
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: Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; John Miller, Riley Sweeney and Jes Stugelmayer. Absent: Matthew Santos, Vice Chair

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; 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; Anna Kirby, Cataloging Specialist; Emma Radosevich, Collection Development Librarian; Amelia Martinez, PSA and Hispanic Cultural Liaison; Diana Antaño, PSA and Hispanic Cultural Liaison

Guests: Deena Garza, SAO Audit Manager; Karyna Orcutt, SAO Assistant Audit Manager; Annika Grande, SAO Audit Lead; Jed Ballew, Zervas Architects

Call to Order

Danielle determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The group welcomed Riley Sweeney as the new trustee. Riley thanked the group and shared that he was honored to join.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Service Anniversary Recognition

The Board recognized Dianne Marrs-Smith for her 20 years of service as well as Anna Kirby and Jackie Saul for their 10 years of service, each.

Michael presented Di, who joined virtually while on vacation. Michael shared words from a few of Dianne's coworkers which included, but was not limited to, appreciation of Di's leadership, volunteering, supportive nature, communication, and mentorship. When asked if she would like to say anything, Di noted that the last 20 years have gone fast. Dianne shared her appreciation of the lifestyle of the library and how she has continued to enjoy all that it entails. Christine shared what a joy it is to work with Di and applauded how much she accomplishes in and out of work. She noted that Di is the only current staff member who was honored as a Library Champion during WCLS's 75th anniversary year.

Lisa introduced Anna, who is a Cataloging Specialist with WCLS. Anna began at WCLS at 16, where she worked as Clerk and a Page. Anna took a break from WCLS for a bit but eventually found her way back. Lisa applauded Anna for having all the best qualities a Catalog Specialist needs in order to be successful at their job. Lisa also shared comments from Anna's coworkers applauding her and admiring her work ethic. Anna thanked Lisa and the group and said how happy she is to be with WCLS.

Christine celebrated Jackie for her hard work and dedication to WCLS over the last 10 years. She highlighted that one of the most recent major projects, the levy lid lift, would not have been successful without her. Christine is impressed with how Jackie's brain is oriented towards finance and strict adherence to the law while continuing to consider public service and how to serve our community. Jackie is appreciated for her consistent willingness to help with all that needs to be done for and around WCLS. Christine concluded her recognition with some fun number facts that Jackie has accomplished over the last 10 years. Jackie thanked the group for her recognition.

WA State Auditor's Office Audit Exit Conference

Deena Garza, Karyna Orcutt, and Annika Grande from the Washington State Auditor's Office presented the 2023-2024 Audit Exit Conference for WCLS which is meant to share the full audit process, results, and answer any potential questions. The auditors provided the group with a summary packet which will also be posted on the Office of the Washington State Auditor website. The group began by thanking Jackie and WCLS for their participation. The presentation continued to summarize the results of the Accountability and Financial portions of the audit, noting that WCLS was in compliance with both State law and WCLS policies. . At the end of the presentation, the auditors provided contact information and opened the floor to any questions or comments. No questions or comments were forthcoming. Deena, Karyna and Annika left the Board meeting.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the January 20, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- December 16-31, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1045717878-1045717882 and voucher nos. 565015-565168 totaling \$245,083.39 and January 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1045865825-1045865831 and voucher nos. 565173-565324 totaling \$258,012.40.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$112,423.96; \$63,498.64 of this is for employee-funded contributions to dental and vision 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 2025-53G: warrant nos. 1269881-1269903 totaling \$44,409.95
- Claim 2025-54G: warrant nos. 1270037-1270071 totaling \$229,828.67
- Claim 2025-55G: warrant nos.1270302-1270317 totaling \$6,009.34
- Claim 2026-01G: warrant nos. 1269879-1269880 totaling \$10,116.40
- Claim 2026-02G: warrant nos. 1270031-1270036 totaling \$174,448.93
- Claim 2026-03G: warrant nos. 1270340-1270351 totaling \$76,564.91
- Claim 2026-04G: warrant nos. 1270874-1270895 totaling \$86,998.24

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-28C: warrant no. 1270072 totaling \$2,915.00
- Claim 2025-29C: warrant no. 1270318 totaling \$87.50

John noted an adjustment needed for the minutes which is to clarify that Issac Stevens was the territorial governor of Washington.

Danielle moved to accept the Consent Agenda with the noted amendment. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, which included a year-end summary of 2025 and January 2026. She highlighted the general fund and noted a minor variance in taxes collected versus the budgeted amount, likely due to the timing of property tax payments. Overall, the operating deficit at the end of 2025 was less than planned.

She presented an amendment to the 2026 General Fund and Capital Fund Budgets. This amendment is to include adjustments to levy amounts, contributions and donations, and a grant that was predicted to arrive in 2025 but came in 2026. Other miscellaneous costs are included in the adjustment, as well.

Adjustments to the Capital Fund Budget included projects from 2025 being carried into 2026, along with Sumas flood repairs.

Danielle moved to approve Resolution 02/17/26-01 as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Trustee Education: Hispanic Cultural Focus Liaisons

WCLS Hispanic Cultural Liaisons Amelia Martinez and Diana Antaño spoke to the Board about their work for WCLS.

Amelia and Diana shared their personal favorite programs and activities of 2025. These events included making piñatas and spiñatas (spinning piñatas), making tortillas, painting classes and general outreach. With these events, the goal is to share aspects of Hispanic culture with the community. Participants at these programs included both children and adults.

The presenters noted that outreach is an important aspect of what they do. They are out in the community visiting schools, community events, food banks and more. The main goal for them both is to have a presence in their communities. They are on track to achieve this goal as they already have to say no to some requests because their time is booked. Amelia and Diana shared the joy they get when they meet youth and families at outside events and then see them come to the branches because of the connection they made. These liaisons provide support and help build confidence and pride among their culture. They also shared special appreciation for the Youth Services department and their consistent support with these programs.

Amelia and Diana opened the floor to questions and Ryan asked what other communities WCLS supports with cultural liaisons. He was informed that, in addition to Amelia and Diana, we have Christian Cultee as a Lummi Cultural Liaison, Marty Jimmy as a Nooksack Cultural Liaison and Harman Kaur as a Punjabi Cultural Liaison.

The group thanked them for their presentation and applauded the work that they do and the relationships they are continuing to build.

Break

Danielle adjourned the meeting for a break from 10:30 - 10:40 a.m.

Policy Updates

IT Services Policy 9.01 – Christine presented this policy update, which adds a line to make staff aware of the possibility of needing to use a personal device on a de minimis basis for certain tasks such as multifactor authentication. This update was reviewed by our attorney and was deemed acceptable.

Danielle moved to approve the updated 9.01 Policy, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Classification & Compensation Update

Beth updated the group on the Classification and Compensation Study and shared the draft of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to conduct the study. She noted that the draft does not require Board approval and asked for feedback they may have on it. Beth confirmed that the goal is to have the RFP released on March 2. Beth will be bringing any feedback received to the committee for them to discuss. She assured the Board that the committee, which is made up of both Union representation and management representation, will continue to provide updates to the Board throughout the process.

As a reminder, the last time this process was completed was in 2017. There is the potential that some positions could be adjusted to make sure everyone is compensated correctly. John suggested a potential change on the first line of page 34 under 3A, which notes a minimum of 12 comparable organizations. John recommended adding “or as mutually determined” after this.

Strategic Planning Update

Christine presented the Board with a draft of proposed components of the Strategic Planning process. She noted that the hopeful timeline is to be ready to adopt the finalized Strategic Plan in September so that it is ready for next year’s budget planning. WCLS recently launched two electronic surveys, one for Stakeholders and one for Cardholders. The current surveys close February 28. Surveys of non-library users will be forthcoming. We will collaborate with an outside consultant on this aspect. The Board of Trustees Strategic Planning retreat, taking place in March, will give an opportunity to review results of the surveys.

The group discussed potential community events to attend over the next few months and other opportunities to connect with community members. Christine also suggested that the group should consider a second Board retreat in July to review the information that will result from connecting more with the community.

Riley asked Christine what her end goal is once the Strategic Plan is in place. Christine responded by noting that we want to figure out how to best optimize the resources from the successful levy lift, provide excellent library services and set WCLS up for success for the next one.

Christine asked the group to brainstorm questions to be asked on the non-user survey and to email them to her as they come up.

North Fork Tenant Improvement Bid Award

Ryan presented an update for the Meeting Room project taking place at the North Fork library. Jed Ballew of Zervas Architects will be completing the project. Friends of the North Fork Library provided \$90,000 in grant money for the meeting room. Summit Construction bid package was presented to the group outside of the Board agenda packet. The package was presented and approved on Monday, after the agenda packet was completed. Christine thanked the Friends of the North Fork Library and their ambitious drive to find grant funding. The Board applauded the group in their belief in their library, wanting to honor them and follow through with the work.

Riley moved to approve the funding as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Annual General Meeting – Board Officers and Committee Assignments

The group suggested the following appointments for the Board of Trustees for the 2026 year: Matthew Santos, Chair; John Miller, Vice Chair; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; Jes Stugelmayer, Trustee; and Riley Sweeney, Trustee.

Riley moved to accept the suggested appointments as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

The group moved forward to appoint committee members for the Marketing Committee, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, IT Services Committee and WCLF Liaison. The 2026 year will include Matthew and Jes on the Marketing Committee, Danielle and Riley serving on the Finance Committee, John and Jes on the Personnel Committee, and Jes as the WCLF Liaison. The group will check with Matthew regarding the IT Services Committee and if he would like to stay on. If so, the IT Services Committee will include Matthew and Riley. These appointments will be noted on the WCLS website under the “About the Board” section.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted Ferndale parking access. It was noted that, with the continued construction, there are fewer ADA accessible spaces, and fewer spots in general – now at the temporary lot and in the future lot that will be shared with City Hall. It was made clear to the city that the limited ADA parking spaces is a concern among patrons and staff. In the meantime, WCLS is grateful to have the currently temporary parking lot. Ryan installed additional solar lighting to address safety concerns.

Christine reminded all to read the current Whatcom READS book, *Solito*. There are many great complementary programs for interested parties.

Christine shared that there a staff member submitted a peer recognition form thanking the Board of Trustees for their continued support of WCLS staff.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that an agreement was made to allow the Whatcom READS event at the Mount Baker Theatre to be live streamed. It was noted that both author events have been sold out. The events are free but require a ticket to enter. If patrons are interested in a livestream, they must sign up and get on the waiting list. This will ensure they receive the information to join the livestream.

