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Location

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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.

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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; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services 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.

**Guests:**

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Call to Order

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

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Open Public Comment

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No public comment.

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Consent Agenda

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The Consent Agenda included minutes of the March 17, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, March 25, 2026 Board of Trustees Special Meeting, authorization to void a warrant, and the following 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

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

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#### Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

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Jackie reviewed her report, including the March Notes and Highlights section. She informed the Board that she is keeping an eye on fuel prices as they are already high, and we are heading into summer months. There is no concern yet, but she will continue to monitor and give updates to the Board as needed.

Jackie is currently working on the 2025 Annual Report to submit to the State Auditor's Office which is due May 30th. She will have a draft to present to the Board at the May 19, 2026, meeting. Riley asked about the purpose of this report. Jackie confirmed that every governmental entity prepares this report so that citizens have the ability to compare local governments.

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#### Trustee Education

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Christine introduced Jessica Burson, Whatcom County Library Foundation Development Director, who spoke to the Board about the Whatcom County Library Foundation.

Jessica started by saying it has been fast, exciting, and rewarding first year with the Foundation. She then gave a little background on the Whatcom County Library Foundation and how it started.

In June of 2004, the FBI came to Deming Library asking for a list of patrons who checked out a specific book. The library denied the request for privacy and confidentiality reasons. The subpoena was eventually abandoned, thanks to the WCLS Director and Board of Trustees standing their ground. This was featured in national news and an individual from the Midwest emailed in saying they were grateful to know there are "still feisty little stinkbugs who will stand up to Big Brother". This is where the Foundation's stinkbug mascot came from, which is featured on Library Game cards. The WCLS Director at the time, Joan Aioldi, was awarded \$20,000 from the PEN / Newman Foundation which was used as seed money to establish Whatcom County Library Foundation.

Jessica explained some of the budget and funding aspects of WCLF. The Foundation is able to receive donations in multiple ways, and it is a goal for Jessica to find ways to help people better understand all the different options they have to give. Jessica informed the Board that each branch has its own endowment fund. She confirmed that all endowment funds for the Foundation are held at Whatcom Community Foundation. Christine reminded the Board that the new Ferndale library was built due to an anonymous million-dollar donation given through the Whatcom Community Foundation. This gift kicked off WCLF's relationship with them. WCLF also supports annual programs that otherwise would not be able to be paid for by WCLS with tax dollars. Some of these programs include Books for Babies, Summer Reading, the Library Game, and more.

WCLF has multiple fundraising events to help build relationships with donors and with the community. These events include, but are not limited to, Library Giving Day, Branch Out fundraising gala, and Giving Tuesday. Christine told the group about Branch Out being applauded by some attendees at the State of the City and County breakfast she recently attended. Jessica is working on finding ways to have more relational interactions with donors. Currently, she likes to try and call everyone who has given or, at least, send an email of thanks. Christine also sends a handwritten note to donors that have given over \$500, as well as to WCLS staff members. They both agree that it is important to have donors know that their gifts are appreciated. Jessica is working on revamping the Foundation webpage with Neil McKay and Siri Beckmen to provide more information to those that are interested. She is also planning a luncheon that will be an appreciation event for invited donors.

Jessica said that she is thankful for the Board being flexible and open to all ideas presented. Her predecessor set everything up very well, so she is happy to build on what has already had success. Christine applauded the transformation that has happened in just the last 10-15 years and she looks forward to working together and figure how WCLS can support WCLF and vice versa.

Danielle asked if there will be an endowment for the new Birch Bay library express. It was confirmed that is the intention and it will be worked into the budget for 2027.

Matthew appreciated presentation and the awareness of someone coming in and honoring what was already there but still bringing in new ideas to the table. He looks forward to what is to come with the Foundation.

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#### Birch Bay Library Invitation to Bid

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Christine informed the Board that the Birch Bay Project is moving into its construction phase. Ryan updated the group that WCLS is in the bid process and will be showing potential contractors the site this coming week. Any questions asked during the visit will be collected and answers will be released on the website. The bidding process will close on May 13. The finalist will be presented to the Board at the May 19, 2026 meeting for bid approval.

Michael and Dianne were thanked for pushing the process forward to get the project to this point. They will continue to work closely with Ryan as it progresses.

Riley asked what quirks this branch may see through the building process. Michael answered that the construction site is also an archaeological site so there have been many conversations, investigations and informed decisions around the construction that will take place. The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) has been involved from the beginning as have representatives from the Lummi Nation and Drayton Archaeology. It was agreed that anything displaced from its original spot will be kept in the building's crawlspace. John thanked everyone for their patience around this project, as it has been going on for quite some time.

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#### Compensation Study Update

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Christine confirmed that the Classification and Compensation Study committee selected Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. as the team to consult through the study. They will work collaboratively with the planning committee, including union representation. The final cost is below the threshold, so Christine is authorized to sign the contract. A final report will be presented to the Board at the August 18, 2026 meeting.

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## Non-User Survey Update

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Mary informed the Board that EMC Research of Seattle was selected by the Marketing committee as the consulting team to help with our Non-cardholder Survey. The final cost is below the threshold, so Christine is authorized to sign the contract. EMC Research will be presenting a final report to the Board on June 16, 2026.

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## Break

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Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:05-10:15 a.m.

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## Staff Reports: Executive Director

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In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted that today is National Libraries Workers Day. She thanked all staff and emphasized that WCLS would not be able to do what we do without our staff. Our patrons make it clear almost daily how much they appreciate our staff, as well.

Another highlight that Christine brought to the Board's attention is that we can move forward with construction of the Sumas meeting room now that the City of Sumas signed the agreement. This improvement will be a benefit to people of all ages.

Christine confirmed that our new Collection Services Manager will be Mary Kinser. Mary has worked for WCLS for the last 16 years. There will be more than a month of overlap with Lisa and Mary to work together and help ease the transition. We are currently recruiting for Mary's former position of Collection Development Librarian. As this is a librarian position, there is high interest internally as well as externally.

A final note that Christine had for the Board was to inform of a few behavioral incidents that have happened over the past month. Through these incidents, staff have been very patient and are helping best they can by connecting individuals with services that may help them.

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## Staff Reports: Deputy Director

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In addition to his written report, Michael shared a few National Library week celebrations. He presented a Library Game card that was designed for National Library Week. The card is called Library Joy and asks patrons, "What about the library sparks joy for you?". Michael noted that this card has been a fun way to engage with patrons and hear from them about what they love about our libraries. A Library Joy card was presented to each Board member.

Michael said that WCLS was awarded an ALA Libraries Transforming Communities grant. The grant will help WCLS work with deaf and hard of hearing communities. Thanks to the grant, Lynden staff will be receiving special ASL training and will be meeting with community members.

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## Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

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Thom shared his written report highlighting the offsite programming that Youth Services is providing. He confirmed that well over half of Youth Service programs take place off site. These programs are not visible on the public online calendar, so he provided a sampling of the outreach that happens supporting kids and families in his report.

