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Location

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This meeting was held in-person attendance at Lynden Library, 216 4<sup>th</sup> St, Lynden, 98264

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In Attendance

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**Trustees:** Matthew Santos, Chair; John Miller, Vice Chair; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; Riley Sweeney 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; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Paul Fullner, Everson and Sumas Branch Manager; Allyson McBride, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant.

**Guests:** Ed Trott

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Call to Order

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Matthew determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

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Welcome/Introductory Remarks

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Christine thanked the group for attending today's special meeting and thanked John for joining All Staff Learning Day (ASLD). John mentioned he sat in on a breakout session with Dr. Travis Tennesen from Western Washington University and found it quite interesting. John informed the group that Travis presented a community engagement model called Community Design Clinics. Christine then thanked Ed Trott, a member of the public, for attending today's in-person meeting.

Christine started the meeting by expressing hope for a participatory, interactive discussion. The group then went around and shared their intentions for the meeting and the beginning of the Strategic Planning Process.

Some insights from the group included the importance of receiving input from stakeholders, keeping conversations inclusive, investing in the community, commitment to intention, prioritization, and finding where we may have missed opportunities in the past.

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Digging into the Data

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Christine shared Cardholder and Stakeholder Survey analysis documents for the group to review. After reviewing the documents individually, the group came back together and discussed major themes.

Some takeaways: patrons want libraries to be open more hours, patrons appreciate Whatcom County Library System as a whole; the opportunity there might be to connect WCLS with other resources and businesses to help the communities, the community is wanting more access to space and to things, and that the WCLS staff is our biggest strength.

Christine noted that this is just the first phase of gathering all the information that we can. The next step will be moving forward with a non-user survey and one-on-one or small group conversations.

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### Asking Unanswered Questions

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The group discussed potential questions to ask on the non-user survey that could bring WCLS more information. Ideas included asking about hobbies, which changes in open hours would be desirable, what do they believe they are paying for through their tax dollars, what holds them back from visiting the library, and would they use the library if it came to them?

The group felt as though this was a good starting point for the non-user survey.

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### Break

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Matthew adjourned the group for a break from 3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

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### Envisioning the Future

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Christine presented a visual aid for WCLS staff and Board members to use at community events to help facilitate conversations about the strategic plan. Individuals can “vote” on what they feel is more important in the categories such as “new things and non-traditional experiences”, “lean into literacy” and “library as community hub”.

Michael pointed out that there have been a few library events that have “sold out” of free tickets recently. He asked the group to brainstorm ideas on how to keep that going.

The group discussed the topic of local history and its relevancy with patrons. The group agreed that it is important to hold onto Whatcom history and will reach out to other libraries to ask how they handle their historical items.

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### Desired State

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The group discussed what the desired state of WCLS looks like in 10 years. The brainstorm included ideas such as creating events relevant to younger generations, encouraging seeing value in the library system, focusing on facility needs, connecting with community resources, and enhancing staff training.

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### Reviewing the Plan and Adjourn

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Christine reminded the Board of the community pop-up schedule and asked them to sign up for events they know they will be available to attend. She also informed the Board that the Nonuser Survey RFP process is underway and responses are due Friday.

It was noted that during an exercise at ASLD, staff had the opportunity to answer questions that will help direct the Strategic Planning process. The comments are being transcribed in a spreadsheet to review more easily.

Internal happenings within WCLS that will add to gathering information for Strategic Planning include Deep Dives, Branch staff meetings, and small group interviews. The Board was reminded that we want to look at new areas of the community so it was requested that they submit all ideas to Christine.

Christine proposed that L3 work together to draft a Strategic Plan to present to the Board by August for a full group discussion. The Board requested to be added to the Teams page where the Strategic Planning information is being stored. Christine agreed to add them all so they have full access.

A final reminder was given that this is just the first run through of early information and the process will continue throughout the summer.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

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### Next Meeting

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The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on April 21, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Ferndale Library, 2125 Main St, Ferndale, 98248.

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