



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; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Thom Barthelmess, Youth Services Manager; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Christina Read, Human Resources Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Sarah Koehler, Ferndale Library and Mobile Services Manager; Rika Vanderhorst, Mobile Services Public Services Assistant; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of the Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Neil McKay, Online Experience Coordinator; Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Dan Gottlieb, Hillis Clark Martin & Peterson, P.S.; Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) Members: Ruth Higgins, Doralee Booth, Brian Bell, and Holly Witte.

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

The trustees recognized Mobile Services Public Services Assistant Rika Vanderhorst for her 30-year service anniversary. Ferndale Library and Mobile Services Manager Sarah Koehler introduced Rika, who has the distinction of having worked on three different WCLS bookmobiles. Always happy to discuss books, audiobooks, videos, and pets, Rika is a favorite with bookmobile and homebound services patrons alike. Sarah congratulated Rika on this momentous anniversary and accomplishment. Christine thanked Rika for her many years of kind, warm, and friendly service to WCLS and its patrons.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the May 18, 2021 Regular Meeting and the June 3, 2021 Special Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- May 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1026218959 -1026218960, (Voucher Nos. 547655 - 547806) Totaling \$188,449.74 and May 16-31, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1026375997 -1026376000, (Voucher Nos. 547812 - 547959) Totaling \$189,616.23.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$94,622.95; \$30,367.03 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-15G: Warrant Nos. 1126063-1126078 Totaling \$81,646.74
- Claim 2021-16G: Warrant Nos. 1126340-1126361 Totaling \$25,572.21
- Claim 2021-17G: Warrant Nos. 1126726-1126750 Totaling \$106,061.69

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-06C: Warrant Nos. 1126751-1126753 Totaling \$43,858.76

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the May Notes and Highlights section. She reiterated that current property tax revenue is on par with prior years and that the shortfall in investment interest revenue, which represents less than 2% of budgeted revenues, is projected to continue for another year.

Jackie provided details behind the variance in year-to-date supplies and minor equipment expenditures compared to the prior year. While 2021 figures indicate a 57% increase in these expenditures compared to 2020, at this time last year we were experiencing the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, WCLS facilities were closed to the public, staff were working from home, and we were actively refraining from spending.

Jackie presented a condensed 2020 Annual Financial Report, a full version of which she submitted to the Washington State Auditor's Office last month. She noted that this report has been reviewed by the WCLS Finance Committee and includes the same numbers presented at the February board meeting. There were no questions for Jackie on her May report or the 2020 Annual Financial Report.

Jackie reported that five bids were received in response to our Architecture and Engineering Request for Qualifications to complete a system-wide Facilities Assessment. A committee reviewed and scored the responses; RMC Architects was the highest scoring respondent and was therefore selected to complete the work. The cost proposal exceeds the originally budgeted amount of \$50,000. Jackie presented Resolution 06/15/21-07 Amending the 2021 Capital Fund Budget, detailing adjusted items, and answering trustee questions. She noted the expanded scope of work to be completed in this Facilities Assessment, as referenced in her May report, compared to the previous Facilities Needs Assessment conducted in 2008. Marv also commented on the comparatively limited parameters of the 2008 study, which did not include the in-depth structural analysis we are requesting at this time, a substantial reason behind the higher cost proposal now.

Jackie indicated that WCLS will pay for the Facilities Assessment to inform our 5-year Capital Plan and will share the findings of the study with our building partners. This allows all concerned parties to plan and budget for future maintenance and improvement expenses, in accordance with the terms in our facilities contracts.

Erika moved approval of Resolution 06/15/21-07 Amending the 2021 Capital Fund Budget as presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area

Christine introduced attorney Dan Gottlieb, in attendance to answer questions. She recapped last month's meeting, in which we discussed expanding the LCFA boundaries and requesting an updated legal description and map. Christine presented Resolution 06/15/21-08 Requesting the Establishment of the Birch Bay Library 2021-06-15 APPROVED Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees

Capital Facility Area, including Exhibit A, the legal boundary description and map prepared by Pacific Surveying and Engineering. She noted that the updated boundary information and map has been reviewed by the Whatcom County Assessor's office for accuracy.

Christine reported that the Finance Committee recently met with Dan Gottlieb and Bond Broker Dave Trageser regarding the capitalization of interest on the bonds to fund the Birch Bay Vogt Community Library building project. She explained that, due to the timing of the November 2021 ballot, the certification of the new Birch Bay LCFA taxing district in August 2022 (if approved by voters in November 2021), and the November 2022 approval of a levy for tax year 2023, the earliest that the Assessor would begin collecting property taxes is January 2023. If, with the intention of minimizing further increases in construction costs and taking advantage of the current bond market, the LCFA desires to begin construction prior to the receipt of property tax revenues in 2023, capitalizing the interest on the bonds will provide access to earlier funding. Capitalizing the interest is estimated to increase the total cost of the bond levy from \$4.35 million to \$4.5 million.

Mr. Gottlieb commented that interest capitalization is a fairly common practice, especially when revenue to repay the bonds is not received immediately, as in this case. He noted that the currently proposed levy amount includes one full year of capitalized interest. Depending on when the bonds are sold, the LCFA may not need to utilize the entire amount of interest funding calculated for that one year. Dan clarified that the interest is termed "capitalized" because it is built into the cost of construction of the building and that this capitalization means we can borrow money to use toward construction, as well as the June 2022 and December 2022 bond interest payments, prior to receiving property tax revenues beginning in 2023.

Rod reported that the Finance Committee reviewed other options in the meeting with Dan and Dave, and this one-year interest capitalization seems to be the most optimal option available at this time. Marv concurred, stating that, throughout this process, we have attempted to be as conservative as possible in an effort to reduce the possibility that the project will be changed substantially due to cost overruns. Marv asked if any other trustees had questions. Christine reported that, as of this morning, the Assessor estimated a mill rate of \$0.11 based on current projections.

After receiving no further input or questions from the trustees, Marv opened the floor to FOBBL members in attendance. There were no comments or questions.

Rod moved to approve Resolution 06/15/21-08 Requesting the Establishment of the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area, including Exhibit A, as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Dan stated that the resolution requires the signatures of all five trustees. Christine confirmed that the document is available at Administrative Services and offered to bring it to trustees for signatures, if needed.

Christine requested a postponement of the scheduled break to address the Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of the South Whatcom Library before Erika needed to depart for another meeting. There were no objections.

Memorandum of Understanding with Friends of the South Whatcom Library

Christine recapped that, in 2014, the Friends of South Whatcom Library (FOSWL) and WCLS signed an Agreement for Exchange of Services related to the operation of a branch library in a barn at 8 Barn View Court, Bellingham. This agreement obligated the Friends to purchase Fire and Extended Coverage Insurance for the full replacement value of the premises. This building no longer exists, and WCLS now operates the South Whatcom Library in the Sudden Valley Adult Center building under a lease with the Sudden Valley Community Association. This location has no ownership by, or ties to, FOSWL. Christine suggested that we therefore terminate this agreement and replace it with the presented Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which has been restructured based on our current relationship. This MOU has been prepared by attorney Dan Gottlieb and reviewed and approved by FOSWL. Christine said this MOU is a model to which we would like to transition with all of our Friends groups. There were no other questions and comments.

Claudia moved approval of the Memorandum of Understanding with Friends of the South Whatcom Library as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Break

Marv adjourned for a break from 9:49 to 10:00 a.m., during which Erika left the meeting.

Trustee Education: Website Statistics – Neil McKay

Christine introduced Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay, who delivered a presentation on website statistics. Neil presented examples of how we measure the effectiveness of our web presence on our three public websites, LibCal, BiblioCommons, and WCLS.org. LibCal is an event calendar and has the smallest interaction. BiblioCommons is the site patrons use to search our collection, check out materials, and manage their accounts. WCLS.org is our main site, conveying information about the library system and acting as the doorway to access all of the services we provide, including links to the previous two sites.

Neil reviewed related terminology and the use of Google Analytics to measure usage on our sites and explained how periodic reports are compiled and compared. He answered trustee questions and illustrated activity trends that could be attributed to specific announcements and patron-directed emails, such as an upcoming Whatcom READS! event, the Children’s Literature Conference at WWU, impending pandemic closures, offering of curbside services, and emailed reminders with links to digital services. He highlighted the bidirectional traffic seen between our sites and the Whatcom READS! and Children’s Literature Conference sites. Neil further demonstrated interactional behavior trends by displaying overlays of site activity, which provide an understanding of the tools, services and messaging that resonate most with our patrons and website users.

Christine noted that Neil and the Community Relations team pay close attention to these analytics to identify patterns and adjust our approaches to optimize our sites and their usage. Mary and the trustees thanked Neil for his presentation and explanation of these metrics.

Strategic Planning: Values Discussion

Christine thanked everyone for their participation in the Strategic Planning Retreat, during which the management team gained valuable insight from the trustees. A committee consisting of Christine, Thom, and Marv started drafting an updated Values Statement in which they refreshed the language, consolidated some concepts, and expanded others. Christine presented the draft of the reframed WCLS Values Statement for trustee input. She read through each line of the statement, pausing to allow trustees to indicate their levels of approval and offer comments and recommendations. Christine asked if anything was missing, and no suggestions were noted.

Feedback from this discussion will be incorporated into a refined draft, which will be presented for further review at the next meeting.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the selection of WCLS’s Integrated Library System Administrator Carmi Parker as a 2021 [Library Journal Mover and Shaker](#). Christine recalled that, a few years ago, Marv suggested that WCLS tackle the issue of access to eBooks and eAudiobooks. Carmi has embraced the advocacy of eMaterials on WCLS’s behalf, as well as on the behalf of libraries nationwide. Christine thanked Carmi for her perseverance and congratulated her on receiving this esteemed honor in the library profession.

Christine gave thanks to the Everson Library staff, Facilities Planning Coordinator Carol Oberton, and Facilities Management Coordinator Mark Barrett, who all worked diligently to help the branch stay open during their remodel. Michael Cox and Everson Branch Manager Alexa Andrews were very supportive, as were Geoff Fitzpatrick and IT Services staff. This team effort, along with the bequest received by Friends of the Everson Library (FOEL), has created the opportunity to remain in that space for a long time with materials that support our values of stewardship, sustainability, and accessibility. Michael noted that the FOEL were able to re-purpose

the old bookshelves in their warehouse, which provides storage for the materials being sold via the [Friends of the Library Online Bookstore](#). Christine applauded FOEL president Emily Fullner, who has been working hard to keep everything organized and facilitate online book sales for the whole system.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael reviewed supporting details on the graphic in his report that depicts a system-wide overview of access levels throughout the reopening phases this year. He noted that we are meeting patron demand with our current 50% capacity mandate. Progression to 100% capacity is awaiting the Governor's June 30 announcement.

Christine clarified that all staff are still wearing masks through June 30, a measure deemed prudent after her conversations with the Whatcom County Health Department. She discussed the current Washington State Labor and Industries requirements for staff to provide proof or attestations of vaccination in order to be in the workplace without wearing masks. Christine asked the trustees for their input regarding employees that are fully vaccinated not wearing a mask at work, noting that WCLS staff who wanted to continue wearing a mask, even if fully vaccinated, would be encouraged to do so. The trustees expressed general approval and shared concerns on the topic. It was agreed to readdress this after further reopening announcements at state and federal levels.

Michael spoke about our four online collections that can be accessed through the Washington Rural Heritage Project. We can increase exposure to these digitized history collections by uploading them to the Digital Public Library of America (DLPA) after meeting the DLPA standardized naming convention and copyright status requirements. Michael reported that we plan to apply for grants to add more collections. We will be holding History Harvest events in Blaine and Birch Bay over the summer and fall.

Michael noted that we are still experiencing shifts in staffing and are implementing strategies to keep staffing availability as needed, including providing training for Clerks to be trained to substitute at the PSA level. He announced that Debby Farmer, Blaine Library Manager, is retiring at the end of the month after 25 years at WCLS. There is an internal posting for an Interim Blaine Library Manager to serve in that position through the end of this year.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

In addition to his written report, Thom emphasized the Book Discovery initiative and the importance of helping young people to discover new library materials to read and consume, and subsequently providing them with the appropriate means to connect with, and make recommendations to, other young people. Reader to Reader (R2R) is the first step in establishing active young library users and sharers of stories.

Thom reviewed some of the tools being developed this summer to prepare for the 2021-2022 school year, as we plan to support our school library partners and students through the ConnectED program. He thanked Mary and the Community Relations team for their support in making it easier for young people to take advantage of these resources.

Thom reported ongoing work with a team to integrate Restorative Practices in WCLS procedures and practices.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary reviewed her written report and reiterated the value of increasing awareness of library services across a variety of platforms, maximizing the coverage of our message as we reach out in different ways. She reported that the summer edition of *Explorations* is available online and in print, and copies have been mailed to all Whatcom County households. The Power of Sharing campaign continues to roll out, including the WTA bus boards, digital ads, and social media posts. "The Library is Open" banners are being installed outside our branches, adding a visual cue to the community.

Mary highlighted our new podcast, [WCLS in Whatcom County Presents Library Stories](#), which is hosted and produced by Neil McKay. The light-hearted and informative podcast advances our plan to share stories, enjoys a

