

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

May 20, 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; Jessica Burson, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Bryan Middlebrook, Ferndale Page; Shelley Catwell, Ferndale Assistant Branch Manager; Alix Prior, Ferndale Branch Manager.

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.

Service Anniversary Recognition – Michael Cox & Bryan Middlebrook

The Board recognized Bryan Middlebrook, Ferndale Page, for his 20-year service anniversary. Ferndale Assistant Branch Manager Shelley Catwell shared a brief summary of Bryan's time with WCLS including his contributions to the Ferndale Library and WCLS. He has worked at three separate Ferndale Library buildings with multiple management changes and has worked in the menderly as a sub. Bryan is a great resource of institutional knowledge. A few games and genres that are now part of the library collection were suggested by Bryan. Over the years, he has also provided his creativity, acting skills and voice talent for many of the WCLS social media videos created by Ferndale staff. The Board congratulated and thanked Bryan for his dedication and years of service so far.

The Board recognized Michael Cox, Deputy Director, for his 10-year service anniversary. Christine shared many "Top 10" lists for Michael that were compiled by his colleagues. These lists covered everything from his magic and musical skills to his professional contributions to WCLS. During his time with WCLS so far, Michael has helped expand services and reduce access barriers for patrons. One example is automatic renewals that WCLS

provides for items currently checked out, which John thanked him for. Rod thanked Michael for reading the land acknowledgement at each Board meeting.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the April 15, 2025, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

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

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

John asked for clarification about the voided warrants included in the Consent Agenda. Jackie explained why these warrants were voided. John suggested adding account status to the resolutions for future void resolutions. Jackie agreed that it would be useful for the Board to have that information added to the resolutions in the future.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the April Notes and Highlights section. As of April 30th, WCLS received 45% of projected property tax revenue for the year, which was short of what WCLS expected for this time of year. As of the first half of May, the total received was up to 54%, which is more typical for this time of year. This allowed WCLS to replenish the cash reserve after dipping into it earlier this year to cover operating expenses.

Jackie is finishing the 2024 Annual report to the State Auditor's Office. Christine will look over the report in detail before it is submitted later this month.

Birch Bay Property

Jackie reminded Trustees of the easement that was approved with a motion at the February Board meeting. A resolution needs to be formally approved by the Board authorizing the Executive Director to execute the easement.

Danielle asked about the term of the easement. Michael said that the term of the easement is “in perpetuity.” There is interest from the other party in purchasing the affected property. WCLS is open to selling it to the party in the future. However, selling the section of property involved at this time may affect or delay the permitting process currently underway with Whatcom County for the construction of the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express.

John moved to approve Resolution 05/20/25-09 Delegating Signature Authority to Execute an Easement. Seconded. Unanimous Board approval.

Trustee Education: Responding to Conflict and Cultural Tension

Thom and Michael spoke to the Board about how WCLS approaches and incorporates restorative practices in the work staff do. Thom shared the principles behind restorative practice such as focusing on the behavior instead of the individual and focusing on repairing harm and not punishing the perpetrator(s). He spoke about how empathy and understanding are applied to interactions with the community every day at WCLS locations.

Michael showed the Board a few video clips from the Ryan Dowd training content provided to WCLS staff. These training videos talk about a topic that has been surfacing more recently regarding stereotypes and cultural tension. Michael reminded the Trustees that they also have access to this material. Christine asked Maggie Mae to resend the email invitation for the Ryan Dowd training to all Trustees.

Levy Update

Christine talked about the recent media attention regarding the levy lid lift on the ballot for voters in August. She showed the Trustees the updated informational webpage on wcls.org that includes a widget that calculates the increase in taxes for a homeowner.

Matthew asked about tracking the visits to the page. Mary said there is steady traffic but no way to separate which visits are made by staff and which are by the public. WCLS staff visit the page often to look at updates and to ensure they have the most recent information if a patron has questions.

Michael did a few informational presentations to various community groups last week while Christine was away. He is pleased to be getting the information out to the public so that voters can make an informed decision in August.

Rod motioned to amend the agenda to postpone the break. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

2025 Strategic Action Plan Update

Trustees reviewed the strategic plan. Many projects have already been completed or are in progress. The strategic plan for 2026 will be reviewed in the third quarter of this year. The date of the August election will have passed and WCLS will be able to plan a budget based on what the voters have decided regarding the proposed levy lid lift.

Ryan reached out to the Department of Commerce to decline the grant for installing electronic vehicle charging stations at various WCLS locations. The Department of Commerce informed WCLS that the grant funds expended by WCLS so far for the project did not need to be reimbursed.

Rod inquired about the search for a Learning Management System and if there was any progress to report. Christine shared that Learning Coordinator Maggie Mae Nase will be narrowing the choices down and, as her schedule allows, will look deeper into them before selecting a finalist.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:22-10:30 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine led Trustees in a discussion about the possibility of a joint meeting with the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees. Trustees decided not to commit to a joint meeting between the two boards. Instead, Trustees who are interested in attending a BPL Board meeting should contact Christine so that she can make arrangements. BPL Board of Trustees are also welcome to reach out to attend a WCLS Board meeting.

John inquired about mention of the Icelandic Prevention Model in her report. Christine explained the ideas behind the model and how it applies to youth.

Rod asked if the water adjudication impacted any of our libraries. Ryan said that North Fork Library does have a well and WCLS has filed the required paperwork.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael thanked Paul Fullner, Everson and Sumas Branch Manager for sharing a few of the many things that make Sumas a great branch.

Michael talked about the work going into a state program to assist patrons in testing for certain certifications for free. The uncertainty of future funding of the resources for the program has halted the rollout of this service. WCLS will reevaluate the future of this program in the fall.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom had nothing to add to his written report.

John thanked Thom for going to the Juvenile Detention Center and the program Youth Services hosts there. Thom informed the Board that the program is led by Teen Services Coordinator Tamar Clarke, and the credit is all hers. Christine and Foundation Development Director Jessica Burson toured the facilities a few weeks ago with Tamar Clarke and a donor who has pledged to support the program for the next five years.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary had nothing to add to her written report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael mentioned that physical circulation has plateaued. He compared disc circulation from previous years and pointed out that it has steadily been declining. Some items are not available in DVD or CD format and WCLS is not able to purchase them.

Lisa spoke about the change in Kanopy tracking. The way Kanopy reports views with kids' content is different than other content and would delay the collection of accurate statistics for reports for two months. WCLS has chosen to revert to the ticket reporting model for Kanopy use for Board reports.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee had nothing to report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: IT Services

The IT Services Committee had nothing to report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Jessica is still getting acquainted with WCLS and Whatcom County. She is working with Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay to post WCLF information on its own social media account. She reminded Trustees that Branch Out is in September. A survey about Branch Out will be sent out shortly to both the WCLF and WCLS Boards and WCLS staff to get feedback.

Announcements and Adjourn

No further announcements.

Rod adjourned the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on June 17, 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

06/17/2025
Date

/s/
Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant