

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

April 15, 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; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; John Miller 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; 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; Jessica Burson, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Quin Stewart, Collection Maintenance Specialist.

Guests:

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.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the March 18, 2025, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting and March 28, 2025, Board of Trustees Special Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- February 16-28, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1042152221-1042152224 and voucher nos. 561893-562042 totaling \$220,910.08 and March 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1042330572-1042330576 and voucher nos. 562047-562200 totaling \$245,066.22.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$101,981.95; \$50,968.60 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2025-09G: warrant nos. 1253183-1253202 totaling \$65,675.22
- Claim 2025-10G: warrant nos. 1253330-1253350 totaling \$44,442.72

- Claim 2025-11G: warrant nos. 1253940-1253966 totaling \$129,363.17
- Claim 2025-12G: warrant nos. 1254165-1254191 totaling \$42,951.23

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-04C: warrant no. 1253203 totaling \$29,131.50
- Claim 2025-05C: warrant nos. 1254192-1254193 totaling \$14,347.99

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

Celebrating National Library Week (all month long)

Every year WCLS recognizes educators with the Golden Apple Award. The recipients of the 2025 Golden Apple Award are Natalia Burke, middle school librarian at Lynden Christian School; Tammy Immer, administrative assistant to the principal, Beach Elementary School, Ferndale School District; and Jordan Wolcott, second grade teacher at Irene Reither Elementary School, Meridian School District. They will be recognized at Branch Out in September.

The Library Game is up and running. Patrons collect cards by visiting locations and attending certain events. Cards will be released throughout the year. Once patrons collect 16 cards, they receive a Library Legend pin. Michael encouraged trustees to stop in at any location to get their passport and begin The Library Game.

Library Giving Day was April 1st, and WCLF received over \$17,000 in donations. They also received a separate donation of \$10,000 from a long-time donor. Overall, the total amount of donations was down this year but there were more donors this year than last, and more first-time donors. Quite a few comment fields in the donation forms were filled with love for the library.

The First 500 is currently in a beta phase. Thom thanked Carmi Parker for all her help setting up this program and assistance making the experience as seamless and simple as possible for patrons.

Levy Lid Lift Update

The committees to advocate for voter approval or rejection have been formed and are now full. A third volunteer for the rejection committee came forward yesterday. The updated resolution with the addition of the third committee member was shared with the trustees. Contact information will be shared between the members of each committee so that they may collaborate to create a statement for the voter pamphlet.

Rod moved to approve updated Resolution 04/15/25-05 Appointing Committees to Advocate Voter Approval or Rejection of Proposition Regarding Restoration of the District's Regular Property Tax Levy. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

The paperwork for levy lid lift and the committees will be submitted to the Whatcom Elections Department as soon as possible. A series of informational presentations with community groups throughout Whatcom County will begin later this month.

EV Charging Stations Update

WCLS recently put out an invitation to bid on the public charging station component of the electric vehicle (EV) charging stations project. Two bids were received but only one was responsive. Both bids were higher than expected and previously budgeted for. Ryan explained the expenses the Department of Commerce grant WCLS was awarded would cover and the expenses that WCLS will be responsible for covering. The Board discussed the unexpected additional costs of installation. They asked if this project fills a patron need and provides a service to library patrons.

Clarification was given on the window of time within which WCLS must commit to the grant stipulations and proceed forward with the project. WCLS needs to commit to the project for the grant or withdraw from the grant program in the next few weeks. As of today, WCLS has received \$5,800 of the grant award. Those funds may need to be repaid to the Department of Commerce if WCLS withdraws from the program.

The trustees discussed how the public would perceive the project now that WCLS has announced the need to ask voters for a levy lid lift this August.

Matthew said he cannot support this project at this time based on the increased cost to WCLS. Danielle said that she cannot support it as a tourism draw. Rod agreed with them. The increase in price is not tenable right now. John thanked Ryan for all his work on this project. John wanted to clarify that he believes EV chargers for WCLS fleet vehicles help provide library services; chargers for public use do not help WCLS provide services to patrons.

Rod moved to withdraw support for the public EV charging project due to the bid costs exceeding budgeted funds. WCLS must reject all bids. The Board rescinds permission for WCLS to serve as site hosts and will follow up with the Washington State Department of Commerce to reimburse granted funds already received if necessary. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:06-10:16 a.m.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the March Notes and Highlights section. Due to the timing of when property tax revenue flows into WCLS, WCLS had to dip into the Cash Flow reserve fund which will be replenished next month.

Jackie reviewed the Capital Fund budget amendment. As it was decided by the Board to not proceed forward with installation of EV charging stations before the break, Jackie asked that the lines about funding for the project be ignored. During the break, Jackie updated the budget amendment with the EV charging stations project removed and added the repayment of the \$5,800 for already received grant funds if this is required. The updated version was shared with the Board. This amendment will still result in a budget deficit, but the deficit will be smaller than anticipated.

John moved to approve Resolution 04/15/25-06 amending the 2025 Capital Fund Budget as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Policy Updates

Collection Policy 3.01 – Lisa and Thom presented this policy update, which includes language to clarify the digital collection selection and content and remove redundant selection criteria for all collections. Language was added about disclosure of AI created content purchased for WCLS's collection.

Matthew moved to approve the updated Collection Policy 3.01, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Fund Balance Policy 20.03 – Jackie presented this policy update, which includes renaming the Operating Cost Stabilization Fund to the Levy Sustainability Fund to clarify that these funds are to offset operating deficits in future levy cycles, and codifying the fund as a standing rather than special purpose fund.

John moved to approve the updated Fund Balance Policy 20.03, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

Christine had nothing to add to her written report.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael had nothing to add to his written report.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom had nothing to add to his written report. Rod inquired about the number of families that are participating in The First 500 program. Thom talked about the current number of participants.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

In addition to her written report, Mary noted trustees should have received the 2024 Community Report in the mail recently.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that so far this year WCLS is seeing an overall increase in circulation. The increase in use of digital materials is not as high as it was this time last year, but it is still a higher increase than physical materials circulation. Door counts at the different locations were discussed and the events that helped increase numbers. There was a continued increase in unique users of OneDrive and month to month increases in database use over 2024.

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 10:42 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on May 20, 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

05/20/2025
Date

/s/
Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant