

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

March 18, 2025

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, Vice Chair; John Miller; Danielle Gaughen and Jes Stugelmayer. Absent: None.

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; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT 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.

Guests: None.

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.

Welcome New Trustee, Jes Stugelmayer

The Board welcomed Jes Stugelmayer and introductions were made.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the February 18, 2025, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

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

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 February Notes and Highlights section. It is still early in the year, but expenses are where they are expected to be so far. WCLS had to draw on the cash reserves to cover expenses in February. The funds will be replenished in April with incoming property tax payments.

Some expense categories appear to be very high for how early in the year it is. This is due to upfront costs at the beginning of the year, mostly professional services and annual service agreements. It drives up costs at the beginning of the year, but it balances out as the year progresses.

Levy Lid Lift

Christine updated the board about Budget Listening Sessions and conveyed feedback provided by community members during these sessions. There were some surprising responses from community members, including the desire for WCLS to prioritize low or short-term negative impact on staff. Attendees of the sessions seemed to already be large supporters of the library.

All trustees agree that pursuing a levy lid lift this year is in the best interests of WCLS. Pros and cons were discussed for August and November election dates. Rod asked if there were any board members who were against WCLS being on the ballot for a levy lid lift in August. All board members agreed that August was the right time to attempt a levy lid lift.

Trustees then discussed the levy amount, which needs to be determined and is not yet noted in the Resolution shared today. Jackie shared revenue and expense projections based on various levy rates and assessed valuation scenarios.

Matthew moved to approve Resolution 03/18/25-04 authorizing a levy lid lift funding initiative for the amount of \$0.42 per \$1,000 of assessed value to be put before voters on August 5, 2025. Seconded. Discussion ensued.

Trustees discussed the pros and cons for different amounts; they agreed on \$0.42.

Unanimous board approval.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:23-10:35 a.m.

Birch Bay Project Update

Michael offered to provide an update on the Birch Bay Project.

Rod motioned to add this update to the agenda before we resume the previously scheduled agenda. Seconded and approved.

Michael shared an abbreviated version of a larger presentation that he prepared for the Birch Bay Friends and the Whatcom Community Foundation. Mary noted the presentation will be added to the Birch Bay project webpage at a later date. In April 2024 WCLS hired Osborne Architects (OAI) after the project scope change was approved by the Department of Commerce. We then began the permitting process with Whatcom County. A community engagement session was held in July 2024.

The County permitting process resulted in additional testing, assessments and planning. For example, the asphalt driveway is required to have a commercial roadway apron and pervious concrete. A landscaping plan has been developed to remove dead or dying trees or those that interfere with the roadway apron. Several healthy trees will remain, and twenty-two new trees and shrubs will be planted. A survey showed that an area of approximately six feet beyond the fence line at the rear of the property is part of our lot. Michael is working with our attorneys and the adjoining property owner to craft an easement agreement.

We submitted conditional use and shoreline permit applications to the County on February 18, 2025. This process can take up to 221 days. OAI has provided an updated permitting timeline – we have passed the completeness review and are now in the staff review phase. Project funding from Whatcom County expires at the end of this year. We are working with community advocates to request an expedited permitting process. We will not begin demolition or vegetation updates until the conditional use permitting process is complete. We are considering purchasing furnishings and equipment that would be stored if necessary, so the County funding can be used before the year-end deadline.

We are waiting for a substantive estimate before seeking additional funds or making a final fundraising push. Fundraising could also support ongoing sustainability of the facility such as a rental venue for the Friends to hold book sales or provide programing space. We are working with local artist Kim Morris on a donor recognition display, featuring natural aspects of the area.

Resolution Review

The board reviewed an updated version of Resolution 03/18/25-04 that included the agreed upon election date and levy amount. Feedback was provided to update language in the resolution. Christine will send the amended resolution to legal counsel for review. If the attorney finds substantive edits are needed, trustees will be asked to attend a special meeting later this month to review and approve the finalized document.

Annual General Meeting – Board Officers and Committee Assignments

Election of officers was discussed. Rod and Matthew are willing to continue their roles as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

Jes nominated Danielle as secretary. Seconded. Unanimous approval of all positions.

Discussion continued regarding committee assignments and the following were decided:

Jes Stugelmayer – Community Relations Committee, Foundation Liaison

Rod Lofdahl – Personnel Committee, Finance Committee

John Miller - Personnel Committee, IT Services Committee

Matthew Santos - IT Services Committee, Community Relations Committee

Danielle Gaughen - Finance Committee

Rod motioned to approve committee assignments as discussed. Seconded. Unanimously passed.

Board Meeting Location and Time

Discussion about the meeting locations and times for the remainder of 2025 took place. All agreed to continue meeting at Administrative Services throughout 2025 and revisit the locations when approving the 2026 schedule later this year. All agreed that the 9 a.m. start time works best.

Rod moved to approve the Board of Trustee meeting locations and times for 2025 as discussed. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted that on Saturday the Administrative Services building experienced a trespass incident. The trespasser was able to access the fenced area with the vehicles by cutting through barbed wire and climbing over the chain link fence on the backside of the building. The Sheriff's Office has been notified, and Ryan is working to have the fence repaired. All WLCS vehicles have catalytic converter protectors installed on them to prevent theft of the part.

Ryan has put forth an RFP for installation of the EV charging stations at Administrative Services and North Fork Library. A site walkthrough is scheduled for this Thursday.

A recent federal order to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services has raised concerns about how this may impact WCLS and its partnerships. Christine has a meeting with the State Librarian and other library directors from around Washington State to learn more.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that the Ferndale Library entrance has a camera pointed at it. Recently, the branch had a patron take a curbside pickup bag that did not belong to them and the camera was used to figure out what happened. Michael is in contact with the patron and working to resolve the issue. This is the first time this has happened since WCLS first began offering this service in 2020.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and highlighted a thank you card received from the homeschooling group that visited AS in February.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary had nothing to add to her written report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Jes pointed out that video streaming usage increased by over 12% in February and inquired about the costs of using Kanopy for video streaming. Lisa answered that Kanopy charges a flat rate regardless of the amount of usage. There is no expectation of a dramatic increase to that rate in the future due to the wording of WCLS's contract and Kanopy's values.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

Nothing to report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Nothing to report.

Announcements and Adjourn

No further announcements.

Rod adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on April 15, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

/s/
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary

04/15/2025
Date

/s/
Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant