



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; and Rodney Lofdahl. Absent: Erika Lautenbach.

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; Sarah Koehler, Ferndale Library and Mobile Services Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of the Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: None.

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment Opportunity

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

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

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- March 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025669574 -1025669577, (Voucher Nos. 547031 - 547180) Totaling \$193,445.07 and March 16-31, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025808969-1025808971, (Voucher Nos. 547187 - 547336) Totaling \$204,206.15.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$92,475.04; \$29,585.48 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-08G: Warrant Nos. 1122670-1122687 Totaling \$126,721.51
- Claim 2021-09G: Warrant Nos. 1123255-1123257 Totaling \$113,129.77
- Claim 2021-10G: Warrant Nos. 1123581-1123607 Totaling \$74,415.97
- Claim 2021-11G: Warrant Nos. 1124134-1124143 Totaling \$29,387.51

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-02C: Warrant No. 1122688 Totaling \$3,067.50
- Claim 2021-03C: Warrant Nos. 1124144-1124146 Totaling \$4,752.57

There were no questions. Claudia moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the March Notes and Highlights section. In addition to her report, she noted that the Whatcom County Treasurer announced last week that businesses with significant income losses in the 2020 calendar year may apply to defer their real property tax payments to December 31, 2021. These payment deferrals may have a small effect on our property tax revenues, which can be accommodated within our budget and reserves.

There were no questions for Jackie on the March financial report.

Jackie presented the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a system-wide Facilities Assessment, issued to firms on WCLS's architectural and engineering roster on April 9, with responses due May 7. Our last system-wide Facilities Assessment was done in 2008. The target completion date for the current assessment is October 1, 2021. Results from the assessment will be used to inform our five-year Capital Plan and for annual strategic action and budget planning. Jackie answered trustee questions.

Strategic Planning 2022+

Christine presented a proposed outline for the Strategic Planning process for 2022 and beyond, including the gathering of input from all WCLS staff groups, the trustees, stakeholders, and the community. The goal is to have this long-term Strategic Plan completed and approved by the Board by the end of August. She requested input from the trustees regarding the duration of the Strategic Plan, in addition to their preferred timing and format for a Board Retreat focused on an in-depth discussion of the Plan.

After discussion, the trustees decided that an in-person meeting, with appropriate COVID precautions, is preferred for the Board Retreat. The Retreat was tentatively scheduled for Sunday, May 16, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Ferndale Library. May 23 was agreed upon as an alternative date, if Erika, who was absent from today's meeting, is not available May 16. Christine and Ruth will communicate the final Board Retreat details.

The trustees considered various parameters in determining the duration the Strategic Plan for 2022 onward. Marvin noted that we are in a post-pandemic period of change. Claudia concurred about change, especially the changing roles of the library in communities, re-balancing the focus from resources to people. Marvin suggested that attendees read the 2018 book, [*Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*](#), by Eric Klinenberg. Lisa Gresham provided a history on the duration of some previous Strategic Plans, with periods of 1997-2000, 2002-2007, 2008-2012, and 2016-2020. The duration of the pending Strategic Plan will be discussed and determined at the May Board Retreat.

Christine shared the current three-question anonymous WCLS staff input survey. Lori suggested the inclusion of an open-ended question asking where improvement is needed within the system. Christine will discuss this further with the management team.

COVID-19 Phased to Service Update

Michael reported on open hours, which are responsive to the local needs of the branch. All branches are open from 1-5 p.m., with a few branches already open their full pre-pandemic hours. Open hours are expanding weekly, as each branch is able to do so. We are maintaining this flexibility through May, and June 7 is the target

date for resuming full hours. Some branches are seeing a decrease in curbside pickups as patrons begin choosing to come inside to pick up items and browse. Newspapers remain on hold, with brief visits encouraged for now.

Marv asked about the Points Roberts Library, and Michael responded that they are open full hours, with patrons enjoying the highly utilized Library Express there. Lori inquired if outdoor in-person Storytimes would be available for children soon. Thom answered that no synchronous, in-person events are planned this summer for Youth Services. His team is doing a more substantive update online and installing Story Walks, in which picture books are placed on placards for families to read together as they walk through gardens, parks, et cetera, around WCLS branches. There will be a different Story Walk at each library, plus the Bookmobile, the site of the pending Birch Bay Library, and two local migrant workers' camps.

Break

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

Birch Bay Library Update

Christine shared an interactive map of the proposed Birch Bay Library Capital Facilities Area (LCFA). This interactive map was developed by Sumas PSA Cayla Samms, and we will be sharing this tool online and at community meetings. Pacific Surveying and Engineering has been hired to perform the land legal description preparation services necessary to establish the legal boundary of the Birch Bay LCFA. This work is scheduled to be completed by the end of this month, after which it will be reviewed by attorney Dan Gottlieb for presentation to the Board for approval in May.

The Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) have been very active building awareness and support for this library building project. In a recent social media post, Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu shared his administration's support of this initiative. FOBBL has invited all Whatcom County council members out to the site to share their vision with the council.

Christine noted that, this Thursday, she will be joining a Books on the Bay online call, presented by the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce. The topic of the call is a Library Project Q & A, in which Christine will be providing information and facts about the project. Mary and the Community Relations team sent out a notice of this Chamber event to people that had previously subscribed to be informed of updates on the project. We will share a recording of Library Project Q & A when it becomes available.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WCLS and the State of Washington's Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and Department of Commerce has been signed off completely, with many thanks to Michael. There were no requested changes that differed in substance from the draft version reviewed by the Board in March.

Michael has been working with Zervas Architects throughout the building permit application process. He recapped the January 7 pre-application meeting with Whatcom County Planning & Development representatives, which identified additional work to be done. With the installation of the Birch Bay berm since our preliminary landscape plan was drawn up, the site has more open space which requires an updated landscape plan and hydrology report. For permit approval, the County requires that the site plan include sidewalk, monument sign, and single entrance design contingency options, all of which require additional civil engineering work and draft preparation. Expeditious permit application approval is our goal.

Christine stated that a capital budget amendment of \$30,500 is required to do this, based on an estimate from Zervas. Jackie explained that approximately \$25,000 is for new work, with \$5,500 related costs for work previously approved that carried over from the 2020 budget into 2021. Michael clarified that this additional \$30,500 could be rolled into the total eligible to be reimbursed to WCLS if the LCFA passes.

Jackie presented Resolution 04/20/21-04 Amending the 2021 Capital Fund Budget, to include additional expenses of \$30,500 associated with Phase II of the Birch Bay Library building project.

Rod moved approval of Resolution 04/20/21-04 Amending the 2021 Capital Fund Budget, as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

Christine presented her written report and announced the 2021 Read & Share selection, *House Lessons: Renovating a Life*, by Port Townsend author Erica Bauermeister. Author events and related programming, including a memoir-writing workshop, will be flexible to allow for an in-person or online format.

Christine noted that trustee and Whatcom County Health Department Director Erika Lautenbach has been recognized by the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce for her service to county residents, along with the Whatcom County Library System and Bellingham Public Library. Christine expressed her gratitude to the Chamber for acknowledging both systems with “Toast of the Town” recognition and providing them the opportunity to highlight their partnership in the community.

Jennifer Rick joined Christine in reporting that contributions for Library Giving Day were over \$11,700 as of yesterday, with 91 new donors to WCLF so far. Two gifts were received this morning in response to a Branch Out mailing that went out last week, with more anticipated in the coming weeks.

Christine directed everyone’s attention to the gracious words from Blaine Manager Debby Farmer honoring Patty Macheras, who retired after 32 years at WCLS and was unable to join us at last month’s Board meeting.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael presented his report and shared that there has been increased energy and growth in the [Friends of the Library online bookstore](#), which has added more Friends groups and pickup locations, as well as new inventory. Rod commented that he has ordered from the online store and praised the process. Marv reported that orders have been increasing steadily.

In addition to expanded hours, we have increased access with myLIBRO, online application to schedule held items for pickup. Staff are currently learning and implementing this web platform. We will start sharing the link with patrons next week on our website and in emailed holds notifications. Calling branches remains an option.

Michael highlighted that Joshua Olsen, Cultural Focus PSA at the Deming Library, was selected to participate in the Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) Outstanding in Their Field Leadership Institute. This is a great opportunity for ARSL, WCLS, and Joshua, who has ties to the Nooksack Indian Tribe, Lummi Nation and rural communities. We look forward to learning from him as he brings his new insights back to us!

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

In addition to his written report, Thom expounded on how the Reader to Reader (R2R) book recommendation program works and facilitates this year’s Youth Services initiative of book discovery and the commitment to putting books in young people’s hands. Initiated by the Teen Services Team, the R2R program lets teens express autonomy, highlight books they are reading, and see themselves in the library. Teens may access the [R2R site](#) directly and through the Teen link on the Youth drop-down menu on the WCLS webpage. In addition, shelf talkers (hand-written cards) are displayed near recommended books on the shelves at libraries. Thom shared a few recommended books and reported that well over 100 people have discovered and clicked through to the R2R site so far without any publicity. Thom expressed thanks to the Community Relations and Youth Services/Teen Services teams for their work on this program.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary presented her written report and invited everyone to read the annual report, which serves as a terrific time capsule of the amazing work that our staff did to keep community connected during the past year. She encouraged attendees to join in celebrating National Poetry Month throughout April by reading, writing, and

