



Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

In Attendance

Trustees: Rodney Lofdahl, Chair; Matthew Santos, Holly Robinson, John Miller and Danielle Gaughen.

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; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Angelina Kuchar, Youth Services Assistant.

Guests: Scott Hylton, Assistant Audit Manager, and Christy Fazio, Audit Lead, from the Washington State Auditor's Office.

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Trustee Education: Serving Neurodivergent Preschoolers

Youth Services Assistant Angelina Kuchar joined the Board of Trustees meeting to give a presentation on Serving Neurodivergent Preschoolers and speak about the Sensory Storytime interventions she hosts at the Deming and North Fork branches. Angelina has also created a sensory kit to keep at the front desk for neurodivergent patrons to use as needed. Patron responses regarding these kits have been positive.

Holly inquired if these kits would also assist WCLS staff to be more vocal about their neurodivergent needs. There may be more staff feedback once kits are available at every branch.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the January 16, 2024, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- December 16-31, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1036724673- 1036724675 and voucher nos. 557123-557271 totaling \$210,257.30 and January 1-15, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1036896920- 1036896921 and voucher nos. 557278-557428 totaling \$ 223,065.15.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services, annual insurance premiums and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$134,830.73; \$35,216.46 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, state paid family medical leave and long-term care fund premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2023-51G: warrant nos. 1182958-1182976 totaling \$51,953.88
- Claim 2023-52G: warrant nos. 1183218-1183233 totaling \$31,915.88
- Claim 2023-53G: warrant nos. 1183440-1183464 totaling \$40,840.61
- Claim 2024-01G: warrant nos. 1182977-1182983 totaling \$9,912.74
- Claim 2024-02G: warrant nos. 1183465-1183472 totaling \$101,330.11
- Claim 2024-03G: warrant nos. 1184096-1184109 totaling \$81,259.36
- Claim 2024-04G: warrant nos. 1184644-1184661 totaling \$54,013.28

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2023-25C: warrant no. 1183234 totaling \$2,496.96
- Claim 2024-01C: warrant nos. 1184662-1184663 totaling \$1,412.31

Authorization to Void Warrants

- Resolution 02/20/24-01 voiding warrant 1180405
- Resolution 02/20/24-02 voiding warrant 1184987

Approval of Interlocal Purchasing Agreement with Washington Learning Source

John moved to remove the 2024-01-16 UNAPPROVED Minutes from the consent agenda and vote on them separately without the new Trustees. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Matthew moved to approve the 2024-01-16 UNAPPROVED Minutes. Seconded. Approved with abstentions from John and Danielle.

John moved to accept the remaining Consent Agenda items. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the 2023 End of Year budget review and proposed 2024 budget amendment. Jackie reported that there were two property tax valuation disputes that resolved in 2023 and impacted our property tax revenue. In one case the property owner was required to pay back taxes and WCLS's share of this was around \$230,000. This money is in abeyance and will be withheld from our 2024 levy. The second case resulted in a tax payment refund to the property owner. WCLS's share of this was approximately \$63,000. Overall, we ended the year with an operating deficit of \$17,779.

The 2024 General Fund budget amendment shows a reduction in estimated property tax and timber tax revenues, as well as an overall reduction in operating expenditures. The Capital Fund budget does not include any new projects but moves forward projects that were budgeted for 2023 but not completed. Rod inquired if there were any planned new positions for WCLS in 2024. There are no new positions planned for 2024.

Christine stated that the legal representative for WCLS, Dan Gotlieb, is retiring soon. Dan has been providing services to WCLS at a discounted rate and is assisting WCLS in finding someone at his firm to take on his library

clients. The new representation may not bill at a discounted rate, and this will be considered for the budget beyond 2024.

Christine spoke about the budget, previous board decisions, and the upcoming Levy Lid Lift. Danielle inquired about the timeline for the Levy Lid Lift.

Rod moved to accept the Budget amendment. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Update

Michael reviewed the findings of the Birch Bay Library Express Design Committee from interviews with the architectural firms. The Committee appreciated the enthusiasm, energy, and familiarity that Osborn Architects, Inc. demonstrated for this venture and made the decision to recommend the firm for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Project. More information will be shared at a public meeting to discuss the choices and recommendations for moving forward with the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Project.

Rod moved to approve Christine to engage in contract negotiations with the design firm recommended by the Birch Bay Library Express Design Committee. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

WA State Auditor's Office Exit Conference

Scott Hylton, Assistant Audit Manager, and Christy Fazio, Audit Lead, from the Washington State Auditor's Office presented the results of the 2022-2023 state audit for WCLS. Overall, it was a great audit and WCLS had no issues or areas of concern.

The state audit team would like to thank Jackie Saul and the Finance team for all the wonderful communication and organization that assisted in a smooth audit on both sides.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:24 to 10:35 a.m.

Policy Updates

Information Technology Services Policy 9.01 – Geoff presented this new policy. The final high-priority recommendation resulting from last year's Cybersecurity Audit was the implementation of an IT Services Policy that clarifies the IT Services Department's responsibilities and role in providing technology services to staff. Background about the 2022 cyber security event that WCLS experienced which prompted this policy to be drafted was also given for context to trustees who were not sitting on the Board during that time.

Christine recognized Geoff for all the work that has gone into this policy and review and updating of existing IT policies and procedures by the IT Department.

Rod moved to approve the new Information Technology Services Policy 9.01, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Annual General Meeting

Election of officers and assignments to committees was discussed. Christine shared the previous practices of the Board of Trustees concerning the appointment of Trustees to vacant officer positions. The Board reviewed the slate of officers:

President – Rod Lofdahl

Vice President – Matthew Santos

Secretary – Holly Robinson

Danielle moved to approve the slate of officers. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Discussion continued about committee assignments and the following was decided:

John Miller – Personnel Committee, IT Services Committee

Holly Robinson – Marketing Committee, Personnel Committee

Rod Lofdahl – Finance Committee, WCLF Liaison, Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Design Committee

Danielle Gaughen – Finance Committee

Matthew Santos – Marketing Committee, IT Services Committee, Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Design Committee

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the Study Session held by the Blaine City Council regarding the affordable housing and library project. The topic was left unresolved at the end of the Council meeting. WCLS management team has done a risk assessment related to the project and Christine touched on a few of the potential concerns, risks, and financial implications associated with this project.

Part of WCLS's Strategic Action Plan is to offer day-of election voter registration assistance at the branches. This is not feasible for the Whatcom County Auditor's Office at this time but may be revisited in the future.

Naloxone kits, provided by Washington State Department of Health, have been supplied to the branches for distribution to patrons.

WCLS has been awarded \$45,000 in funding to install Electric Vehicle charging stations at a few of our locations. Christine recognized Ryan Cullup for his work on the grant application.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that exhibit spaces across our libraries assist in creating uniqueness among the branches. Some spaces double as meeting and exhibit spaces. These spaces help us learn about the patrons in each community and the local culture.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and highlighted the book Marjory Saves the Everglades and the patron experience that encountering this book in the library had for a local family. He spoke about how patrons from different backgrounds can make connections when reading the same book. After hearing a story about a teen using her ConnectED account to access materials, Thom reminded the Board that the statistics shown each month are real experiences happening and impacting patrons.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She noted that Whatcom READs events are happening now. She encourages Trustees to attend some of these events. Tamar and Christine have been working on a digital literacy project for WCLS. There is quite a bit of interest in this project by the public as indicated by website visits and patron interaction with the webpage and links.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that the trend of growth in the use of digital materials and the decrease of the use of print and physical materials has continued. Door counts for the branches have continued to increase as well as new patrons signing up for library cards.

