



## APPROVED MINUTES

### Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

April 19, 2022

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#### Location

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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.

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#### In Attendance

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**Trustees:** Marvin Waschke, Chair; Claudia Disend, Secretary; and Rodney Lofdahl. Absent: Lori Jump, Vice Chair; and Erika Lautenbach.

**Staff:** Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Beth Andrews Human Resources Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and President of Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL); Neil McKay, Online Experience Coordinator; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Ruth Nail, Administrative Assistant.

**Guests:** None.

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#### Call to Order

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Marvin determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., followed by Michael's reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement, which is now included on our website, [WCLS.org](http://WCLS.org).

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#### Open Public Comment

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No public comment.

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#### Consent Agenda

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

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- March 1-15, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1029365420 -1029365425, (Voucher Nos. 550739 - 550883) Totaling \$206,610.42 and March 16-31, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1029509225 -1029509234, (Voucher Nos. 550889 - 551029) Totaling \$209,627.92.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$83,030.02; \$28,122.64 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).

- Claim 2022-06G: Warrant Nos. 1142686-1142698 Totaling \$40,863.37
- Claim 2022-07G: Warrant Nos. 1143003-1143019 Totaling \$11,385.57
- Claim 2022-08G: Warrant Nos. 1143340-1143355 Totaling \$107,961.72
- Claim 2022-09G: Warrant Nos. 1143723-1143748 Totaling \$87,761.41
- Claim 2022-10G: Warrant Nos. 1144267-1144281 Totaling \$33,845.10

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2022-03C: Warrant No. 1143356 Totaling \$25,381.56
- Claim 2022-04C: Warrant Nos. 1143749 Totaling \$540.00
- Claim 2022-05C: Warrant Nos. 1144282-1144283 Totaling \$5,897.79

***Claudia moved approval of the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimous approval.***

Financial Report: Finance Committee Report and Resolutions

Jackie reviewed her report, including the March Notes and Highlights section, remarking that it has been necessary to access cash flow reserves during the current property tax revenue trough and these reserves will be replenished as property tax revenues increase in April in our typical cyclical pattern.

Although downward adjustments were incorporated in the 2022 budget, investment interest revenue continues to be below target. Jackie highlighted that the insurance company waived the \$1,000 deductible on our claim for flood losses at the Sumas Library, and we have received a \$178,100 payment for the full amount of the policy. She confirmed that policy coverage for that location has been increased to \$250,000 this year.

Jackie reported that expenses are in alignment with the budget, and she has begun work for the annual report to the State Auditor’s Office, which is due at end of May. She shared updates on facilities projects and noted that the Everson Library remodel is almost complete, and an open house celebration is being planned for July. Jackie expressed gratitude to the Friends of the Everson Library for funding the custom shelving in the Book Nook there.

Jackie directed attention to the news article referenced in her report. The article details the Washington State Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) launch of a new program to lease forest land for carbon offset credits, versus the selling of forest lands for logging. Since WCLS receives a portion of proceeds from DNR leases in Whatcom County, she will be evaluating how the new program impacts our budget. Marv and Rod shared further comments and details on the DNR project.

Policy Updates

Jackie presented a revision of Shared Sick Leave Policy 12.55, noting the updates to its related policies and inclusion of a sick leave donation form designated for employees separating from employment, who are not required to retain a minimum balance of accrued leave.

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

Jackie presented a revision of Emergency Closure Policy 12.35, which would remove the restriction that employees cannot receive more than eight hours of closure pay in a single day. In the rare case that staff are scheduled to work more than eight hours in a single day, this update would allow them to receive closure pay for all scheduled hours missed due to an emergency closure as defined by the policy.

***Chair moved approval of the revised Emergency Closure Policy 12.35 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.***

Michael presented an updated Patron Service Policy 1.02, which was formerly titled Customer Service Policy 1.02. With input from the staff Diversity Advisory Committee, a change was made in policy title, as well as the updates to the language contained therein, to better reflect our current Mission, Vision and Values and Strategic Goals for 2022-2025.

***Claudia moved approval of the revised Patron Service Policy 1.02 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.***

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## Trustee Education: WCLS Digital Resources

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Michael announced that this portion of the meeting will be recorded to share with trustees that are absent today. Michael displayed the digital content page on our website, which lists the resources alphabetically and features a dropdown box of topic choices. He walked through details and offerings of some of these resources, including Freegal, Consumer Reports, CreativeBug, Kanopy, Britannica Library, Chilton Library, Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest, demonstrating that videos of staff utilizing these resources and offering tips are available on our website.

Lisa spoke about the Gale educational resources listed, which are subsidized by the state, as well as ProQuest CultureGrams, all of which are highly used in county schools and homeschools. She noted that there is a lot of helpful content to be aware of and utilize.

Claudia asked if we have had an easy search engine for our databases. Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay explained how WCLS develops the keyword search box references and answered further questions from trustees. Jenn asked about the difference between Bellingham Public Library (BPL) databases and ours. Lisa explained that we try to match resources with BPL while offering different databases and options based on patron usage in each individual community and necessary digital bandwidth. Jenn asked if there was a way to redirect someone to BPL, if there was a database that BPL offered that WCLS did not. Michael replied that we will investigate that possibility, noting that we are currently highlighting our options to optimize staff training.

Michael shared the digital and database usage metrics that Lisa compiles monthly, noting that we continue to see increases in online usage. Lisa added that login sessions or page views are ways to measure usage and applauded the efforts of Mary and the Community Relations team and their commitment to sharing databases in their messaging. Some databases with increasing usage are Consumer Reports, Novelist, Newsbank, and ValueLine.

Michael indicated that some databases are experiencing decreased usage, such as Freegal. He shared some statistics about U.S. Recorded Music Revenues by Format (RIAA), and the trajectory of vinyl recordings, as well as the reduction in downloads and paid (and unpaid) music streaming. Neil talked about efforts he has put into promoting Freegal, including creating custom music playlists and talking about it on the WCLS podcast. Michael reported that Chilton's and Peterson's Test Prep database usage is also down. These are valuable resources, and, whereas it would be difficult to keep a print collection current, digital versions are updated nearly instantaneously.

Michael noted that another invaluable resource offered is the Washington Rural Heritage Collection, in which we have four collections. In 2021, this resource had 14,000 views, and results come up with a regular Google Search, making it extremely accessible.

Marv commented that Peterson Test Prep is a vital part of service to the community and suggested to Mary that her team feature a promotion of this resource.

Michael stopped recording the presentation. The trustees agreed to take a break before the Birch Bay update.

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Break

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Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:16 – 10:20 a.m.

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## Birch Bay Update

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Michael provided the trustees with an update on recent media attention regarding the Birch Bay Library project. In preparation for the Board Facilities Retreat in June, Michael asked if the trustees would prefer a separate meeting to address Birch Bay or if they wished to receive updates at our regular board meetings, emphasizing that the June retreat must address all WCLS facilities.

The board opted for updates at the regular monthly meetings at this time, and Marv asked Michael to summarize the Birch Bay considerations, including former options. Michael recapped that former options included a phased approach of systematically upgrading the facilities at Birch Bay and a joint Blaine-Birch Bay Library Capital Facility Area (LCFA). Michael said two options now include putting a portable structure on the improved site or using the \$2 million state grant funding to renovate the 1500 square feet available on the first floor of the existing house so that it can be utilized as a library facility. He underscored that WCLS is not currently looking to sell the property.

Marv talked about the investment in the property so far and the potential to develop it, as well as the challenges of a LCFA approval and voter support for a community-funded project.

Michael shared the Addendum to Purchase and Sale Agreement and the language therein regarding easement access for restroom/laundry facilities to the RV park behind the planned Birch Bay Library site. He noted that the RV park property was sold last year and the current owner has until July to remove the restroom facility from WCLS property and replace it elsewhere on their property. Alternately, WCLS could opt to extend the easement period. Marv would like further legal review on extending the easement with clarification that we can terminate if the new park owner does not act.

Claudia expressed concerns about using funding for first floor usage, because it limits forward movement and may not meet the needs expressed by many in the community. Michael acknowledged that pursuing this option will commit us to roughly ten years in that facility.

As Michael continues to gather data, the trustees confirmed their desire to have Birch Bay Library discussions over the next couple of regular meetings, unless Michael's findings indicate a need to do otherwise.

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## Staff Reports: Executive Director

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In Christine's absence, Michael shared her written report.

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## Staff Reports: Deputy Director

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In addition to his written report, Michael highlighted the focus on community and coming together. He shared recent examples of such events in communities surrounding the North Fork and Sumas branches.

Michael noted that the Everson Chamber of Commerce has dissolved. The big summer event in Everson is moving forward with the engagement of local groups, and the library is joining the festivities with its coinciding open house celebration.

Michael recapped his findings derived from conversations with the Washington Department of Commerce (DOC), as outlined in his report. He expressed the system's desire to keep pushing forward to use these funds with a scope change subject to DOC review and approval.

Rod inquired about our communications with the Blaine community, and Michael replied that WCLS is remaining in contact with the Friends of Blaine Library and conversing about the scope of that project. Jenn is going to meet with them to discuss fundraising capacity and plans for their campaign. Discussion followed about the level of involvement of the City of Blaine in the library building project and its funding.

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#### Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

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In Thom's absence, Michael shared highlights from Thom's written report, which focused on reading lists curated in BiblioCommons to highlight eleven annual commemorations and foster more cultural awareness in our community.

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#### Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

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Mary discussed her written report and highlighted the 2021 Annual Report. She thanked everyone who contributed to the development of the report and highlighted the inclusion of pre-COVID physical circulation data from 2019 compared to 2021. A key takeaway from this comparison is that access to the library's physical materials is critical. When given the opportunity to browse in person, patrons have demonstrated that they preferred doing so.

Mary noted that the ongoing Power of Sharing campaign continues to exceed industry standards in terms of interaction. 99% of this work is done in-house, including voiceovers, with only digital ad placement being outsourced. She shared promotional campaign signage being featured on the sides of WTA buses.

Mary directed attention to the compilation of press releases and news clips in her report, including media coverage about Birch Bay Library, Blaine Library, and the Vogts' letter in the *Northern Light*. She reiterated that she, Christine, and Michael attended the March Friends of Blaine Library meeting to keep them abreast of developments. The trustees thanked WCLS for the response to the Vogt letter. Mary answered questions about any subsequent media response and indicated that it was minimal.

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#### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

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In addition to his written report, Michael noted that 2019 door counts have been included as requested last month. We are showing increases compared to 2021, but still have a way to go to get back to pre-pandemic activity. Responding to Claudia's request for more background behind the increases in year-to-date activity, Michael replied that last March we still had reduced capacity and were not open all months year-to-date, whereas this year there were no capacity restrictions and branches were open all months year-to-date. He thanked Lisa for providing great insights into our digital and database usage, which is still going strong.

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#### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

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No report.

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#### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

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Jenn reported that Library Giving Day (LGD), April 6, was a resounding success. The Foundation has exceeded its fundraising goal for LGD and gifts are still coming in. She provided a breakdown of existing, new, reactivated and upgraded donors and expressed gratitude for all of them. Jenn commented that the Sumas Library Recovery Fund is up to \$32,000 and that funds dedicated to the Birch Bay Library stand around \$160,000. She reported that the

