



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; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Debby Farmer, Blaine Library Manager; Sarah Koehler, Ferndale Library and Mobile Services Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of the Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator; Tamar Clarke, Teen Services Coordinator; Tammy LaPlante, Children’s Services Coordinator; Theresa Morrison, Early Learning Coordinator; Nick Flerchinger, Lynden Library Teen Librarian; Marie Guenette, Blaine Library PSA-Youth; Melody Leung, Lynden Library Children’s Librarian; Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Friends of the Birch Bay Library Board Members Keith Alesse, Vice President; Brian Bell, Communications; and Ruth Higgins, Director.

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment Opportunity

No public comment.

Service Anniversary Recognition

Retiring Blaine Library PSA Patty Macheras, who was scheduled to be recognized for her 32 years of service with the library system, was unable to attend today’s meeting.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the February 16, 2021 Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- February 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025431297-1025431298, (Voucher Nos. 546716 - 546866) Totaling \$186,155.43 and February 16-28, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025544805-1025544808, (Voucher Nos. 546873-547023) Totaling \$178,090.53
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$89,215.67; \$29,076.73 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-04G: Warrant Nos. 1121297-1121307 Totaling \$31,514.39
- Claim 2021-05G: Warrant Nos. 1121547-1121561 Totaling \$75,489.43
- Claim 2021-06G: Warrant Nos. 1121726-1121743 Totaling \$20,922.65
- Claim 2021-07G: Warrant Nos. 1122217-1122241 Totaling \$86,492.20

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-01C: Warrant Nos. 1122242-1122243 Totaling \$4,609.77

There were no questions. Rod moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval, with Erika absent at the time of the vote.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her February 2021 report, noting:

- Revenues:
 - Property tax revenues are currently around \$58,000 and will increase as the April 30 property tax payment deadline approaches.
 - 2021 property tax revenues are lower to date compared to the same pre-COVID period in 2020. Jackie noted that the first property tax payment deadline of 2020 was extended to June 30, after COVID-19 was recognized as a pandemic, and no extension is planned this year. She will continue to monitor 2021 property tax revenues and the pandemic's effects thereto.
- Expenditures:
 - Expenditures are below budget to date and reflect a combination of upfront annual payments and a typical seasonal lull in purchasing activity.
- Fund Balance Summary:
 - The Fund Balance is impacted by delayed property tax receipts, which result in a cyclical cash flow trough. We budget for this trough, accessing planned reserves prior to the influx of property tax revenue beginning in April.

Jackie shared the new format for her financial report, which includes the addition of a "Notes and Highlights" section for the month, followed by a "WCLS Account Summary" section that provides detailed descriptions for the listed accounts. There were no questions for Jackie on the February financial report. Lori noted her appreciation of the new report format.

Jackie presented the bids received for the Everson Library Remodel Public Works Project and requested approval to award the project to the apparent low bidder, Ethos West Construction, Inc. She answered trustee questions.

Lori moved to award the Everson Library Remodel Public Works Project to the apparent low bidder, Ethos West Construction, Inc. The approved project award includes the base bid amount, with the option to add the janitor closet add-on alternate bid if determined necessary by the project committee. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Policy Updates

- a. **Pandemic Shared Leave Policy 12.34** – Christina presented the new policy, which fills a gap in the absence of government mandated leave for purposes related to a pandemic.

Rod moved approval of the Pandemic Shared Leave Policy 12.34 as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

- b. **Third-Party Monitoring Systems Policy 7.05** – Michael presented this new policy, which has been reviewed by counsel. He answered questions from the trustees pertaining to the liability, as well as power and internet service requirements, for these third-party monitoring systems. Michael clarified that these aspects would be detailed in a written agreement, as referenced in the policy.

The trustees requested the third paragraph of the policy be amended to read: "If WCLS determines to permit the installation and operation of a third-party monitoring system, WCLS and the third-party monitoring system operator will enter into a written agreement regarding their respective responsibilities as to the liability, installation, operation, maintenance and removal of the monitoring system, including records retention and disclosure."

The Chair moved approval of the Third-Party Monitoring Systems Policy 7.05 as amended. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Birch Bay Library Update

- a. **RFQ for Land Legal Description Preparation Services** – Christine presented the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Board review and summarized the necessity for a land legal description for the Library Capital Facilities Area (LCFA), including the roles of the County Auditor and the County Assessor. Christine expressed her gratitude to Jackie for drafting the RFQ, which has been submitted to firms on WCLS's Architectural and Engineering roster for responses. Christine and Jackie will review RFQ responses and present them to the Finance Committee. Jackie and Christine answered questions from the trustees, including the source for the roster and status on responses to date.

Erika moved approval to authorize the Executive Director to sign a contract for land legal description preparation services to establish the legal boundary of the Birch Bay Library Capital Facilities Area, pending review by the WCLS Finance Committee. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

- b. **Named Gift Opportunities** – Christine referenced the terms included in our Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12 and Naming and Recognition Policy 20.16. She presented a proposed list of Named Gift Opportunities for board approval, in accordance with the latter policy. Christine reiterated that the trustees will approve any written agreements with donors for each naming opportunity.

Erika moved approval of Birch Bay Named Gift Opportunities proposal as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

- c. **Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) Memorandum of Understanding** – Michael presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WCLS and the State of Washington's Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and Department of Commerce. The draft MOU has been accepted by DAHP and is still being reviewed by the Department of Commerce. Michael reviewed the stipulations section in detail. After review and discussion, the trustees requested that Stipulation II. A, be amended to read, "Examples of items that may be included in the salvage..." No other revisions were suggested at this time. It was agreed that the WCLS Finance Committee will review the final MOU for approval before Marv, as Board Chair, signs it.

The Chair moved approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the Department of Commerce, and WCLS, as amended, and to authorize the Board Chair to sign once this draft version has been reviewed by the Department of Commerce and the WCLS Finance

Committee, unless requested changes differ in substance from the draft version being reviewed. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:00 – 10:10 a.m.

Trustee Education: ConnectED

Christine announced that the ConnectED presentation portion of the meeting will be recorded. The video recording may be viewed at this link: <https://youtu.be/7DUeDgZ5Z9M>.

Thom introduced himself and expressed his gratitude for ILS Administrator Carmi Parker and the Youth Services team, many of whom attended the meeting. Thom's presentation addressed the history of the ConnectED program and the library system's partnership with schools in Whatcom County. He spoke of the program's origins in the Mount Baker School District and its expansion to date. WCLS currently has signed MOUs with all six of the county's school districts of Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden, Mount Baker, Meridian, and Nooksack Valley, as well as Lynden Christian Schools. While there has historically been a signed agreement with Lummi Nation Schools, they have opted to pause their participation in the program during the pandemic.

To illustrate the unique challenges facing them, Thom told the amalgamated, fictionalized stories of two young people, depicting experiences representative of real youth patrons. Working on the principles of equity, the library system strives to identify these challenges and build bridges to close the gaps. The essence of the program is to remove barriers to young people, meet their needs, and cultivate a strong relationship with the library now and into adulthood.

Thom spoke of future plans for expanding the distribution and Integrated Library System (ILS) infrastructure to facilitate delivery and pick up of library materials in all county school districts, as well as home logins within the system. He emphasized continuing to strengthen our partnerships with the schools and working in tandem with school librarians to support them in meeting students' needs, bridging the transition between school library and public library. Thom acknowledged the ongoing efforts of the dedicated Youth Services staff, several of whom shared their stories of seeing young people excited to check out library books, participate in book talks, and encourage their family to join them at the library. Thom and Youth Services staff members thanked the trustees for their support and helping to make this program possible.

The trustees shared their appreciation for the ConnectED program, the value it brings to the community, and its part in developing lifelong public library patrons.

COVID-19 Phased Return to Service

Christine thanked Erika for putting her in touch with Dr. Greg Stern, Health Officer for Whatcom County Health Department, who joined WCLS staff on a Zoom call last month to help address staff concerns, provide additional input to inform our procedures, and affirm the comparatively low risk of COVID transmission while providing library services. She reported that, on March 1, WCLS opened its branches to the public at 25% capacity, after the region including Whatcom County was approved to move to Phase 2 of the [Healthy Washington](#) recovery plan. All branches are open from 1-5 p.m., with a few branches open their full hours. We have procured carbon dioxide (CO₂) monitors and are testing them at our buildings to aid in evaluating ventilation and air circulation.

Christine noted Governor Inslee's March 11 announcement that all counties in Washington state would be moving to Phase 3 of the plan, effective March 22. One aspect of this phase advancement is the possibility to increase building occupancy to 50% of capacity. At this point, WCLS is planning to begin expanding hours prior to increasing building occupancy levels.

Rod asked if the 25% capacity rate is allowing us meet the public's needs. Michael confirmed that this appears to be the case. After the initial surge upon opening, branch traffic seems to be calming down, with most branches

touching the top limit of occupancy capacity only briefly. Christine noted that curbside services are still being used to meet public needs, with some patrons reporting a preference to use this service exclusively for a while. Christine expressed her gratitude to Public Services staff for their diligent efforts during the opening, closing, and reopening of branches over the past six months and their adherence to the pandemic mitigation protocols. Erika left the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

Christine presented her written report and noted that we are wrapping up Whatcom READS season. She shared that she just received a note card from our local independent bookstore, Village Books, with a sizable check enclosed that includes 10% of the year's gross sales of [Washington Black](#), as well as additional donations from attendees of a Whatcom READS virtual program. Village Books also supports the Whatcom County Library Foundation's annual Books for Babies program, providing a 50% discount toward the purchase of 1,800 board books for newborn babies born each year in Whatcom County.

Christine encouraged everyone to see the [video trailer](#) of the announcement of the Whatcom READS selection for 2022, [Greenwood](#), by Michael Christie. The [video](#) was developed by Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay and features the voice of Deputy Director Michael Cox.

Christine directed attention to the attachment to her report, a March 10 *Washington Post* article regarding Amazon and its monopoly on certain eBook titles it is publishing. Christine summarized the nation-wide efforts of Carmi Parker, WCLS ILS Administrator, advocating for libraries to have rights to eBooks and eAudiobooks.

Christine reported that a meeting is scheduled in Washington state this month for statewide library directors to hear from a Maryland library director who advocated on this issue in the Maryland state legislature. Lori inquired if the Maryland legislation addressed the availability, versus affordability, to libraries. Christine will investigate. There was additional discussion about the licensing and purchasing of copies of electronic materials. Christine offered to ask Carmi to prepare a presentation on the subject. The trustees indicated interest in exploring this issue in more depth to determine how the library system, joined by state and national library associations and independent booksellers, can negotiate with Amazon and other publishers to make this content equitably available.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael presented his report from the South Whatcom Library to demonstrate how the incorporation of computers and supplemental technology in meeting spaces serves a variety of needs. Proper lighting, with quality microphones and headsets, can support Zoom job interviews, as well as meetings with a lawyer from the LAW Advocates program. Staff can utilize the space and technology to deliver virtual programming, such as the recent Zoom program, "Q&A with your PSA," initiated by Deming PSA Joshua Olsen.

Michael also reported on the initiation of the Books by Mail planning project, which is exploring options to extend Homebound services to more people via mail delivery. Currently, Mobile Services staff bring titles directly to patrons' homes, which limits the number of patrons we are able to serve. We hope to increase service capacity for Homebound patrons with Books by Mail. Reading Conversations will be included as an integral part of this program. Patrons would communicate with staff via phone instead of in-person.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom presented his written report, discussing his recent training on Restorative Justice Conferencing through the International Institute for Restorative Practices. He provided insights from his training, which is centered around decreasing the focus on punitive measures and shifting it to repairing harm, and expounded on the Institute's Social Discipline Window graphic included in his report.

Thom shared his enthusiasm in integrating these principles into our organization and practices. Christine noted the book, *The 57 Bus*, a true story of teens and the employment of the restorative justice process, served as an introduction to this concept. Thom answered Claudia's questions and offered further discussion in the future.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary presented her written report and encouraged people to view the [Whatcom READS 2021 video](#), made possible by a grant from the Equity Fund of the Whatcom Community Foundation, showing our community coming together to explore the issues of race and belonging addressed in *Washington Black*. She noted that new community partnerships forged this year brought more people together to read and discuss the book.

Mary thanked Neil McKay and Michael Cox for their contributions to the [video trailer](#) announcing our 2022 Whatcom READS selection. She reported that the spring issue of *Explorations* has been mailed out to all county households and that it can also be read online via the link provided in her report.

Mary highlighted that the [Friends Online bookstore](#) is open on the Shopify platform. She acknowledged Board Chair Marv Waschke, Christopher Waschke, and the Lynden, Ferndale, and Everson Friends groups for their work setting up and maintaining the online bookstore. We are grateful to Everson Friends for providing storage.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael presented his report, which included circulation data from a full year experiencing pandemic closures. Physical circulation saw a 50% reduction, with a 35% reduction in total circulation. The Northwest Drive Library Express is circulating more in February 2021 than it did in February 2020.

Michael reviewed statistics on our borrowing and lending with Bellingham Public Library (BPL), noting that the progress in BPL's remodel project has increased access to their materials and reduced the time waiting for holds. Christine reported that BPL is still closed to the public, largely due to construction delays, with plans to reopen this spring.

There was discussion regarding factors contributing to the decrease in WCLS.org visits, the ability to parse out external versus internal access, and methods to provide deeper insight and measure usage more definitively. Michael will look into this, and Mary will talk to Neil McKay for his input.

Michael reviewed charts comparing monthly figures for physical, downloadable (electronic), and total circulation for 2019, 2020, and 2021 to date. Presenting a chart comparing annual total circulation for the years of 1996-2020, Michael noted that 2020's pandemic reduced total circulation levels to those seen in 2008/2009 and that it may take time to regain the circulation growth accomplished prior to the pandemic. He thanked Mike Kusick, ILL and Circulation Specialist, for gathering this data and compiling it graphically for a visual perspective of the past two years and beyond. A brief discussion followed detailing circulation measurements and impacts.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No report. Christine thanked the board for approving the Pandemic Shared Leave Policy.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Marv reported that the Foundation meets regularly via Zoom and continues to plan for the future. Jenn reminded everyone that Library Giving Day, April 7, is coming up and materials will be mailed out soon. The annual "Branch Out" fundraising event has been canceled again this year and is being replaced by "Branch In". Jenn has compiled the annual report for the WCLF, which dovetails into the WCLS annual report. Over the course of its 15-year history, WCLF has brought over \$1 million into the library system, and the endowment fund has a sizeable balance that continues to grow.

