



APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

January 18, 2022

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; Erika Lautenbach and Rodney Lofdahl. Absent: Claudia Disend, Secretary.

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 Human Resources Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Brooke Pederson, Island Library Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Deena Garza, Audit Manager, and Karyna Orcutt, Assistant Audit Manager, Washington State Auditor's Office.

Call to Order

Marvin determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., followed by his reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement and sharing of its personal importance to him.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

State Auditor's Office Audit Exit Conference

Deena Garza, Audit Manager, and Karyna Orcutt, Assistant Audit Manager, both with the Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO), presented their Financial and Accountability Audit Report following their examination of specific areas of the library system's records for the period of January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020. It was determined that WCLS was in compliance, in all material respects, with the areas audited this period, including accounts payable, self-insurance for unemployment, open public meetings, and financial condition. No material deficiencies in internal control, nor instances of noncompliance, were identified. In their opinion, the information was fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole. The draft audit report is included in the board meeting agenda packet, and the final report will be published publicly after this meeting.

This year's audit costs were in alignment with the initial estimate provided in the audit engagement letter. The next Accountability Audit will be performed in 2023 for January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022. For budgetary purposes, an estimate of audit costs for 2023 is provided in the audit exit packet.

The presentation included a list of resources at the SAO, and the audit team thanked Jackie for all of her work during this audit. Jackie acknowledged her gratitude for the efforts of the audit team and her appreciation of the culture of SAO and ease of audit process. There were no questions for the audit team.

Consent Agenda

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

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- December 1-15, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1028428666-1028428673, (Voucher Nos. 549812-549956) Totaling \$196,814.86 and December 16-31, 2021 Payroll: Nos. 1028628754-1028628757, (Voucher Nos. 549965-550115) Totaling \$191,525.24.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$78,003.70; \$26,549.91 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2021-39G: Warrant Nos. 1137323-1137338 Totaling \$21,955.63
- Claim 2021-40G: Warrant Nos. 1137544-1137567 Totaling \$167,476.28
- Claim 2021-41G: Warrant Nos. 1137908-1137929 Totaling \$33,928.26
- Claim 2021-42G: Warrant Nos. 1138214-1138244 Totaling \$214,374.27

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2021-23C: Warrant No. 1137568 Totaling \$4,025.00
- Claim 2021-24C: Warrant No. 1137930 Totaling \$270.00
- Claim 2021-25C: Warrant No. 1138374 Totaling \$942.40

Management Leave Carry Forward:

According to the Management Benefits and Leave Policy, accrued vacation leave in excess of 240 hours cannot be carried forward without prior approval from the Board of Trustees. The following vacation balances in excess of the carryover maximum are approved by the Board of Trustees for carryover and use in 2022:

Mary Vermillion – 1.74 hours

Lori moved approval of the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Financial Report: Finance Committee Report and Facilities Assessment Overview

Jackie reviewed her report, including 2021 debt write-off amounts comprised largely of the removal of debt older than six years. Since WCLS practices cash basis accounting, these write-offs do not require an adjustment to Accounts Receivable nor do they impact the fund balance. She will present a complete review of fiscal year 2021 at next month's meeting.

Jackie presented an overview of the Facilities Assessment performed by RMC Architects on all WCLS facilities and commended RMC on their professionalism and detailed recommendations for each facility. She shared these recommendations, which accompanied each facility's floor plan, and noted that there were no items listed that required immediate attention. WCLS owns the Administrative Services and North Fork facilities. Jackie will be

sharing the reports with the building owners of the other branch facilities. She will provide an update to the five-year Capital Plan and budget amendments at next month's board meeting.

Jackie stated that these recommendations have also been reviewed with the Finance Committee, and reminded the trustees that binders of RMC's complete Facilities Assessment are available for review at Administrative Services. She also has PDFs available, a complete set of which Marv requested on a thumb drive. Jackie will provide that to him this week.

Review of 2021 Incident Reports

Jackie reviewed a summary of 2021 Incident Reports, noting that there were more reports in 2021 than 2020, but fewer than in 2018 or 2019. The 2021 Incident Reports reflect a decrease in property damage and an increase in disruptive patron behavior and harassment or threats to staff. Many of these increased incidents, as well as the three trespasses issued last year, were related to COVID-19, particularly mask mandate enforcement.

At this point in the agenda, the meeting was running about 40 minutes ahead of schedule, so it was unanimously agreed to address the policy, COVID-19, and Birch Bay updates before the break.

Policy Updates

Christine presented an update to the Fixed Asset Policy 20.05 that includes language to clarify that real property, such as a house, pole buildings or other structures, may be designated surplus by the library Board of Trustees and outlines methods for their subsequent disposition. This draft policy revision has undergone legal review.

Erika moved approval of the update to Fixed Asset Policy 20.05 as presented. Seconded. Motion carried with unanimous board approval.

COVID-19 Update

Christine reported that Human Resources Manager Beth Andrews has had a busy couple of months since she started with WCLS in mid-November keeping up with COVID-related policies and procedures. This includes the OSHA ETS regarding mandatory COVID-19 vaccination, the federal implementation of which has now been blocked by the Supreme Court for employers of 100 or more other than healthcare workers. Rod asked about the possibility for state application, and Beth replied that Governor Inslee is still evaluating that option. Jackie clarified that the Governor's mask mandate is still in effect, and it is only vaccination that is under debate.

Christine thanked Purchasing Agent Kaye Huck and the Community Relations team for their work coordinating the system-wide distribution of free at-home rapid antigen tests provided through Unity Care Northwest as part of a federal program. Personal interaction in the distribution effort at branches is being limited to reduce potential COVID exposures. Michael reported that there is a huge demand for these tests throughout the county, and WCLS branches distributed a full pallet of tests in about a day. We anticipate more pallets, but availability is unclear, and logistics are still being determined.

Christine noted that, as part of the City of Bellingham's cautious response to the pandemic, many city offices will be scaling back public services. Unable to restore full public hours yet, Bellingham Public Library (BPL) is closed to the public starting today and will be exclusively providing curbside services. BPL will be bringing materials from the Barkley and Fairhaven branches back to Central to better support curbside services operation. WCLS is staying open to the public at this time, and BPL patrons have the choice to shift holds to WCLS locations.

In response to recent questions by a WCLS staff member about options available for front-line staff concerned about exposure, Beth spoke about previous provisions of the now-discontinued FFCRA. Jackie said that WCLS has a pandemic shared leave pool for those that have become ill, and Christine confirmed that the leave pool covers illness, not prevention. Marv asked if we have had to close facilities or reduce service due to pandemic exposure.

Michael replied that we have not yet had to do so. He briefly reviewed plans in place to maintain services while mitigating staff exposure risks, as well as preparations for location closures or shortened hours, should conditions require.

Current cleaning protocols, upgraded air filters, and increased ventilation at facilities was discussed. Erika confirmed that transmission is still predominantly person-to-person, versus via surface contact. Beth reviewed the latest CDC isolation and quarantine guidelines, which are reflected in our internal procedures.

Rod asked about the status of Sumas employees and patrons, now that the branch has been closed due to flooding. Michael said those staff members are working at other locations. One staff member is in Sumas Tuesdays and Thursdays, working to help Sumas residents with FEMA applications. He added that a holds pickup lockbox is currently being utilized in Sumas. Our plans to begin implementing Bookmobile services this month have been held back due to lack of restrooms. We are in the process of having a portable toilet facility set up there.

Birch Bay Library Update

Christine spoke about community awareness efforts this month prior to the special election on February 8. WCLS just sent out an informative email to all subscribers in the Birch Bay area recounting the details of the measure's narrow miss in the November 2021 election and the opportunity to vote on it again this February.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 9:57 - 10:10 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted 2022's new strategic framework, WCLS CARES. She reported that donations to the Sumas Library Repair Fund are still coming in and expressed thanks to Friends of Blaine Library and Friends of Lynden Library for their gifts and support of their neighboring Friends group. Christine noted Collection Development Librarian Mary Kinser's upcoming book review in the *Salish Current*, expanding our reach. Whatcom READS is happening now, and next week's event is with a luthier, who makes stringed instruments, something which is featured in this year's selected title, *Greenwood*. Christine expressed appreciation to Lisa Gresham and the Collection Services team for their Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) grant participation.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that a low-vision magnifying reader and adjustable table, generously donated by [Northwest Eye Surgeons](#), [Vision Matters](#) and the [Whatcom County Library Foundation](#), are in use at the Ferndale Library. He recalled the county's inclement weeks of weather at the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 and reported on the roof leak at Deming and loss of heating and subsequent frozen water pipes at North Fork. He thanked Mark Barrett, Facilities Management Coordinator, and Katrina Buckman, North Fork Branch Manager, for their efforts during this time. Michael noted the harsh weather gave us the opportunity to refine our process on closures, as well as utilize phone support staff to answer about 150 calls, as we continue to adapt and provide services during the pandemic and severe weather.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and focused on Summer Reading 2022 and the long planning cycle for this program. The Youth Services Team has evaluated feedback on 2021's program and have responded with modifications. The ongoing influence of the pandemic impacts in-person programming and pushes us to prepare for multiple eventualities, helping us to be in a position of being ready to pivot at the last moment. Thom extended special thanks to Sarah Lavender, Youth Services Librarian at Ferndale; Nick Flerchinger, Teen Services Librarian at Lynden; Amy Jones, Communications Specialist; and Jenn Rick, Foundation Development Director, for their work on the program. He noted that, with the addition of Hana Boxberger as YS Assistant, and her prior experience with youth books, the YS team is excited to move forward fully-staffed.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report and celebrated the launch of the Friends of the Library online bookstore, which started in March 2021. Its big success includes cohesive, collaborative work and new relationships, as well as a new service to patrons and community. Mary expressed her thanks to all involved and invited everyone to see what's available. The Power of Sharing campaigns are ongoing across digital platforms and Mary noted that the latest campaign, "You Need Me Time," has had a really positive response. Mary discussed the performance of Community Resources page, which has also been shared on many of our community partners' pages. Michael and Online Services Coordinator Neil McKay are working to update that page to keep it dynamic, benefiting the community in response to needs. Marv asked if we could coordinate with Erika and the Whatcom County Health Department to provide COVID updates. Mary will discuss it with Michael and Neil. In the Zoom chat, Lori asked if we could include the link(s) to the free at-home COVID-19 testing kits. Ruth will contact Michael and Neil to relay Lori's request.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael pointed out that a little circulation for Sumas in December resulted from transactions completed at the Everson branch. Print circulation for 2021, compared to 2019, is only down about 25% and total circulation is down 18%, demonstrating a rebound this year. Electronic circulation is up compared to 2019, but down a bit compared to 2020. Door counts remain down compared to 2019, but our volunteers are back! We have seen a 95% increase there since 2020, when volunteer hours were only related to the Friends online bookstore. Michael noted that upcoming reports will no longer show 2019 pre-pandemic figures, 2022 figures being compared to 2020 and 2021 activity.

Michael reviewed the digital and database usage statistics, remarking on *Us Weekly* magazine's place at the top of the most-checkouts list again last month, as well as the eAudiobook of the Whatcom READS title, *Greenwood*, taking the #3 position. He noted that Kanopy streaming video usage is up, nearing some of the pandemic highs, with new content added to Kanopy, and its inclusion in the Libby app. Kanopy's additional promotion was confirmed by Marv, who said that Kanopy is now featured on Roku, and Thom, who noted Kanopy is also on Apple TV. CreativeBug usage saw almost a 250% increase during November and December after being included in the November "You're Feeling Crafty" Power of Sharing campaign.

Regarding electronic circulation, Marv questioned the 20% drop on eMusic and 55% drop on eMagazines. Lisa Gresham replied that the drop in eMagazines is attributed to the decrease in access with RBDigital, which had automatic new issue checkouts for subscribers, versus Overdrive, which sends a notification of new issue availability but no automatic checkout. The difference in platforms creates an apparent reduction of use, with the prior statistic being falsely elevated by automatic checkouts instead of active checkouts. Freegal, our eMusic platform, seems to have a core group of users but is not growing in usage, perhaps due to competition with Spotify, Pandora and other streaming audio platforms. Christine added that Neil McKay's recent Freegal promotions, including listening lists and conversation featured on this month's podcast, may yield an uptick in next month's statistics.

