



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; 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; Beth Andrews, incoming Human Resources Manager; Christina Read, incumbent Human Resources Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Sarah Koehler, Ferndale Library and Mobile Services Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President, Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: FOBBL members Keith Alesse, Sharman Burnam, Brian Bell, Doralee Booth, and Ruth Higgins; Terry Terry.

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

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the October 19, 2021 Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- October 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1027769198 - 1027769205, (Voucher Nos. 549187 - 549332) Totaling \$198,624.88 and October 16-31, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1027920421 - 1027920431, (Voucher Nos. 549338 - 549499) Totaling \$ 214,256.72.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$80,023.65; \$26,336.51 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-33G: Warrant Nos. 1134461-1134486 Totaling \$103,915.67
- Claim 2021-34G: Warrant Nos. 1134807-1134817 Totaling \$15,336.66
- Claim 2021-35G: Warrant Nos. 1135235-1135270 Totaling \$155,376.22

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-19C: Warrant Nos. 1135271-1135272 Totaling \$18,513.11

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

Trustee Education – Land Acknowledgement

This agenda item will be postponed until next month, in lieu of a report today on local flooding and the impacts on WCLS facilities and operations.

Report on Local Flooding and Impacts on WCLS Facilities and Operations

Christine reported that Administrative Services and the Deming, Everson, and Sumas branches were closed all day yesterday, Monday, November 15, due to flooding, road closures and hazardous weather conditions. These conditions prompted abbreviated hours at other branches to facilitate patron and staff safety.

Administrative Services and the Deming, Everson, Ferndale, South Whatcom and Sumas branches are closed again today due to continued flooding and lane closures on Interstate 5 and other connecting roads. Staff access and safety remains a concern, as does the intent to alleviate further burden on the limited routes of travel. The Blaine, Island and Point Roberts branches are open regular hours today, with the Lynden and North Fork branches open modified hours.

Christine specified that only the Everson and Sumas libraries are currently in immediate flood danger. She will provide an update when staff can safely reach and evaluate these locations. While the historic downtown section of Ferndale is flooded, the Ferndale Library itself is above the 100-year flood plain, but road closures and unsafe conditions are making access to that branch problematic today.

Lisa Gresham reviewed the process for evaluating and reporting damage to collection materials at affected branches for insurance claims, as well as redistribution of materials from other branches and Administrative Services. She noted the prior planning emphasis put on preserving local history materials and the storage of duplicates of such items, when possible, at Administrative Services. In response to a trustee question, Jackie clarified that only the Sumas and Everson branches have flood insurance, due to their location on a flood plain. We are evaluating flood insurance for the future Birch Bay location. Christine noted that reports of the Birch Bay property have indicated that, while the ground there is soggy, it is not flooded.

There were suggestions from the trustees to add links to our website for emergency management and recovery support resources in cases of local disaster, such as this flood event. Christine affirmed that we will begin working on this resource list promptly. Mold safety and supplies were briefly discussed.

Christine highlighted the Whatcom Community Foundation Resilience Fund, which is currently offering a matching program, up to \$115,000, for gifts made to the Fund for local emergency flood response and assistance. Christine confirmed that WCLS will post the WCF Resilience Fund information and link on our website, along with other community resources for emergency management and recovery.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie provided a brief, verbal October report and noted that she was unable to provide a written report due to time constraints this month. At the end of October, we had collected 93% of our property tax levy. As of yesterday, collections have increased to 98.8% of our full levy amount, leaving a balance of approximately \$108,000 to collect through the end of December 2021. It is anticipated that the full levy amount will be collected, and we may recoup some late 2020 payments. She will report on levy collections status in January.

Jackie noted the recent receipt of the report from RMC Architects resulting from their system-wide assessment of WCLS facilities. She will do an in-depth review of this report at a future meeting and hopes to include details of recent flood damage at affected WCLS facilities. Work will begin immediately on assessing damages, including coordinating with our municipal partners and their public works departments.

Christine presented Resolution 11/16/21-13 Outlining Annual Holiday Observation, which includes the addition of Juneteenth (June 19) in accordance with the approved 2022 Memorandum of Understanding addendum to the current collective bargaining agreement. This resolution also recognizes the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day.

Claudia moved approval of Resolution 11/16/21-13 Outlining Annual Holiday Observation, as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Christine introduced WCLS's new Human Resources Manager, Beth Andrews, and welcomed her. Beth greeted attendees and spoke of her background and recent employment with the Community Food Co-op in Bellingham.

It was 9:30 a.m. at this point in the agenda, and the public hearing was posted for 9:40 a.m. To maintain this posted time, the trustees opted to begin addressing policy updates in the meantime.

Policy Updates

- a. **COVID-19 Vaccination, Testing, and Face Covering Policy 12.54** – Christine presented the new policy, which addresses the recent federal mandate and OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS). While the ETS is currently being contested in court, we have prepared this policy in the event it is upheld.

Christina noted that, since the publication of the agenda packet, we have added the following language as the second sentence in the policy's Purpose Statement: "In the event that the OSHA ETS is overturned and there are no equivalent state requirements, this policy will be vacated or amended as necessary."

Christina reviewed the policy in detail, which includes suggested language from the OSHA guidelines. She noted the OSHA standard's December 6 requirement for a complete roster of employees with vaccination status. Christina answered questions about acceptable testing methods, and there was further discussion on exemptions, accommodations and legal courses of action. Lori asked about requirements regarding contractors or subcontractors, and Christina replied that we do not have to track them, as their employer would be responsible for such. Christine clarified that only state employers have to track subcontractors. Claudia questioned the case for retroactive pay for staff members to get vaccinated and Beth commented that this issue, which is under debate, was a topic of a recent legal seminar she attended.

The Chair moved approval of COVID-19 Vaccination, Testing, and Face Covering Policy 12.54 as presented and amended. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2022 Operating Budget Revenue Sources and Preliminary Budget

Resuming the scheduled agenda, Marv announced the beginning of the public hearing on proposed 2022 operating budget revenue sources and preliminary budget.

Jackie reviewed the estimated beginning and ending funding balances for 2022, highlighting the impact of the projected 2022 year-end operating deficit of \$387,000. She noted that, while a decrease in the ending fund balance was previously projected for 2021, that deficit is likely to be closer to zero.

Jackie presented the proposed 2022 Operating Budget Revenue Sources and Preliminary Budget, detailing items contained therein, fiscal impacts upon them, and changes from 2021. She called attention to the Departmental Summary. There were no questions from the trustees or other attendees. She presented Resolution 11/16/21-14 Authorizing an Increase in the Regular Property Tax Levy, followed by Resolution 11/16/21-15 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2022 Preliminary Budget.

Rod moved approval of Resolution 11/16/21-14 Authorizing an Increase in the Regular Property Tax Levy. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Claudia moved approval of Resolution 11/16/21-15 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2022 Preliminary Budget, as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area

Christine recapped the requirement for a 60% supermajority approval to pass the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area ballot measure this November. Since the proposition currently has a 59.3% approval, and considering the remaining votes to be counted, it appears that it will not pass. She has spoken with members of Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) and other supporters of the campaign, and there is a consensus to bring this measure back up to voters as soon as possible while there is still strong support for it. Preliminary analysis of the precincts indicates areas where we need to increase our information distribution, and other pertinent taxing entities are not planning to submit competing propositions in early 2022. We estimate needing \$45,000 to run the ballot measure again, which will be included in our 2022 Budget; Christine recommends drawing down from the Facility Ownership and Library Services Fund Reserve for this purpose. Jackie will present the final budget next month.

Planning to get the proposition on the ballot in February 2022, Christine presented Resolution 11/16/21-16 Requesting the Establishment of the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area. She reiterated that the language in the resolution has remained unchanged from the June 15 approved resolution, except for the dates. Christine confirmed that the LCFA boundaries also remain unchanged.

Rod moved approval of Resolution 11/16/21-16 Requesting the Establishment of the Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

FOBBL members in attendance thanked the trustees for approving this resolution and pledged their continuing efforts to garner support for the proposition.

Erika left at 10:30 a.m. to attend another meeting.

Policy Updates (continued)

The board continued its review of the remaining two policy updates.

- b. Temporary Reassignment Policy 12.15** – Michael shared updates to the policy, which would allow for access to holiday pay benefits for staff in a temporary reassignment situation. This situation occurs very infrequently, funds for this purpose are already included in the budget.

Claudia moved approval of the updated Temporary Reassignment Policy 12.15, as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval, with Erika absent at the time of the vote.

- c. Management Benefits and Leave Policy 12.20** – Jackie presented the updated policy, which clarifies that management staff are not eligible for holiday pay for Easter, which is a WCLS closed day.

Rod moved approval of Management Benefits and Leave Policy 12.20, as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval, with Erika absent at the time of the vote.

Break

Marv adjourned for a break from 10:35 to 10:45 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

Christine recounted a recent incident in which our payroll processing company, Paylocity, made errors in federal income tax withholding deductions from staff paychecks. WCLS's Payroll Specialist, Dana Pallas, valiantly worked

to assist Paylocity in correcting the errors before payroll was released. Paylocity, however, was unable to make their corrections in a timely manner, so necessary adjustments will be reflected in the next pay period. Christine applauded Dana's diligent efforts and care in trying to resolve this matter for affected staff, all of which were promptly advised of the situation.

Christine reported that we continue to have problems with patrons' noncompliance with the mask mandate, especially at certain branches. Enforcing the mask mandate adds to daily stress for branch staff members, with some patrons being deliberately aggressive and challenging, sometimes to the point of verbal abuse. Lynden Library Manager Dianne Marrs-Smith shared specifics of occurrences at her branch. Marv asked if the Lynden Police Department had been called in any of these instances. Dianne replied that they have been trying to avoid doing so, in an effort to be flexible and establish and maintain relationships with the public as they follow and uphold the law. Now, due to continued escalation of this confrontational behavior, branch staff may more frequently utilize trespass procedures and request police assistance. Lori thanked Dianne for being so patient, level-headed, reasonable and proactive. Claudia echoed Lori's appreciation.

Christine presented the 2022 Draft Board Meeting Schedule and asked for trustee input. The trustees approved the schedule with the contingency of remote meetings as conditions allow and require.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael highlighted the success of Lynden Assistant Manager Wendy McLeod's presentation of "Whatcom's Historical Places". She has been invited to repeat her presentation for the Washington State Retiree's Association. Michael recapped the results of a recent study examining the various pathways visitors use to access our website. He also mentioned the six book returns, sporting our iconic blue with a full-color logo, that we have replaced this year.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and elaborated on his team's recent Storytime institute, a deep dive into storytime and how things connect. He noted that the organizational restructuring that his department has been undergoing directly affects the team's improved ability to serve the youth in our county. The team now consists entirely of Youth Services professionals who help in the branches, versus the prior structure in which branch staff helped out with Youth Services in an ancillary capacity. Thom expressed his appreciation for Children's Services Coordinator Theresa Morrison, who oversees the storytime program and planned and organized the Storytime Institute. He shared a storytime experience in which a regular storytime attendee was participating via phone while another child in the program excitedly helped to describe what was on the book's page so that the child on the phone could better visualize the material. This experience highlights the many ways we reach our patrons and underscores the passion of staff and patrons and the importance of making connections.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary reviewed her written report and reiterated the success of this year's programming, some of which we've been able to record and to which we are now adding closed captions. She recognized Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay for his audio and video editing skills and the team of staff that are helping with closed captioning.

Mary thanked Lori and Claudia for sharing their guidance and input for 2022 at the recent quarterly marketing meeting and highlighted the Whatcom READS community partnerships and events, commending Adult Programming Coordinator Ann McAllen for her work arranging a wide array of accompanying programs that explore themes for the 2022 featured title, *Greenwood*, by Michael Christie.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael presented the report, noting no major changes in patterns month over month. Print circulation is roughly 80% of 2019 and holding steady, while electronic circulation continues to increase. Read & Share events contributed to favorable program numbers in October.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

Christine noted that Erika Lautenbach's first term as trustee is ending January 31, 2022 and that Erika has already re-applied with the Whatcom County Executive to serve another term. The trustees requested that, on their behalf, Christine submit to the Whatcom County Executive their recommendation of Erika's re-appointment for a second term.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Christine confirmed there will be no WCLF board meeting this month. December's meeting will determine the 2022 budget. Marv reported that the Foundation has two new board members, Cheryl Fear and JoAnn Johnson.

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

At 11:20 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 11:35 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 Executive Session were moved to the Executive Session Breakout Room.

At 11:35 a.m., all meeting participants rejoined the Main Session and Marvin reconvened Open Session.

Executive Director's Annual Review

Rod reported that the Board has completed the Executive Director's 2021 annual performance review and provided recommendations for her 2022 leadership goals, as well as approved a 4.5% increase in the Executive Director's annual salary, the same rate as the Bargaining Unit's salary rate increase for 2022.

Claudia moved to approve the Executive Director's 2021 annual performance evaluation and salary increase as discussed during today's Executive Session. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine announced she will email the Facilities Assessment report to the trustees for their review prior to the December meeting. She added that, if any of them would prefer a paper copy, to please contact Ruth.

Christine advised the trustees that their "I Believe in Libraries" Sasquatch T-shirts are available for pick up at Administrative Services, with many thanks to the Whatcom County Library Foundation for providing them. More WCLS "I Believe in Libraries" merchandise is available, as noted in Mary's report, at wcls.org/merch. The Foundation receives a small commission on merchandise sales.

The trustees agreed that December's meeting will be held remotely via Zoom.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Next Meeting
