



whatcom county
library system

APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

October 19, 2021

Location

Via teleconference for all attendees, in accordance with Proclamation 20-28, *et seq.*, by the Governor of the State of Washington, allowing open public meetings to occur remotely.

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; Christina Read, Human Resources Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President, Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Tamar Clarke, Teen Services Coordinator; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator and Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) Leader; 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

As a member of the public, Dianne Marrs-Smith addressed the trustees regarding the current campaign to raise community awareness and support for Proposition 14 to establish the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area (LCFA). She reported that, between now and November 2, there will be multiple sign-waving events, and supporters will be canvassing neighborhoods within the LCFA boundaries this Saturday, October 23. On Thursday, October 21, there will be a Trivia Night at The Beach Bar in Birch Bay. On Saturday, October 30, at the Birch Bay berm, there will be treats for kids and families. Dianne commented that the campaign response has been very positive so far, with no major opposition voiced to date.

Service Anniversary Recognition

The trustees recognized Tamar Clarke, Teen Services Coordinator, for her 10-year service anniversary. Thom introduced Tamar, who began her career with WCLS more than ten years ago in a grant-funded position creating People of the Salish Sea kits. Having taught high school English before coming to WCLS, Tamar bridged the transition smoothly, embracing the freedom and discovery that comes with librarianship. She has expanded her responsibilities over the years and leads the selection of print, digital and audio materials for teens. She also oversees the Connected working group on the Youth Services team. Thom commended Tamar's unimpeachable standards – from the layout of our teen spaces to the quality of our programming – which she ties directly to what young people need and deserve. He also lauded Tamar's propulsive energy and her talent as an incredibly insightful reader, noting that her presence in the organization makes his work easier and better, and, more importantly, has a profound impact on the young people of Whatcom County.

Christine expressed her appreciation for Tamar's authenticity and tenacity in her service to the county's youth, establishing and maintaining high standards for our teens. Jenn highlighted Tamar's skill at providing heartwarming, impactful stories to the Foundation.

Tamar stated that her time with WCLS has been a privilege, largely due to its leadership, and she is excited to come in every day to work with youth and talk about books. She thanked the board for supporting the vital cutting-edge services we are providing to youth in the county and helping them find their place in the libraries.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the September 21, 2021 Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- September 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1027455214 -1027455220, (Voucher Nos. 548885 - 549032) Totaling \$191,409.51 and September 16-30, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1027585537 -1027585543, (Voucher Nos. 549038 - 549181) Totaling \$191,230.41.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$75,458.96; \$25,692.77 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-30G: Warrant Nos. 1132947-1132964 Totaling \$80,605.55
- Claim 2021-31G: Warrant Nos. 1133307-1133326 Totaling \$48,754.04
- Claim 2021-32G: Warrant Nos. 1133831-1133855 Totaling \$96,634.45

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-16C: Warrant No. 1132965 Totaling \$41,791.07
- Claim 2021-17C: Warrant No. 1133327 Totaling \$734.40
- Claim 2021-18C: Warrant Nos. 1133856-1133859 Totaling \$27,810.70

Authorization to Void Warrants:

- Resolution 10/19/21-12 voiding warrant 1108806

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

Closed Session to discuss 2022 Wage & Benefit Negotiations and Memorandum of Understanding

At 9:10 a.m., Board Chair Marvin Waschke moved the meeting to Closed Session, as per RCW 42.30.140, to discuss the 2022 Wage and Benefit Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with the Bargaining Unit. It was announced that the Closed Session would end at 9:35 a.m. Since the Board meeting was being conducted remotely via Zoom, a slide indicating the preceding information was shared on the screen of the Main Session, monitored by Ruth, and participants in the Closed Session were moved to the Closed Session Breakout Room.

At 9:35 a.m., all meeting participants rejoined the Zoom Main Session and Marvin reconvened Open Session for final action on the 2022 Wage and Benefit Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding.

2022 Wage and Benefit Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding

Claudia moved approval of the 2022 Wage and Benefit Agreement with Attached 2022 Salary Structure. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Claudia moved approval of the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding which revises and clarifies the current bargaining agreement. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the September Notes and Highlights section, emphasizing that we have not yet needed to access cash flow reserves during the current property tax revenue trough. She reported that we have received approval for over \$30,000 in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), managed by the Washington State Library. This funding, in reimbursement form, will allow us to purchase standalone HEPA filters and make ADA updates at specific branches, as outlined in Jackie's written report.

Jackie advised the trustees that she has been contacted by the State Auditor's Office (SAO) regarding our upcoming audit of fiscal years 2019 and 2020. She presented the SAO Audit Engagement Letter, to be signed by Marv upon board approval. She explained that the audit is comprised of a financial audit, for fraud and accuracy, and an accountability audit to evaluate compliance with state laws, regulations and policies, as well as good stewardship of public funds, including data security. The audit is scheduled to start in the beginning of December and wrap up in January, at an estimated cost of \$15,000, which is already included in the budget. Jackie noted that the SAO offers a pre-audit and a post-audit meeting, and asked the board's preference. After discussion, the trustees agreed that they do not require a pre-audit meeting, but request a post-audit meeting.

The Chair moved approval to accept the Washington State Auditor's Office Audit Engagement Letter as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Jackie presented a preliminary draft of the 2022 General Fund Budget for board review. She noted that this draft was shared during Union Negotiations, after which some items were updated to reflect additional information received from the County Assessor's Office regarding our base levy revenue, plus levy revenue from new construction and state-assessed property values. Jackie reviewed line items in the draft budget, providing supporting details and answering questions from the trustees. She reiterated that this is a working draft and that she will include a more explanatory narrative in the preliminary budget, which will be presented at next month's meeting for approval.

Building upon last month's explanation of property tax levies, Jackie and Christine provided an educational presentation of the state's levy lid lift process and answered trustees' questions. Discussion was had regarding the conditions precipitating the pursuit of a levy lid lift, a one-time increase in our property tax levy that must be approved by voters, and the optimal timing to do so. The discussion also included the increase in Whatcom County's population, changes in the assessed values of county properties, the current Capital Facilities Assessment and pending WCLS Capital Plan and expenses, and other major projects under consideration. The relationship between the percentage increase in our levy revenues compared to the percentage increase in cost of living was addressed, as was the potential for operating at a sustained deficit and the subsequent effects on cash reserves and our level of service. Jackie clarified state requirements and recommendations regarding operating expenses, designated and undesignated funds, and cash reserves. She referred attendees to the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) site, <https://mrsc.org>, for further information.

Lori excused herself from the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Christine described the work of EveryLibrary, a highly-regarded national organization that assists libraries across the country with local elections. Claudia asked if other libraries in our state had pursued a levy lid lift in the past year or so, and Christine replied that library systems in Spokane, Pierce and Kitsap counties have done so.

Jenn suggested the possibility of the Foundation providing grant funding for levy lid lift campaign education, such as that provided by EveryLibrary.

Break

Marv adjourned for a break from 10:57 to 11:05 a.m.

2022 Addendum to the Agreement with the Whatcom County Library Foundation

Christine presented Addendum No. 11 (2022) to the Agreement with the Whatcom County Library Foundation, noting the modest changes made since the prior Addendum No. 10 (2021).

Rod moved approval of the 2022 Addendum No. 11 to the Whatcom County Library Foundation Agreement as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval, with Lori absent at the time of the vote.

2022 Strategic Action Plan Draft

Christine presented a draft 2022 Strategic Action Plan and discussed its contents in detail, noting projects for each of our five focal areas of Community; Access; Resources; Equity, Diversity & Inclusion; and Stewardship.

Some items included were: development of an in-person community connections and events list; amplification of health, employment & legal resources provided by other agencies; beginning Birch Bay Library construction, if the LCFA proposition passes, and supporting fundraising efforts for a new Blaine Library; planning for ConnectED holds pickup in schools; building capacity to expand Books by Mail; creating a fourth quarter systemwide literary event; participation in information literacy research and sharing skills with the public; integrating restorative practices principles into policies and procedures; planning for recruitment and retention of diverse trustees and staff; analyzing optimal timing for a levy lid lift election and preparing a strategy; upgrading and maintaining facilities per a Facilities Master Plan; and beginning the transition to Microsoft 365 and Teams.

Christine requested feedback from the trustees. Marv asked if Geoff has explored Google Workplace, as a consideration, and Christine assured him the Geoff will review all applicable options, including factoring in the current staff and community knowledge base on Microsoft products. Claudia was pleased to see the plans to expand ConnectED pickups at schools. Marv inquired about establishing a land acknowledgement statement for the library system, and Christine affirmed that we have drafted a statement that has been reviewed by Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe representatives. We are currently determining our procedures on reading the statement, as well as considering a modified version for children's events. Christine will include a trustee education item about our land acknowledgement on next month's agenda.

Comments about the visual impact of the action plan graphics were made, but no suggestions to change the content of the plan. Christine stated that she plans to present the final draft to the board for approval in November.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine deferred to Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager, to discuss supply chain issues and potential impacts on our collection materials purchases. Lisa reported that some library systems are expecting significant fulfillment issues, including Bellingham Public Library, who uses a different supplier than us. She noted that WCLS is seeing delays in the publication of printed materials. For example, some new releases that were expected out this fall are now releasing in February or March of 2022. We had some delivery complications with our primary supplier, Ingram, due to their short-term labor challenges, which have now largely resolved. Lisa said that some of our magazine subscriptions have been affected, especially those from foreign publishers. She clarified that impacts to audio-visual material orders are resulting less from supply chain issues than format challenges, with some providers skipping over physical production and going directly to digital streaming. We expect to see increases in prices due to paper shortages, as well as a decrease in quality due to the discontinuation of paper mills. Lisa commented that publishers may produce fewer new releases and reprints, which means we will need to enhance care for our collection and keep items in circulation longer. She noted that more publishers are opting to print on demand, which may result in decreased print quality. Lisa offered to provide more trustee education at a future board meeting, if requested.

Michael shared that the 2022 Public Library Association Conference is being held March 23-25 in Portland, Oregon, and asked the trustees to indicate if they are interested in attending in some way. Ruth will follow up with the trustees.

Due to time constraints at today's meeting, Christine requested that the trustees refer to the written staff reports included in the agenda packet. The trustees agreed, and she briefly highlighted a few items in the reports.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Due to time constraints, the trustees were referred to Michael's written report without additional commentary.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Due to time constraints, the trustees were referred to Thom's written report without additional commentary.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Due to time constraints, the trustees were referred to Mary's written report without additional commentary.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Christine asked if there were any questions regarding the performance measures report. Marv noted there has been no decrease in digital reading, and Michael confirmed that we have seen the biggest increase in individual users yet.

Michael reported that he has emailed Marv directly with the breakdown of Overdrive usage, as requested at last month's meeting. Marv acknowledged receipt of the information and thanked Michael.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

Christine reminded the board that Erika Lautenbach's first term as trustee is ending January 31, 2022. Christine has begun communications with Erika regarding term renewal. She and Marv will discuss this further with Erika to determine if there is a need for trustee recruitment.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Jenn reported that the Foundation is in the process of bringing on two new board members, Cheryl Fear and JoAnn Johnson. WCLF committees will be meeting soon to determine the 2022 budget and meeting schedule, as well as discuss if Branch Out will be in-person in 2022 and possible alternatives, if necessary.

Executive Session to Discuss the Executive Director's Annual Review per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)

At 11:43 a.m., Board Chair Marvin Waschke moved the meeting to Executive Session, as per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), to discuss the Executive Director's annual performance review. It was announced that the Executive Session would end at 11:53 a.m. Since the Board meeting was being conducted remotely via Zoom, a slide indicating the preceding information was shared on the screen of the Main Session, monitored by Ruth, and participants in the Executive Session were moved to the Executive Session Breakout Room.

At 11:53 a.m., all meeting participants rejoined the Main Session and Marvin reconvened Open Session. No action was taken and Marvin announced that the board will readdress the Executive Director's annual performance review at the November 16, 2021 meeting.

Announcements and Adjourn

The trustees agreed that Ruth will contact them a week prior to November's meeting to confirm whether the meeting will be held in person or via Zoom.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 11:54 a.m.

Next Meeting

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

/s/ Claudia Disend, Board Secretary	November 16, 2021 Date	/s/ Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant
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*pending confirmation by the Board of Trustees and/or further announcements by the Governor of the State of Washington