



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Whatcom County Library System
March 18, 2025

Via Teams and Administrative Services
5205 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226

WCLS Vision: *An engaged community where curiosity is cultivated, literacy flourishes and democratic ideals thrive.*

1. 9:00 a.m. **Call to Order.** Quorum determined. Land Acknowledgement.
We are on the ancestral homeland of the Nooksack, Lummi and other Coast Salish peoples. They have been its stewards since time immemorial, respecting the land, river and ocean with the understanding that everything is connected, related and alive. We acknowledge the elders and their collective and individual plights and achievements. We consider the legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together today. And we pursue ongoing action, to build lasting relationships and grow together so that all may prosper.
2. 9:05 a.m. **Open Public Comment Opportunity**
This period is set aside for persons wishing to address the Board. Each person may have up to three minutes for this purpose. Written comments may be submitted to Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.
3. 9:10 a.m. **Welcome New Trustee, Jessica Stugelmayer**
4. 9:15 a.m. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Meeting Minutes
 - b. Expenditures
 - c. Authorization to void a warrant
5. 9:20 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Finance Committee Report
6. 9:25 a.m. **Levy Lid Lift**
 - a. Resolution 03/18/25-04 Authorizing a Levy Lid Lift Funding Initiative
7. 11:00 a.m. **BREAK**
8. 11:05 a.m. **Annual General Meeting – Board Officers and Committee Assignments**
9. 11:10 a.m. **Board Meeting Location and Time**
10. 11:15 a.m. **Staff Reports**
11. 11:20 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
12. 11:25 a.m. **Announcements and Adjourn**

Board of Trustees Meetings are open to the public in accordance with RCW 42.30. The Board is currently holding meetings with options for in-person or remote participation. Persons wishing to be provided with an internet link or telephone number to access the meeting are asked to please email Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org before 4:00 p.m. Monday, March 17, 2025. Written comments may be submitted to Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	3/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Consent Agenda – Board Meeting Minutes, Monthly Expenditures, Resolution to Void a Warrant
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of consent agenda items

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of consent agenda items as presented

Summary:

Meeting Minutes:

- February 18, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- January 16-31, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1041825148-1041825151 and voucher nos. 561570-561727 totaling \$243,807.66 and February 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1042008640-1042008644 and voucher nos. 561733-561887 totaling \$235,851.74.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$107,023.73; \$51,520.87 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental and vision insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2025-05G: warrant nos. 1251688-1251708 totaling \$57,405.69
- Claim 2025-06G: warrant nos. 1252015-1252027 totaling \$113,544.42
- Claim 2025-07G: warrant nos. 1252325-1252356 totaling \$49,644.79
- Claim 2025-08G: warrant nos. 1252680-1252694 totaling \$70,533.21

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-02C: warrant nos. 1251709-1251710 totaling \$2,178.82
- Claim 2025-03C: warrant no. 1252357 totaling \$1,630.00

Authorization to Void a Warrant

- Resolution 03/18/25-03 voiding warrant 1204850

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: Expenditures for approval paid from available 2025 budgeted funds.

Comments: The Finance Committee has reviewed the General and Capital Fund claims listed above. They reviewed that there were no General Journal entries in February.

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

February 18, 2025

Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance at the Blaine Library, 610 3rd Street, Blaine, WA 98230.

In Attendance

Trustees: Rodney Lofdahl, Chair; John Miller and Danielle Gaughen. Absent: Matthew Santos, Vice Chair.

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; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Birch Bay and Lynden Library Manager and Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) President; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Jonathan Jakobitz, Blaine Library Manager.

Guests: Virginia Naef, Friends of the Deming Library; Eric Lewis, Blaine City Council.

Call to Order

Rod determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m., followed by a reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement by Michael.

Open Public Comment

Eric Lewis with the Blaine City Council was introduced.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the January 21, 2025, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- December 16-31, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1041464254- 1041464262 and voucher nos. 561251-561403 totaling \$234,635.02 and January 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1041677506- 1041677510 and voucher nos. 561409-561564 totaling \$239,877.11.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services, annual insurance premiums and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$123,211.63; \$65,400.37 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 2024-52G: warrant nos. 1250002-1250021 totaling \$97,183.90
- Claim 2024-53G: warrant nos. 1250068-1250112 totaling \$112,076.10
- Claim 2024-54G: warrant nos. 1250664-1250677 totaling \$8,507.63

- Claim 2025-01G: warrant nos. 1250022-1250024 totaling \$18,015.43
- Claim 2025-02G: warrant nos. 1250297-1250308 totaling \$181,396.68
- Claim 2025-03G: warrant nos. 1250678-1250689 totaling \$65,959.18
- Claim 2025-04G: warrant nos. 1251380-1251395 totaling \$99,322.87

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2024-27C: warrant nos. 1250025-1250026 totaling \$909.89
- Claim 2024-28C: warrant nos. 1250690-1250691 totaling \$2,820.00
- Claim 2025-01C: warrant no. 1251396 totaling \$5,838.30

Authorization to Void Warrants

- Resolution 02/18/25-01 voiding warrants 1250070, 1250097, 1250101, 1250102 and 1250307

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the December Notes and Highlights section.

The finance report this month includes 2024 year-end and January 2025 information. General property taxes collected for WCLS in 2024 were \$44,570 less than expected.

The county implemented a new accounting system at the end of 2024. Due to this change, investment revenue that would normally post in January 2025 instead posted in December 2024.

Wages and benefits for 2024 were under budget by \$122,000. This is due to position vacancies and unused hours, along with associated benefit costs. The office supply budget was overspent due to inflation and the continued rising costs for office supplies. Collection materials were under budget by \$41,410. This is a payment timing issue that Lisa and Jackie hope to resolve. Tools and Equipment were also under budget and some items will be carried into 2025. Communication was over budget. The rising costs of postage prices were a contributing factor to the higher-than-expected expense throughout 2024.

Although net income was better than projected, WCLS was still operating in a deficit for 2024.

Jackie also briefly reviewed the Capital fund expenses in 2024. There are still plans to install EV charging stations at multiple WCLS locations. However, the charging stations are on back order. WCLS is waiting for the charging stations to be installed before purchasing the replacement electric vehicles which has caused a surplus of funds while the project carries over into 2025.

Jackie reviewed a recent settlement of a property valuation dispute and the impact of the settlement on WCLS levy taxes collected in 2025.

Jackie reviewed the 2025 budget amendment. This included the 2025 beginning balance which has been updated to reflect the 2024 ending balance. She analyzed the increase in costs and the decrease in revenues.

Rod moved to approve Resolution 02/18/25-02 Amending the 2025 General Fund Budget as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Friends of the Deming Library Update

Virginia Naef with the Friends of the Deming Library spoke about the upcoming projects taking place at the Deming Library. The Friends of the Deming Library own and maintain the library building and property it is located on. A few projects happening in 2025 are the installation of solar panels on the new metal roof and a battery pack preventing the library from being impacted by power outages. These improvements are possible because of a grant awarded to the Friends of the Deming Library. The interior of the library is also getting new carpet this year. Carpet installation costs will be split between the Friends and WCLS.

Recently, flooding of a nearby street and culvert impacted the Deming Library and backed up into the yard. The Friends are working with the county to find a solution to the problem before it happens again.

Trustee Education: Blaine Library Tour and Update

Jonathan led the Board and attendees on a tour of the Blaine Library and provided a brief history about the current library building. He spoke about the redesigns and upgrades that are being planned to better utilize the current space.

Michael and Christine spoke about the recent history of plans to rebuild the Blaine Library. WCLS plans to refocus on finding funds for a new Blaine Library building once funding is secured to address the deficit impacting day-to-day operations at WCLS. The upcoming improvements Jonathan spoke about during his tour will help the Blaine Library continue to provide patrons the best possible service until that time.

Eric Lewis thanked Jonathan for the tour and said that WCLS is making great use of the limited space it currently has. He says that when – not if - the new library is built, it will be a great space for the community.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:45-10:51 a.m.

Policy Updates

Required Leave Policy 12.36 – Beth presented this policy update, which clarifies the ability to pay staff when they leave work following work-related incidents. Christine provided an example of when this may happen. Jackie clarified that the updated policy covers incidents that impact mental and physical health. Discussion took place about the difference between what this policy update covers in comparison to L&I. WCLS will always encourage staff to seek medical attention if they are injured to the point they cannot return to work on their next shift.

Rod moved to approve the updated Required Leave Policy 12.36, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Birch Bay Easement

Michael updated the Board about an ongoing matter with a property line at the Birch Bay location. A land survey in 2024 discovered use of the neighboring property is encroaching on the property line towards the back of the WCLS property. There is a tentative agreement between WCLS and the neighboring owner, Edgewater Estates, regarding an easement along an existing fence line to continue to allow the adjacent property owner use of the area. Michael provided a cost per square foot estimate of the affected WCLS property that was used to calculate the cost of the easement. The property owner will also be asked to share the legal fees associated with creating this easement.

John moved to approve the Birch Bay property easement agreement with Edgewater Estates, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Budget Listening Sessions Report

Christine spoke about the two recent Budget Listening Sessions that have happened so far at branches. Trustees discussed their takeaways from the sessions they were able to attend. The remaining Budget Listening Sessions continue at branches through February and into March and will conclude the weekend before the March board meeting. The trustees discussed the timeline for reviewing the feedback from the sessions and the dates the board would need to vote on whether or not to pursue a levy lid lift this year.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted her recent trip to the State Capitol for Library Legislative Day. While there, she spoke with elected officials about re-appropriating grant funding for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express for the next biennium. This was followed by the Washington State Public Library Director's meeting. The Washington State Library relies on federal funding for certain services, including the Washington Anytime Library. Changes at the federal level may impact this popular consortium, which could in turn have an impact on WCLS's ability to offer such a wide variety of eBook and eAudiobooks to patrons.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael presented his written report and thanked Jonathan Jakobitz for his contribution to Michael's report this month.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and highlighted the project to have WCLS library locations added to school bus routes throughout the county. Students could ride the school bus to the public library after school. This will increase library access for youth patrons. Deming and Lynden branch managers are already working towards this goal.

Thom is working with the Opportunity Council to develop a portal for families to access services for their children. Thom will have more information as this project moves forward.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She spoke to the Board about the updated tactics of WCLS's communication plan. WCLS will be segmenting emails going forward to reach patrons on a more individual level and with information that may be of particular interest to them. This was recently tested for Pajama Storytime and it increased attendance at this program immediately.

WCLS's Spanish language phone line will be highlighted in the local media soon. After a brief hiatus, the podcast is back with a new episode.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that numbers between January 2024 and January 2025 may be skewed due to multiple inclement weather closures in 2024. Unique users of digital resources are at a record high since Lisa started tracking these statistics. eAudiobooks are still the most popular digital items accessed. WCLS took advantage of a temporary discount to fill holds for a recently released popular title that had over 200 holds. This opportunity filled most of WCLS's existing holds and lowered the holds queue for the Washington Anytime Library.

The database usage statistics were estimated for January due to an issue with the website used to gather these statistics. The statistics will be updated for the March meeting.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

John and Christine had two interviews with Board of Trustee candidates last week. Jessica Stugelmayer is a highly promising candidate they are recommending for Trustee appointment.

John moved to approve the recommendation of Jessica Stugelmayer for Position 2 on the WCLS Board of Trustees to the Whatcom County Executive. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

WCLS has made an offer to fill the Foundation Development Director position. The candidate is from out of state and is currently relocating to the area, so their start date has not been decided yet. More details to come once the start date has been determined.

Announcements and Adjourn

John would like to have a session about the current strategic plan for trustees in March. Rod asked that it be added to the April board meeting instead. The trustees agreed that April would be a good time to do this as we will have a new trustee by that time.

No further announcements.

Rod adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on March 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

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Rod Lofdahl, Chair	03/18/2025 Date	Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant



RESOLUTION NO. 03/18/25-03

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT
AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF A WARRANT**

WHEREAS, the following warrant was issued as payment to a local vendor for services rendered; and,

WHEREAS, the warrant was lost or not received by the vendor and has not been redeemed; and,

WHEREAS, the vendor has completed an application for duplicate instrument;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County Administrative Services and County Treasurer are hereby authorized to execute the cancellation of the warrant shown below.

Warrant #	Date	Vendor	Amount
1204850	November 25, 2024	Doorman Commercial, LLC	\$130.56

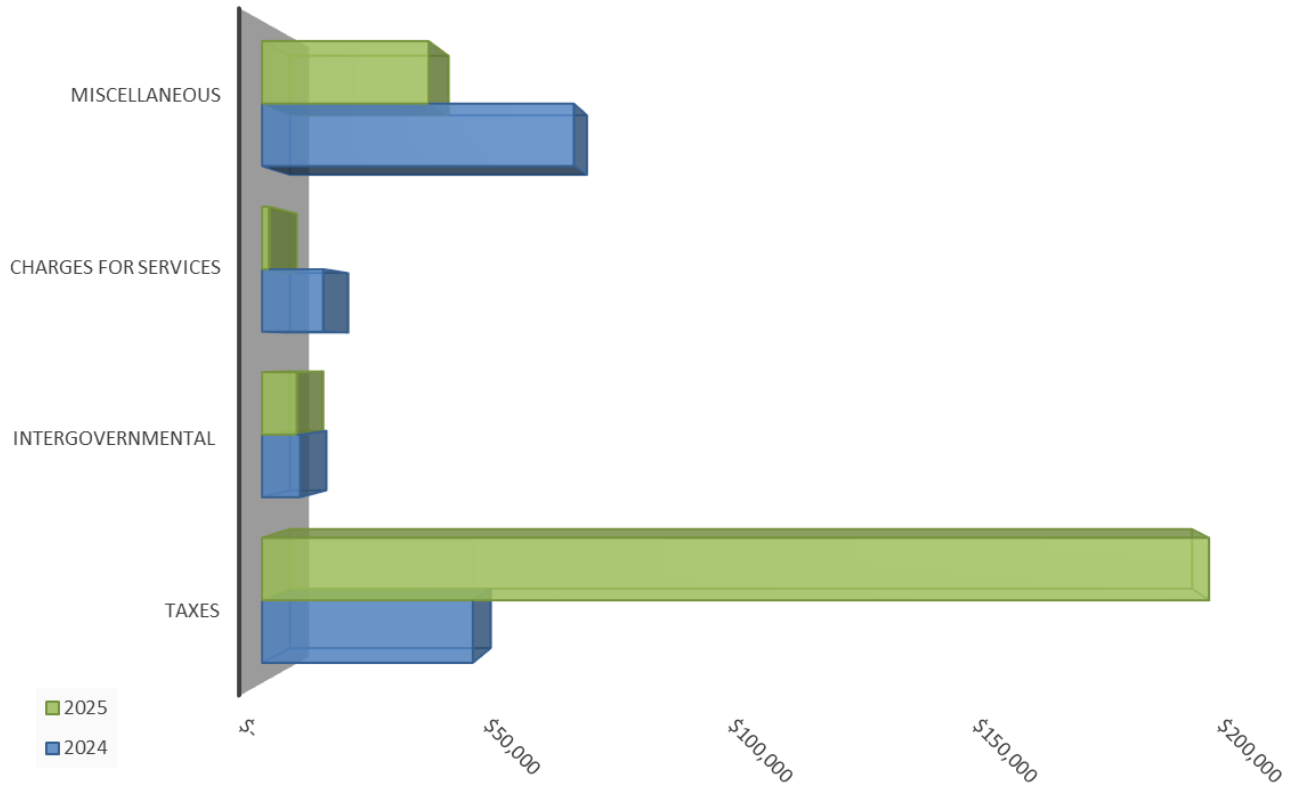
Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 18th day of March, 2025:

Rodney Lofdahl, Board Chair

February Revenue

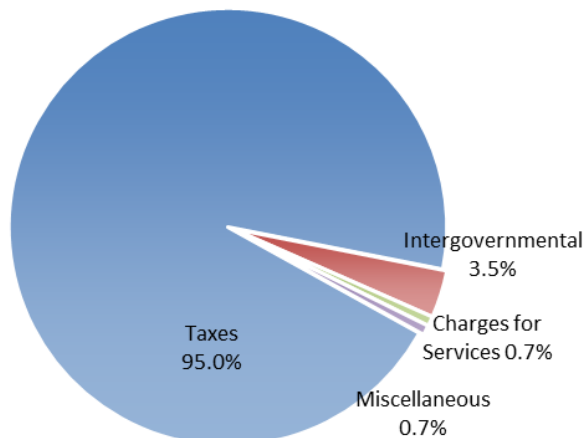
2025 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date						
February 2025 (17% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Revenues	Actual Revenues YTD	% of Actual Revenues YTD	% of Budgeted Revenues Received YTD	Budget Variance
310	TAXES					
311.10	General Property Taxes	\$ 10,153,717	\$ 200,860	81.92%	1.98%	\$ (9,952,857)
	TOTAL TAXES	10,153,717	200,860	81.92%	1.98%	(9,952,857)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	2,000	400	0.16%	20.00%	(1,600)
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	58	0.02%	0.13%	(44,942)
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	6,970	2.84%	23.23%	(23,030)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	77,000	7,428	3.03%	9.65%	(69,572)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	6,000	1,237	0.50%	20.62%	(4,763)
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,400	292	0.12%	2.35%	(12,108)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	18,400	1,529	0.62%	8.31%	(16,871)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	352,000	26,711	10.89%	7.59%	(325,289)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,000	315	0.13%	10.50%	(2,685)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	39,000	5,754	2.35%	14.75%	(33,246)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	10	0.00%	10.00%	(90)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	(0.75)	0.00%	0.00%	(1)
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	22,000	1,375	0.56%	6.25%	(20,625)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	1,197	0.49%	10.89%	(9,803)
369.9105	E-Rate Reimbursement	15,000	-	0.00%	0.00%	(15,000)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	442,100	35,361	14.42%	8.00%	(406,739)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	10,691,217	245,179	100.00%	2.29%	(10,446,038)
390	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES					
395.1000	Proceeds from Sale of Capital Assets	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 10,691,217	\$ 245,179	100.00%	2.29%	\$ (10,446,038)

General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year



Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison				
	2024		2025	% Change
Taxes	\$	44,748	\$ 200,860	348.87%
Intergovernmental		8,147	7,428	-8.83%
Charges for Services		12,994	1,529	-88.23%
Miscellaneous		66,161	35,361	-46.55%
Total Operating Revenue		132,050	245,179	85.67%
Other Financing Sources		-	-	0.00%
Total Revenue	\$	132,050	\$ 245,179	85.67%

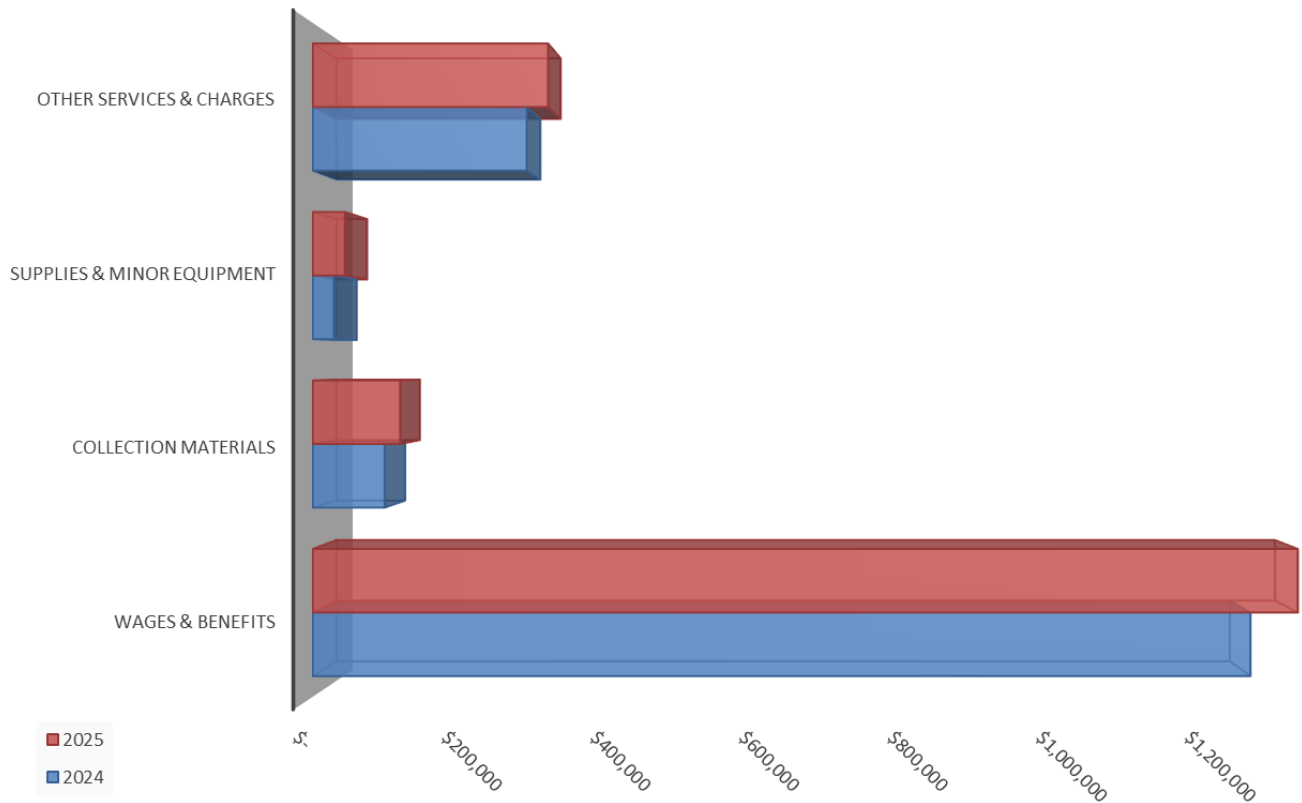
YTD Revenue by category



February Expenditures

2025 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date						
February 2025 (17% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Budgeted Expenditures Spent YTD	Budget Variance
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS					
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	\$ 6,289,075	\$ 1,014,266	54.22%	16.13%	\$ (5,274,809)
572.2000	Benefits	2,210,792	360,397	19.27%	16.30%	(1,850,396)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	8,499,867	1,374,663	73.49%	16.17%	(7,125,205)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	156,570	16,673	0.89%	10.65%	(139,897)
572.3032	Fuel	24,050	1,753	0.09%	7.29%	(22,297)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,275,000	122,296	6.54%	9.59%	(1,152,704)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	217,500	26,655	1.42%	12.26%	(190,845)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,673,120	167,377	8.95%	10.00%	(1,505,743)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	705,465	186,756	9.98%	26.47%	(518,709)
572.4042	Communication	132,088	25,829	1.38%	19.55%	(106,259)
572.4043	Travel	30,600	2,119	0.11%	6.93%	(28,481)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	550	108	0.01%	19.69%	(442)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	22,423	3,694	0.20%	16.48%	(18,729)
572.4046	Insurance	99,537	76,120	4.07%	76.47%	(23,417)
572.4047	Utilities	166,424	23,120	1.24%	13.89%	(143,304)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	112,740	6,266	0.33%	5.56%	(106,474)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	104,420	4,613	0.25%	4.42%	(99,807)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,374,247	328,626	17.57%	23.91%	(1,045,621)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	11,547,235	1,870,666	100.00%	16.20%	(9,676,568)
590	OTHER FINANCING USES					
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	78,164	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	78,164	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 11,625,398	\$ 1,870,666	100.00%	16.09%	\$ (9,754,732)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (934,181)	\$ (1,625,487)			\$ (691,306)
	FUND BALANCE SUMMARY					
	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 9,932,448			
	Net Income	(934,181)	(1,625,487)			(691,306)
	Ending Fund Balance	\$ 8,998,267	\$ 8,306,961			\$ (691,306)

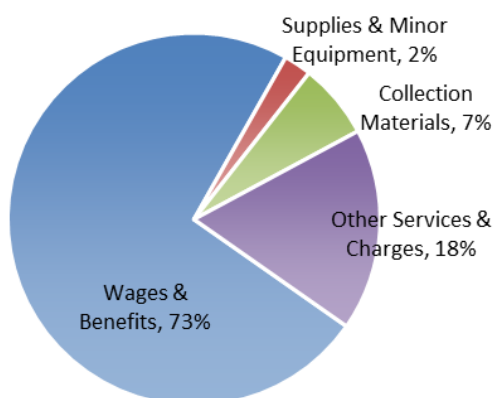
General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year



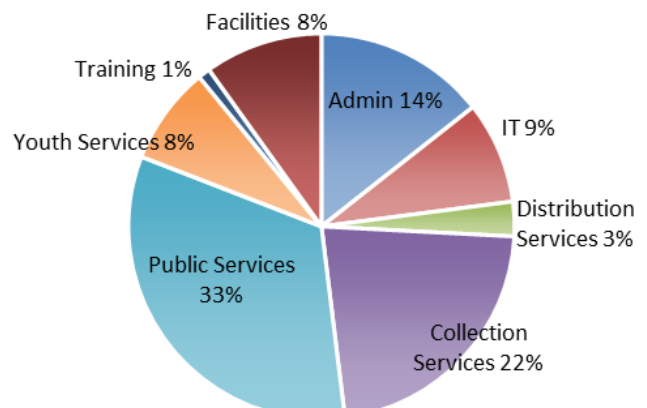
Actual General Fund Expenditures Year to Date Comparison

	2024	2025	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$ 1,308,595	\$ 1,374,663	5.05%
Collection Materials	100,679	122,296	21.47%
Supplies & Minor Equipment	29,783	45,081	51.37%
Other Services & Charges	298,780	328,626	9.99%
Total Operating Expenditures	1,737,837	1,870,666	7.64%
Other Financing Uses	-	-	0.00%
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,737,837	\$ 1,870,666	7.64%

YTD Expense by Category



YTD Expense by Department



		2025	
Fund Balance Summary		2024 Actual	2025 Budgeted
		Actual to Date	
Beginning Fund Balance	\$	10,612,545	9,932,448
Revenue		10,517,581	10,691,217
Expenditures		(10,967,678)	(11,625,398)
Transfer to (from) Reserves		(230,000)	-
Ending Fund Balance	\$	9,932,448	8,998,267
		2025	
Ending Fund Balance Designation Detail		2024 Actual	2025 Budgeted
		Actual to Date	
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Cash Flow	\$	3,639,587	3,767,044
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Emergency		926,588	951,274
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Capital Transfer		94,135	75,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Reserve		14,662	15,560
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund Reserve		600,000	580,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund Reserve		3,192,315	2,967,315
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund		650,000	550,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Operating Cost Stabilization Fund		250,000	-
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Collection Project Fund		172,000	-
Total Designated Ending Fund Balance		9,539,286	8,906,194
Beginning Fund Balance less designated funds		1,073,259	1,026,255
Transfer to (from) Reserves		(230,000)	-
Net Income		(450,097)	(934,181)
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation		393,162	92,073
Ending Designated Funds		9,539,286	8,906,194
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$	9,932,448	8,998,267

February Summary

- Property tax revenue is lagging, as is typical this time of year. We have received \$200,860 as of the end of February. We have dipped into the Cash Flow reserve fund by \$619,232 and will likely do so again in March. The Cash Flow reserve will be replenished in April, which is the first of two semiannual property tax payment deadlines.
- Upfront, annual payments have been made for IT and collection related service contracts and for auto, flood, liability and property insurance coverage.
- Winter storms at the end of January resulted in snow removal costs totaling \$8,251. WCLS is responsible for this expense at Administrative Services and the North Fork Library (buildings owned by WCLS). Elsewhere, building owners are responsible for snow removal. We budgeted \$11,000 for this expense, so there's a small amount remaining for any additional storms before the end of the year.
- We have recently implemented an update to our patron notice system that will significantly reduce postage costs and staff time spent printing and processing notices for mail. Previously, a notice was sent by mail any time a patron had charges on their account, even if their notification preferences were for email. This change will allow us to send billing notices by email.

WCLS Account Summary

WCLS follows the Washington State Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS). Below is a brief description of revenue and expense accounts.

Revenue Accounts:

Taxes: This section includes taxes on real and personal property, which are the primary revenue source for the library system, making up 95% of operating revenues received. The bulk of property tax revenue is received in April and October of each year.

Intergovernmental Revenue: Sources of intergovernmental revenue include grant revenues received from state and federal sources and revenues resulting from the leasing of, or sale of, timber and other products from state forest lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources. It also includes taxes from private harvest timber sales.

Charges for Goods and Services: This category includes fees received from library printing and copying services. It also includes use fees from the sale of library cards to non-residents and from contracted services with other entities, such as the Whatcom County Jail.

Miscellaneous Revenues: This source of revenue includes investment interest earned through participation in the Whatcom County Investment Fund. It also includes fees received for library meeting room use, private grants and donations, charges for lost or damaged library materials, and other miscellaneous revenue such as rebates and reimbursements.

Other Financing Sources: This category includes non-revenue items such as proceeds from the sale of capital assets and insurance recoveries.

Expense Accounts:

Salaries, Wages, and Benefits: This expense category includes wages and fringe benefits for WCLS employees, including medical and dental insurance; contributions for employees enrolled in the State of Washington Public Employee Retirement System (PERS); contributions into the Social Security and Medicare systems; workers' compensation (Labor and Industries); state Paid Family and Medical Leave; long-term disability insurance; and unemployment compensation.

Supplies and Minor Equipment: This section includes office, program, maintenance, and custodial supplies, as well as fuel. It includes small tools and equipment items such as computer hardware, furnishing and fixtures, shelving, book returns and carts, etc. It also includes the collection materials budget that comprise WCLS's lending collection.

Other Services and Charges: This category includes costs for professional services, such as legal, payroll, programming, cataloging, and Interlibrary Loan services. It includes communication costs, such as postage, courier services, and phone and internet charges. Travel; use and excise taxes; auto, liability and property insurance; utilities; repairs and maintenance; and other miscellaneous expenses are also reported here.

Other Financing Uses: This category includes transfers to the WCLS Capital fund. This transfer is equal to the prior year's revenue received from certain intergovernmental sources, such as those resulting from the sale of timber and other products from state forest lands.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	3/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Levy Lid Lift Resolution
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approve Resolution 03/18/25-04 authorizing a levy lid lift funding initiative to be put before voters.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: To be discussed.

Summary:

For the past year or more, the Board of Trustees has been reviewing budget projections and recognizing that we have been accessing the fund balance to support ongoing operating expenses, with annual operating deficits since 2023. It is now time to decide whether or not to pursue a levy lid lift to raise the levy rate one time and establish a new base levy amount.

We will discuss which election to target and what levy rate to request of voters.

Timing considerations:

Economic climate and interest in passing a lid lift before conditions become more unstable.

Other initiatives and races on the ballot.

Maximum number of yes votes needed to pass (maximum of 25,000 in August vs. 41,000 in November)

Levy rate considerations:

What rate will optimize fiscal sustainability for the library system while still being realistic and likely to pass?

What rate is reasonable for local property owners given the current economic climate?

What is an ideal length of time between elections to balance voter support vs. fatigue, staff attention and morale, cost of elections, etc.?

What rate captures the concept of restoring the levy rate to maintain services?

What rate allows for a fallback if a first levy lid lift is not successful?

Alternatives: As discussed.

Fiscal Impact: WCLS will be responsible for paying election costs to conduct the election including the cost to print and mail ballots and voter pamphlets to voters in the district service area. Costs will be shared with other entities with items in the election.

Comments: None.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	3/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Annual General Meeting – Election of Officers and Committee Assignments
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of consent agenda items

Suggested Motion for Consideration: To be discussed.

Summary:

Now that our board is back to full strength, we will hold our Annual General Meeting to elect officers and select committee assignments.

Chair – Rod Lofdahl

Vice Chair – Matthew Santos

Secretary – nominations welcome

Community Relations Committee (aka Marketing Committee) - (2 trustees) - meets quarterly in-person, date and time TBD

Finance Committee - (2 trustees) - meets monthly the week before the Board meeting (currently the Friday before from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. online)

Personnel Committee - (2 trustees) - participates in union negotiations using the Interest Based Bargaining model (generally 3 full days in October) and Executive Director performance evaluation process October - November

IT Services Committee - (2 trustees) - meets quarterly in-person, date and time TBD

Whatcom County Library Foundation liaison - (1 trustee) - meets monthly, third Thursdays from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Alternatives: As discussed

Fiscal Impact: None.

Comments: None.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	3/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration
Subject:	Meeting location and time for remainder of 2025
Prepared By:	Rheannan Pfnister
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of all Board of Trustee meeting locations taking place at Administrative Services for the remainder of 2025. Confirm that the current meeting time is amenable to all trustees.

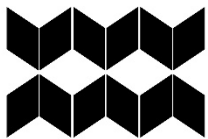
Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of Board of Trustee meeting location and time as discussed.

Summary: In December 2024, the Board approved the Board of Trustee's meeting schedule and meeting locations through March 2025. It was decided to revisit the topic of meeting locations at the March Board of Trustee's meeting.

Alternatives: Board could decide to meet at various WCLS branches April through August. After that, it's preferable to stay at Administrative Services as we have a number of Executive Sessions that happen in the Fall and it is difficult to accommodate these in our branches.

Fiscal Impact: Increased staff time and mileage.

Comments: The trustee who proposed meeting at different branch locations throughout the year is no longer on the board. Other trustees have expressed that driving to other locations adds to the time commitment to attend meetings and disrupts their workday. Trustees have visited multiple branches for budget listening sessions and will continue to have opportunities to do so as part of our levy lid lift efforts. Christine would be happy to schedule tours of branches for any trustee interested in participating.



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Executive Director's Report

March 2025

COMMUNITY

WCLS's annual All Staff Learning Day on March 7 brought together 160+ staff members to celebrate our accomplishments of the past year, learn new skills, and get clarity about WCLS's budget situation and the steps we will be taking to achieve long-term sustainability. Thank you to Danielle Gaughen and John Miller for joining us and participating in cross-department and cross-branch conversations.

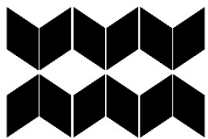
ACCESS

WCLS's Right to Read training team (Hana Boxberger, Jonathan Jakobitz, Mary Kinser and Emma Radosevich) have been collectively awarded the 2025 Candace Morgan Intellectual Freedom Award from the Washington Library Association. They will be honored at an awards lunch during the WLA Conference in early April. The team shared their training with every WCLS staff member, leading thoughtful discussions about our core values and how these play out in our day-to-day experience.

STEWARDSHIP

On Saturday I completed the eleventh Budget Listening Session at the Sumas Library. Thank you to all the community members who attended and shared their insights! A special thanks to Community Relations Manager Mary Vermillion who joined me at every session, as well as Finance Director Jackie Saul who made it to most. Trustees were in attendance at all of the sessions as well – listening to public feedback and getting to know each community that WCLS serves.

Christine Perkins, Executive Director



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Deputy Director Report

March 2025

RESOURCES

Select staff recently received training from a Data Dissemination Specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau. We learned more about some of the excellent data tools available to provide insight into variables such as income level, county of origin, health insurance status, employment status and others. I was interested to learn more about languages spoken in households throughout Whatcom County.

COMMUNITY – Lummi Island Library Spotlight

Erin Suda began working as the Lummi Island Library Branch Manager in May 2024 after working with WCLS for over 20 years as a Public Services Assistant. Erin has initiated a library book club and an after-school library club with the theme, 'Enriching the storytelling imagination.' During Whatcom READS programming, Erin helped host a conversation with Erica Bauermeister to a packed house of 80 participants who came to Lummi Island from all corners of Whatcom County.

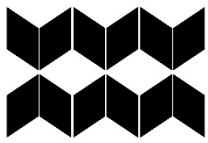
Unique to Island Library is an after-hours holds pick-up box which allows patrons to get their requested items even when the library is closed. During the summer, the population doubles on the island. To accommodate this, Friday open hours are added during July & August. A special display cabinet hosts personal collections and themed displays highlighting unique interests and personalities of island residents. This is clearly a library both of and for the people of Lummi Island. The fingerprint of local artists can be seen in the form of, say, stained glass replacing a windowpane, a triptych depicting Lummi Island changing with ocean levels, the hand carved sculpture of a raven with, "Quoth the raven, read some more." Furniture, casework and some educational toys have been made by residents. To read the bricks recognizing donors of the 2013 renovation project is to better understand the sense of spirit and humor of those who live there.

Erin is proud of how the Island Library also fully represents WCLS. WCLS-led programming is taking on a stronger role while Friends-led programming continues. There is real integration. The NW Regional Council series of programs connecting NWRC staff with patrons to support individuals' access to services has been coordinated at multiple WCLS branches. FOIL hosted a conversation with Sherif Tanksley. Updated book return branding and a monument sign update provide the WCLS shine to a cozy library owned and maintained by FOIL. Recent upgrades to wiring, Internet access, casework, technology, and even a heated mat to melt snow from the ramp have been a true partnership and sharing of resources. A good partnership creates a buzz.

It's easy to learn more about the Lummi Island Library via the Washington Rural Heritage digital collections. The [Lummi Island Heritage](#) collection was the first digitization project for WCLS, completed in 2018 by former Branch Manager, Brooke Pederson. It contains images, artifacts and oral histories of the area. The [WCLS 75th Anniversary Collection – Island Library](#) focuses attention on library history dating back to its humble beginnings as a shelf of books in the post office.

Michael Cox

Deputy Director



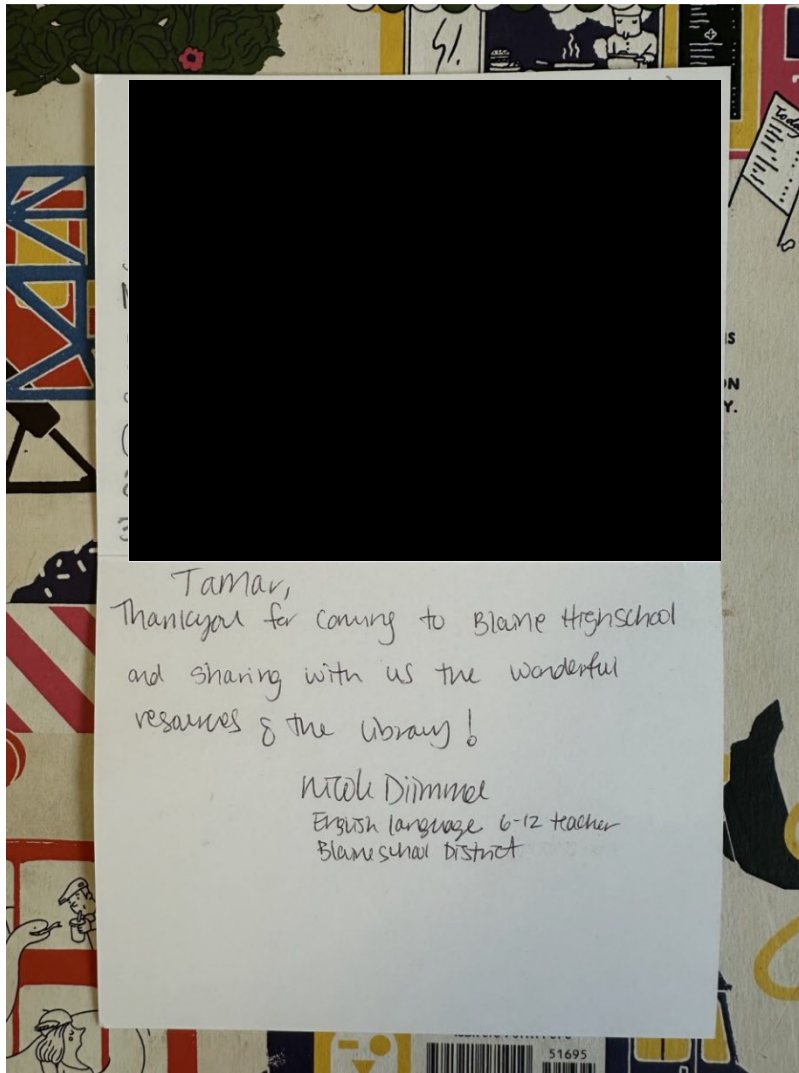
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Youth Services Report

March 2025

COMMUNITY

On the morning of Friday, February 21, a group of 31 homeschoolers came to our Administrative Services building for a field trip. They are regular, enthusiastic users of the Ferndale Library, and wanted a behind-the-scenes view into the inner workings of the library. They were welcomed by Christine, toured the building, spent some time in collection services learning about how materials come into our collections (complete with a hands-on barcode application activity), worked with Youth Services on exploring the different facets of library service, and visited Northwest Drive Express and the Bookmobile, with opportunities to check out. Staff reported how nice it was to have young people in the building, and the families let us know how much they appreciated the opportunity to learn more.



ACCESS

We received this lovely note from a Multilingual Learners class at Blaine High School thanking Tamar Clarke for a recent ConnectED visit. Our digital collections are one of the quickest and easiest ways we have to provide materials in a variety of languages, and we appreciate the opportunities to share them in classrooms around the county. This note highlights the number of languages spoken by Whatcom County residents, and I'm proud of the nimble and attentive response our staff is providing.

RESOURCES

On the morning of Tuesday, March 11, we hosted the first (since the pandemic) in-person meeting of the Whatcom Early Learning Alliance (WELA), a collective of individuals and agencies serving young children and their families. Tess Reding Hoffart, Theresa Morrison, and I showcased a variety of materials, including new and noteworthy picture books, kits, dolls, and companion cats. We promoted our Educator Cards, answered questions, registered people on the spot, and checked out lots of materials. It was wonderful to see people making meaningful connections in the context of the library as gathering space.

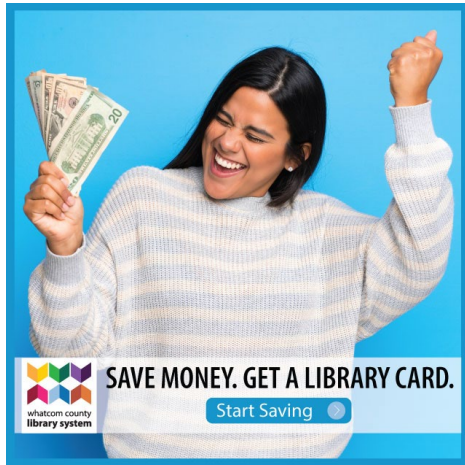
EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

On March 11 in the afternoon I traveled to Western Washington University to work with a group of 25 students enrolled in ELED 305: Development and Learning in a Diverse Classroom at the Woodring College of Education. My talk focused on the role of books and stories in social and emotional learning, and our conversation moved in a lot of different directions, with many opportunities to explore the value of a breadth of books across curricula, and highlight the ways public libraries can support educators. I have established strong relationships with a number of Professors at Woodring and appreciate these opportunities to lay a groundwork for partnership with teachers in training, to support later partnerships between our Youth Services staff and educators in our many school districts.

Thom Barthelmess

Youth Services Manager

COMMUNITY/RESOURCES



Our Power of Sharing campaign highlights how a library card helps patrons to save money and invites community members to get a card. With inflation and potential tariff impacts in the news, this message is especially relevant. We recently updated wcls.org/power, digital ads and bus boards to more overtly broadcast the money-saving benefits of a library card. As always, we will evaluate results and evolve messages, channels and audiences as needed. The Power of Sharing campaign strategy and creative materials are created in-house by the Community Relations team. We work with a local media buyer to place our digital ads.

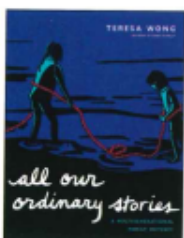


Book Reviews

- *Cascadia Daily News*, Feb. 24, 2025, [Review: 'The Ministry of Time' by Kaliane Bradley](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, Feb. 16, 2025, [Review: Cookbooks highlight Skagit agriculture to wild game](#)
- *Bellingham Alive*, February 2025. See clip below.

Book Reviews

WRITTEN BY EMMA RADOSEVICH

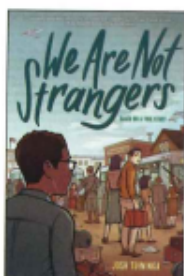


"All Our Ordinary Stories: A Multigenerational Family Odyssey"
by Teresa Wong

When she was a kid, Teresa Wong quit Chinese lessons to watch Saturday morning cartoons. She had no idea how her choice would ripple into the future. As an adult, she looks back on a childhood spent translating for her immigrant parents and wonders: is language to blame for the distance between us?

In intimate grayscale illustrations, Wong seeks an answer among family stories and trips to Guangzhou with her parents. She unspools the story of how her generation became the first in one hundred years to have a father living at home. Political upheaval, including the Cultural Revolution in China and the Chinese Exclusion Act in Canada, created a family history of separation.

Illustrations of historical ephemera and cultural references keep the narrative grounded, even when Wong struggles to unearth long-buried details. As in the Chinese ink painting, Wong is skilled at using blank space to convey meaning: "What's absent is just as important as what's present."



"We Are Not Strangers: A Graphic Novel"
by Josh Tuininga

Growing up in Seattle, Josh Tuininga tagged along with his grandfather to Pike Place Market, where they shopped at a Japanese seafood market. He wondered why his papoo, the son of Sephardic Jewish immigrants from Turkey, knew entire Japanese families by name.

Using family stories as source material, "We Are Not Strangers" shines a light on a lesser known part of World War II history. In pre-war Seattle, the Central District was where Tuininga's family called home. They lived side by side with other immigrant families like Sam Akiyama's, who were redlined out of other neighborhoods. When the government rounded up Japanese people and sent them to internment camps, Tuininga's great grandfather and other Jewish families stepped in to safeguard their neighbors' homes and businesses.

With frequent time jumps and a large cast of characters, "We Are Not Strangers" is less detailed than history fans might hope for. However, the author's personal connection to this part of Seattle history makes this a compelling read about cross-cultural friendship.

Media Coverage

- *Whatcom News*, Feb. 3, 2025, [Whatcom schools and other closures and opening delays announced following snow event](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, Feb. 3, 2025, [Whatcom County Library System locations closed Monday, Feb. 3 due to inclement weather](#)
- *Whatcom News*, Feb. 3, 2025, [Updated: Tuesday school and other closures and delays announced](#)
- *Whatcom News*, Feb. 4, 2025, [UPDATED: Wednesday school and other closures and delays announced](#)
- *Whatcom News*, Feb. 6, 2025, [Thursday school and other closures and delays announced](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Feb. 13, 2025, [Quelling the winter blues in Blaine and Birch Bay through activities and recreation \(Blaine Library, books and art exhibition\)](#)

- News Break, Feb. 17, 2025, [Charter Debates Hit Home In Lynden: Citizen Commission Gets Down To Business](#) (meeting at Lynden Library)
- News Break, Feb. 17, 2025, [Whatcom County Event Planners Book Group: The Art of Relevance](#)
- Lynden Tribune, Feb. 21, 2025, [WHATCOM NEWS: Feb. 19, 2025](#) (Spanish-language phone line)
- Lynden Tribune, Feb. 20, 2025, [Valentine and Wine event a success in Sumas](#) (Friends event)
- Cascadia Daily News, Feb. 21, 2025, [Deming Library receives solar panel grant](#)
- Cascadia Daily News, Feb. 23, 2025, [What's the Deal With: Lloyd the cardboard dragon?](#)
- All Point Bulletin, Feb. 28, 2025, [The Raven is calling for you](#) (mentions Deming Library)
- All Point Bulletin, Feb. 6, 2025 (clip below)

LOL 101: Wednesday, March 5, 3 to 4 p.m., Point Roberts Library. Grades K-5.

- Salish Current, Feb. 7 2025 (clip below)

Whatcom READS. "No Two Persons" by Erica Bauermeister is the 2025 book selection with programs culminating with in-person author events March 12–15. [Information.](#) See: "Whatcom READS builds a community of readers" [Salish Current](#)

Mary Vermillion

Community Relations Manager

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	301,426	389,891	691,317

Circulation	Feb 2024	Feb 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	12,135	13,406	22,908	27,833	21.5%
Bookmobile & Outreach	4,679	4,017	8,630	9,171	6.3%
Deming	8,273	7,108	15,616	15,429	-1.2%
Everson	8,647	8,005	16,613	17,061	2.7%
Ferndale	31,974	27,450	61,288	57,299	-6.5%
Island	1,683	1,610	3,279	3,505	6.9%
Lynden	35,606	31,854	68,416	68,263	-0.2%
North Fork	3,874	3,117	7,322	6,751	-7.8%
NWIC	3	14	10	28	180.0%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,922	1,938	3,677	4,109	11.7%
Sumas + SLX	2,328	2,395	4,298	4,842	12.7%
South Whatcom	7,456	7,029	14,098	14,463	2.6%
NDX	3,173	3,653	6,181	8,025	29.8%
Physical Circulation Total	121,753	111,596	232,336	236,779	1.9%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	25,969	22,679	50,765	48,556	-4.4%
All other materials	94,484	86,427	179,251	182,961	2.1%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	34,407	34,792	71,163	74,095	4.1%
eMagazines	5,633	5,419	11,763	11,547	-1.8%
eMusic	11,506	9,594	20,739	19,236	-7.2%
Streaming Video	1,351	1,626	2,756	3,104	12.6%
Digital Circulation Total	52,897	51,431	106,421	107,982	1.5%
Grand Total	174,650	163,027	338,757	344,761	1.8%

Visitors (Door counts)	Feb 2024	Feb 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Blaine	6,807	6,220	12,997	13,685	5.3%
Deming	2,830	2,642	5,605	5,366	-4.3%
Everson	3,215	3,020	6,132	6,460	5.3%
Ferndale	13,022	11,308	24,234	24,557	1.3%
Island	1,075	1,204	2,073	2,197	6.0%
Lynden	11,261	10,033	21,921	22,441	2.4%
NDX	322	286	626	601	-4.0%
North Fork	1,499	1,491	3,015	3,173	5.2%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,240	1,193	2,539	2,474	-2.6%
Sumas + SLX	1,005	1,103	1,950	2,420	24.1%
South Whatcom	2,911	2,621	5,287	5,792	9.6%
Total	45,187	41,121	86,379	89,166	3.2%

New Borrowers	Feb 2024	Feb 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
	586	495	1,320	1,147	-13.1%

Interlibrary Loan	Feb 2024	Feb 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	12,125	11,232	23,102	23,909	3.5%
Lent to BPL	22,680	20,382	43,855	43,577	-0.6%
Borrowed: other libraries	732	502	1,304	1,142	-12.4%
Lent: other libraries	632	564	1,197	1,256	4.9%

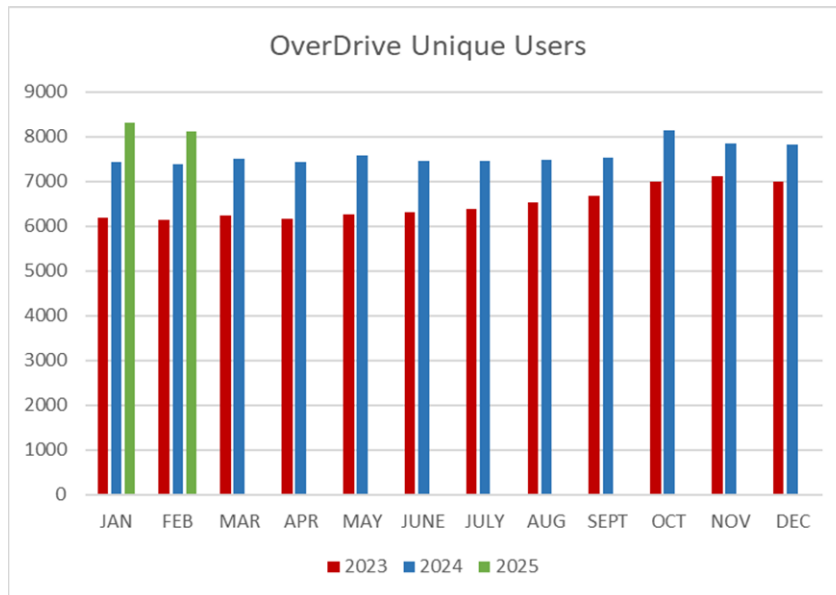
Electronic Resources	Feb 2024	Feb 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	38,586	38,161	77,002	77,564	0.7%
Bibliocommons Sessions	92,608	87,162	189,339	181,382	-4.2%
Internet Sessions	3,620	3,450	6,843	7,550	10.3%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	6,136	7,457	11,381	14,809	30.1%

Activities	Feb 2024	Feb 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	58	95	109	184	68.8%
Teens	15	39	27	65	140.7%
Children	104	109	159	213	34.0%
Total	177	243	295	462	56.6%
Attendance					
Adults	479	835	915	1,770	93.4%
Teens	1,090	774	1,315	1,747	32.9%
Children	2,520	2,640	3,813	3,914	2.6%
Total	4,089	4,249	6,043	7,431	23.0%

Notes/Corrections:

OVERDRIVE UNIQUE USERS

As we would hope during Whatcom READS season, the top circulating title at WCLS in February was the eAudio format of *No Two Persons* (111 checkouts) which is available with no waiting through a cost-per-circ license. Eaudiobooks continue to dominate the top-circulating titles list with eAudiobooks making up 17 of the top 20 titles in February. There are indications that growth in usage is slowing to a more manageable pace; # of checkouts in February 2025 increased by 4% over Feb. 2024 as compared to a 23% jump between February 2023-2024.



DATABASE USAGE

A summary of February's database learning highlights: patrons used Peterson's Test Prep to prepare for exams and vocational tests on topics such as bookkeeping, GED, citizenship and Math/Science basic skills for H.S. students. 42 learners logged in to LinkedIn Learning and completed courses about strategic thinking, digital body language, Excel, animation foundations and more. Mango users logged 466 sessions in February studying 24 languages. Newsbank users viewed 32,888 documents; in addition to the top 3 newspapers, accessed news from the *Duluth News Tribune*, *Tri-City Herald*, *El Diario La Prensa* (NY) and others.

