



APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

July 19, 2022

Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Zoom and on-site attendance at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA.

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; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Ruth Nail, Accountant; Amanda Bonilla, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: Matthew Santos, Blaine resident; and Grace McCarthy, *Point Roberts Press/The Northern Light*.

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment Opportunity

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the June 21, 2022, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting and the June 30 Board of Trustees Special Meeting, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- June 1 - 15, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1030516220 - 1030516223, (Voucher Nos. 551642 - 551789) Totaling \$212,673.43 and June 16 – 30, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1030386033 - 1030386040, (Voucher Nos. 551796 - 551942) Totaling \$207,112.20.
- Claims 2022-18G: Warrant Nos. 1148595-1148624 Totaling \$132,167.12
- Claims 2022-19G: Warrant Nos. 1148696-1148713 Totaling \$20,035.70
- Claims 2022-20G: Warrant Nos. 1149379-1149403 Totaling \$123,323.62

Capital Fund:

- Claims 2022-08C: Warrant Nos. 1148625 - 1148626 Totaling \$1,171.56
- Claims 2022-09C: Warrant Nos. 1149404 - 1149405 Totaling \$1,868.22

There were no questions. Claudia moved approval of the Consent Agenda as amended. Seconded. Unanimous Board approval.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, providing insight into the compilation of the June financial report in the absence of QuickBooks. She has been closely tracking our financial activity and it aligns with our typical pattern. Jackie confirmed that she was able to prepare a report of our warrants to meet our policy and legal obligations that the Finance Committee and trustees review them, and she noted that the warrant detail has been reviewed by the Finance Committee. Marv concurred with Jackie's statement and commented further.

IT Services/Network Update

Christine gave an update on our network status and thanked the IT Services Team for their efforts to ensure that public services are up and running, allowing for a nearly seamless patron experience at our branches and online. Administratively, we are utilizing this opportunity to accelerate our transition to the Microsoft 365 and Teams environment. She briefly outlined further network goals being evaluated, some of which may require a budget amendment, that will be addressed in more detail at future meetings.

Marv offered his input regarding library services in the cloud and the maintenance of separate databases based on functionality. He thanked the IT Department for their diligence and forethought.

Geoff thanked Marv and added to the network update. With our old phone hardware reaching the end of its life, the IT team is evaluating cloud-based hardware for our new phone system. The transition to Microsoft 365 was already part of the 2022 Strategic Action Plan and the replacement of our phone equipment was on the near horizon. Both items are now being prioritized as we restore operations, keeping data security first and foremost in our considerations. Geoff expressed appreciation for staff's patience and willingness to embrace the challenges and learning opportunities during this transition. Christine commented that we have been in close communication with our partners in the management team at the Bellingham Public Library who have been very gracious and helpful in this endeavor.

Policy Update

Travel Policy 12.53 – Christine reviewed the reasoning behind the changes in the policy, which would allow WCLS to pay a small stipend to prospective employees traveling to WCLS for an interview, or to new employees relocating to Whatcom County for a position with the library system. She clarified that the stipends would be based on budget availability and approved by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis. Christine and Jackie answered trustees' questions about the policy and update.

Rod moved approval of the changes to Travel Policy 12.53 as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Birch Bay Library Scope Change Update

Michael recapped the history of the construction project and funding, including details on site preparation and proposed building modifications to provide approximately 1,700 square feet for indoor library services and 6,000 square feet of outdoor program space. He confirmed that, with the approval of the Board last month, he has initiated the scope change process with the Department of Commerce (DOC). We are still waiting to hear

back from the DOC, and an answer may be 3 weeks to 8 months in coming. Michael is hopeful that, since the funds are already allocated, the DOC will allow those funds to be applied to the revised project.

Michael commented that *The Northern Light* ran an article, <https://www.thenorthernlight.com/stories/wcls-board-of-trustees-proposes-to-renovate-vogt-home-for-birch-bay-library,20559>, about the Board of Trustees' decision to pursue this scope change option. Public comments are available for viewing when reading the article online.

Michael answered questions from the trustees, including those about the Departmental of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) process, LEED Silver qualifications, project funding, permitting requirements and codes, and project escalation costs. He clarified that the submitted scope change request takes into consideration current cost estimates and permitting requirements—not those on the original plan—and our previous work informs our current plan.

With the meeting running ahead of schedule, the trustees decided to move ahead with staff reports and take a break later.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

Christine announced that we have a new Administrative Assistant on board, being trained by our outgoing Administrative Assistant, Ruth Nail. Christine introduced Amanda Bonilla, who briefly spoke with the trustees.

Christine shared an update from Carol Oberton, Facilities Planning Coordinator, on the progress of enhanced electrical work being done at the Sumas Library building on behalf of WCLS. This work is scheduled to be inspected this week, after which the contractor for the City of Sumas will proceed with a reconstruction plan scheduled to be approved this month. That work is anticipated to take about fifty (50) days to complete, after which we should be able to move back into the facility. Initially, some temporary fixtures may be used while we manage supply chain delays and wait for final fixtures to be delivered. We will be able to offer in-person services as soon as we get approval from the City. Responding to Marv's question, Christine confirmed that we can reasonably expect to re-establish library services there in the September to October 2022 timeframe.

Christine briefly recalled an easement agreement at our Birch Bay property allowing the previous owners of a neighboring property access across our property to a restroom facility. This easement dissolved with new property owners and we have given them a temporary easement while they get permits to remove the facility in the coming weeks. Lori inquired if our insurance would cover us in the case of a temporary easement. Jackie confirmed that we have general coverage and will investigate the temporary easement further. She will also verify the insurance coverage, including any riders, of the contractors utilizing the easement to complete this work.

Christine thanked resigning trustee Claudia Disend for sharing her insights and positivity. This will be Claudia's last meeting. Claudia replied that she has truly enjoyed working with the board and staff and will remain a devoted fan. The rest of the Board extended thanks to Claudia.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael talked about the success of the June ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the Everson Library renovation. The event was attended by the Everson Mayor and other City Council members, WCLS and WCLF trustees, State Sen. Sefzik, State Rep. Shewmake, Whatcom County Executive Sidhu, and representatives of the family who gave the bequest to the library that helped fund the restoration. Paul Fullner shone in his new role as Everson and Sumas Library Manager as he spoke publicly about the library and its importance in the community.

Michael reported that Island and Point Roberts branches have expanded summer hours, with the increased population and activity seen in those communities in the summer. We have hired some temporary Page support for these expanded hours, with the added benefit that these trained staff may offer future coverage as subs.

Michael commented that library services at the branches and online were maintained despite network issues, parking lot closures, and other challenges. We were able to continue connecting with patrons and they were able to continue connecting with us. Lori shared a very positive recent experience in which a patron expressed how impressed they were with WCLS services.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:10-10:18 a.m.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared details about in-person programming being coordinated by Youth Services, including regular Storytimes and Summer Reading at all locations and the bookmobile, services at the migrant camps in Lynden, and Shakespeare camps at Ferndale and Lynden. He reported that the Pride in the Park event at Marine Park in Blaine went over tremendously well, and even a swarm of bees did not hamper celebrations.

Christine extended kudos to Blaine Library Youth Services Assistant Marie Guenette for coordinating the Pride in the Park event and the splendid work of all the other staff and volunteers involved. Christine expressed thanks to Blaine Library Manager Jonathan Jakobitz and Human Resources Manager Beth Andrews for their support, as well as the Whatcom County Library Foundation for their contribution and Friends of the Blaine Library for their volunteerism. Matthew Santos commented that he had the opportunity to attend with his family and was impressed with staff engagement and the sense of inclusivity in the community.

Responding to Marv's question, Thom provided his assessment of the involvement of kids in programming pre-COVID, during the COVID closures and in-person at present.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

In Mary's absence, Christine shared that media releases and book reviews continue to be published despite challenges with network and software access. She highlighted the recent story in the *Cascadia Daily News* about our network situation. Lisa added that, as *CDN* transitions to a subscription basis, we have asked *CDN* to work with NewsBank for digital access, which will allow WCLS to provide digital subscription access. Lori suggested that we put that up on our webpage, and Lisa will consider doing so once details are finalized with NewsBank. She noted that the once-weekly free print copies will continue to be distributed at the branches in the current manner, and we are prepared to maintain branch availability when the print version also moves to paid subscriptions.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Christine extended a big thank you to ILL (Interlibrary loan) & Circulation Specialist Mike Kusick and his resourcefulness rebuilding the performance statistics spreadsheet to provide this information for the Board report. Michael reported that, with the network outage, we do not have Wi-Fi or internet session counts now, nor do we have door counts for the month of June. Christine noted that our door counters are network-based, so we may have an asterisk for a while. Michael added that Branch Managers say attendance has exploded and Marv asked if manual count estimates would be feasible. With input from Branch Managers, Michael will explore options to manually calculate door count estimates while the network is being fully restored.

Christine highlighted the impressive check-out volume at Sumas, even though we are operating out of a book locker there. Michael expounded on the ILL activity between WCLS and BPL (Bellingham Public Library), noting that current numbers for 2022 match 2019 numbers. During 2020 and 2021, those numbers had increased as services at WCLS branches were more readily available while BPL had limited hours due to COVID closures and construction at the main branch. He has recently received program attendance updates, which will be reflected in next month's report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No report this month. Christine said that we hope to have a new trustee in August, pending the County Council's confirmation of the County Executive's appointment. To adequately prepare for union negotiations in the fall and the Executive Director's Annual Review immediately thereafter, we will need to address at next month's meeting which one of the trustees will be filling the Personnel Committee position being vacated by Claudia.

Christine noted that we plan to have interest-based bargaining training this year provided by the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC). All trustees are invited to attend.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

No WCLF report this month. Christine noted that there is no meeting this month and reminded attendees that the Foundation's annual fundraising event, Branch Out, is scheduled for Friday, September 9, 2022, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Bellwether Event Center.

Announcements and Adjourn

Next month's meeting is scheduled for Ferndale, with Zoom availability. As the meeting date approaches, the trustees will determine if the primary location will be Zoom or the Ferndale Library. Christine thanked Ruth for being a liaison to the Board and is reassured that Ruth is remaining with WCLS and will be available to assist Amanda in her role as the new Administrative Assistant.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on August 16, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. online via Zoom and at the Ferndale Library.

Address: 2125 Main Street, Ferndale, WA 98248

_____/s/
Marvin Waschke, Board Chair

August 16, 2022
Date

_____/s/
Ruth Nail, Accountant