
Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Zoom and in-person attendance at Ferndale Library, 2125 Main Street, Ferndale, WA 98248.

In Attendance

Trustees: Marvin Waschke, Chair; Lori Jump, Vice Chair; Matthew Santos and Rodney Lofdahl. Absent: Erika Lautenbach, Secretary.

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) President; Alix Prior, Ferndale Library Manager; Ruth Nail, Accountant; Em Olpinski, Administrative Assistant.

Guests: None.

Call to Order

Marvin determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m., followed by a reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement by Michael.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the September 20, 2022 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- September 1-15, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1031426552-1031426556, (Voucher Nos. 552564-552710) Totaling \$201,312.24 and September 16-30, 2022 Payroll: Nos. 1031559487-1031559489, (Voucher Nos. 552717-552865) Totaling \$194,001.07.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$83,982.55; \$27,785.24 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2022-29G: Warrant Nos. 1153263-1153276 Totaling \$75,197.43
- Claim 2022-30G: Warrant Nos. 1153552-1153569 Totaling \$26,508.28
- Claim 2022-31G: Warrant Nos. 1154029-1154053 Totaling \$82,046.69
- Claim 2022-32G: Warrant Nos. 1154639-1154655 Totaling \$109,075.35

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2022-15C: Warrant No. 1153277 Totaling \$7,425.00
- Claim 2022-16C: Warrant No. 1154656 Totaling \$12,241.16

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

Christine thanked Ruth for taking minutes today and introduced our new Administrative Assistant, Em Olpinski. Em shared that they are a recent Western Washington University graduate, with a focus in environmental studies, and are excited to learn more about library administration. Alix Prior, who began at WCLS in September as the new Ferndale Library Branch Manager, also joined the meeting.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her written report, including the September Notes and Highlights section, and emphasized that it has not been necessary to access Cash Flow reserves. We expect tax revenue to arrive after the October 31 property tax payment deadline.

Jackie detailed the adjustments to specific revenue and expense items addressed in the proposed 2022 amendment to the 2022 General Fund Budget. She and Christine answered questions from trustees regarding the adjustments, followed by Jackie's presentation of Resolution 10/18/22-11 amending the 2022 General Fund Budget.

Matthew moved to approve Resolution 10/18/22-11 amending the 2022 General Fund Budget, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Closed Session to discuss 2023 Wage & Benefit Negotiations and Memorandum of Understanding

At 9:20 am, Board Chair Marvin Waschke moved the meeting to Closed Session, as per RCW 42.30.140, to discuss the 2023 Wage and Benefit Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with the Bargaining Unit. It was announced that the Closed Session would end at 9:35 a.m. At 9:35 a.m., Marvin reconvened Open Session briefly to announce a 15-minute extension, from 9:35 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.

2023 Wage and Benefit Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding

At 9:50 a.m., Marvin reconvened Open Session for final action on the 2023 Wage and Benefit Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding.

Rod moved approval of the 2023 Wage and Benefit Agreement with attached 2023 Salary Structure, and the Memorandum of Understanding which revises and clarifies the current bargaining agreement. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

2023 Budget Projections

Jackie presented a draft of the 2023 WCLS General Fund Budget, noting that it includes 2022 projections based on year-to-date actual revenue and expenditures through the end of September 2022, and that the 2023 projected percent changes reflect comparisons to these 2022 projections. She summarized the draft budget, which has been reviewed by the Board Finance Committee. Jackie explained that a public hearing is scheduled at next month's meeting for the proposed 2023 operating budget revenue sources and preliminary budget, after which the Board will have the opportunity to adopt the budget.

Jackie addressed an inquiry by Lori about Labor & Industries reclassifications. In response to Marv's question, she clarified that we are still maintaining the system's goal of spending 13% of operating expenses on collection materials, but including the cost of professional services associated with maintaining the collection in that

calculation. She explained that we have historically transferred intergovernmental revenue, such as that from timber and leasehold taxes, out of the general fund to the capital fund. Next year, however, we will retain them in the general fund to help address the \$609,000 projected year-end operating deficit. Jackie noted, and Rod concurred, that we have the option to transfer any such unused revenues from the general fund to the capital fund at the end of 2023.

There were no other questions for Jackie regarding the draft budget. Discussion followed regarding the 2023 projected operating deficit, comparison of historical projected and actual deficits, and the likelihood and degree of an actual deficit at the end of 2023. The conversation included property tax levy limits, rates and constraints, and a future levy lid lift.

Break

Marvin adjourned for a break from 10:20 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.

2023 Strategic Action Plan Draft

Christine shared a draft of the 2023 Strategic Action Plan, including ongoing and new projects, for Board input. Community-centered strategic projects proposed for 2023 included partnering with Friends groups for a “Jazz at the Library” program series; conducting a geographic and demographic analysis to better identify areas of the community that we are not reaching; and celebrating WCLS at community events, much in the way we did in 2019 for our 75th Anniversary year. Lori suggested a QR code or special landing page to help quantify how these public events generate an increase in cardholders.

Access-oriented projects include renewing our Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Lynden and continuing discussion with the City of Blaine about the library facility there. Expanding the Books by Mail program and holds pick up in county schools will be a primary focus of the new Mobile Services-Distribution Manager joining WCLS on December 5. Construction on the Birch Bay Library is planned, pending approval from the Department of Commerce or our project scope change request. Michael reported that, while general sentiment to date is favorable, we probably won’t hear anything definitive until December 2022, at the earliest. Christine noted that, while we are still planning on restoring library services to the Sumas community before the end of 2022, a big reopening celebration will likely be happening early next year.

Teen Services Coordinator Tamar Clarke is invested in a project designed to increase digital literacy among teens that is supported by our participation in a UW information literacy grant. Book Discovery through various means and media, as well as Writing for Readers staff training, are two other projects for the coming year.

In the category of equity, a new Public Services Assistant-Cultural Liaison position, with a focus on our Punjabi community, has been created for 2023, with shifts to be divided between the Blaine and Lynden libraries. The posting and hiring process for this position is anticipated to begin early next year. 2023 also includes plans to expand EDI Staff Training.

Levy lid lift planning and preparation will be a main area of stewardship focus in 2023 and 2024, along with implementing cybersecurity audit recommendations and Microsoft 365 staff training. Hiring a Facilities department head, another new position created for 2023, also tops the list, with many facilities projects on the horizon. Beginning the Sustainable Libraries Initiative toward the end of next year will further inform our evaluation of the library system’s facilities and vehicle fleet, supplies, policies and materials, and other areas we can work on to meet sustainability goals.

Marv commented that he was really inspired by the digital literacy project, and the trustees expressed support for this comprehensive plan. In light of a pending levy lid lift, Matthew encouraged the management team to hold All Staff Learning Day and Branch Out events in our service area, versus Bellingham. Christine noted that the Whatcom County Library Foundation had previously held Branch Out at Shuksan Golf Club, and she will communicate this venue consideration to the Foundation’s Board.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine thanked trustees Lori Jump and Matthew Santos for joining all of WCLS staff at the 2022 ALL Staff Learning Day (ASLD) held on October 7, remarking that it was the first in-person ASLD since 2019. Lori inquired about the possibility of a future ASLD being held on a Monday, versus the historical Friday. Michael thanked Lori for her input and responded that Fridays had been chosen because they have fewer open hours than Mondays, but we will consider Mondays as an option in the future.

Christine highlighted the cultural significance of the Day of the Dead / Día de los Muertos celebration coming up on Saturday, October 29 at the Lynden Library. Lori recounted her experience at one of the ASLD sessions and saw how the staff's work was manifested in this Día de los Muertos event.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael commented that all events held at our libraries are not necessarily library events, with various organizations meeting in our spaces to support the needs of our community members. He noted the new Island Library sign, which is illuminated at night. Michael recounted an emergency phone call he received last week from Ferndale Library Manager Alix in which she reported a fire behind the branch; she said she could hear the flames from the library. Fortunately, the Fire Department responded quickly and extinguished the fire.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

In Thom's absence, Christine shared his written report and highlighted the fireside stories events. She expressed that the act of listening and reading together is powerful and important and should be celebrated.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She noted that it is National Friends of Libraries Week and dedicated time to acknowledge and appreciate these groups and their contributions. Mary encouraged everyone to support the Friends of the Library, by attending fundraising events and book sales, including the Friends Online Bookstore. Participating Friends groups have earned a shared income of roughly \$2,500 from the online shopping platform over the past two years. An additional priceless benefit of the online store has been the opportunity for Whatcom County Library Friends groups to connect, work together and learn of each other's challenges.

Mary recapped the plans for next summer's Friends' Jazz Series and September's media coverage. She urged attendees to click on the "KUOW - Sound It Out" link in her report and listen to a patron talking about our Point Roberts librarians helping out with ArriveCan app challenges, with additional interviews of Michael Cox and Lizz Roberts.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael highlighted that our YTD physical circulation is up 9% from September 2021 to September 2022. While YTD electronic circulation is down 6%, eBooks and eAudiobooks continue to see strong use. Factors contributing to the apparent decrease in electronic circulation include the 2021 eMagazine platform change, which yielded a downward adjustment of procedurally-inflated circulation numbers, and a genuine drop in eMusic circulation.

Door counts continue to increase over 2021. We are still working on getting back to pre-COVID numbers, with some branches seeing a faster return than others. September was Library Card Sign-Up month, and we saw an uptick in new borrowers last month. In-branch internet sessions and WiFi sessions are both up significantly, as are adult and children's programs attendance numbers.

Lisa reported that the number of unique Overdrive users continues to see amazing increases, adding that she and ILS Administrator Carmi Parker are investigating usage trends on Overdrive. They are reviewing Added Copies Fund (ACF) versus Simultaneous Use Packages (SUP) to evaluate SUP utilization and sustainability. If the evaluation is favorable, Lisa is considering adding more SUP on eBooks to help take pressure off Always-Available titles and a constrained budget. She noted that Kanopy has not quite bounced back to prior pandemic levels. Her team is investigating trends and seeing how this video database usage is tied to the school year. Currently, The Great Courses content is highly viewed on Kanopy, and we can see that patrons are viewing Kanopy content from different countries, perhaps while on vacation or traveling.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Marv reported that the Foundation Board did not have a quorum in October, so the WCLF meeting is rescheduled for November. Mary directed attendees to episode 25 of the [WCLS podcast](#), which features an interview with Jenn Rick, Foundation Development Director.

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

At 11:25 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 11:55 a.m. At 11:55 a.m., Marvin reopened the meeting briefly to announce that the Executive Session will be extended another ten minutes from 11:55 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. At 12:05 p.m., Marvin again reopened the meeting briefly to announce that the Executive Session will be extended another five minutes from 12:05 p.m. to 12:10 p.m.

Marv reconvened Open Session at 12:10 p.m. Rod indicated that the trustees have discussed the Executive Director's performance in 2022 and goals for 2023. The trustees are recommending the same rate increase in her salary as the rest of the Bargaining Unit for 2023. This rate increase will be announced after the Union membership ratifies the agreement on November 4.

The Chair moved that the Executive Director be compensated in alignment with performance increase rates specified in the Bargaining Unit Agreement for 2023. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine announced that Mary Vermillion would like the Board of Trustees present to say a few words for a video message to present to the Friends of the Library.

Marvin adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be November 15, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. online via Zoom and at the Ferndale Public Library.
Address: 2125 Main Street, Ferndale, WA 98248.

/s/
Marv Waschke, Chair

11/15/2022
Date

/s/
Ruth Nail, Preparer