



Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance at Ferndale Library, 2125 Main St, Ferndale, WA 98248.

In Attendance

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

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; Allyson McBride, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant.

Guests: None

Call to Order

Rod determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Open Public Comment

No public comment was made. Matthew asked about the removal of the land acknowledgement. Christine confirmed that this may have been a bit premature, but the committee is discussing whether or not to recite the land acknowledgement at every meeting. Some committee members feel that reciting the land acknowledgement regularly is not effective or a best practice.

John informed the group that two days from today is January 22nd. On January 22, 1855 the territorial governor of Washington, Isaac Stevens, signed the Treaty of Point Elliott in Mukilteo. Four days later he signed the Point No Point Treaty on the northern tip of the Kitsap Peninsula.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the December 16, 2025, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- November 16-30, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1045329736-1045329740 and voucher nos. 564711-564858 totaling \$236,274.11 and December 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1045530141-1045530147 and voucher nos. 564863-565010 totaling \$253,085.92.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$94,268.25; \$47,789.60 of this is for employee-funded contributions to dental and vision insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, and PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2025-48G: warrant nos. 1268104-1268120 totaling \$39,773.51
- Claim 2025-49G: warrant nos. 1268385-1268397 totaling \$118,032.51
- Claim 2025-50G: warrant nos. 1268622-1268655 totaling \$135,664.24
- Claim 2025-51G: warrant nos. 1269357-1269381 totaling \$53,238.08
- Claim 2025-52G: warrant nos. 1269603-1269618 totaling \$70,573.34

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-23C: warrant no. 1268121 totaling \$4,123.52
- Claim 2025-24C: warrant no. 1268398 totaling \$77,464.80
- Claim 2025-25C: warrant no. 1268656 totaling \$2,729.61
- Claim 2025-26C: warrant nos. 1269382-1269385 totaling \$95,039.52
- Claim 2025-27C: warrant no. 1269619 totaling \$4,306.03

John confirmed that there was one correction needed for the December 2025 draft minutes, which has been made in the final version shared today.

Rod 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 county just closed out the year, and Jackie received reports on Thursday. As head of the Safety Committee, Jackie shared a statistical summary of incident reports for 2025. She noted that the biggest drop in incidents was at Ferndale. In 2024, Ferndale had over 50 incidents and in 2025 only had 17. Ferndale staff were applauded and acknowledged for their teamwork and leadership. It was noted that Youth Services staff were a big help, as well.

The Finance Committee report includes a summary of 2025 debt write-off, as required by Policy 20.13 Write-off of Uncollectable Debts, and a list of Small Works projects as required by Policy 20.04 Purchasing and Contracting.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning discussions continued. The group completed the “No Brainers” activity that Christine had presented at the last meeting. The group agreed that it is good to be looking at what has shifted and what top priority needs are now, compared to the last strategic planning process. Discussion led to asking how the library responds to emergencies and how we support our communities. John brought up that it is important to let the public know what is available to them through the library. The group agreed and applauded Explorations as a way to let people know what the library offers. The group brainstormed where they would like to see WCLS in the next 5, 10, and 20 years. More library express options, branch renovations and disaster/emergency response were a few topics discussed. John asked if WCLS is involved with Whatcom County disaster/emergency meetings. When it was confirmed that we do not, he encouraged staff to partner with Whatcom County Sheriff’s Office Division of Emergency Management.

The Board scheduled a strategic planning retreat. The group agreed on March 25th from 2-5pm. Lynden conference room was booked for the event, and Christine will write up the agenda, as well as inform Jes and new Trustee Riley Sweeney of this date and time.

John asked that for public sessions there be a mutual facilitator.

Policy Updates

Shared Sick Leave Policy – Beth and Jackie presented this policy update, which came about due to the Board’s recent approval of discretionary time off. Other needed changes are also addressed with this update. Edits that were made include removing reference to an inactive Union shared leave program, expanding the definition of a family member to align with Washington State sick leave law, adding discretionary time off as leave that must be used before shared sick leave is utilized, and addition of criteria for leave.

Danielle asked if this is a required policy and how often this issue and need for type of leave comes up. It was confirmed that this is not a required policy and it does not happen often but there have been some situations over the years. The intent is to give time for a staff member to get healthy so they can return to the workplace and not lose their job after a long leave of absence. We want folks to understand that this is leave that is donated by their colleagues and the clause regarding paying back is more to remind staff to not abuse this policy.

John requested that wording in the Leave Allowance section be changed from **cannot** result in an absence to **may not** result in an absence.

John moved to approve the Revised 12.55 Policy, with wording in Leave Allowance section changed from cannot to may not. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

One Book, One Coast

Christine introduced an idea from Los Angeles County Library of One Book, One Coast celebrating Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Month. The cost for WCLS to participate is minimal – adding copies of the selected book to the collection for patrons to check out and hosting at least one event. In order to get access to shared marketing collateral and the livestreamed event with the author, we must sign an interlocal agreement with LA County Library. Christine asked for authorization to sign the agreement. The book is a memoir in graphic novel form by George Takei titled They Called Us Enemy.

John moved to approve WCLS’s participation in One Book, One Coast and to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Interlocal Agreement. Seconded. Passed unanimously. John expressed appreciation for the LA County Library for initiating the program and asking WCLS to join.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:16-10:25 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the article regarding Bellingham Public Library (BPL) at end of her report. BPL will be closed for about a year at their central location due to renovations. BPL has lined up extra space at their Bellis Fair location to help mitigate the loss of availability downtown. WCLS may see an increase in use from BPL patrons due to the closure.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared the changes to Bookmobile and its locations. The Wickersham location has now reverted to its historic location in Acme. Some other highlights included Professional Certifications services and the first program for Whatcom READS book, *Solito*, which was a showing of “Desert Angel” at the Pickford. *Solito* author Javier Zamora will be in town in early March for two events. One event, held at the Mount Baker Theatre, has been sold out with a waitlist available (tickets are free of charge but required). There will also be an event with Javier Zamora in Ferndale at Pioneer Pavilion.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom did not include a report this month due to being out of office. He noted that the February report will include updates on Whatcomics.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She noted a thank you to Pat Grubb and Louise Mugar, publishers of Point Roberts Press (*All Point Bulletin* and *Northern Light* newspapers) who are retiring. Mary stated that she is very grateful to them for being strong supporters of library.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that we were on trend for the end of the 2025 year statistics. Rod asked about the door count results, specifically about Island branch and their significant increase. Michael confirmed that there are two doors which keep track of the count. Unfortunately, if one sensor goes out it can be a little harder to keep track. It was also noted that with the continued construction in Ferndale, we may continue to see fewer visitors there. Sumas will also have a drop off due to the flood damage and the building not being in use. Christine confirmed that she has a meeting scheduled with the City of Sumas on Thursday to get more information on the status of the building.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

Last month, the Personnel Committee reported that they recommended that Riley Sweeney be appointed to the library Board of Trustees. Executive Sidhu supports this nomination and will bring it to the County Council for approval on January 27. If Mr. Sweeney’s appointment is approved, his first WCLS Board of Trustees meeting will be in February.

It was noted that the Marketing Committee will be meeting at the Ferndale Library on Friday, January 23.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

No updates were made.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine announced that this is Rod’s last meeting as part of the WCLS Board of Trustees. Rod’s hard work, passion and dedication to WCLS was recognized by all attendees, and the group wished him well. Rod thanked everyone and reflected on his Board experience, which was favorable. Rod was invited to come make public comments any time.

Rod adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on February 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and in person at Ferndale Library, 2125 Main St, Ferndale, WA 98248.

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Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant