



APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

May 21, 2019

Location

North Fork Community Library, 7506 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266

In Attendance

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

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Alexa Andrews, Manager North Fork Community Library; Dana Klootwyk, Payroll Specialist; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director

Guests: Wayne Land, Maple Falls resident; Dianne Marrs-Smith, President Friends of Birch Bay Library; Keith Alesse, Vice-President FOBBL; and Brian Bell, Chair FOBBL; Terry Brown, Principal and Kelsey Gates, Associate AIA Zervas Group; Peter Young, Chair Whatcom County Library Foundation

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

North Fork Community Library Update

Alexa gave a tour of the North Fork Library, which was constructed in 2011. Recent updates to furniture, shelving, and LED lighting have enhanced the space for patrons and staff. Upcoming summer projects include redesign of the front desk, teen space, and DVD shelving. Exterior paint, outdoor security lighting, and some landscaping refinements are planned for outdoors.

Staff & Committee Reports: Executive Director

Christine's report includes an article about communities' persistent love of bookmobiles, and WCLS is excited about our new Bookmobile scheduled to arrive June 1.

A May 10 KGMI Radio Podcast featured an interview with Christine about the State Legislature's budgeted \$2 million for the Birch Bay Vogt Community Library.

Three cheers to Jenn Rick and WCLF for the most successful Branch Out fundraiser yet, in which 210 attendees raised a net \$27,000.

A connection between a Youth Services staff member and Bellingham Arts Academy for Youth (BAAY) employee led to a free ad in a recent playbill to promote Books for Babies, WCLS' cooperative effort with BPL and WCLF. Non-profits work together for good!

Staff & Committee Reports: Deputy Director

Michael drew attention to anecdotes of WCLS employees' meaningful and measurable support of patron life goals, including certifications in GED and Commercial Driver's License.

Discussion is scheduled for later in the meeting regarding Zervas Architects' report for the planned Birch Bay Vogt Library. The full scope of work was approved by Birch Bay Library Design Committee in May 2018.

WCLS provided an American Sign Language interpreter so a deaf patron could participate in a Self Defense for Women course at the library.

The Friends of South Whatcom Library gained 103 new members in 100 days; prize-drawings created ongoing buzz and kept conversation going in the community.

Staff & Committee Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom was absent, so Christine referred to his written report, highlighting the importance of children seeing themselves mirrored in diverse literature.

Staff & Committee Reports: Services Committee and Performance Measures

Michael explained that while YTD circulation was down in January and February, we are seeing recovery by the end of April, especially at Everson and Island libraries. Jackie suggested that the staffing transition at Island has had an impact on that hyper-local community. Point Roberts circulation is up, due to the use of the Library Express vestibule.

Circulation data does not appear to be co-related to door count statistics at Point Roberts. Marvin asked if Library Express pickups are included in door count; Michael said no. Lori asked if we know who is using the Northwest Library Express (NDX); Christine and Michael will follow up with an analysis at a future meeting. The Polaris ILS enables us to differentiate between CS staff and NDX patrons, whereas Horizon did not. Marvin observed that NDX must have an impact upon BPL circulation and wondered how many people now choose it over BPL locations. Lori asked about marketing NDX to families who use the Northwest Soccer Park. Christine mentioned that a few years ago we paid to sponsor a field sign at Northwest Soccer Park and now that NDX is open we may wish to update the field sign design with more specific language about NDX.

Erika left the meeting at 9:29 a.m.

Staff & Committee Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary called attention to press clippings on the table. The May 15 *Ferndale Record* included a front page banner: "Friends of the Ferndale Library Support Library Programs," directing readers to the Encore insert. The *Cascadia Weekly Kids Summer Guide 2019* includes an article on Summer Reading by Thom Barthelmiss.

Five different radio ads featuring library patron stories have begun. The first was played on PRAISE KWPZ 106.5 FM for two weeks. After a break, a different ad will play on 790 KGMI, followed by a new ad on Spotify. The spots encourage people to get library cards. Red Rokk has a goal of 7,500 new cardholders during our 75th Anniversary year.

Spring Explorations is published and the summer edition (June through August) is on deck.

Staff & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

There was no report from the Personnel Committee.

Staff & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Marvin reported that the May WCLF meeting was cancelled. Christine mentioned that Jenn Rick and Peter Young are scheduled to attend the latter part of this meeting to begin discussions on developing synergy between WCLF, WCLS, and our Friends groups.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the April 16, 2019 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following expenditures:

General Fund:

- April 1 - 15, 2019 Payroll: Nos. 1018724452 - 1018724461, (Voucher Nos. 539731 - 539878) Totaling \$188,495.80 and April 16-30, 2019 Payroll: Nos. 1018917644 - 1018917655, (Voucher Nos. 539883-540032) Totaling \$200,560.09
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$162,666.99; \$35,646.76 of this is for employee funded contributions to health insurance premiums, health savings accounts, PERS, and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction)
- Claims 2019-09G: Warrant Nos. 1080651-1080652 Totaling \$21,817.82
- Claims 2019-10G: Warrant Nos. 1080981-1081012 Totaling \$110,733.48
- Claims 2019-11G: Warrant Nos. 1081881-1081921 Totaling \$104,469.62
- Claims 2019-12G: Warrant Nos. 1082269-1082277 Totaling \$20,495.25

Capital Fund:

- Claims 2019-06C: Warrant Nos. 1081013-1081014 Totaling \$51,280.68
- Claims 2019-07C: Warrant No. 1081922 Totaling \$3,672.98

Claims 2019-08C: Warrant Nos. 1082267-1082268 Totaling \$722.73

Marvin moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented; Brad seconded. It passed unanimously.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

- Jackie reviewed the Finance Committee reports. April marks the first half of the year's tax collections. April 30 showed less than expected, but as of May 14 revenues had jumped up to 52% of budgeted. WCLS is on track to receive full levy for this year.
- In our financial accounts with Whatcom County, Jackie keeps minimum funds in the operating account and maximum in the investment account, which combined with positive investment returns results in an increase in investment revenue over what was budgeted. With 33% of the year complete, we are at 41.65% of operating revenue.
- Expenditures in personnel are 2% below targeted. Professional Services expenses include payment to Innovative Interfaces, Inc. for Polaris. Overall operating expenses are tracking at about 29% of budgeted.
- The Fund Balance Detail shows that last month's dip into cash flow reserves has been replenished and then some. Committed funds are at \$8.9 million, and unassigned funds at \$2.1 million, for a total of just over \$11 million, from which we will draw down until October tax receipts.
- Jackie, Carol Oberton (WCLS Facilities Planning Coordinator), Stephen Falk (Point Roberts Park and Recreation District Representative), and architect David King participated in the 1-year inspection of the Point Roberts Library. The main issues have been satisfactorily fixed, and remaining minor matters are in process. David King is requesting an extension to ensure that warranties start from the time of repair.
- Retrofit upgrades to LED lighting in several WCLS-operated facilities are keeping fluorescents out of landfills and making spaces brighter. An \$8,000 expenditure results in an immediate \$1,500 rebate from Puget Sound Energy, with a cost recoupment of the remaining \$6,500 within 5 years. Deming and Everson Libraries are next on the schedule. Christine pointed out that this level of attention to detail to energy efficiency brings value to the public and building owners.

- No resolutions at this meeting

Strategic Action Plan Update

Christine reviewed the Strategic Action Plan noting completed, current, and future projects.

Completed: In the middle of quarter two, the Strategic Action Plan shows lots of checkmarks on significant activities. Completed major projects include Whatcom READS, Forest of Words, spring and summer *Explorations*, Branch Out, the first annual Library Giving Day, hiring of an additional Collection Development Librarian, a successful Teen Internship program, moving WCLS.org to a new platform, and migration to Polaris.

In Progress: Facilities Management Coordinator Mark Barrett is installing new book returns at schools, most recently at Lynden High School. Each additional book return impels reworking of the distribution delivery schedule, but WCLS is expanding service to the community at large and increasing our visibility.

Marvin asked for an update on the progress of signing up school districts with ConnectED. Christine responded that the Blaine School District's contract has stalled due lack of consensus on the opt-in/out mechanism. Lynden School District is on board and transferring data. Meridian School District is still working on their strategic goals and has not been formally approached. Lynden Christian Schools is still considering. Lori asked about expanding ConnectED beyond schools, such as Boys & Girls Clubs. Christine stated that all children enrolled in a school district should be covered, but WCLS could be more overt in reminding kids about their ConnectED privileges during Clubs programs. Christine will follow up with Youth Services. Lori suggested placing holds pickup and book returns at Boys & Girls Club locations which are currently in Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, and Kendall. Brad suggested that the Waldorf school would be a good candidate for ConnectED; Christine will mention this to Youth Services staff.

While the Polaris migration is mostly complete, certain key staff experience ongoing tasks.

Seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations are ongoing. Each week a new "Books That Suit You" recommendation is revealed. Excitement is growing about author Leif Whittaker's fall visits.

Collection Services staff are beta-testing a personalized reading subscription service to inspire, excite, and refresh reading. Lori asked how staff will gauge the cost-benefit ratio of staff time and energy over against the number of patrons served, and how results will be measured. Alexa and Mary spoke to sustainability and explained that the planners are mindful of time and learning from other libraries. Michael added that this program will roll out next year. Marvin offered assistance to the team regarding how to streamline workflows. Brad inquired about the length of time will be allotted to measure success. Christine responded that the plan is to continue for a year, with quarterly updates to the Board of Trustees.

Michael gave an update on the [new bookmobile](#), which has been painted and is currently in Lynden undergoing casework installation. At least 5 different county businesses have contributed to the project, and WCLS is expecting delivery on schedule. Training for key staff operational processes begins later this week. Ribbon cuttings at all four Bookmobile stops are scheduled, but prior to that Mobile Services staff will complete dress rehearsals to test turning and leveling.

As the contract with Tech Logic expires at the end of June, Geoff, Michael, and Public Services staff have been evaluating self-checkout options. The team is looking at demos from other vendors, as well as a new Tech Logic product, and currently favoring a reasonably-priced product that will allow for emailed receipts, payment of fines and fees, placement of holds, renewal of materials, and the ability to advertise other library apps, such as Libby.

Future: Christine reported that management is preparing to begin the Facilities Assessment in the second half of the year. Brad asked if the assessment will include interface with owners of facilities with which we share

systems outside of our control. Christine noted that as the occupant WCLS wants to work with building owners to facilitate ongoing maintenance. Lori asked if WCLS can buy a warranty to cover maintenance and repair on commercial buildings. Brad responded that he has not seen this in a commercial application; generally maintenance and repair are done by a service vendor. Jackie agreed to research the option. Lori stated the importance of planning effectively for ongoing maintenance as WCLS moves in the direction of more building ownership.

Marvin commented that WCLS is doing very well and encouraged staff to keep it up.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:10-10:30 a.m. During the break Terry Brown, Kelsey Gates, Dianne Marrs-Smith, Keith Alesse, Brian Bell, Jenn Rick, and Peter Young joined the meeting.

Birch Bay Library Design Committee Final Report

Michael introduced Terry Brown and Kelsey Gates from Zervas Group Architects. He reviewed the process of the Birch Bay Library Design Committee that led to the contract with Zervas for the plan. Keys to success were, and will continue to be, building community support, generating public interest, and maintaining donor-follow through. Four community input sessions at various locations allowed stakeholders to share dreams and ideas and determine space allocations for various purposes. From this, Zervas Group created four different designs which incorporated the original Vogt house. After extensive consideration, consensus was reached that assimilating the 1912 structure into the new library would hamper goals including unobstructed views, efficiency, accessibility, flexibility, security, and affordability.

From there, Zervas staff went back to drawing board, re-envisioning the new library by building new from ground up but incorporating the beloved and iconic elements of the old structure, and ultimately elevating the historicity of the Vogt home. Christine added that the design has been featured in an article in the *Northern Light* newspaper, and the incorporation of the look and feel of the old structure leads many people to assume that it is being retained. The article was very clear to point out that the proposed structure will be new and will not use the existing structure.

Zervas collected survey responses from the public throughout the design process. People expressed desired features and amenities, and the community agreed that while it is important for the facility to *look* like the existing house, it is not essential that it *be* the existing house. Sixteen different spaces emerged; which formed the basis of the floor plan. As the design continues, evolving details will be added. Continuous evaluation will ensure we're hitting the target.

Lori asked about the demographics of the survey respondents and if the feedback is representative of the people who will actually use the library, or merely the people who have the time to give feedback. Michael responded that most of the participants live in Birch Bay year-round and approximately 20% were under 30.

Specific details about mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems are not included in this early-stage plan. When we get to that point, we can specify bid alternates. Sustainable design assessment will follow LEED Silver scorecard recommendations.

The estimated cost to build is about \$3.9 million. Approximately \$700,000 has already been spent on acquiring property, title charges, taxes and fees, and architect billing. The total goal for the project is \$4.7 million. Michael thanked Zervas Group for donating a portion of their design services in-kind, and for going above and beyond with street view renderings, and the amazing fly-through animation.

Christine noted that the original total estimate of \$3.5 million has escalated to \$4.7 million through 2021. Fund-raising must be complete before then, or the target will move. The \$4.7 million does include permanent finishes within the structure (floor coverings, drywall, paint, etc.), sales tax, contingency, permitting, design fees, and other soft costs, but does not include WCLS portion of furniture, fixtures, and equipment. The difference between the original and revised estimates are due to three factors:

1. The proposed size of the facility grew, a result of the intensive community meeting process to incorporate stated needs. The larger size is in keeping with projected population forecasts and target square footage per capita.
2. Land use regulatory aspects and a change in FEMA rules and flood plain datum as a result of the Solstice Storm Surge added some level of cost. This information came late into the process, and was new to everyone.
 - a. Birch Bay Drive is a man-made structure, which blocks the beach ecosystem from extending onto Library property. This effective disconnect will allow moving the planned structure closer to the road, which meets many design and efficiency goals. However, the effective disconnect requires study and documentation by a biologist, which is an unforeseen cost.
3. More site preparation in response to current land use regulations and the storm surge.
 - a. Because of the archeological significance of site, excavation is not an option, so the plan was to bring in fill. Observations of the recent storm surge dictate more fill than originally planned.
 - b. Christine asked how stability of the fill is ensured against a future surge. Terry responded that landscape design and organic matter stabilizes the fill and keeps it intact. Brad described armoring edges to protect lower surrounding properties. Terry added that the parking lot and drive-through loop serve as a hard surface, which is a benefit. Lori asked how we ensure that our building up does not adversely affect the surrounding neighbors. Terry responded that civil engineering is included in the budget to ameliorate displacement impact.

Lori asked about changing land use regulations. Terry explained that new construction permits grandfather a project into the regulations at the time the permit is issued. Permits generally are good for a year, and can receive extensions, but not indefinitely. Land use application can be done without full architectural drawings, but we must obtain certification from a biologist documenting the effective disconnect.

Brad asked about the status of the trailers to the rear of the property. WCLS has proposed to the Vogts, through their legal counsel, that WCLS issue a revocable license for the property on which the trailer straddling the property line sits. This license would be in effect until the trailer park property changes hands or library construction begins. Christine also reviewed the terms of the easement agreement with the Vogt family regarding the outbuilding in the southeast corner of the property; this easement also ends if the trailer park property is sold. Electrical meters for the trailer park have been removed from the pole building on our property. Brad complimented WCLS management's due diligence.

Lori inquired whether there are items easily deducted if costs escalate. Terry explained that given the complexities of the project, a phasing plan is not feasible. Christine reminded the group that cutting features may not be wise in the long run. Multiplying 20-year population projections by the system formula of 0.75 SF per capita indicates Birch Bay could need a 9,000 s.f. building, whereas the site can only accommodate up to a 7700 s.f. facility.

Marvin proposed that the Board of Trustees pass a resolution to congratulate the design committee on good work done, and affirm that we want to continue with this project. Lori said she would like to see a contingency cut list with options. Brad acknowledged that this a great design and the community is happy with it, and asked Marvin to clarify that the Board is not making a financial commitment to the design, but wants to recognize that effective progress has been made to the degree that we want to continue.

Marvin proposed the following resolution: **The board resolves to continue with the Birch Bay Library project based on the final report of the design committee.** By passing this resolution, the Board is stating that is what they want to do, while recognizing that there is much yet to do.

Marvin moved to accept the resolution as presented; Brad seconded. It passed unanimously.

Birch Bay Support Discussion

Christine reviewed that Washington State's biennial Capital Budget included a \$2 million appropriation to WCLS for the Birch Bay Vogt Community Library. With total costs estimated at \$4.7 million, WCLS now needs to raise the remaining amount necessary to complete the project.

Application for the state appropriation, while helped by the support of WCLS, was mainly driven by the Birch Bay community members. Christine especially recognized the efforts of Ted Morris. She also stated the importance of stewarding these funds for maximum impact, ensuring that representatives Van Werven and Shewmake are proud to have supported the grant, and that WCLS is likely to be favorably considered for future support.

Friends are already working on fundraising and have received a \$100,000 donation from BP Cherry Point Refinery as well as \$20,000 from private donors. Many fundraisers are planned, but it is acknowledged to reach the \$2.7 million goal, we will need to identify donors who will make sizable gifts. June asked about the availability of federal funds; Christine responded that LSTA funding generally goes for programmatic rather than capital projects.

Christine cast a vision of ideal outcomes.

- Raise \$2.7 million by December 2020
- Ensure that the northwest county residents are fully aware that the Blaine Library project is coming right behind the Birch Bay project, and how the two fit together
- Build relationships with donors and community that set WCLS up for success with the Blaine Library and other future projects
- State Legislature is pleased about the way state funds have been utilized and is willing to award future funds to WCLS capital projects.

Friends of the Birch Bay Library are working on applying for a county economic development initiative (EDI) grant. Thanks to Doralee Booth for her work on this.

Christine introduced Foundation Development Director, Jenn Rick, whose experience includes several multi-million dollar capital campaigns. Recently Jenn has met with Friends groups to discuss strategies for high-level fundraising.

As WCLS moves into a season of major projects and property ownership, Christine would like to develop stronger support and synergy between the Library system, the Foundation, and the Friends groups. Historically new library projects have been the responsibilities of Friends groups or municipalities, but it is a new day, with new realities. Christine asked:

- How can WCLS prepare for our facilities infrastructure to keep up with our capacity to own and maintain buildings?
- How can WCLS best support fundraising efforts of Friends groups and the Foundation?
- Can WCLS budget more hours and sub coverage so that staff like Jenn and Di can devote more time to Foundation and Friends work?

WCLS has some funds in the budget for assigned capital projects; this may be an opportunity to help facilitate the process.

June asked about putting before voters the option of establishing a Library Capital Facilities Area. (LCFAs are quasi-municipal corporations within the boundaries of existing rural library districts for the purpose of financing the construction of capital library facilities.)

Christine suggested a three-year plan.

2019: For the remainder of this year, provide sub coverage for Di, provide more budgeted hours for Jenn, found a PAC, get Blaine Library design committee up and running, support Friends' fundraising, engage Community Relations in messaging, and overall attempt to raise as much money as possible. At year end, assess the likelihood of meeting fundraising goals through private donors versus an LCFA.

2020: If an LCFA is necessary, combine Birch Bay and Blaine projects and begin campaign.

2021: If an LCFA passes but does not receive full funding, run it again.

Christine reminded the group that the Ferndale library project ran \$500,000 short, and that voters who had already donated significant time and money did vote to pass a municipal bond in order to finish the project.

Brad asked if it would be possible to bring the Whatcom Community Foundation into this, and what the impact of community fundraising could be upon a future LCFA, given that November 2020 may not be favorably timed for a vote. Christine, Mary, and Jenn spoke to the importance of getting messaging out ahead to ensure success. Jenn asked if there has been a separate fundraising feasibility study for Birch Bay Library. Michael responded that it has not yet been completed.

Marvin commented that in his five years on the Board of Trustees, he has observed a quantum leap in the way WCLS, WCLF, and the Friends work and are organized. Originally these three entities have been somewhat disconnected.

Marv said the current realities of WCLS owning more property, of larger capital projects, and the growing cultural importance of libraries will require the three groups to synergize. Marv believes that WCLS is more effective than it was five years ago, and is doing more for the community than ever before. In order to continue, we must think of a more integrated team.

Christine noted that because funding came more quickly than we had anticipated, we need to move more quickly than we had planned.

June stated that the Board of Trustees committed to this vision a while ago, and today's discussion marks the next logical step.

Christine queried the Trustees regarding their comfort devising a plan to use the Facilities Ownership and Library Services Fund to increase personnel spending in order to free up Jenn and Di for more Foundation and Friends work. Brad asked about the limitations of Jenn as a public employee asking for private funds. It was noted that Jenn's position is aimed at seeking private donations and this is not an issue. Brad requested that a Birch Bay fundraising feasibility study be done to inform the decision-making process. In advance of the next meeting, he requested that management learn the state's requirements for the use of capital funds.

Christine affirmed her interest in establishing a PAC to advocate for an LCFA. Christine reminded the group that Library employees may serve on PACs as private citizens, but not during work time.

Brad asked Jenn and WCLF to work with Whatcom Community Foundation and learn about what is possible with this county's donor base. Christine noted that FOBBL has already been in contact with WCF and has invited Christine to join in on a meeting they've scheduled with WCF.

June would like to see all the pieces delineated for the next meeting so that a timing sequence can be planned.

Christine spoke to the need to ensure that all members of the Foundation and Friends are comfortable integrating together in new ways to reach higher goals. Peter expressed a sense that the Foundation is moving from a tactical toward a more strategic approach, and that the County residents will only benefit from the enhanced coordination of "library people." Brian and Keith expressed gratitude for the support of the Foundation. Di stated that Birch Bay Friends monthly meetings precede Board of Trustees meetings, and that the members are adaptable to achieving integration.

Jenn commented that marketing and fundraising are great for making connections. While fundraising, the Community Relations team has exponential potential to feather in messages about the Library system throughout the county. Jenn noted that many corporate and private donors, though not library users themselves, love to hear about the community building work of libraries.

Christine noted that while the state budget now includes a place holder for library capital projects, and that each biennium there will be about \$10 million available for projects, we are in a unique situation right now and need to act on it. In the next budget cycle new criteria will be set for awarding grant funding in the future, which will give priority to libraries in distressed counties, or those which are restoring culturally or architecturally significant facilities. Also, future grants will require a 50% match, so we will likely not as easily qualify for future grants from this source.

Lori asked whether the preservation of tribal remains at the Birch Bay Library project would qualify for future state funds. Christine agreed to explore this further.

Marvin asked if we should consider an addition to, or enhancement of, the Strategic Action Plan to indicate support for this effort. This question was tabled for the next meeting.

Announcements and Adjourn

No further announcements.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at Administrative Services, June 18, 2019 at 9:00am.

Address: 5205 Northwest Avenue, Bellingham 98226

Signed by Lori
Lori Jump, WCLS Trustee

6/18/19
Date

Signed by Dana
Dana Klootwyk, WCLS