



Location

Via teleconference for **all** attendees, in accordance with Proclamation 20.28.15 by the Governor of the State of Washington, which amends and extends Proclamations 20-05 and 20-28, *et seq.*, declaring a State of Emergency in all counties and prohibiting open public meetings from occurring in person.

In Attendance

Trustees: Marvin Waschke, Chair; Lori Jump, Vice Chair; Claudia Disend, Secretary; Erika Lautenbach and Rodney Lofdahl. Absent: None.

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Thom Barthelmess, Youth Services Manager; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Christina Read, Human Resources Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Debby Farmer, Blaine Library Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of the Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Mary Andersson, South Whatcom Library PSA; Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Friends of Blaine Library (FOBL) Officers: Carroll Solomon (President), Pat Kingshott (Vice President), Carol Macmillan (Secretary), and Sandra Bogen (Treasurer); Keith Alesse, Vice President, FOBBL; Bonnie Onyon, Mayor, City of Blaine.

Call to Order

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

Service Anniversary Recognition

The trustees recognized Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director, for her 10-year service anniversary. Christine introduced Jennifer, who shines in her position with the Foundation. In 2014, Jennifer helped establish an endowment fund for the Foundation, with specific endowed accounts for each library branch, and has worked to grow these funds to a total of over \$250,000. She is the driving force behind the annual Branch Out fundraising event and pivoted creatively to shift the Foundation's fundraising efforts since the pandemic limited in-person gatherings. Christine commended Jennifer's energy, dedication, flexibility, and ability to connect with donors, working to forge beneficial community partnerships.

Jennifer expressed her gratitude to the trustees and WCLS staff, saying that doing good work feels good. She views herself as a dream broker with a passion to connect people's philanthropic interests with projects, and the library system has a big impact in the community.

Open Public Comment Opportunity

Mary Andersson, who joined WCLS as a PSA at the South Whatcom Library four months ago, addressed the trustees to express her appreciation for them and the staff she has encountered at WCLS. Without exception, she has found them all to be gracious and knowledgeable. She thanked the trustees for fostering this

environment, for finding people to embody these ideals, and for their dedication, consideration, and concern for the library system and community. Marvin thanked Mary and asked if anyone else had additional comments. There were none.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the January 19, 2021 Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- January 1 - 15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025180924 - 1025180927, (Voucher Nos. 546404 - 546553) Totaling \$187,377.86 and January 16 – 31, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025302810 - 1025302812, (Voucher Nos. 546559 - 546710) Totaling \$184,810.72
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$93,366.52; \$30,124.23 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS, and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2020-37G: Warrant Nos. 1119765-1119775 Totaling \$1,447.61
- Claim 2020-38G: Warrant Nos. 1119991-1120015 Totaling \$111,046.73
- Claim 2020-39G: Warrant Nos. 1120037-1120053 Totaling \$139,755.90
- Claim 2021-01G: Warrant Nos. 1119988-1119990 Totaling \$53,939.54
- Claim 2021-02G: Warrant Nos. 1120026-1120036 Totaling \$19,365.68
- Claim 2021-03G: Warrant Nos. 1120645-1120657 Totaling \$8,651.36

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2020-22C: Warrant No. 1119776 Totaling \$1,173.96
- Claim 2020-23C: Warrant Nos. 1120016-1120018 Totaling \$1,315.89

Authorization to Reissue Paychecks:

- Resolution 02/16/21-02 to reissue paychecks 1023408439 and 1023408441

There were no questions. Rod moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie presented a summary report for the closing of the 2020 fiscal year, noting:

- Property tax revenues were less than \$14,500 (.16%) short of our full annual levy, an improvement over last year, even during the 2020 economic recession.
- Intergovernmental revenue exceeded budgeted expectations by over \$87,000. These funds are earmarked for the 2021 Capital Fund. Many 2020 capital projects are being rolled over into 2021.
- Annual interest revenue was below budget, reflecting reduced returns in the 2020 pandemic economy.
- In addition to planned operating budget margins, intentional underspending was implemented to mitigate the revenue shortfall impacts of COVID-19, resulting in minimal utilization of reserves and net overbudget totals in the ending General and Capital Fund balances.

Jackie reviewed her January 2021 report, highlighting:

- Revenues:
 - Funds have been received for annual contracts with the Whatcom County Jail and Whatcom County Library Foundation.
- Expenditures:

- Annual front-end payments have been made for our check-out software subscription and several insurance premiums. Other spending activity is generally low at this time of year.
- Construction estimates for the Everson Library remodel are pending. Until these bids are received, we have paused the purchase of other project materials. The request for bids went out on January 28, contractor walk-throughs were February 9, and bids are due March 2. Jackie will have update at our next meeting. The City of Everson is replacing the library's roof this week.

There were no questions for Jackie on the January report. She presented the 2021 General and Capital Fund budget amendments, detailing adjusted items, and answering trustee questions.

Erika moved approval of Resolution 02/16/21-03 Amending the 2021 General and Capital Fund Budgets as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Library Capital Facilities Areas

Christine briefly recapped last month's meeting and the requests of the Friends of Blaine Library and the City of Blaine's Mayor Onyon to reconsider rejoining the Birch Bay and Blaine library building projects under a single Library Capital Facilities Area (LCFA). To provide a background of both projects for the trustees, Christine and Ruth compiled a History Timeline from 2006 to present, which she reviewed at today's meeting. She emphasized that COVID-19 has put an economic strain on the county, especially the communities along the Canadian border. With the ongoing pandemic and border closures, current conditions are not entirely favorable for the success of a LCFA ballot measure, whether single or combined; however, a \$2 million grant from the State Department of Commerce to fund the Birch Bay project is motivation to push forward. Christine summarized budgeted costs, including estimated escalation costs, for both building projects. Lori noted that she appreciates Blaine's support and inquired if the City of Blaine has committed to funding any portion of the library building project. Christine replied that Blaine City Council has communicated insufficient city funding for such a capital project, but offered to contribute the land for the project and consider transferring ownership of the building to WCLS in the future.

Christine presented options for funding, noting that options A and B appear to be the most viable at this time. Responding to Erika's inquiry, Christine provided more detail on the 2024 construction start date and costs for the Blaine project. She clarified, and Michael concurred, that the \$9 million figure includes demolition costs, but not the temporary relocation of staff and collection materials. A temporary storefront space in Blaine is estimated at \$1,500-\$2,000 per month, and construction is anticipated to require a minimum of twelve months.

Marvin expressed his concerns over the library system owning and maintaining library buildings when there is a stable municipal entity to do so. He is sympathetic to the situation in Blaine and it is very clear to him that the city needs a new library, as does Birch Bay, a community with no library. In more optimal conditions, WCLS would proceed with both projects, but the current economic situation is a barrier. He favors Option A, which likely affords WCLS the best opportunity to demonstrate successful receipt and management of state grant funds, thus paving the way for future grants, including one to help fund a Blaine building project.

Christine reviewed the proposed LCFA boundaries map, stating that the Blaine city limits and Area 5 north of Loomis Trail-Lincoln Road, as suggested by the City of Blaine, could be the boundaries for a future Blaine LCFA. She noted that proposed Birch Bay LCFA boundaries include Areas 1, 2, 4, and 6, and explained why Areas 3, 7, and 8 were not considered. Christine presented a Summary of Assessed Value, proposed LCFA amounts, and the associated estimated monthly costs to homeowners. She answered trustee questions about project timing, cost escalations, projected changes in assessed value, and the considerations of a city tax assessment versus an LCFA, the latter of which can include a larger boundary area, thereby reducing costs to homeowners within city limits.

Christine shared a comment posted by Blaine Library Manager Debby Farmer referencing the hiring of a construction manager to oversee both projects concurrently, potentially offsetting some escalation costs of the projects. Christine acknowledged that the combination of projects could have some shared costs.

The trustees expressed appreciation for Christine's comprehensive preparation and diligent attempts to find an equitable solution for both communities, as well as her forethought regarding future funding grants.

Claudia moved approval that the Board re-affirm its intent to ask voters to establish a Birch Bay Library Capital Facilities Area. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

There was further review of the proposed boundaries map, with Christine answering trustee questions.

The Chair moved approval that the Birch Bay Library Capital Facilities Area will include Areas 1, 2, 4, and 6 on the attached map. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:25 – 10:30 a.m. Erika excused herself from the meeting at the break.

Policy Updates

- a. **Starting Salary and Benefits Policy 12.05** – Christina presented the updated policy, which clearly reflects our current and past practice to extend to all employees the pay rate increases and salary structure negotiated with the union.

Lori moved approval of the updated Starting Salary and Benefits Policy 12.05 as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved, with Erika absent at the time of the vote.

- b. **Hours of Work Policy 12.12** – Christina presented an update which extends to all staff for consistency.

Rod moved approval of the updated Hours of Work Policy 12.12 as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved, with Erika absent at the time of the vote.

- c. **Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12** – Christine presented a policy revision to clarify wording pertaining to gifts of real estate, as discussed at last month's board meeting.

Rod was experiencing internet connectivity issues and left the meeting briefly.

Claudia moved approval of the revised Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12 as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved, with Rod and Erika absent at the time of the vote.

Annual Meeting – Election of Officers & Committee Assignments

Rod rejoined the meeting.

The current roster of officers for the WCLS Board of Trustees includes Marvin Waschke serving as Board Chair, Lori Jump serving as Vice Chair, and Claudia Disend serving as Board Secretary.

Current committee membership is as follows:

- Community Relations Committee: Lori Jump and Claudia Disend
- Finance Committee: Marvin Waschke and Rod Lofdahl
- Personnel Committee: Claudia Disend and Rod Lofdahl (with Marvin Waschke as an alternate)
- Foundation Liaison: Marvin Waschke

All present trustees indicated their willingness and desire to retain their current position and committee membership, without changes.

The Board Chair moved to approve the slate of officers and committee members as presented, without changes from the 2020 roster. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

2020 Library User Survey Review

Christine reviewed the results of the 2020 Library User Survey, noting that the input was overwhelmingly positive, with many users eager to have the library reopen. She commented that, in years past, we had requested name and contact information for future communications. For brevity this year, we had not

requested this information. We will consider it for survey inclusion in the future, to be able to address respondents' questions. As a direct result of survey input, we are pursuing holds pickup scheduling software.

COVID-19 Phased Return to Service

Christine summarized her recent discussion with Erika, who also serves as Director of the Whatcom County Health Department (WCHD) about the COVID-19 status in Whatcom County, as well as the recent progression of Whatcom County to Phase 2 of the State's [Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery](#) reopening plan. Erika had confirmed that the WCHD supports WCLS's reopening at 25% capacity when the library system is ready to do so, with risks to staff and the public being mitigated by established protocols. Christine has received input from staff and union leaders on reopening concerns, and WCLS has scheduled Dr. Greg Stern, Health Officer for WCHD, to join us via Zoom Thursday, February 18, 9:00 -10:00 a.m., to answer staff questions and address their concerns. Christine welcomed the trustees to attend for informational purposes only, and advised them that the management team has notified staff that preparation period of ten days will be provided prior to reopening.

Christine reviewed procedures on limiting building capacity to 25%, which varies by branch to best meet the public and staff at each facility. Marvin suggested researching carbon dioxide meters, currently being used in some restaurants, which may be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of air circulation and building capacity. Jackie confirmed that she is investigating this option, as well as including a review of HVAC systems in our facilities assessment. Christine reviewed the procedure for notifications in the case of a positive COVID test result in a library facility, as well as quarantine requirements. Marvin provided a brief description of the workings of the State's COVID tracking and notification application, WA Notify, noting anonymity for users.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine referred attendees to our "eRead of the Month" for February, *Wintering*, an especially appropriate selection for this past weekend's snowy weather. She provided insight into the diverse experience and background of Adult Programming Coordinator Ann McAllen and highlighted the US Department of State's recent recognition of Ann as one of their top [30@30](#) TESOL Specialists. Christine noted that WCLS and Bellingham Public Library will be recognized in a "Toast of the Town" video being produced by the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce for their contributions to community resiliency during the pandemic. She will share the video, being filmed and edited by Veritas Media, when it becomes available.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael invited attendance to the "I'll Fly Away" virtual program scheduled for February 25, the last of three Whatcom READS events that were funded by a *Lift Every Voice* grant secured by Ann McAllen and Katrina Carabba, Manager of the Deming and North Fork libraries. He noted the free legal consultations to be provided county-wide through our partnership with Law Advocates of Whatcom County, including access to this service using the library's technology or meeting spaces, if desired. The City of Blaine and WCLS are refreshing the Blaine Library with new interior paint, smoke alarms, and other updates and repairs. The City of Everson is replacing their library's roof right now. We are maintaining curbside services across the street in a blue WCLS box truck with a canopy, which will be serving the community as a pop-up library. Michael thanked Alexa Andrews, Everson and Sumas Library Manager, for the creative idea, as well as Everson Library and WCLS distribution staff for accommodating the modified conditions this week.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

In addition to his written report, Thom further illustrated the principles and success of Teen Paint Night, in which teens were able to pick up a collection of painting supplies and explore this medium together in a library environment using Zoom. The program was developed and supported by Teen Services staff, including Ferndale Library's Sarah Lavender and Lynden Library's Nick Flerchinger. Due to the virtual format, Point Roberts PSA Rose Momsen, an artist herself, was grateful to be able to participate and provide additional staff expertise

without border closure concerns. Thom expressed appreciation for Jackie and her team for ordering supplies and getting materials to Youth Services staff to seamlessly support these projects.

Christine announced that the latest issue of *Whatcomics* has just arrived from the printers, with more examples of teen art, creativity, and perspective.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary reviewed her written report and reiterated that it is Whatcom READS season, emphasizing the tagline of “Read the book, join the conversation.” We are seeing strong community engagement, even in a virtual space. The most recent program, “The Smart Skin and Amazing Brains of the Octopus,” was very well-attended. *Washington Black* explores issues of race and belonging, and, thanks to a grant from the Equity Fund of the Whatcom Community Foundation, Whatcom READS is offering virtual book discussions led by social justice leaders, supplemented with questions and resources available by registering at whatcomreads.org. At that site, you may also register for a virtual Think, Drink, and Dine event with a takeout meal prepared by our partners at Evolve Chocolate + Cafe. The Whatcom READS Facebook page shared a [video](#) this weekend, already reaching over 2,000 people, featuring *Washington Black* and demonstrating the value of a community one-read program.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael presented the report, noting that the Northwest Drive Library Express has been able to stay open, with many patrons selecting to pick up their holds there to utilize the expanded hours of availability. The Point Roberts branch was briefly closed during Phase 1, but is open again now. Electronic circulation continues to flourish, as does database usage. There was a system-wide closure this past Saturday due to inclement weather. The Ferndale Library was closed Sunday due parking lot inaccessibility, and the Lynden Library was open.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Marvin reported that the Foundation is developing small in-person events for fundraising. The Give Every Month (GEM) program is progressing successfully, and he encouraged those interested to support the program.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine recapped the weekend’s closures and reported that she has received confirmation from the County Executive that the Whatcom County Council has confirmed the reappointment of trustee Rodney Lofdahl, Board Position 3, for a second term of February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2026.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Next Meeting

Next regular meeting will be online via Zoom* on March 16, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

_____ /s/ Claudia Disend, Board Secretary	_____ March 16, 2021 Date	_____ /s/ Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant
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*pending further issuances from the Office of the Governor of the State of Washington.