



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Whatcom County Library System
May 20, 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. **Service Anniversary Recognition – Michael Cox & Bryan Middlebrook**
4. 9:20 a.m. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Meeting Minutes
 - b. Expenditures
 - c. Authorization to void warrants
5. 9:25 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Finance Committee Report
6. 9:30 a.m. **Birch Bay Property**
 - a. Resolution 05/20/25-09 Delegating Signature Authority to Execute an Easement
7. 9:45 a.m. **Trustee Education: Responding to Conflict and Cultural Tension**
8. 10:15 a.m. **Levy Update**
9. 10:30 a.m. **BREAK**
10. 10:40 a.m. **2025 Strategic Action Plan Update**
11. 10:50 a.m. **Staff Reports**
12. 11:00 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
13. 11:10 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, May 19, 2025. Written comments may be submitted to Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	5/20/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Consent Agenda – Board Meeting Minutes, Monthly Expenditures, Resolutions to Void Warrants
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:

- April 15, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- March 16-31, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1042500590-1042500594 and voucher nos. 562205-562355 totaling \$233,763.66 and April 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1042677215-1042677219 and voucher nos. 562360-562512 totaling \$247,391.74.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$125,959.48; \$69,353.42 of this is for employee-funded contributions to dental, vision and health insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, state paid family medical leave and long-term care fund premiums, and PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2025-13G: warrant nos. 1254838-1254858 totaling \$66,535.80
- Claim 2025-14G: warrant nos. 1254965-1254980 totaling \$23,072.62
- Claim 2025-15G: warrant nos. 1255281-1255305 totaling \$125,375.69
- Claim 2025-16G: warrant nos. 1255685-1255708 totaling \$71,751.38
- Claim 2025-17G: warrant nos. 1256344-1256369 totaling \$68,382.91

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-06C: warrant no. 1254859 totaling \$5,885.42
- Claim 2025-07C: warrant nos. 1255306-1255307 totaling \$14,319.15

Authorization to Void Warrants

- Resolution 05/20/25-07 voiding warrants 1251701 and 1253194
- Resolution 05/20/25-08 voiding warrant 1254974

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 was one General Journal entry in April.

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.

Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary

05/20/2025

Date

Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant



RESOLUTION NO. 05/20/25-07

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

This page submitted in place of confidential information



RESOLUTION NO. 05/20/25-08

**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 vendor for services rendered; and,

WHEREAS, the warrant was determined to have been issued in error; and,

WHEREAS, the original warrant is in the possession of WCLS and has not been redeemed;

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
1254974	04/08/2025	Northwest Fence	\$442.63

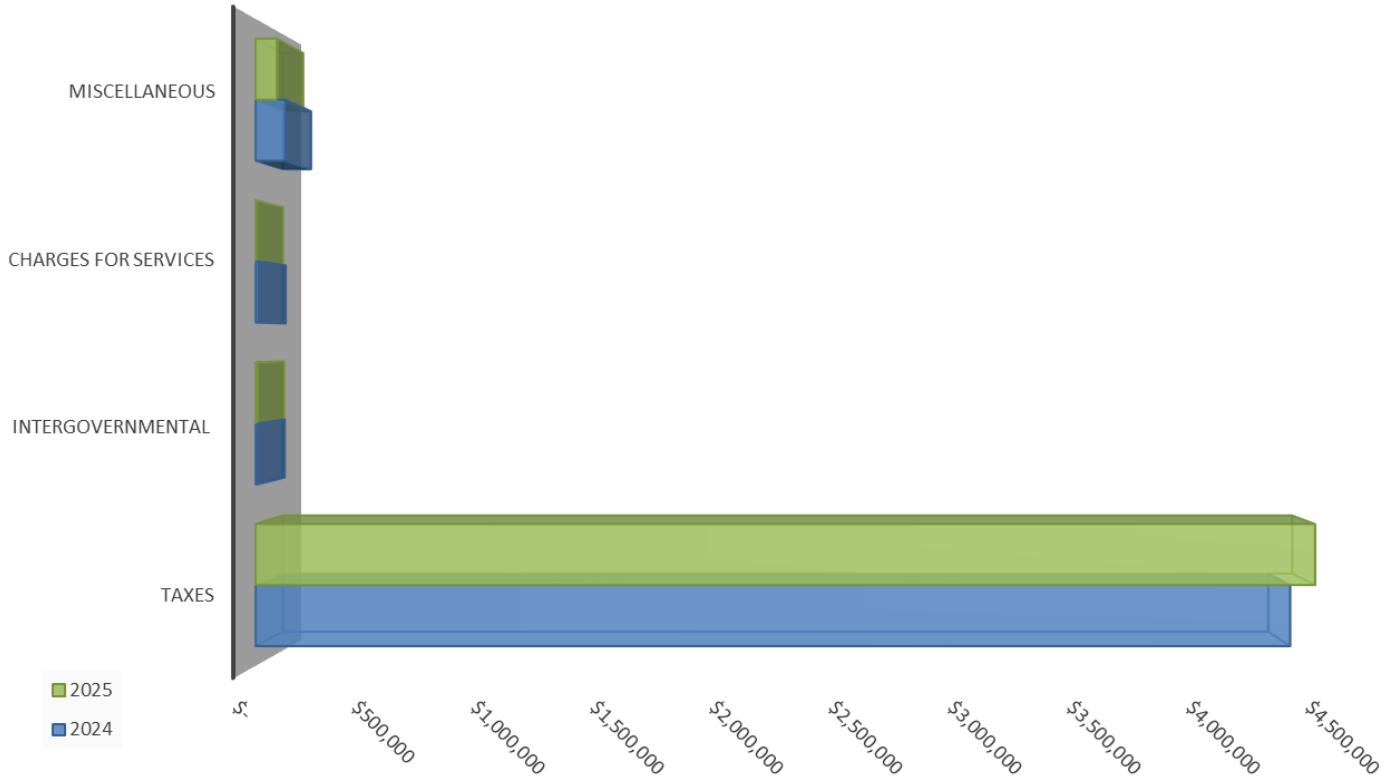
Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 20th day of May, 2025:

Rodney Lofdahl, Board Chair

April Revenue

2025 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date						
April 2025 (33% 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	\$ 4,615,044	97.77%	45.45%	\$ (5,538,673)
	TOTAL TAXES	10,153,717	4,615,044	97.77%	45.45%	(5,538,673)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	2,000	400	0.01%	20.00%	(1,600)
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	203	0.00%	0.45%	(44,797)
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	7,106	0.15%	23.69%	(22,894)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	77,000	7,709	0.16%	10.01%	(69,291)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	6,000	2,245	0.05%	37.41%	(3,755)
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,400	537	0.01%	4.33%	(11,863)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	18,400	2,782	0.06%	15.12%	(15,618)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	352,000	76,431	1.62%	21.71%	(275,569)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,000	675	0.01%	22.50%	(2,325)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	39,000	6,946	0.15%	17.81%	(32,054)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	60	0.00%	60.00%	(40)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	(1.73)	0.00%	0.00%	(2)
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	22,000	7,650	0.16%	34.77%	(14,350)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	3,013	0.06%	27.39%	(7,987)
369.9105	E-Rate Reimbursement	15,000	-	0.00%	0.00%	(15,000)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	442,100	94,773	2.01%	21.44%	(347,327)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	10,691,217	4,720,308	100.00%	44.15%	(5,970,909)
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	\$ 4,720,308	100.00%	44.15%	\$ (5,970,909)

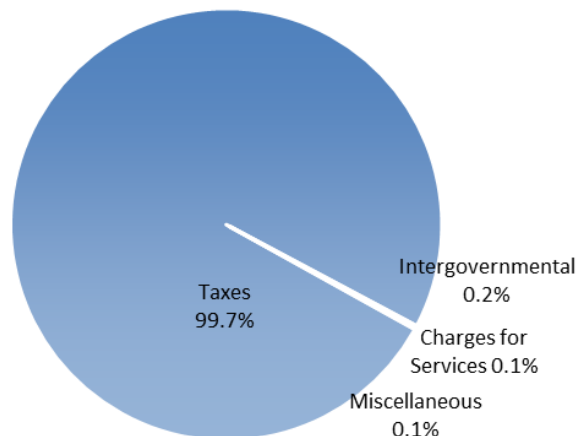
General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year



Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison

	2024	2025	% Change
Taxes	\$ 4,506,357	\$ 4,615,044	2.41%
Intergovernmental	9,799	7,709	-21.33%
Charges for Services	14,008	2,782	-80.14%
Miscellaneous	130,206	94,773	-27.21%
Total Operating Revenue	4,660,369	4,720,308	1.29%
Other Financing Sources	-	-	0.00%
Total Revenue	\$ 4,660,369	\$ 4,720,308	1.29%

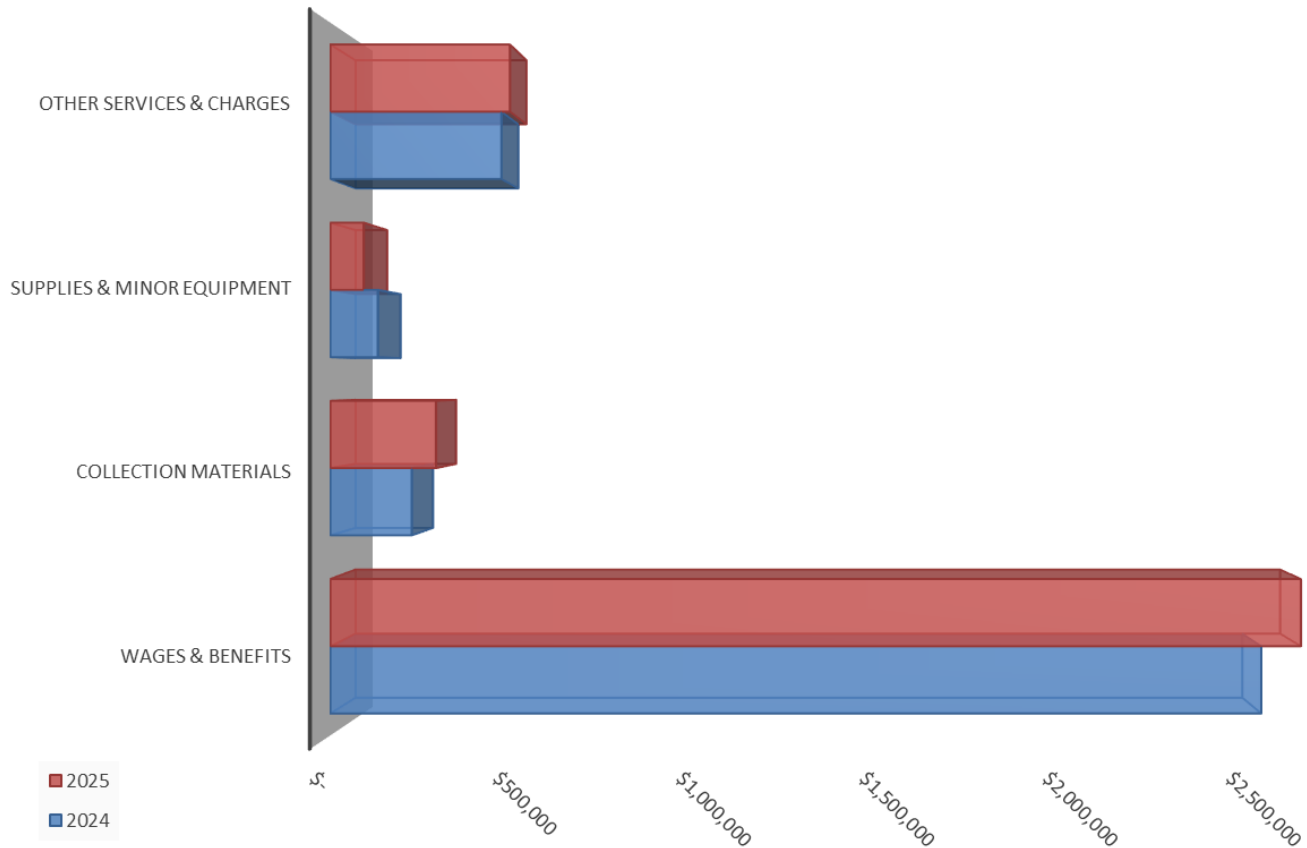
YTD Revenue by category



April Expenditures

2025 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date						
April 2025 (33% 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	\$ 2,025,993	55.55%	32.21%	\$ (4,263,083)
572.2000	Benefits	2,210,792	719,467	19.73%	32.54%	(1,491,326)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	8,499,867	2,745,459	75.28%	32.30%	(5,754,408)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	156,570	48,627	1.33%	31.06%	(107,943)
572.3032	Fuel	24,050	7,232	0.20%	30.07%	(16,818)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,275,000	298,930	8.20%	23.45%	(976,070)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	217,500	38,514	1.06%	17.71%	(178,986)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,673,120	393,302	10.78%	23.51%	(1,279,818)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	705,465	258,961	7.10%	36.71%	(446,504)
572.4042	Communication	132,088	51,152	1.40%	38.73%	(80,936)
572.4043	Travel	30,600	7,644	0.21%	24.98%	(22,956)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	550	209	0.01%	37.91%	(341)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	22,423	7,103	0.19%	31.68%	(15,320)
572.4046	Insurance	99,537	76,120	2.09%	76.47%	(23,417)
572.4047	Utilities	166,424	60,446	1.66%	36.32%	(105,977)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	112,740	18,808	0.52%	16.68%	(93,932)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	104,420	27,671	0.76%	26.50%	(76,749)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,374,247	508,114	13.93%	36.97%	(866,133)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	11,547,235	3,646,876	100.00%	31.58%	(7,900,359)
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	\$ 3,646,876	100.00%	31.37%	\$ (7,978,523)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (934,181)	\$ 1,073,432			\$ 2,007,613
	FUND BALANCE SUMMARY					
	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 9,932,448			
	Net Income	(934,181)	1,073,432			2,007,613
	Ending Fund Balance	\$ 8,998,267	\$ 11,005,880			\$ 2,007,613

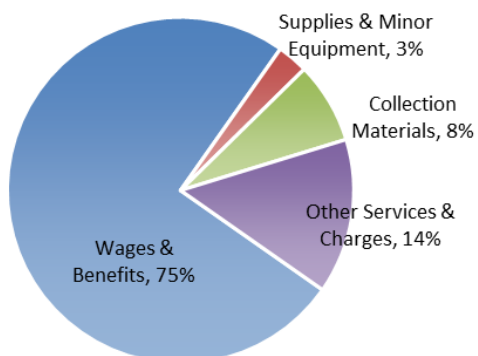
General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year



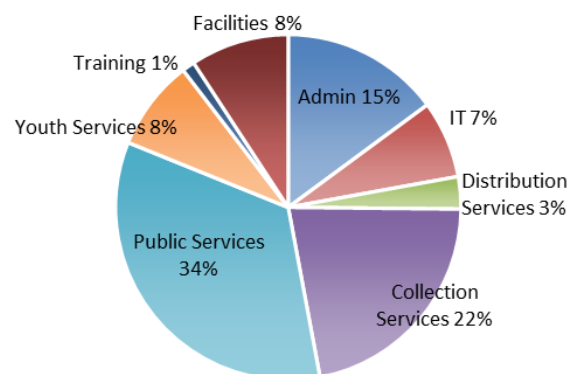
Actual General Fund Expenditures Year to Date Comparison

	2024	2025	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$ 2,633,210	\$ 2,745,459	4.26%
Collection Materials	230,483	298,930	29.70%
Supplies & Minor Equipment	134,522	94,373	-29.85%
Other Services & Charges	483,983	508,114	4.99%
Total Operating Expenditures	3,482,198	3,646,876	4.73%
Other Financing Uses	-	-	0.00%
Total Expenditures	\$ 3,482,198	\$ 3,646,876	4.73%

YTD Expense by Category



YTD Expense by Department



Fund Balance Summary		2024 Actual	2025 Budgeted	2025 Actual to Date
Beginning Fund Balance	\$	10,612,545	9,932,448	\$ 9,932,448
Revenue		10,517,581	10,691,217	4,720,308
Expenditures		(10,967,678)	(11,625,398)	(3,646,876)
Transfer to (from) Reserves		(230,000)	-	-
Ending Fund Balance	\$	9,932,448	\$ 8,998,267	\$ 11,005,880
Ending Fund Balance Designation Detail		2024 Actual	2025 Budgeted	2025 Actual to Date
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Cash Flow	\$	3,639,587	\$ 3,767,044	\$ 3,767,044
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Emergency		926,588	951,274	951,274
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Capital Transfer		94,135	75,000	75,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Reserve		14,662	15,560	15,560
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund Reserve		600,000	580,000	600,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund Reserve		3,192,315	2,967,315	2,967,315
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund		650,000	550,000	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	8,926,194
Beginning Fund Balance less designated funds		1,073,259	1,026,255	1,006,255
Transfer to (from) Reserves		(230,000)	-	-
Net Income		(450,097)	(934,181)	1,073,432
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation		393,162	92,073	2,079,687
Ending Designated Funds		9,539,286	8,906,194	8,926,194
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$	9,932,448	\$ 8,998,267	\$ 11,005,880

April Summary

- As of the end of April we have received \$4,615,044 in property tax revenues, which is 45% of what we budgeted for the year. I have confirmed with the County Treasurer's Office that we received another \$828,080 in payments that posted at the beginning of May. This brings our total for the first half of 2025 to \$5,443,966 which is 54% of budget.
- This influx of revenue allowed us to replenish the cash flow reserve, which we had dipped in to in February and March.
- Expenses are tracking close to budget, at 31% of budgeted revenues.
- I have just about wrapped up the 2024 Annual Report to the State Auditor's Office, which is due at the end of May. I will share the final report at the June meeting.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	5/20/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Birch Bay Easement
Prepared By:	Michael Cox
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 Resolution 05/20/25-09 Delegating Signature Authority to Execute an Easement

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move Approval of Resolution 05/20/25-09 Delegating Signature Authority to Execute an Easement

Summary:

At the February meeting, Trustees approved entering into an easement agreement with Edgewater Estates covering a small portion of the Birch Bay property. The resolution presented today authorizes staff to execute that agreement.

Alternatives: Retain full property ownership and issue a notice to vacate, potentially stalling construction of the library project

Fiscal Impact: Edgewater Estates will pay WCLS approximately \$13,365 plus a portion of legal costs.

Comments: none



RESOLUTION NO. 05/20/25-09

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT DELEGATING
SIGNATURE AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE AN EASEMENT**

WHEREAS, at the February 18, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting the Board approved a motion to approve the Birch Bay property easement agreement with Edgewater Estates, by a vote of three to zero, with one Trustee absent and one position vacant; and,

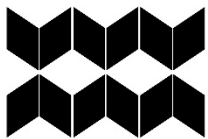
WHEREAS, in exchange for said easement Edgewater Estates will provide compensation to Whatcom County Rural Library District, to include fair market value of the area of the easement and a portion of associated legal costs; and,

WHEREAS, execution of said easement will help to maintain a positive relationship with the property neighbors as well as keep the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express project moving forward;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Director or their designee is hereby authorized to execute said easement agreement with Edgewater Estates.

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 20th day of May, 2025:

Rodney Lofdahl, Board Chair



whatcom county
library system

Executive Director's Report

May 2025

COMMUNITY

The Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees is interested in co-hosting an annual joint Board of Trustees meeting with the WCLS Board of Trustees in order to learn about each institution, get to know one another, and discuss how our organizations cooperate, and goals and projects overlap. Let's discuss.

ACCESS

Last week I signed a letter of support for a grant request from the USDA Food Resilience Program for a Freedge at the Sumas Library. Our partner Sustainable Connections continues to seek sources of sustained funding for this project.

RESOURCES

Collection Services Manager Lisa Gresham recently responded to a staff question about why we do not have copies of a popular James Patterson eBook available even though the record shows up in Libby. Our license to this title has lapsed and will not be repurchased until at least 6 holds are pending. The particular title costs \$75. If we purchased all lapsed titles with outstanding WCLS requests (approximately 1,500 of them) the cost would total more than \$60,000 – which is more than our budget for the entire children's picturebook collection or our DVD collection and close to the amount we spend for adult fiction overall.

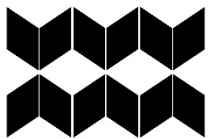
EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

I attended a webinar "The Tip of the Iceberg" co-hosted by the City of Ferndale, Whatcom Community Foundation and Ferndale School District, about using the Icelandic Prevention Model to address the opioid epidemic, especially as it relates to teens. It's part of the "all hands on deck" approach. WCLS libraries can serve as safe "third places" for teens to connect socially and take healthy risks (like acting at Shakespeare Camp or reading their poetry in front of an audience). As we look at future strategic goals, becoming more involved in these efforts is top of mind.

STEWARDSHIP

Facilities Manager Ryan Cullup attended the Deming Water Association meeting in April. This small community-based water association is reliant on rain and surface water from local streams to provide water for the Deming Library. There is some vulnerability to climate change and drought, but neither the Friends of the Library (who own the Deming Library property) nor the water district have a well nor any water rights as being reviewed by the water adjudication process.

Christine Perkins, Executive Director



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Deputy Director Report

May 2025

SUMAS LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

What makes the Sumas Library unique?

- Sumas Library is located inside the Sumas Community Center, occupying one side of the building while the Sumas Senior Center occupies the other. The Nooksack Valley Food Bank also uses the Senior Center space one day each week. Between the Library and Senior Center is a lobby that contains the Sumas Library Express. The Community Center is owned by the City of Sumas, along with a playground just outside the library. The Sumas Community Garden is currently located nearby just across the street.
- Located on the Sumas Prairie – our weather blows south from Canada, so locals watch BC news for weather, not US news
- Heavy Canadian influence. Local businesses rely on Canadian traffic, and the library has several reciprocal borrowers from the Fraser Valley Regional Library as regulars.
- Welcome bags – every new Sumas resident gets a welcome bag of items and info from local businesses, including a handwritten card from library staff.

What is new at SU?

- Everything! The branch was completely renovated after the 2021 floods that damaged most of Sumas, reopening on February 15, 2023.
- Ballistic Brews coffee trailer in the parking lot every other Monday – popular with the Storytime crowd and locals

What is the Friends role at SU?

- Use fun community events to communicate to new (and old) residents that yep, Sumas has a library, and they should get a library card! - Community Movie Nights, bingo, fall carnival, Sip and Savor (previously Valentine and Wine)
- Advocate to WCLS for expanded SU library services in their community

What are some challenges facing the SU library/community?

- No public meeting room and very limited programming space. The library and FOSL occasionally reserve the Senior Center space for programs.
- Major post-flood demographic changes from older residents to younger families. Lots of people moved away for good after 2021, not willing to risk the renewed trauma of another flood. They've been replaced by new residents.

Michael Cox

Deputy Director

COMMUNITY

Our annual A Forest of Words Poetry Reading and Celebration took place on the evening of Friday, May 9 at the Ferndale Library. Young poets from across Whatcom County came to read their work, listen to their peers, and revel in expression. It is always a favorite night of the year, a chance to witness the extraordinary creative capacity of our young people, and to see the world with the sharp, righteous clarity of young eyes. It also gives us a chance to affirm the value of young people's endeavor, and by extension their own value, in a meaningful way. Thanks to Cynthia French, Sevilla Thomas, Tamar Clarke, and Tess Reding Hoffart for all their work putting the 2025 anthology together, and to Jim Pettinger, Ollie Holm, Sarah Lavender, Theresa Morrison, and Vanessa Tucker for pitching in to make the celebration such a success.



ACCESS



I spent every morning last week reading *Greeking Out: Epic Retellings of Classic Greek Myths* with young people in the Whatcom County Juvenile Detention Center as part of our monthly book club. These teens met these stories with voracious enthusiasm and brought some especially astute and insightful responses to their reading. Many thanks to the Whatcom County Library Foundation for their support of Books Unbound, providing a copy of every book we read there for the young people to keep.

Thom Barthelmess
Youth Services Manager

COMMUNITY/RESOURCES

Community Relations has been working closely with the levy project team to update and share information regarding the library levy lid lift. Recent efforts include enhancing the levy webpage, wcls.org/levy, and providing posters and information flyers to branches, bookmobile and pop-up libraries. Webpage improvements include easy-to-navigate buttons and a widget that allows people to enter the assessed value of their property to find out what their new monthly and annual tax would be if the levy passes.

We also respond to reporters' questions about the levy proposition, and we anticipate this work will increase as we near election day. On May 14, The Lynden Tribune/Ferndale Record ran the most comprehensive article to date, [WCLS to ask voters for support | News | lyndentribune.com](https://www.lyndentribune.com/news/wcls-to-ask-voters-for-support-1.1234567)



The summer issue of Explorations will begin arriving in county mailboxes Memorial Day weekend. Copies will also be available at branches and online. The issue features Summer Reading, Whatcom Grooves, Pride in the Park and other summer events. The first two pages of the issue are devoted to levy lid lift information.

News Releases

- [WCLS announces free summer events, including popular Summer Reading program](#)

Podcast: wcls.org/podcast or subscribe on your favorite podcast platform

- [Episode 54: Intellectual Freedom Award Winners](#)

Book Reviews

- *The Northern Light*, April 2, 2025, [Blaine book review: "The Road to Roswell"](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, April 20, 2025, [Review: 'The Berry Pickers' by Amanda Peters](#) (PDF Attached)
- *Bellingham Alive*, April 2025



Media Coverage

Levy and library budget coverage

- *Bellingham Herald*, April 2, 2025, [Federal cuts called 'devastating' for Whatcom libraries, museums](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, April 2, 2025, [County library board approves levy lid lift resolution for Aug. 5 ballot](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, April 3, 2025, [What's at risk at libraries if federal funds cut? E-books, creative clubs, tribal offerings](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, April 8, 2025, [Letters, week of April 9, 2025: health funding, duped U.S. voters, mental illness includes a letter encouraging support of local libraries](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, April 9, 2025, [Whatcom News: April 9, 2025 \(Levy Lid Lift\)](#)
- *The Northern Light*, April 9, 2025, [WCLS to place levy lid lift on August ballots](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, April 9, 2025, [WCLS to place levy lid lift on August ballots](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, April 10, 2025, [GUEST OPINION: It's time to be there for your local library](#) (PDF Attached)
- *My Bellingham NOW*, April 10, 2025, [Whatcom County Library System approves levy lid lift resolution for August election](#)
- *KPUG*, April 10, 2025, [Whatcom County Library System approves levy lid lift resolution for August election](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, April 24, 2025, [Library seeks levy LID lift](#)
- *Salish Current*, April 29, 2025, [Libraries rethink funding strategies after federal cuts](#)

Library lid. The Whatcom County Library System will present to voters in the Aug. 5 primary election a lifting of the library levy lid for the first time in 16 years. ([The Northern Light](#))

Other

- *My Bellingham NOW*, April 3, 2025, [Lifestyle Lookout: Sunnyland Garden Party, Skagit Wood Expo, a heavy metal show and more this weekend](#) (Everson Library book sale)
- *CNN*, April 8, 2025, [What it's like to live in Point Roberts, a US town completely surrounded by Canada](#)
- *The Northern Light*, April 9, 2025, [Blaine and Birch Bay family activities on the agenda for summer](#)
- *El Periodico*, April 16, 2025, [El Periodico Abril 2025 by Lynden Tribune](#) (Spanish-language phone line)

El Periódico | Abril 2025

La línea telefónica en Español de WCLS conecta a los usuarios con los recursos de la biblioteca y la comunidad

WHATCOM — Una nueva línea telefónica en Español amplía aún más el acceso al sistema de bibliotecas del Condado de Whatcom a la comunidad Hispana local. Cuando los usuarios llaman a la línea telefónica, los miembros del personal de la biblioteca que hablan Español responden directamente. Ellos pueden ayudar con preguntas relacionadas con la biblioteca y referir a las personas que llaman a la comunidad. El número de teléfono en Español es 360-354-3638.

Las Coordinadoras Culturales Hispanas de WCLS, Diana Antuña y Amelia Martínez, prepararon la línea telefónica dedicada para conectar a la comunidad hispana con los servicios bibliotecarios. La línea telefónica en Español se lanzó en octubre de 2024.

"Ha sido un poco complicado mantener un registro de llamadas y dejar un mensaje recibiendo una llamada de regreso dentro de las 48 horas."

"Me encantaría que la gente sepa que la biblioteca es un lugar seguro donde empezar, a veces la biblioteca es el primer lugar donde podemos referirlos los usuarios a otros programas."

Acercar de WCLS El Sistema de Bibliotecas del Condado de Whatcom (WCLS) atiende a los usuarios del Condado de Whatcom que hablan español de la comunidad.

Las aplicaciones de aprendizaje de idiomas como Duolingo y otros recursos que deseen aprender a la comunidad.

"La biblioteca puede ser un lugar seguro y desconocido para las personas que no crecen hablando una lengua de la biblioteca", dice Antuña. "A veces, cuando vamos a la biblioteca, nos damos cuenta de que no sabemos cómo pedir ayuda o cómo pedir ayuda a la biblioteca."

Antuña y Martínez están en el centro de la biblioteca, donde se encuentran las personas que hablan Español en la biblioteca. El personal de la biblioteca está en el centro de la biblioteca, donde se encuentran las personas que hablan Español en la biblioteca.

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El Periódico | Abril 2025



Diana Antuña y Amelia Martínez, de izquierda a derecha, atienden una llamada telefónica en la Biblioteca de Lynden. (Foto cortesía de WCLS)

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- *Newsbreak*, April 21, 2025, [Whatcom County Charter Review: Halfway Through the Rulebook Overhaul](#)
- *My Bellingham NOW*, April 22, 2025, [BRIEF: Whatcom County agencies take part in National Drug Takeback Day](#)
- *Whatcom Talk*, April 25, 2025, [Rolling Art Gallery: Whatcom Transportation Authority Whatcomics Bus on Display During Art Walk](#)
- *WhatcomTalk*, April 30, 2025, ["Postmarked Washington" Sheds Light on Whatcom County History](#)
- *Ferndale School District, We Are Ferndale blog*, May 6, 2025, [Ferndale students benefit from Whatcom County Library System partnership | Blog Details](#)

Mary Vermillion
Community Relations Manager

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	299,005	387,066	686,071

Circulation	Apr 2024	Apr 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	13,751	14,357	49,911	57,143	14.5%
Bookmobile & Outreach	4,422	4,535	17,460	18,257	4.6%
Deming	7,629	7,339	31,409	30,697	-2.3%
Everson	8,938	8,614	34,975	34,678	-0.8%
Ferndale	32,997	30,351	127,931	119,485	-6.6%
Island	1,568	1,646	6,444	7,013	8.8%
Lynden	36,582	34,493	142,970	141,163	-1.3%
North Fork	3,633	3,501	15,120	13,851	-8.4%
NWIC	6	5	30	44	46.7%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,972	2,100	8,080	8,415	4.1%
Sumas + SLX	2,208	2,478	9,068	10,207	12.6%
South Whatcom	7,164	8,121	29,334	30,987	5.6%
NDX	3,552	3,697	13,192	15,900	20.5%
Physical Circulation Total	124,422	121,237	485,924	487,840	0.4%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	25,818	23,636	103,810	97,360	-6.2%
All other materials	97,804	95,169	377,980	380,330	0.6%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	36,016	36,618	143,852	149,546	4.0%
eMagazines	3,306	5,861	21,188	23,744	12.1%
eMusic	9,598	10,272	41,320	39,239	-5.0%
Streaming Video	2,337	3,389	11,578	14,241	23.0%
Digital Circulation Total	51,257	56,140	217,938	226,770	4.1%
Grand Total	175,679	177,377	703,862	714,610	1.5%

Visitors (Door counts)	Apr 2024	Apr 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Blaine	6,981	6,920	26,878	27,534	2.4%
Deming	2,913	2,683	11,389	11,119	-2.4%
Everson	3,201	3,794	12,527	13,735	9.6%
Ferndale	14,514	12,197	52,649	50,036	-5.0%
Island	1,159	1,581	4,422	5,985	35.3%
Lynden	11,488	12,399	44,924	47,419	5.6%
NDX	313	297	1,282	1,224	-4.5%
North Fork	1,952	2,038	6,729	7,070	5.1%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,411	1,397	5,160	5,208	0.9%
Sumas + SLX	1,519	1,380	4,599	5,412	17.7%
South Whatcom	2,737	2,949	10,961	11,704	6.8%
Total	48,188	47,635	181,520	186,446	2.7%

New Borrowers	Apr 2024	Apr 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
	554	520	2,508	2,221	-11.4%

Interlibrary Loan	Apr 2024	Apr 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	12,285	11,826	48,710	48,658	-0.1%
Lent to BPL	21,409	22,254	88,231	89,443	1.4%
Borrowed: other libraries	722	576	2,680	2,394	-10.7%
Lent: other libraries	640	589	2,461	2,479	0.7%

Electronic Resources	Apr 2024	Apr 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	38,552	37,774	154,164	156,938	1.8%
Bibliocommons Sessions	101,314	82,742	394,670	359,960	-8.8%
Internet Sessions	3,796	4,308	14,294	16,286	13.9%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	7,683	7,722	25,722	30,014	16.7%

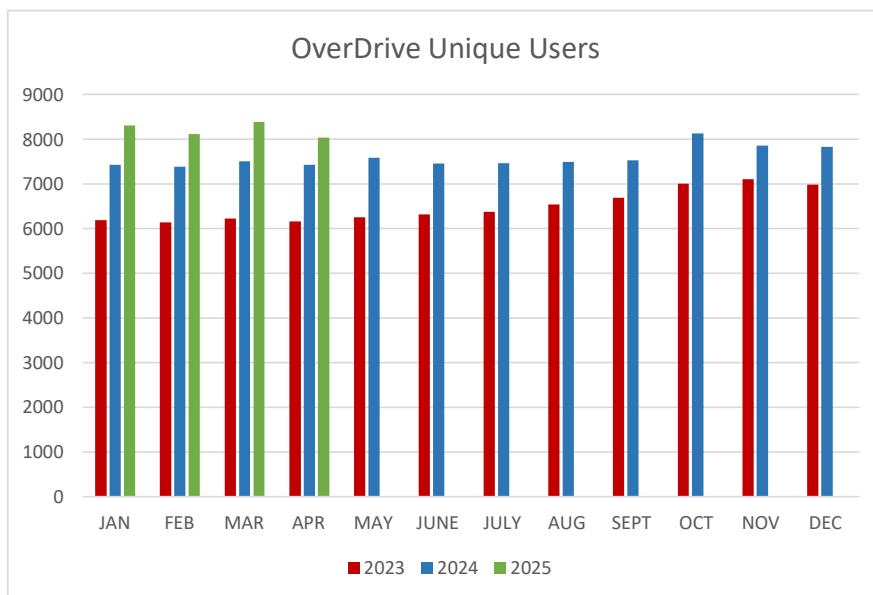
Activities	Apr 2024	Apr 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	80	112	275	411	49.5%
Teens	7	33	55	142	158.2%
Children	127	85	413	429	3.9%
Total	214	230	743	982	32.2%
Attendance					
Adults	539	977	3,261	4,796	47.1%
Teens	106	275	1,864	2,810	50.8%
Children	2,413	2,764	8,370	9,881	18.1%
Total	3,058	4,016	13,495	17,487	29.6%

Notes/Corrections:

Issue with Kanopy stat tracking by title, so we now track Plays. Previous Year streaming video stats in 2025 Board Report will be inconsistent with 2024 Board Report.

OVERDRIVE UNIQUE USERS

Emagazine use continues to grow with *The New Yorker* topping the list at 518 checkouts in April. The top 23 circulating items in April were all eMagazines, on a range of topics spanning health, finance, culture, guns, politics, gardening and food. WCLS total eMaterials circulation increased 8% when comparing April 2024 to April 2025. Eaudiobook usage increased 8% so maintained the same percentage of total eMaterials circulation (49%). Ebook circulation decreased by 6% when comparing April 2024 to April 2025, while eMagazine use for the same periods increased 77%, moving from 9% of total eMaterials circulation in April 2024 to 14% of the total eMaterials circulation in April 2025.



DATABASE USAGE

The most popular content at LinkedIn Learning in April were courses on email marketing strategy, accounting foundations, Microsoft Planner essential training, and photography foundations. WCLS patrons continue to use databases like LinkedIn Learning and Peterson's Test Prep for personal enrichment and to expand marketable skills. Users viewed 32,990 Newsbank documents in April; *Bellingham Herald* and *Seattle Times* content continues to be the most popular, but someone is staying connected with their MN roots by reading the *Duluth News Tribune* daily, and in April, someone had a special interest in what was happening in Lancaster PA as that local newspaper ranked in the top 8 papers accessed.

