of employment. In that case, separating employees may choose to donate up to 10% of their sick leave to a shared pool.
- Brad asked if the 960 hours maximum has been consistent over the years. Christina confirmed that 960 hours has been the maximum since at least 2005; it represents 10 years of accrual with no use of sick leave.

Lori moved to approve the Union Memorandum of Understanding for compliance with Washington State Paid Sick Leave Law – Seconded; approved.

9. Policy Updates

Jail Services Policy 4.10

- Jail Services – Whatcom County pays WCLS \$8,000 per year to provide library services to inmates. We never had a policy formalizing this commitment. We found a draft policy from 1996 but no record of it being adopted, so we are doing that now.
- Erika asked what entity assumes risk if something happened to employee while at the jail. Christina responded that our employees are covered under L&I.
- Jackie asked if we should say "WCLS MAY provide staff" so we are not locked in if someone gets ill?
- Trustees discussed how to keep the policy general to allow maximum flexibility.
- Lori expressed interest in maintaining Jail Service in the future and Marvin concurred.
- Trustees reworded the policy to read:
"WCLS will provide library services to the people at the Whatcom County jail as per the library services annual contract with the Whatcom County Jail."

Marvin moved to approve the Jail Services Policy as amended. Seconded; approved.

10a. 2017 Project Evaluation – Book Club Kits - Lisa

Lisa presented her written report and referenced the new [Book Club Picks](#) page on the WCLS website at the bottom of 'Books and More' tab.

Lori suggested that we ask Red Rokk to promote the Book Club Picks page.

June said she's in a book club, and although her club picks titles at the beginning of the year they have difficulty getting copies from the library. We brainstormed ways to use the Suspend Holds feature to secure book club books when needed and agreed to work with staff to teach the public how to do this.

Lisa shared copies of new book club books for trustees to review.

10b. 2017 Project Evaluation – Northwest Drive Library Express - Michael

In addition to Michael's written project evaluation he shared the following:

- The Library Express sign on Northwest Drive has caught peoples' interest.
- Michael is planning on doing a deeper analysis in the next few months after the Library Express has been open for one year. He will look at data by month to see how long it has taken people to discover it.
- We sent a direct mail piece to people in the area to let them know about Library Express.
- It has been helpful to test out the technology and know that it will work for our next implementation in Point Roberts.
- We have not experienced any issues with people misusing the Library Express space – sleeping there overnight or stealing materials. This may be because of the remote location.

Marvin noted that he uses the Northwest Library Express all the time but has mixed feelings about it. It's very convenient for holds pickup but he likes seeing people at the Ferndale Library. He thought Library Express might be a replacement for the bookmobile but no longer believes it is, nor is it a replacement for a branch.

Michael commented that we are refining our expectations for Library Express service, and we now see it as a way to provide additional access to holds and a small browsing collection at our branches that are only open a limited number of hours per week.

Lori asked if people can enter the Library Express without their library card if they know their card number. Lizz and Michael confirmed that yes, one can enter their card number using the keypad.

10c1. 2017 Project Evaluation – Emerging Leader Program - Jeanne

Jeanne discussed the Emerging Leader Program (ELP), now in its second iteration. The first cohort had 20 applicants and 8 were chosen to participate. Staff gather monthly and listen to guest speakers who cover a variety of library-related topics. Half of the first cohort were promoted or took on new responsibilities.

Lori asked how staff are chosen for ELP and what we are looking for. Jeanne said we selected people with leadership potential, who have shown curiosity and had gotten themselves involved in WCLS projects. They have to have worked for WCLS for at least a year. To date, all except one (who moved out-of-state) are still employed by WCLS.

Lori encouraged Jeanne to consider ways to encourage and support the staff members who were not selected to participate in ELP.

Marvin asked about opportunities for mentoring, and Christina explained that ELP participants were encouraged to identify and secure their own mentors as a way of taking ownership of their career development.

Erika discussed a similar program that the Whatcom County Health Department has developed.

10c. 2017 Project Evaluation – All Staff Learning Day - Jeanne

Jeanne reviewed the evaluation of All Staff Learning Day. She thanked Lori and Marv for attending this year. We are tentatively planning to hold this year's event on October 5, 2018.

10d. 2017 Project Evaluation – New Paper Cutter - Lizz

When presenting her written evaluation, Lizz noted that because the old paper cutter lacks modern safety features, we will not be selling it. Instead, we will follow our procedures to surplus it.

10e. 2017 Project Evaluation – Birch Bay Feasibility Study and Purchase of Vogt Property - Christine

Christine reviewed the written project evaluation with the Board. Marvin thanked her for getting all the details documented.

11. Announcements and Adjourn

The next meeting will be held on February 20, 2018 at WCLS Administrative Services, 9:00 a.m.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

Signed by Lori Jump
Lori Jump, Secretary

2/20/18
Date

Signed by Darcy Riggins-Schmidt
Darcy Riggins-Schmidt,
Administrative Assistant