



APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

March 15, 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; 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 Human Resources Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Ann McAllen, Adult Programming Coordinator; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Liz André, South Whatcom Branch Manager; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: None.

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the February 15, 2022 Regular Meeting of the WCLS Board of Trustees as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- February 1-15, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1029074104 -1029074108, (Voucher Nos. 550434 - 550581) Totaling \$207,374.86 and February 16-28, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1029208923 -1029208926, (Voucher Nos. 550587 - 550733) Totaling \$184,459.08.

- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$86,118.36; \$27,680.43 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2022-02G: Warrant Nos. 1140315-1140341 Totaling \$133,333.07
- Claim 2022-03G: Warrant Nos. 1140671-1140678 Totaling \$41,643.86
- Claim 2022-04G: Warrant Nos. 1141821-1141840 Totaling \$110,995.49
- Claim 2022-05G: Warrant Nos. 1142282-1142304 Totaling \$78,926.18

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2022-01C: Warrant Nos. 1140342-1140343 Totaling \$995.15
- Claim 2022-02C: Warrant Nos. 1140696-1140697 Totaling \$1,184.99

Authorization to Reissue Paychecks:

- Resolution 03/15/22-03 to reissue paycheck 1026998357

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

Financial Report: Finance Committee Report and Resolutions

Jackie reviewed her report, including the February Notes and Highlights section, remarking that it has been necessary to access cash flow reserves during the current property tax revenue trough. She pointed out upfront annual funding sources, including support from the Whatcom County Library Foundation and payment received for a library services contract with the Whatcom County Jail, as well as front-loaded annual expenses for software licensing fees and insurance. Jackie noted that flood insurance for the Sumas Library is scheduled to be paid in April and the policy premium expense will be slightly higher than last year because we are increasing coverage on the contents of the building. She reported that we have received preliminary approval for the full amount of our flood insurance claim and the adjuster has submitted it to the carrier for payment.

Jackie highlighted the recent bequest received by the Friends of the Island Library (FOIL), which they are using to fund the installation of air conditioning equipment at the Library. After being approached by FOIL, WCLS will contribute an additional \$2,000 to allow for the purchase of a heat pump that is capable of providing both heating and cooling. This investment in an energy-efficient heating and cooling system is expected to be more cost-efficient in the long-term, while also reducing propane use, furthering our financial and environmental stewardship goals.

When questioned by Rod about flood insurance coverage at the Everson Library, Jackie replied that we have the maximum allowable coverage offered through FEMA, the primary coverage source since the building is located in a flood plain. She confirmed that this amount is intended to replace building contents only, since we are not the building owner. Lori asked if library building owners have adequate coverage on those facilities. Christine answered that our Service Agreements stipulate both WCLS and building owners must have sufficient liability insurance, and Jackie offered to verify requirements in the Agreements.

Policy Updates

Jackie presented a revision of the Fund Balance Management Policy 20.03, explaining that the fund balance classifications listed in this policy have been revised to reflect current state Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS) guidelines. She reviewed how the State's classifications apply to our budget classifications.

Claudia moved approval of revisions to the Fund Balance Management Policy 20.03 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Jackie presented a revision of the Purchasing and Contracting Policy 20.04, noting that this policy has been updated to reference current WCLS policies and removes a reference to an outdated section of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). She thanked Ruth for her attention to detail in reviewing and maintaining WCLS policies and procedures.

Claudia moved approval of revisions to the Purchasing and Contracting Policy 20.04 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Christine presented a draft of Shared Leave Policy 12.55, which was updated with the input of legal review, including a title change to “Shared Sick Leave Policy.” She said that, after talking to our attorney, Karen Funston, and reviewing IRS rules, we see taxability and other limitations on sharing any kind of leave other than sick leave.

Christine reviewed the history, limitations and usage of other sources of shared leave currently available within the system, Pandemic Shared Leave and the Union Banked Leave Share Pool. As its current balance is depleted, the latter will be phased out and replaced by the Shared Sick Leave Bank, as proposed in this policy. She confirmed that union members on staff have been consulted and surveyed, and the majority are in support of this new policy, which allows them to share their benefits with all of their co-workers in need.

Christine, Jackie and Beth reviewed the details of the policy, pertinent state guidelines, and WCLS vacation and sick leave accrual parameters as they responded to trustees’ questions.

Rod moved to approve the Shared Sick Leave Policy 12.55 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Thom presented a revision of the Borrower’s Policy 4.01, noting that this revision to the policy adds the educator card, which will allow teachers to use materials with their students, as well as the ConnectED accounts, and codifies our authority to waive lost materials on a limited basis. The revision also reorders the categories of eligibility, updates language to reflect current WCLS policies and adds the Write-Off of Uncollectable Debts Policy to the list of Related Policies. It was agreed to amend the policy to explicitly state the inclusion of homeschools in item B(4). Lori expressed thanks to Thom and the Youth Services team for their work to be inclusive and reduce barriers to library services countywide.

Claudia moved approval of the revised Borrower’s Policy 4.01 as amended. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

COVID-19 Update

Christine reported that WCLS is following the governor’s guidance lifting the mask mandate effective March 12. While WCLS is no longer requiring face masks in our facilities, we are still making masks available for patrons and staff members who wish to wear them. She commented that branch staff were still experiencing mask-related confrontations as of Friday, March 11, and hopefully the lifting of the mandate will reduce such interactions. Christine clarified that curbside service is still available, and we are seeing an uptick in some communities. She said that WCLS plans to continue this service, which appears to be helpful in a variety of cases, further enhancing accessibility.

Michael noted that COVID-19 rapid tests for home use are available at WCLS branches. Lori inquired if our Community Resources page directs people to the Fire Department. Michael replied that, because tests are not always available at WCLS or Fire Departments, our page includes links to the USPS and federal program sites. Lori suggested we add links to the Fire Departments’ Facebook pages, which appear to be updated regularly. Michael will investigate this suggestion further.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 9:47 – 10:00 a.m.

Trustee Education: Whatcom READS

Mary Vermillion and Ann McAllen, Adult Programming Coordinator, presented an overview of the Whatcom READS program and highlights from the 2022 season featuring *Greenwood*, by Michael Christie. Ann talked about the history and origins of Whatcom READS and noted that some in attendance, such as Lisa Gresham and Christine, have been part of the community-wide program since its inception in 2008.

Whatcom READS, Northwest Washington's premier literary event, promotes reading and community connection, engagement and sharing. The event also includes Whatcom WRITES, in which writers submit a piece in response to a prompt inspired by the year's featured book. Written pieces are then curated into an annually published anthology, with the past few anthologies including an author-submitted piece. Several community partners are regulars, such as Village Books, with annual book sales and venue support, and Allied Arts of Whatcom County, with their annual Art Challenge that invites local artists to explore themes in the year's book selection and submit their work for display at the Allied Arts Gallery. Ann and Mary demonstrated how each year's title selection influences the programming and community organizations and businesses involved, from venues to themed cocktails. With diverse programming, related materials, and venue size and location, Whatcom READS is able to reach and engage a wide variety of people.

Mary expressed her gratitude for the contributions from our community partners and engagement across the county over the years. She thanked everyone at the Deming Library for their assistance during the kickoff author event of 2022, which was our first big public gathering since the onset of the pandemic. She lauded author Michael Christie for helping to create an ambiance of small fireside chats, which helped to ease the transition back to in-person events, and for his participation in book club discussions, interactions with the Allied Arts Gallery, and being a guest on the WCLS podcast.

Mary reminded everyone that this year's Allied Arts collection is still on display and directed their attention to [Whatcomreads.org/videos](https://www.whatcomreads.org/videos) for recordings of 2022 events. She announced that next year's selection is *The Cold Millions* by Jess Walter, which includes some history of Washington state and its workers and labor movement. "Between Fact and Fiction" is the 2023 Whatcom WRITES prompt.

Marv thanked Ann and Mary for an excellent presentation. Christine noted that WCLS takes the lead in this event and she appreciates all those involved. She remarked that we have been fortunate to find authors willing to work within our budget. Everyone involved with Whatcom READS does their best to show these authors a good time, hoping they feel appreciated and valued after their visit to Whatcom County.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine noted that, even though the Birch Bay Library was not agenda item this month, we are continuing to gather data for the June Facilities Retreat, which will focus on all WCLS facilities. With pickleball now our official state sport, we are investigating the addition of pickleball equipment to our collection as part of our Library of Things. She reiterated that Michael will be heading the April Board of Trustees meeting in her absence.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael thanked Olesya Moroz-Farias, Page at the North Fork Library, for coordinating the effort to install cedar picnic tables behind that branch with the help of the Friends of the North Fork Library. The addition of the tables has created an inviting outdoor community space, which backs up to a wooded area. This branch is planning a ten-year anniversary celebration—a year late due to the pandemic—on June 4.

Following a suggestion from last month's meeting, Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay compiled usage data on our Community Resources page. Michael reported on daily page views 11/17/2021 – 01/16/2022, highlighting that the data shows how promotion, such as a patron email campaign or a social media post, increases activity on the page. He commented on the dynamic nature of the page, with content driven by local events and promotion of tools, such as the most recent update that points people to tax season resources. Michael introduced Liz André, South Whatcom Branch Manager, who is the project manager for this effort. Liz talked about the development of the process to add, review and update resources on the page. She emphasized that we want it to be a living tool, responding to community needs, and expounded on the process and criteria for selecting and reviewing resources. Liz demonstrated the new user-friendly buttons, the latest updates to the page. She noted that future considerations include a persistent search bar and pinning selected resources at the top of the page for quick reference.

Marv shared his appreciation for their work and offered a suggestion to provide information on how to evaluate the validity of resources and identify misinformation, such as the Poynter Institute. He also recommended coordinating seasonal page content with Community Relations to create a loop between *Explorations* topics and events, the WCLS landing page, and other WCLS media. Bringing people back to the resources page is extremely useful, as demonstrated by Neil's graph depicting activity spikes in response to promotions. Michael and Liz thanked Marv for his comments. Lori added that she would like us to consider including resources for disaster preparedness, as well as response, such as direction to CPR or First Aid classes. Liz confirmed that we do have some disaster preparation resources, and will look at fleshing them out some more. Claudia noted the progress and relevance of this project and thanked Lori for her suggestion of a Community Resources page last year.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and talked about school outreach. Prior to the pandemic, the Youth Services team had been able to talk to each student one-on-one in their classroom each year. During the pandemic, our access had been limited. In the time that we had previously utilized being present with students, we are creating tools and directories to reach students. About 50% of people in school libraries around Whatcom County have turned over this year, and we are working to develop a directory with the help of the Community Relations team. Thom reported that he receives 700-800 publisher review copies of youth books each year and has been leading the effort this year to deliver care packages to second and fifth-grade classrooms, creating the opportunity for students and our staff to be uplifted and make new connections. We are all looking forward to the fall and meeting students in person.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report and referenced the Whatcom READS presentation. She noted that the Power of Sharing campaign rolls on, complete with promotion on bus sides. The campaign is performing well, with higher than average returns. Mary hoped that everyone received their copy of *Explorations*, which has been mailed to all county households. She briefly recapped the *Whatcomics* and *Forest of Words* anthologies and directed attention to the compilation of press releases and news clips in her report. Mary thanked Community Relations Aide Suzanne Carney for tracking and compiling this media information for the monthly board report and expressed appreciation to the Branch Managers for their publicity work and news clips.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael commented that in February 2021 WCLS was limited to curbside services only. This year, we are experiencing the Sumas Library closure and service on the Bookmobile in February He

