



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 Proclamation 20-28, *et seq.*, and currently allows open public meetings to occur remotely.

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; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Thom Barthelmess, Youth Services Manager; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Christina Read, Human Resources 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); Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Dan Gottlieb and Brandon Pond, Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S.; Dave Trageser, D.A. Davidson & Co.; Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) Members: Keith Alesse, Connie Taylor, Ruth Higgins, Doralee Booth, and Brian Bell.

Call to Order

Marvin determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Open Public Comment Opportunity

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

Erika moved to pull Item 3a, Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting, from the Consent Agenda. Seconded. Carried.

The remaining items on the Consent Agenda included:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- April 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1025943010 -1025943012, (Voucher Nos. 547343 - 547493) Totaling \$195,359.12 and April 16-30, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1026105496 - 1026105500, (Voucher Nos. 547500 - 547648) Totaling \$187,335.76.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$96,648.55; \$30,975.22 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-12G: Warrant Nos. 1124667-1124688 Totaling \$88,297.60

- Claim 2021-13G: Warrant Nos. 1124870-1124885 Totaling \$36,883.41
- Claim 2021-14G: Warrant Nos. 1125392-1125418 Totaling \$172,749.81

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-04C: Warrant No. 1124689 Totaling \$5,721.35
- Claim 2021-04C: Warrant Nos. 1125419-1125420 Totaling \$1,905.13

Authorization to Void a Warrant:

- Resolution 05/18/21-05 authorizing the cancellation of warrant 1124873

There were no questions. Claudia moved to approve the remaining items b and c on the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting

Ruth Nail reported that the Unapproved Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees have been amended to strike the entire third sentence of the Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation section, as the information was incorrect. The two remaining sentences are left intact.

There were no questions or objections. Rod moved to approve the April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the April Notes and Highlights section. She emphasized that we have seen no impact on property tax revenues resulting from the Whatcom County Treasurer's announcement last month that businesses with significant 2020 income losses may apply to defer their real property tax payments to December 31, 2021.

Regarding the recent \$19,000 reimbursement request to FEMA, Jackie advised that she has received notification that we would be receiving a reimbursement closer to \$16,000. She is continuing to submit requests as FEMA incorporates rule changes that allow us the opportunity to recoup expenses that had previously been denied.

Jackie shared a detailed explanation of the recent changes in definitions included in the State's Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting System (BARS) as they relate to the descriptions shown in our Fund Balance Designation Detail. The changes do not affect the intention of the designated funds but simply how they are labeled. She reiterated that the 2020 Annual Financial Report will be submitted to the State Auditor's Office tomorrow, after she and Christine perform a final review this afternoon. Jackie will present the 2020 Annual Financial Report at the June 15 Board meeting.

Noting additional time in the agenda, Marvin asked Jackie to elaborate on the Designated Fund Balance. Jackie reported that, starting in 2017, Trustees elected (by Resolution) to designate a portion of our ending fund balance toward projected future costs such as building ownership, operating costs, and facility maintenance, in addition to funds that are already designated for cash flow and emergencies.

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

Policy Updates

Christine and Christina presented a revision to Pandemic Shared Leave Policy 12.34 which will allow flexibility in the timeline for submission of requests for Pandemic Shared Leave, while still providing timely notice for payroll purposes. Christina answered trustee questions regarding the proposed revision.

Rod moved approval of the revision to Pandemic Shared Leave Policy 12.34 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Christine presented Resolution 05/18/21-06 Outlining Annual Holiday Observation. Christine and Christina answered questions regarding the similarities and differences between holidays that WCLS observes in comparison to those that the State of Washington observes.

Erika moved to approve Resolution 05/18/21-06 Outlining Annual Holiday Observation as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Strategic Planning – Prep for Board Retreat

Christine reminded everyone that we will be meeting in person, masked and appropriately distanced, this Sunday, May 23, at 9:00 a.m. at Ferndale Library, before the library is open to the public. Christine reported that she will email the trustees the survey results collected from staff, library cardholders, community members, and community leaders. Ruth Nail will also prepare printed copies for the trustees to pick up at Administrative Services this week. At Sunday's retreat, Christine will share strategic planning input from system-wide staff meetings.

The Board retreat meeting will incorporate some discussion of the 2018 book, [*Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*](#), by Eric Klinenberg, a title recommended by Marv at the April meeting. Rod commented that the audiobook is available at WCLS, too.

Christine requested the trustees' input regarding the duration of the next strategic plan. After discussion, the trustees agreed that a duration of four years is probable. To best respond to the climate of change anticipated in the coming years, high-level goals will be established in the Strategic Plan, which will be addressed in more focused, specific annual action plans that allow for year-to-year flexibility. This will be discussed further at Sunday's special meeting, as well as the review of WCLS's mission, vision and values statements; staff input meeting results; the aforementioned survey results; and our future role in the community as a library system.

Noting that the meeting was running ahead of schedule, the Chair moved that we adjust the agenda to hear some staff reports first, to maintain the scheduled timeframe for the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area discussion, for which more guests were expected to join the meeting. Seconded and unanimously approved.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the addition of streaming videos of "signed stories," as read by American Sign Language interpreters, to our collection.

Christine spoke about the House of Tears Carvers totem pole ceremony at Birch Bay. Marv shared that this group has carved several totem poles prior to this, and this one is the last in a series. He noted that the ceremony contained a focus on ecology and preserving the environment, including the calling of the whales, during which attendees were graced by the appearance of a gray whale in the bay.

Christine commented that we will be adding banners outside our libraries to highlight that they are open to the public now. Rod asked if there was still a 24-hour holding period on returned materials. Christine responded that, yes, State guidelines require that we quarantine returned items for 24 hours. We will await any change in the State's guidelines, after which we will adjust our quarantine period. Christine noted the recent change in CDC guidelines regarding activities and mask-wearing practices for fully vaccinated individuals. We have updated our signage accordingly at the branches. Currently, all WCLS staff will continue wearing masks, as future administrative services and branch procedures are being discussed, with a focus on staff and patron safety. Erika suggested that Christine contact Darin Klein at the Whatcom County Health Department for his input on local mask-wearing guidance as reopening efforts are expanding county-wide.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In Michael's absence, Christine reviewed his report and observations regarding holds and checkouts. His analysis indicates that patrons prefer browsing in person and checking out physical materials, adjusting to other options when conditions require.

Christine recapped the adjustment in the open hours at the Ferndale and Lynden branches, applauding them for their flexibility and creativity in meeting the needs of their communities. The Branch Managers for both of these locations acknowledged that the new hours seem to be working well and that the past week has seen more patrons coming inside the libraries.

Christine expressed that she was pleased with the progress on providing services in various languages, noting that we are responding to census data and population in our communities.

Christine closed this report with a big hurray and hearty welcome to Katrina Buckman, who will be starting later this month as the Branch Manager at the North Fork Library.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

In addition to his written report, Thom thanked Tamar Clarke, Neil McKay, Amy Jones, and all staff who worked on the recent Youth Services website updates to provide consistent, high-quality webpages. Thom added that his team has been adjusting how Youth Services is staffed. Sadly, this restructuring also comes on the heels of the departure of Children's Services Coordinator Tammy LaPlante, as she retires after many years of service to WCLS and the youth in the community. Tammy will be deeply missed!

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:02 – 10:10 a.m.

Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area

Christine noted the attendance of attorneys Dan Gottlieb and Brandon Pond, and Bond Broker Dave Trageser at the meeting today, and thanked them for their continued professional guidance regarding the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area (LCFA).

Earlier in the week, Christine had requested that Dave Trageser review the LCFA documentation to calculate the current bond mil rate. Considering the escalation in project costs and total Assessed Value within the proposed boundaries, the current bond mil rate is close to \$0.18 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, which is higher than previously estimated and communicated to the public. At the Finance Committee meeting Thursday, the possibility of expanding the LCFA boundaries was suggested as a means of increasing total assessed value and thereby decreasing the levy rate to each individual property owner.

Christine presented a Resolution Requesting the Establishment of the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area, including Exhibit A, the legal boundary description and map prepared by Pacific Surveying and Engineering. She then shared a version of this map with adjoining sections highlighted to demonstrate their potential inclusion in the expanded boundaries of the LCFA. Christine reported that, with the inclusion of the highlighted sections, Dave Trageser estimated that the updated bond mil rate would be close to \$0.11.

Christine met last night with FOBBL members, and their general consensus was that the LCFA boundaries should be expanded, thereby reducing the costs to the individual property owners and giving the LCFA proposition the highest possibility of passing. When the Board Chair requested input from FOBBL members in attendance, they unanimously reinforced this sentiment.

The trustees shared their concerns regarding expanding the LCFA boundaries, such as maintaining positive relationships with BP and Blaine Library stakeholders, as well as property owners that could be affected by a future Blaine Library LCFA. Christine noted that, before moving ahead with a boundary expansion, she will communicate these potential boundary changes with BP, Blaine Library stakeholders, and the County Council.

There was further review of the boundary map and discussion of the pros and cons of including these, and possibly other, sections within the LCFA boundaries. FOBBL members Doralee Booth and Keith Alesse shared that the Board may also wish to take into consideration the Census Designated Place (CDP) map for Birch Bay and the [Blaine-Birch Bay Parks and Recreation Districts map](#), respectively.

The Board requested that Christine further investigate expanding the LCFA boundaries to present data for their final decision at the June board meeting. Christine noted if we expand boundaries, the majority of the previously presented Resolution would remain the same, although there will need to be a change in resolution date and number, as well as an updated legal description and map to be included as Exhibit A. It will cost approximately \$2,000 for Pacific Surveying & Engineering to prepare the new legal description and LCFA boundary map.

Christine summarized the timeline, stating that the WCLS Board will first vote on the Resolution to Establish the Birch Bay LCFA. The approved WCLS resolution and proposition verbiage will then be submitted to the Whatcom County Council for approval and submission to the County Auditor's office for inclusion on the November 2021 ballot. Christine presented a draft of the Development, Ownership, and Management Agreement, an agreement between WCLS and the future BBLCFA Board, consisting of County Council members, which would be entered into after voters approve the November 2021 BBLCFA ballot measure.

Dan Gottlieb introduced himself and reviewed the terms of the Development, Ownership, and Management Agreement draft. After the BBLCFA Board is formed, it issues bonds "to provide funding for the acquisition, construction, furnishing and equipping the Birch Bay Library." WCLS transfers title of the undeveloped Birch Bay property to the BBLCFA Board. WCLS maintains responsibility for the development and management/operation of the Birch Bay Library, under the governing body of the BBLCFA Board, for twenty years. After twenty years, and the bond has been repaid completely, the BBLCFA Board transfers the title of the developed library and land back over to WCLS. Dan offered his assistance to the County Council members in drawing up the bylaws for the BBLCFA Board and complying with the requirements of acting as the governing body.

Christine presented a draft of the Purchase and Sale Agreement, an agreement between WCLS and the future BBLCFA Board, which would be negotiated after voters approve the November 2021 Birch Bay LCFA ballot measure. Dan noted that the Purchase Price includes the original property purchase price paid by WCLS, plus amounts for planning and permitting expenses for developing the property after purchase. The Purchase Price cannot include ballot expenses nor any expenses related, but prior, to the purchase of the property.

Christine presented the SOURCE AND USES OF FUNDS, as prepared by Dave Trageser, pertaining to bonds and bond fees for the BBLCFA. With an estimated total of \$4.33 million, the total bond proceeds we are requesting of voters is not to exceed \$4.35 million. Dave reviewed a Schedule of Bond Level Debt Service, set up in mortgage style, with payments of interest applied at a higher proportion at the beginning of the loan period and lower at the end, with an inverse relationship for applications to capital. He noted that the Schedule takes into consideration net levy and assessed valuation, and their effects on the mill levy. Marv asked for verification that if assessed value goes down, then mill rate goes up. Dave acknowledged this as correct.

Dave discussed municipal bonds, which are typically standardly callable (repayable) after the tenth year or thereafter. If an earlier call date (prepayment) is requested, then generally a higher interest rate is in effect. It is possible to select a portion of, or all, bonds for a call. Depending on the portion of bonds called, the levy rate would therefore go down.

Christine presented a draft of the Agreement for Naming Rights and Sponsorship related to the Birch Bay Vogt Community Library and sponsors of the capital campaign to build said library. Our Named Giving Policy references this agreement, which Dan has drafted for Board review. Christine reviewed the terms and conditions of agreement. The Board had no questions or objections.

Christine confirmed that she will explore expanding boundaries and will present further data, including an updated legal description and map, to the Board at the next meeting. She will also convey the updated boundaries as Assessed Values to Dave to recalculate the mill rate.

Marv praised Christine for her work on this issue, as did Erika. Erika left the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary presented her written report and commented that part of the 2020 marketing plan was to increase circulation, and then the pandemic hit and forced us to focus on alternative methods to achieve our goals. In the process, we learned about isolating life's circumstances and how the library can help. In this year's objectives, we also wanted to impart joy, vibrancy, and a sense of empowerment. Initial ads will be audio and video, depending on targeted audiences, outside the city limits of Bellingham. Other ads will be posted on WTA buses and displays in the branches, with the possibility of events in the future involving WCLS staff in the community.

Marv commented that the ad work is very professional and asked if we are using an agency or if this was designed in-house. Mary confirmed that all of this work is done in-house, applauded Amy Jones as lead campaign designer, and thanked the Community Relations team, as well as Claudia and Lori, for their input on the campaign.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Christine present the statistics and noted that our year-to-year door count is still down. Circulation has rebounded, even if the number of visitors has not. This may be attributed to the possibility that only one member of a household is coming in to pick up materials for the whole household, or that people have been stocking up and making fewer trips to the library. A slow-down in the use of eMagazines, addressed in Lisa's Digital and Database Usage performance report, is largely related to a changeover from RB Digital to Libby / Washington Anytime Library. This resulted in changes in subscriptions and automatic renewals and checkouts of magazines every month. Monthly automatic renewal is not currently available on Libby. On the upside, there is now a single interface for eBooks and eMagazines, with no limit to the number of magazines you can check out. With Libby, patrons get access to a rich collection of over 3,000 magazines in 20 languages, including three years of back issues.

Christine shared that Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay will join us next month to discuss reporting methods and Google Analytics terminology. She also noted that Bellingham Public Library's statistics reflect that BPL is not yet open to the public and has been servicing patrons solely by curbside services. Claudia reported that BPL's remodeled Central Library is beautiful!

Rod inquired on the status of the scheduling app for curbside pickup of online holds. Christine confirmed that the MyLIBRO app is being used successfully now and can be accessed at www.wcls.org/pickup. Curbside pickup can be a convenience or safety factor, and myLIBRO was implemented in direct response to our community survey.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No committee report this month.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Marv reported that the Foundation held a Zoom meeting last Thursday and the discussion focused on WCLF Board members holding small Branch Out house parties over the summer, in lieu of the traditional large annual Branch Out event. In essence, this translates to a person "hosting" a table at home, versus at the event. Donations are down a bit for 2021. We're doing pretty well, despite an exceptionally difficult year.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine reminded attendees of the Strategic Planning Retreat scheduled for Sunday, May 23, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., at the Ferndale Library and confirmed individually packaged snacks, coffee and water would be available.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Next Meeting
