



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Whatcom County Library System
April 21, 2026

Via Teams and Ferndale Library
2125 Main Street
Ferndale, WA 98248

***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 Allyson.McBride@wcls.org prior to the meeting.
3. 9:15 a.m. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Meeting Minutes
 - b. Expenditures
 - c. Authorization to Void a Warrant
4. 9:20 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Finance Committee Report
5. 9:30 a.m. **Trustee Education:** Whatcom County Library Foundation – Jessica Burson
6. 9:50 a.m. **Birch Bay Library Invitation to Bid**
7. 10:00 a.m. **Compensation Study Update**
8. 10:10 a.m. **Non-User Survey Update**
9. 10:20 a.m. **BREAK**
10. 10:30 a.m. **Staff Reports**
11. 10:50 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
12. 11:00 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 Allyson.McBride@wcls.org before 4:00 p.m. Monday, April 20, 2026. Written comments may be submitted to Allyson.McBride@wcls.org prior to the meeting.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/21/2026
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Consent Agenda – Board Meeting Minutes, Monthly Expenditures, Resolution to Void a Warrant
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:

- March 17, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- February 16-28, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046336790-1046336793 and voucher nos. 565644-565797 totaling \$246,340.57 and March 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046484432-1046484438 and voucher nos. 565822-565972 totaling \$260,560.04.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$87,938.20; \$49,541.70 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 2026-09G: warrant nos. 1272792-1272811 totaling \$71,062.86
- Claim 2026-10G: warrant nos. 1273110-1273127 totaling \$24,960.69
- Claim 2026-11G: warrant nos. 1273461-1273491 totaling \$126,747.66
- Claim 2026-12G: warrant nos. 1273886-1273910 totaling \$62,370.40
- Claim 2026-13G: warrant nos. 1274346-1274368 totaling \$84,160.08

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2026-03C: warrant no. 1272812 totaling \$6,277.81
- Claim 2026-04C: warrant no. 1273128 totaling \$16,269.21
- Claim 2026-05C: warrant no. 1273911 totaling \$1,550.00

Authorization to Void Warrants

- Resolution 04/21/26-03 voiding warrant 1273118

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: Expenditures for approval paid from available 2026 budgeted funds.

Comments: The Finance Committee has reviewed the General and Capital Fund claims listed above. They reviewed one General Journal entry made in March.



Location

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

In Attendance

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; 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; Allyson McBride, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Katrina Carabba, Deming Branch Manager; Christopher Phillips, Systems Engineer

Guests: Ed Trott

Call to Order

Matthew determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Service Anniversary Recognition

The Board recognized Katrina Carabba, Deming Branch Manager, for her 20-year service anniversary. Michael shared facts from 2006, the year Katrina started at WCLS, noting that 2006 was before the Deming library expansion. Katrina has been a patron of WCLS since before the Deming library was built. Growing up within the WCLS system, Katrina may hold more institutional knowledge than most staff. Michael shared a story of his first experience with Katrina when he visited the Deming Library incognito. A few of the many skills he applauded were her radical listening, customer service and leadership. He also highlighted how Katrina takes things to heart. She is a wonderful leader who cares deeply for her team. Christine mentioned how impressed she is with the grace that surrounds Katrina. Michael ended his recognition by thanking Katrina for these 20 years she has given us. Katrina thanked Michael, and the Board, for the kind words and said she is honored to be with the WCLS system.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes from the February 17, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, authorization to void a warrant, ratification of a public works project award, and the following expenditures:

General Fund:

- January 16-31, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046045627-1046045633 and voucher nos. 565329- 565484 totaling \$263,008.50 and February 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046196391- 1046196396 and voucher nos. 565489-565639 totaling \$254,756.56.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$88,136.83; \$46,662.97 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 2026-05G: warrant nos. 1271379-1271391 totaling \$13,336.49
- Claim 2026-06G: warrant nos. 1271668-1271691 totaling \$218,442.11
- Claim 2026-07G: warrant nos. 1271940-1271959 totaling \$48,427.39
- Claim 2026-08G: warrant nos. 1272335-1272357 totaling \$41,803.80

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2026-01C: warrant nos. 1271392-1271393 totaling \$22,740.21
- Claim 2026-02C: warrant no. 1272358 totaling \$19,157.57

Riley 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 February Notes and Highlights section. She noted that money from the Levy Lid Lift will not begin to appear until April and reminded Trustees of the need for cash reserves. Several annual payments are made at the beginning of the year. Jackie noted that we received our payment from the insurance company for the Sumas flood loss. Many of the items that were damaged were purchased in 2021, and the insurance adjuster took into account depreciation when calculating the payout

Jackie provided a Levy Lid Lift update. She updated the spreadsheet that Christine shared during the lead up to the levy lid lift election. All in all, there are no substantial changes from the original projections. We expect to show an operating deficit again in 2035. Jackie wanted to share this with the Board to show we are on track and to provide context to the Strategic Planning process. The Board had no questions related to the spreadsheet.

Trustee Education

Christopher Phillips, Systems Engineer spoke to the Board about the WCLS IT network. Christopher shared that previously everything was connected to the main office in the Administrative Services building. This resulted in many issues, such as all locations losing internet when system was down at AS. Systems were updated so that they all connect to the internet and are cloud-based. Having everything in a cloud-based system means that there is less opportunity for a systemwide failure. This switchover has also allowed IT to increase the service they can provide to patrons.

Christopher confirmed that if a data center that hosts our data goes down, we may have to wait for them to bring services back up. However, we are with Microsoft who is quick to be back up and running with so many data centers worldwide. He also confirmed that all of the data is encrypted in transit, making it a secured connection when asking the server for information. There are two different backup systems. One runs every night backing up Teams and OneDrive. The other happens once a month with Christopher placing long term, archived items on a hard drive in a safe.

Matthew moved to adjust the break to take place before the policy updates to swap the Meeting OWL due to technical difficulties. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Break

Matthew adjourned for a break from 9:37-9:48 a.m.

Policy Updates

Write-off of Uncollectable Debts Policy 20.13 – Jackie and Lisa presented this policy update, which updated the policy language to allow WCLS to resume sending accounts to collections in the future should WCLS desire to, but it does not require accounts be sent to collections.

Riley moved to approve the updated 20.13 Policy, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Sumas

Due to the December 2025 flood damage in Sumas, the Sumas branch is now back to the bare bones of the building. This fresh start gives us an opportunity to build a small, quiet meeting space in the branch. The City of Sumas has agreed to this as a tenant improvement. In order to move forward, we will need to provide the City of Sumas with a Memorandum of Understanding which Ryan prepared and presented to the Board.

John moved to authorize WCLS Executive Director to sign a memorandum of understanding with the City of Sumas to develop a meeting room at the Sumas library. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning Update

Christine provided the Board with the results of the Cardholder and Stakeholder surveys for their review before the Board retreat on March 25. She confirmed that 3,196 cardholders completed the survey this year! It was noted that many of those patrons have been using the WCLS Libraries for 10 or more years. Christine highlighted the rich responses patrons provided in the comments sections.

Riley was encouraged by some seemingly “easy wins” and noted that negative responses were not as high as expected with such a large response rate.

The Board discussed the possibility of using tools to help quantify responses. Christine will investigate the options that may help provide the best results.

Christine and Mary discussed the Non-user Survey RFP and the strong engagement it has had so far. Responses to the RFP are due Friday, March 27. More information to come as results are provided.

Christine distributed a handout that summarizes an “environmental scan” of the public library environment and proposes various future scenarios. This document is meant to help the group through brainstorming sessions during the Strategic Planning process.

Christine provided a schedule of community events that we will be attending through this summer. The point is to be more involved with the community, rather than only hosting events at the library. This will provide opportunities to have impactful conversations with all community members, whether they are cardholders or not. Christine asked the Board to review the event list and sign up to attend and be involved with the process.

Christine reminded the Board of the retreat next week on Wednesday, March 25 at the Lynden Library.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted *Cascadia Daily News*’ full feature interviews with Thom and Mary Kinser, Collection Development Librarian, speaking about audiobooks. She also applauded the Whatcom READS team and how wonderful this year turned out. This year was different to how Whatcom READS has been done in the past, but it was still a great success. Since both public author events were sold out, Whatcom READS provided its first ever livestream which 561 people attended.

Christine updated the group that One Book, One Coast is continuing to move forward and that she received confirmation that there will be a livestream available of George Takei speaking in Los Angeles on May 31. WCLS will host a watch party at the Ferndale Library

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael announced that WCLS will have an interim North Fork manager, Carol Dapogny, while the current branch manager, Mariya Farmagey, is out on maternity leave.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom had no further comments on his report.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary provided hard copies of the 2025 Community Report for the Board. She also shared that WCLS is working on a Summer at the Library program, encouraging patrons to spend their summer with the library. Thank you to Whatcom County Library Foundation, Whatcom Community Foundation and People’s Bank for providing funding for the effort. With this support, WCLS is able to provide T-shirts for all staff to help promote the program. Mary encouraged the Board to sign up for shirts, as well, if they would like to participate in the campaign.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael said we are continuing to see a slight decrease in use of physical items and an increase in the use of digital items. It was also noted that program attendance is increasing.

Announcements and Adjourn

It was announced that WCLS All Staff Learning Day is this Friday, March 20, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The Board was invited to attend if they are available. John applauded last year’s guest speaker and how it helped prepare staff for the Levy Lid Lift.

Christine also reminded the Board of the Board of Trustees Strategic Planning Retreat taking place next Wednesday, March 25, from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Lynden library.

Matthew reminded the Board to review the pop-up schedule for community events and be ready to sign up for participation at the listed events on Wednesday, at the retreat.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Next Meeting

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 Street, Ferndale, WA 98248.

<hr/>	04/21/2026	<hr/>
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant



Location

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

In Attendance

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

Call to Order

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

Welcome/Introductory Remarks

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.

Digging into the Data

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.

Asking Unanswered Questions

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.

Break

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

Envisioning the Future

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.

Desired State

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.

Reviewing the Plan and Adjourn

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.

Next Meeting

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.

<hr/>	04/21/2026	<hr/>
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant



RESOLUTION NO. 04/21/26-03

**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 local vendor for services rendered; and,

WHEREAS, payment was subsequently made using a WCLS purchase card; and,

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

WHEREAS, the warrant is duplicative of payment already made and therefore no longer needed;

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
1273118	March 10, 2026	Northwest Professional Service	\$1,004.58

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 21st day of April, 2026:

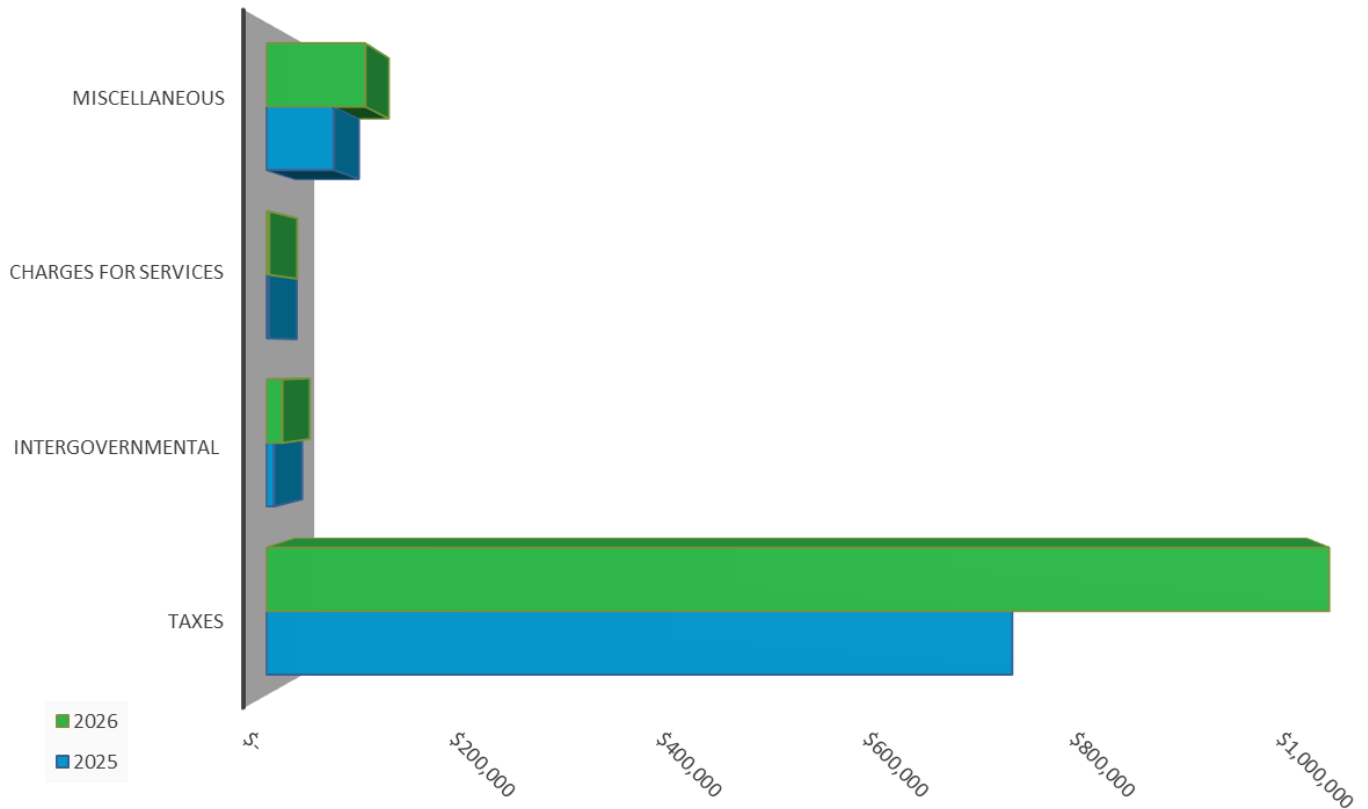
Matthew Santos, Board Chair



**2026 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date
March 2026 (25% 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	\$ 16,816,085	\$ 1,066,611	90.10%	6.34%	\$ (15,749,474)
	TOTAL TAXES	16,816,085	1,066,611	90.10%	6.34%	(15,749,474)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	3,113	0.26%	6.92%	(41,887)
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	12,564	1.06%	41.88%	(17,436)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	75,000	15,677	1.32%	20.90%	(59,323)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	7,000	2,188	0.18%	31.26%	(4,812)
347.2002	Library Use Fees	13,000	240	0.02%	1.85%	(12,760)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	20,000	2,428	0.21%	12.14%	(17,572)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	404,800	78,472	6.63%	19.39%	(326,328)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	4,000	1,481	0.13%	37.02%	(2,519)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	88,000	12,517	1.06%	14.22%	(75,483)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	60	0.01%	60.00%	(40)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	(0.57)	0.00%	0.00%	(1)
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	24,750	4,084	0.34%	16.50%	(20,666)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	10,000	2,413	0.20%	24.13%	(7,587)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	531,650	99,027	8.37%	18.63%	(432,623)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	17,442,735	1,183,743	100.00%	6.79%	(16,258,992)
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	\$ 17,442,735	\$ 1,183,743	100.00%	6.79%	\$ (16,258,992)

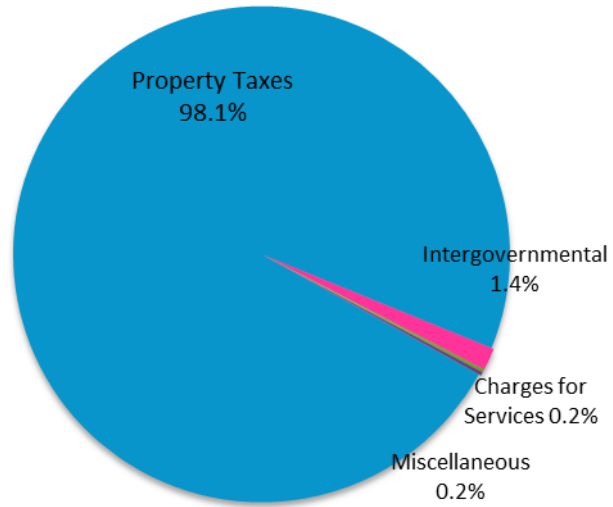
General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year



Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison

	2025		2026		% Change
Taxes	\$	748,671	\$	1,066,611	42.47%
Intergovernmental		7,608		15,677	106.04%
Charges for Services		2,019		2,428	20.30%
Miscellaneous		67,507		99,027	46.69%
Total Operating Revenue		825,806		1,183,743	43.34%
Other Financing Sources		-		-	0.00%
Total Revenue	\$	825,806	\$	1,183,743	43.34%

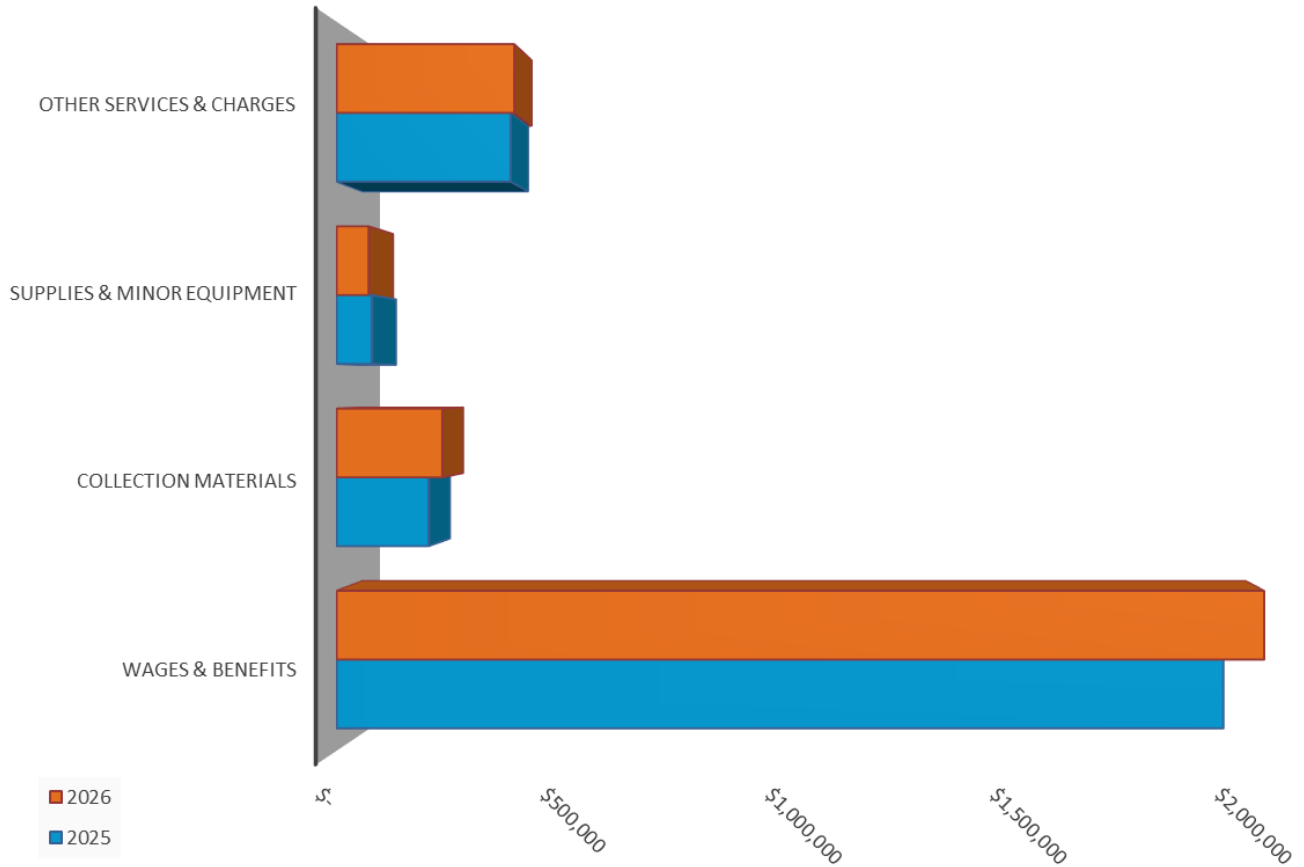
YTD Revenue by category



**2026 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date
March 2026 (25% of FY)**

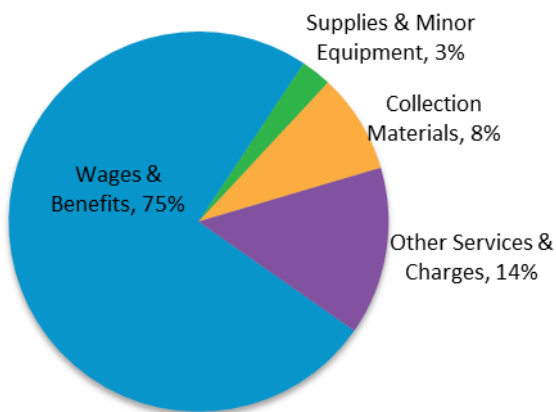
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Budgeted Expenditures Spent YTD	Budget Variance
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS					
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	\$ 6,901,446	1,619,299	56.51%	23.46%	\$ (5,282,147)
572.2000	Benefits	2,203,925	519,028	18.11%	23.55%	(1,684,897)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	9,105,371	2,138,327	74.62%	23.48%	(6,967,044)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	180,225	22,300	0.78%	12.37%	(157,924)
572.3032	Fuel	27,650	5,966	0.21%	21.58%	(21,684)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,400,000	243,556	8.50%	17.40%	(1,156,444)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	239,800	45,723	1.60%	19.07%	(194,077)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,847,675	317,545	11.08%	17.19%	(1,530,130)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	742,875	210,257	7.34%	28.30%	(532,618)
572.4042	Communication	140,450	24,142	0.84%	17.19%	(116,308)
572.4043	Travel	53,025	5,476	0.19%	10.33%	(47,549)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	750	160	0.01%	21.39%	(590)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	27,447	5,762	0.20%	20.99%	(21,686)
572.4046	Insurance	122,634	87,583	3.06%	71.42%	(35,051)
572.4047	Utilities	186,066	42,993	1.50%	23.11%	(143,073)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	120,255	23,526	0.82%	19.56%	(96,729)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	118,965	9,690	0.34%	8.15%	(109,275)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,512,468	409,588	14.29%	27.08%	(1,102,880)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	12,465,513	2,865,460	100.00%	22.99%	(9,600,053)
590	OTHER FINANCING USES					
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	1,000,000	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	1,000,000	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 13,465,513	2,865,460	100.00%	21.28%	\$ (10,600,053)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ 3,977,222	(1,681,717)			\$ (5,658,939)
	FUND BALANCE SUMMARY					
	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,138,159	9,138,159			
	Net Income	3,977,222	(1,681,717)			(5,658,939)
	Ending Fund Balance	\$ 13,115,381	7,456,442			\$ (5,658,939)

General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year

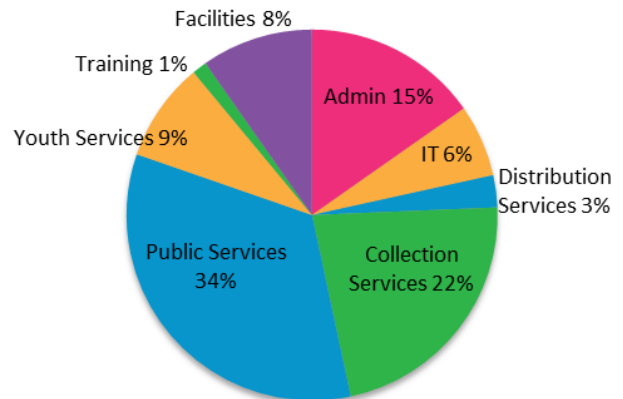


Actual General Fund Expenditures Year to Date Comparison				
		2025	2026	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$	2,044,354	\$ 2,138,327	4.60%
Collection Materials		211,907	243,556	14.94%
Supplies & Minor Equipment		81,105	73,988	-8.77%
Other Services & Charges		400,827	409,588	2.19%
Total Operating Expenditures		2,738,193	2,865,460	4.65%
Other Financing Uses		-	-	0.00%
Total Expenditures	\$	2,738,193	\$ 2,865,460	4.65%
Net Operating Income	\$	(1,912,387)	\$ (1,681,717)	12.06%

YTD Expense by Category



YTD Expense by Department



Fund Balance Summary	2025 Actual	2026	
		Budgeted	2026 Actual to Date
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,932,448	9,115,981	\$ 9,115,981
Revenue	10,582,816	17,442,735	1,183,743
Expenditures	(11,399,284)	(13,465,513)	(2,865,460)
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 9,115,981	\$ 13,093,203	\$ 7,434,264

Ending Fund Balance Designation Detail	2025 Actual	2026	
		Budgeted	2026 Actual to Date
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Cash Flow	\$ 3,767,044	\$ 4,107,993	\$ 1,262,323
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Emergency	951,274	1,037,372	1,037,372
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Capital Transfer	78,164	1,000,000	1,000,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Reserve	15,560	17,254	17,254
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund	600,000	505,000	600,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund	2,967,315	2,967,315	2,967,315
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund	550,000	550,000	550,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Levy Sustainability Fund	-	1,000,000	-
Total Designated Ending Fund Balance	8,929,357	11,184,933	7,434,264
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation	186,623	1,908,269	-
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$ 9,115,981	\$ 13,093,203	\$ 7,434,264

March Summary

- We have received \$1,066,611, or just over 6% of our levy as of end of March. We have dipped into the Cash Flow reserve fund by \$2,845,667. This will be replenished in April.
- Expenses are tracking close to budget, at just over 21% of budgeted revenues.
- The 2025 Annual Report to the State Auditor's Office is underway. I'll be working on this over the coming weeks and hope to have a draft to share at the May Board of Trustees meeting. The report is due at the end of May.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/21/2026
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Compensation Study Update
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Information only.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: N/A

Summary:

The Classification & Compensation Study committee reviewed four responses to a Request for Proposals from qualified consultants and interviewed two finalists online via Teams. We selected Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. Their total cost will not exceed \$46,500. This amount is below the threshold indicated in our Purchasing and Contracting Policy for contracts for professional services, and the Executive Director is therefore authorized to negotiate and sign a contract. Funds for this study were included in the 2026 budget. A final report will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the August 18, 2026 meeting.

Alternatives: None

Fiscal Impact: Not to exceed \$46,250; included in 2026 budget.

Comments: None



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/21/2026
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Non-cardholder survey
Prepared By:	Mary Vermillion
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Information only

Suggested Motion for Consideration: N/A

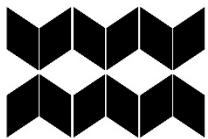
Summary:

The Marketing committee reviewed six formal responses to a Request for Proposals from qualified consultants and interviewed two finalists online via Teams. We selected EMC Research. Their total cost will not exceed \$21,000. This amount is below the threshold indicated in our Purchasing and Contracting Policy for contracts for professional services, and the Executive Director is therefore authorized to negotiate and sign a contract. Funds for this study were included in the 2026 budget. A final report will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the June 16, 2026, meeting.

Alternatives: None

Fiscal Impact: Not to exceed \$21,000; included in 2026 budget.

Comments: None



whatcom county
library system

Executive Director's Report

April 2026

COMMUNITY

We are so pleased with the community response to Library Giving Day! Foundation Development Director Jessica Burson will lead our Trustee Education this month to update you on the final results and share news about the Whatcom County Library Foundation.

ACCESS

Sumas Library Branch Manager Paul Fullner attended the Sumas City Council meeting and reports that they approved the Memorandum of Understanding that will allow us to construct a small meeting room at the Sumas Library. We're eager to move forward with this while other repairs to the Sumas Library are happening; this meeting space will allow patrons to have private conversations, participate in online meetings (job interviews, telemed appointments and more) and meet one-on-one without disturbing other library users.

RESOURCES

We are pleased to announce that Mary Kinser will be our new Collection Services Manager, replacing Lisa Gresham who is retiring in June. Mary has worked for WCLS for sixteen years, and was our Technical Services Supervisor before becoming a Collection Development Librarian. She received her MLIS degree from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Mary has been part of our Reading Conversations training team, spearheaded our Surprise Selections program, hosts our regular staff "Book Shares" and often presents Lightning Booktalks at Branch Out. We received 71 applications for this position and interviewed nine.

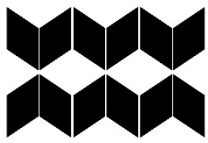
EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We've experienced a few behavioral incidents at various locations in the past month that involve people who may be unhoused or who may have mental health issues. Staff carefully balance their concern and care for these individuals with the need to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.

STEWARDSHIP

As soon as our contract is finalized with our Compensation Study consultant, we will dive right into this project, comparing our job descriptions, classification scheme and pay rates versus the market to help ensure that staff are being compensated fairly and sustainably.

Christine Perkins, Executive Director



whatcom county
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Deputy Director Report

April 2026

COMMUNITY

The series of programs, [Secrets of Dying Well](#), have been getting a lot of attendance across WCLS branch libraries. Participants join local end-of-life planning consultants for an open, honest conversation about what it means to die well – and live with intention. These discussions guide people through a variety of decisions to help ensure their values are honored, affairs are in order, and loved ones are supported. There is still time to attend a program occurring at Ferndale, South Whatcom, Blaine, and Everson libraries 4/23 - 5/28.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

WCLS has been awarded an ALA Libraries Transforming Communities grant with a focus on helping small and rural libraries better serve people with disabilities. This \$10,000 grant will help us work with the deaf/hard-of-hearing community. Meetings will be held with community stakeholders to generate ideas for use of the grant funds. Selected staff will receive American Sign Language training. Funds will also support hiring ASL interpreters for library events and purchasing technology resources identified during community conversations. In 2025, a staff led committee began developing recommendations to better serve the deaf community. This led to the adoption of video on-demand translation services across WCLS, a staff ASL practice group, and work leading up to this successful grant application.

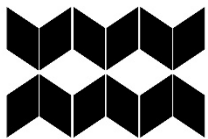
STEWARDSHIP

The Birch Bay Library Project has reached some important milestones, allowing the project to begin to shift from planning to building. The building permitting process is nearly complete, allowing us to begin the search for a contractor with the publication of an [Invitation to Bid](#) on 4/15/2026. The timeline for this bid process allows us to bring a contract for consideration by the Board of Trustees at the 5/19/2026 Board Meeting. Work could begin in June.

During construction, the Birch Bay community will continue to have access to library services via the Bookmobile which will be relocated to The C Shop. We appreciate this partnership that will allow us to continue to connect with our patrons, provide access to materials, and answer questions about the project throughout the construction process.

Michael Cox

Deputy Director



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Youth Services Report

April 2026

ACCESS

The Youth Services Team spends a great deal of our time connecting to young people and their families through outreach, both promoting and bringing library service to patrons where they are. Here's a sampling of some of those efforts in schools and institutions around the county.

Youth Services Assistant Angelina Kuchar and Cultural Liaison Marty Jimmy take turns visiting the Nooksack Tribal Library every other week to read to and with children there. The children often get to choose what they read, from a selection of books library staff bring, and the most recent visit included a variety of books about animal butts and animal poop.

Children's Services Coordinator Theresa Morrison and Youth Services Assistant Thomas Lynn spent two full days booktalking at Kendall Elementary, right across the street from the North Fork Library. They bring a different selection of fiction and nonfiction for each class, calibrated to reading level and interest.

Youth Services Assistant Sawyer Elms is at Irene Reither Elementary every day this week Visiting 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes in the school library. He is refreshing ConnectED familiarity, booktalking grade-specific titles, promoting programs, and providing a pop-up library.

Youth Services Librarian Sarah Lavender runs monthly lunchtime pop-up libraries at Horizon and Vista Middle Schools. She sets up a station in the cafeteria to chat with interested students about the books she has on hand and checks out to them on the spot.

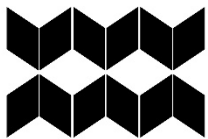
Youth Services Librarian Hana Boxberger, Youth Services Assistant Tess Reding-Hoffart, and Public Services Assistant AmandaLyn Wayland visited Blaine High School ninth grade English Language Arts classes with books connected to curricula and on previously requested topics.

Tess also joined Cultural Liaison Diana Antaño at Nooksack Valley Middle School where they set up a library presence in the Multi Language Learners classroom during school conferences. They checked out books, signed up library cards, and provided information about internet hot spots.

Youth Services Manager Thom Barthelmess spent a morning at Lynden Christian Middle School speaking with all four sixth grade classes about the Newbery Medal. He shared his experience serving on the Newbery Committee (twice), and shed some light on the review, evaluation, discussion, and voting involved in the process.

Thom Barthelmess

Youth Services Manager



COMMUNITY/RESOURCES

ADA Accessibility for WCLS website

Background

[Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) requires state and local governments to make sure that their services, programs and activities are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes websites, videos, online documents, social media, etc.

There is a published technical standard developed by the [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](#), an international non-profit organization that has been overseeing the development of the world wide web since 1994. There was recently (2024) an update to Title II which changes the standard for websites (the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) Version 2.1](#), Level AA) and set a target date of April 24, 2026, for compliance.

The main aspects which the new rule is concerned with are broken into 4 categories using the acronym [POUR](#):

Is it Perceivable? (can it be seen, heard, interpreted by a screen reader tool, etc.)

Is it Operable? (can it be navigated by keyboard or mouse)

Is it Understandable? (is the language clear and simple, are images represented with text)

Is it Robust? (does it work in various platforms, screen sizes, devices)

What does this mean for WCLS?

Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay and Communications Assistant Siri Beckmen are leading the way to ensure WCLS's websites are in compliance. This includes working with staff to ensure website content is accessible.

Being out of compliance with the updated Title II puts WCLS at risk for Department of Justice enforcement actions under the ADA. Because of this, non-compliant content will not be published to WCLS's websites after April 24, 2026.

Current Status

Our website is built with accessibility in mind. Our platform, Wordpress, has built-in accessibility features. We add "alternative text" to images that give context for people who use screen readers. We work to ensure there is a high contrast between our text and background colors. We test pages on mobile devices to ensure readability. We have been going through our website to ensure that the structure and formatting of pages are acceptable for screen readers and keyboard navigation. We have been working with Lisa Gresham to ensure that vendors who offer digital products through WCLS can assure us their products are compliant.

Action Items

- **PDFs:** Where we can, we are converting PDFs to webpages. Otherwise, we are using Adobe tools to make the PDFs accessible.
- **Vendor Accountability:** Collection Services Manager is requesting Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPATs) or other assurances from digital product vendors.
- **Website:** We continue to test and adjust our website to maintain accessibility.
- **Social Media:** We are communicating with all social media managers in our branches to ensure that alternative text is added to any images posted.
- **Video and Audio:** We continue to add closed captions to our videos and transcripts to our podcast episodes.



WCLS is participating in One Book, One Coast, a shared reading initiative connecting more than 190 library systems across California, Oregon and Washington, including 25 in Washington state.

Organized by LA County Library, One Book, One Coast celebrates literacy, learning, community, and civil discourse. All participating libraries will read and discuss [They Called Us Enemy](#) by actor/author/activist George Takei with physical copies of the book available to borrow and unlimited digital copies of the eBook in English and Spanish available through June 6 on the Libby app by Overdrive.

A bestselling graphic memoir, *They Called Us Enemy* recounts Takei's childhood as a Japanese American imprisoned within American incarceration camps during World War II. It reflects on civil liberties, democracy, and what it means to be American — both historically and today.

WCLS will present two local events related to the event April 25 in Deming and May 21 in Lynden. Ferndale Library will host a public screening of the May 31 livestream event with the author. Readers may also register to receive the link to watch from home.

Learn more at the news section of our website: [Read George Takei's graphic memoir with the West Coast's biggest book club – Whatcom County Library System](#)

News Releases

- [WCLS receives \\$10,000 grant to work with Deaf/hard-of-hearing community – Whatcom County Library System](#)

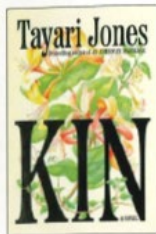
Book Reviews

- *Cascadia Daily News*, March 13, 2026, [Review: 'Dungeon Crawler Carl'](#)

- *The Northern Light*, March 16, 2026, [Blaine book review: "Lady Tan's Circle of Women"](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, March 27, 2026, [Reflecting on COVID-19 literature, six years after lockdown](#)
- *Bellingham Alive*, see clip below

Book Reviews

WRITTEN BY MARY KINSER



"Kin"
by Tayari Jones

Tayari Jones' 2018 novel "An American Marriage" was a bestseller, an award-winner, and an Oprah Book Club Pick, and readers have been eagerly awaiting her next book ever since. Happily, Jones returns in 2026 with "Kin," another richly crafted story that blends themes of fate and the power of individual choice. Annie and Niecy are "cradle friends" from small-town Louisiana. The girls have each been raised by family since infancy; Niecy was orphaned, and Annie's mother abandoned her. The mother-shaped hole in their hearts led them to find strength in one another. As the girls grow, their lives diverge. Niecy heads to university and a life in society, while Annie's search for her mother leads her down a harder path. Through the years, however, their childhood bond remains their North Star. Jones is unsparing in her depiction of heartache and misfortune but tempers the trials with humor and tenderness. Resonant and deeply layered, this is a story that shines.



"Lake Effect"
by Cynthia D'Aprix
Sweeney

It's 1977 in Rochester, New York, and life for two families on Cambridge Road is about to forever change. When Nina Larkin's newly-single friend gifts her a copy of "The Joy of Sex," Nina suddenly realizes she wants more than her going-through-the-motions marriage. Nina falls into a relationship with Finn Finnegan—which turns out to be not just a fling, but a deep love. At last Finn and Nina can hide it no longer, running away for quick divorces and an even quicker remarriage. The scandal sends shock waves through both families, particularly for the Larkin and Finnegan children, who have themselves been enmeshed all their lives. Some relationships bend, while others break, yet the families remain tied together as time marches on. Warm and bighearted, "Lake Effect" bursts with the messy realities of life and all the ways we hurt and heal the ones we love. Fans of family stories like "Sandwich" and "Tom Lake," this one's for you.

Media Coverage

- *Lynden Tribune*, March 4, 2026, [WHATCOM NEWS: March 4, 2026](#)
- *The Bellingham Herald*, March 7, 2026, [Javier Zamora to visit Bellingham for Whatcom Reads events](#)
- *Bellingham Today*, March 10, 2026, [Deadline Extended for Whatcom County Water Adjudication Paperwork](#)
- *Bellingham Herald*, March 11, 2026, [Elizabeth Baker Obituary \(1937 - 2026\) - Federal Way, WA](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, March 12, 2026, [In death planning, greener options are becoming more popular in Whatcom County \(Secrets of Dying Well program at WCLS branches\)](#)
- *Visit Bellingham*, March 17, 2026, [bellingham.org/pressreleases/whatcom-reads-selects-i-cheerfully-refuse-by-leif-enger-as-its-featured-title-for-the-2026-2027-season](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, March 18, 2026, [LeRoy Eggers | Community | lyndentribune.com](#)

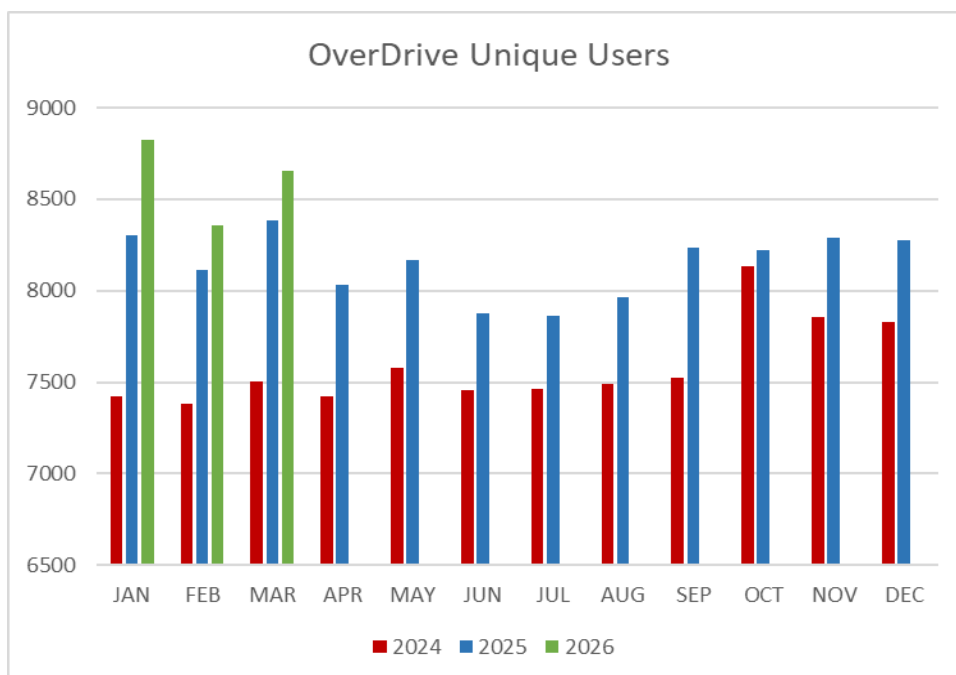
- *Daily World*, March 23, 2026, [Letters to the editor](#)
- *Visit Bellingham*, March 24, 2026, bellingham.org/pressreleases/read-george-takeis-graphic-memoir-with-the-west-coast's-biggest-book-club
- *The Northern Light*, March 25, 2026, [Stock up for the gardening season with these Whatcom County plant sales and classes](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, March 27, 2026, [Stories of the Point: Kris Lomedico](#)

Mary Vermillion

Community Relations Manager

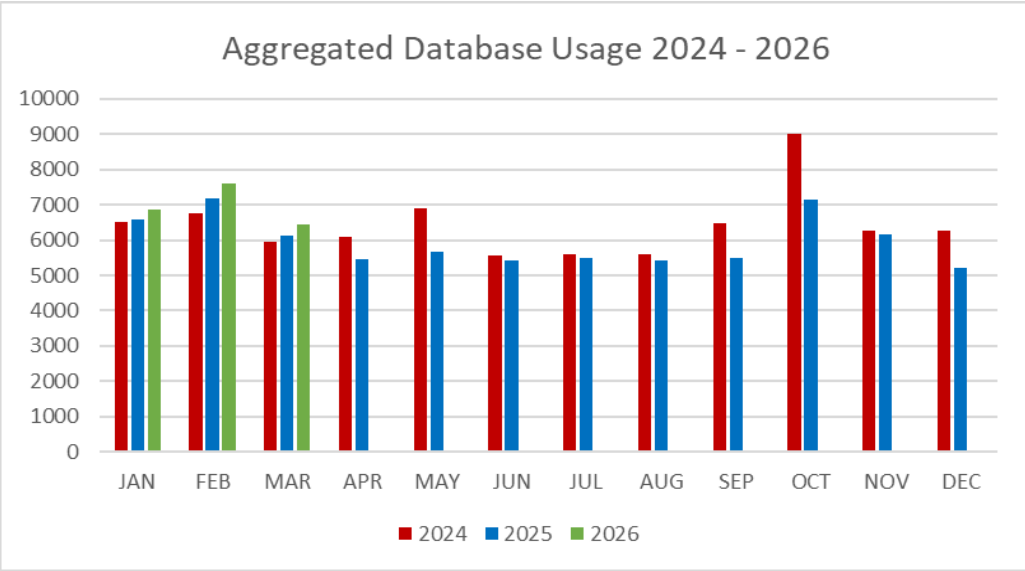
OVERDRIVE UNIQUE USERS

As our number of digital materials users continues to grow, increasing demand for popular titles, and licensing costs continue to increase at rates far beyond increases seen in print formats, we are more frequently purchasing what is known as the MACU license, or "metered access concurrent usage" when this license is offered by publishers. This license purchases 100 concurrent usages at a specified cost, so we know how much we will pay for each checkout, and it provides better service to patrons as usage is concurrent, so there is no waiting. As a result of purchasing more of these licenses, the MACU license titles have the highest circulation.



DATABASE USAGE

Standouts from March database usage are the Gale resources, Chilton's auto repair and Peterson's Test Prep, Newsbank and Value Line. Users accessed Chilton's with questions about 52 different vehicle make/models ranging from a 1971 Volkswagen Beetle to a 2024 Alfa Romeo Stelvio. Besides the ever popular Barbering course, users accessed Peterson's Test Prep for LSAT and MCAT practice tests and to do school and scholarship searches. With the present current events and bumpy economy, it is understandable that users are turning to Newsbank and Value Line resources in greater numbers to access news sources and information about investments.



Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	294,458	428,977	723,435

Circulation	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	YID 2025	YID 2026	YID % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	14,953	12,794	42,786	36,633	-14.4%
Bookmobile & Outreach	5,191	5,734	15,303	17,507	14.4%
Deming	7,929	9,014	23,358	25,353	8.5%
Everson	9,003	8,889	26,064	26,652	2.3%
Ferndale	31,835	28,787	89,134	83,058	-6.8%
Island	1,862	1,654	5,367	4,970	-7.4%
Lynden	38,407	36,053	106,670	101,966	-4.4%
North Fork	3,599	3,254	10,350	10,072	-2.7%
NWIC	11	11	39	43	10.3%
Point Roberts + PRX	2,206	2,121	6,315	5,907	-6.5%
Sumas + SLX	2,887	852	7,729	2,229	-71.2%
South Whatcom	8,403	9,173	22,866	25,134	9.9%
NDX	4,178	4,227	12,203	12,220	0.1%
Physical Circulation Total	130,464	122,563	368,184	351,744	-4.5%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	25,168	22,774	73,724	67,329	-8.7%
All other materials	102,200	97,611	285,161	276,757	-2.9%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	38,833	39,156	112,928	115,134	2.0%
eMagazines	6,336	6,720	17,883	19,011	6.3%
eMusic	9,731	11,681	28,967	32,326	11.6%
Streaming Video	3,534	3,654	10,852	9,216	-15.1%
Digital Circulation Total	58,434	61,211	170,630	175,687	3.0%
Grand Total	188,898	183,774	538,814	527,431	-2.1%

Visitors (Door counts)	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	YID 2025	YID 2026	YID % chg
Blaine	6,929	6,999	20,614	19,900	-3.5%
Deming	3,070	3,121	8,436	8,575	1.6%
Everson	3,481	3,505	9,941	10,300	3.6%
Ferndale	13,282	12,330	37,839	35,781	-5.4%
Island	2,207	1,836	4,404	4,752	7.9%
Lynden	12,579	12,970	35,020	35,680	1.9%
NDX	326	346	927	1,047	12.9%
North Fork	1,859	1,930	5,032	5,599	11.3%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,337	1,357	3,811	4,156	9.1%
Sumas + SLX	1,612	0	4,032	0	-100.0%
South Whatcom	2,963	3,222	8,755	9,410	7.5%
Total	49,645	47,616	138,811	135,200	-2.6%

New Borrowers	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	YID 2025	YID 2026	YID % chg
	554	579	1,701	1,736	2.1%

Interlibrary Loan	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	12,923	11,060	36,832	32,821	-10.9%
Lent to BPL	23,612	23,200	67,189	65,908	-1.9%
Borrowed: other libraries	676	713	1,818	1,849	1.7%
Lent: other libraries	634	610	1,890	1,833	-3.0%

Electronic Resources	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	41,600	44,380	119,164	134,215	12.6%
Bibliocommons Sessions	95,836	96,269	277,218	278,427	0.4%
Internet Sessions	4,428	4,428	11,978	12,573	5.0%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	7,483	7,248	22,292	21,949	-1.5%

Activities	Mar 2025	Mar 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	115	103	299	292	-2.3%
Teens	44	42	109	116	6.4%
Children	131	100	344	251	-27.0%
Total	290	245	752	659	-12.4%
Attendance					
Adults	2,049	2,806	3,819	4,637	21.4%
Teens	788	375	2,535	3,214	26.8%
Children	3,203	2,660	7,117	6,729	-5.5%
Total	6,040	5,841	13,471	14,580	8.2%

Notes/Corrections:

Sumas Library closed due to Dec 2025 flood