

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

May 19, 2026

Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Dr, Bellingham, WA, 98226.

In Attendance

Trustees: Matthew Santos, Chair; John Miller, Vice Chair; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; Jes Stugelmayer and Riley Sweeney. Absent: None.

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; Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator/Librarian; Mary Kinser, incoming Collection Services Manager; Emma Radosevich, Collection Development Librarian; Amy Jones, Communications Specialist; Claire McElroy, Adult Programming Coordinator.

Guests: Rebecca Judd, Ed Trott, Joe Muller

Call to Order

Matthew determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Service Anniversary Recognition

The Board recognized Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator/Librarian, for her 10-year service anniversary. Carmi came to WCLS from Microsoft. Books and tech are her two loves and her current role has combined them both. Lisa highlighted that Carmi was originally hired as an Online Experience Coordinator and during that time she helped create ConnectED with Youth Service Manager Thom Barthelmess. Carmi's current position as ILS Administrator affects everything that we touch and her skills as a project manager are able to shine through.

Lisa also informed the Board that Carmi represents WCLS in the Washington Digital Library Consortium where she has had to deal with changing price models. Carmi is also working on behalf of all libraries across the country; advocating with other leaders of the state. Lisa also highlighted that Carmi was awarded the ALA Movers and Shakers Award in 2021. Carmi continues to gain national respect and with that award, she clearly demonstrates that she is our rock star. Lisa said that something she admires most about Carmi is how well she works in groups, and that she is a strategic thinker. Carmi helps focus the group by narrowing in on the question of, "what is the problem that we are trying to solve".

Carmi thanked Michael, Lisa and Christine for trusting her from the beginning. She noted that her position is an enriching job and she would not work anywhere but here with WCLS where we are small enough to be agile but big enough to get things done.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the April 21, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- March 16-31, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046637120-1046637122 and voucher nos. 565976-566139 totaling \$280,088.03 and April 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046795438-1046795442 and voucher nos. 566143-566299 totaling \$266,717.42.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$119,675.78; \$73,133.88 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 2026-14G: warrant nos. 1274674-1274692 totaling \$30,781.79
- Claim 2026-15G: warrant nos. 1274919-1274949 totaling \$227,790.14
- Claim 2026-16G: warrant nos. 1275340-1275366 totaling \$53,751.07
- Claim 2026-17G: warrant nos. 1275818-1275833 totaling \$61,053.80

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2026-06C: warrant nos. 1274950-1274951 totaling \$10,526.58
- Claim 2026-07C: warrant nos. 1275367-1275368 totaling \$20,697.93
- Claim 2026-08C: warrant nos. 1275834-1275835 totaling \$15,048.67

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 April Notes and Highlights section. This is the first report where we are seeing the proceeds of the successful levy lid lift. It is encouraging to see that all of the hard work paid off. Jackie shared a graph which shows 99.7% of our revenue is coming from taxes.

Jackie informed the Board that after July, WCLS will no longer be purchasing fuel through the County. They will be ending the current arrangement by which we fuel up at local stations and are charged by the County. We hope to piggyback off their new contract, which would require that an interlocal agreement be presented at the June Board meeting in order to be presented to Whatcom County at their July meeting. More information will come at the next Board meeting.

Jackie reminded the Board that the Department of Retirement Services has randomly selected WCLS for a compliance review. At this time, we have provided all information they requested, and she does not predict any issues to come.

During the April Board meeting, Jackie informed the Board that she was preparing the 2025 Annual Report to submit to the State Auditor's Office. Jackie provided the final version of this report to the Board stating that it

includes a lot of repeated information from the audit presentation conducted in the beginning of the year. She briefly reviewed the report, highlighting several financial disclosures. She will submit the report after today's meeting. John thanked Jackie for her consistent attention to detail. He also thanked her for confirming that WCLS carries Directors and Officers liability insurance.

Bellingham Public Library Renovation Project

Bellingham Public Library Director, Rebecca Judd, joined the meeting to discuss the renovations planned for the Bellingham Public Library's Central Library. Rebecca said the timeline is holding steady: with the design completed, the plan is to go to bid late summer/early fall. Construction will begin late 2026/early 2027 and they hope to be completed in late 2027. After sharing the timeline, Rebecca presented the design plans for the areas of focus during the closure. She then shared the funding overview and noted that BPL was able to secure state and federal grants in addition to private fundraising with the support of Whatcom Community Foundation.

Community engagement in 2019, 2022 and 2026 for Bellingham Public Library included Strategic Planning, surveys and a youth advisory group. BPL heard from the community that some of the most valued parts of the library include being able to gather together, story time, learning, and having a personal space. Rebecca stated that they are looking at how to invest in the next generations of readers and learners, create welcoming spaces, while building up staff and community.

Rebecca confirmed that during the closure BPL will expand hours at other branches, and expand space at the Bellis Fair location, and offer additional programming sites. The collection at the central location will still be available for to fulfill holds and deliveries will continue to happen.

Rebecca shared that the next phase of renovations will be more exterior focused. Rebecca gave a special thanks to Miller Hull architects, Caleb Savage, Jen Vander Ploeg, the City of Bellingham, and the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees and opened the floor to questions.

Riley asked for confirmation about the Bellis Fair location and the advertising that will happen, as many people do not know that location exists. Rebecca confirmed that location will most likely be the main location during the Central Library closure. They cannot advertise it enough but will continue their efforts to do so. She also confirmed that the Friends of BPL will be located at the Bellis Fair location. Danielle asked about the current staff located at the Central Library and where they will go during the closure. Rebecca confirmed that BPL is fully committed to keeping all current staff. BPL administrative staff will be located over at City Hall during the construction period.

The Board thanked Rebecca for her attendance and presentation.

Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Bid Award

Ryan provided updates to the Board about the status of the Birch Bay Vogt Library. He introduced Joe Muller, from Osborn Architects Inc. (OAI), who joined the meeting in person. Ryan confirmed that the invitation to bid closed last week and the lowest apparent bidder was Summit Construction. He requested approval from the Board to authorize Christine to execute a construction contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Christine asked how the timeline is looking for the project. Ryan confirmed that they hope to start this June and finish in mid to late December of 2026. Christine wanted to clarify for the Board that the amount written in the cover sheet for this item was written as a generic amount. The actual total is \$1,446,000.

Riley moved to authorize Christine Perkins to execute a construction contract. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

Break

Before the break, Christine announced that this is Lisa's last Board meeting before her retirement. She is pleased to introduce Mary Kinser as the incoming Collection Services Manager. Mary has been with WCLS for 17 years. We have been lucky to have some overlap during the transition. Christine confirmed that Mary's previous position as Collection Development Librarian has now been filled by Sarah Miller. Sarah used to work at WCLS as an Interlibrary Loan Specialist. She earned her MLIS and then accepted a librarian position at Burlington Public Library to gain some experience. We are happy that she made her way back to us!

Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:07-10:17 a.m.

Trustee Education: Whatcom READS

Mary Vermillion introduced Claire McElroy, Adult Programming Coordinator, to the Board. Claire and Mary presented on behalf of Whatcom READS which is entering its 19th season. Mary informed the group that Whatcom READS is presented by all of the public libraries in Whatcom County and is funded by Whatcom County Library Foundation, Allied Arts, Hotel Leo, Western Washington University, Village Books, Joan and Keith Magee, City of Bellingham, and the Friends of Bellingham Public Library.

Claire said that she felt that this year the events around the selection, *Solito* by Javier Zamora, seemed particularly meaningful. Claire mentioned that this book had more engagement than previous years, even amongst the Whatcom READS partners. The programs for *Solito* included three author events, fewer than typical but they had outstanding attendance. Claire confirmed that this was a record year for attendance and participation in the Whatcom READS events. Claire shared photos from the community events, which included five painting programs that our Hispanic Cultural Liaisons Amelia and Diana hosted. A member of the Hispanic book group painted a box specifically for Javier. The box also included personal notes from the book club members as a gift to Javier.

Claire reflected on the events by sharing a quote from an attendee which stated, "I came to the event alone but when I walked in I was with my community". This is the goal Whatcom READS hopes for all participants, every year.

Claire announced that the 2027 selection for Whatcom READS is *I Cheerfully Refuse* by Leif Enger. The Whatcom WRITES prompt, to go with this selection, will be "Light in the Dark". Submissions for Whatcom WRITES are due by October 11, 2026. The physical books have not been ordered yet but will be ordered next week and will be available soon.

Mary gave her thanks to the trustees for their support of Whatcom READS and thanks to Claire for all of the hours, work and thought she puts into these events.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine spoke about the Blaine Library refresh, specifically noting the light fixtures. Christine also confirmed that she is still in communication with Lynden School district regarding the ConnectED program and some changes they requested that WCLS is unable to support. Christine wrote a letter

to the superintendent stating that WCLS cannot make the requested changes, but we are still interested in continuing the agreement.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared a Bereavement Leave Procedure update with the Board. The Inclusive Organization Committee has been working on this over the past several months. Updates include more hours and changing wording to be less constricting about the definition of a close relative. Although this update does not require Board approval, Michael wants to keep everyone aware. The Board applauded the updates and Christine confirmed she would sign the final copy once received.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom was absent for this meeting due to providing services at the Juvenile Detention Center. Christine shared, on behalf of Thom, that the teen poetry event celebrating the publication of *A Forest of Words* took place and was by all accounts well-received. She is always impressed with the bravery of the teens for speaking in public with, especially because sometimes their poems address difficult topics. The Youth Services department built a puppet stage and performed a version of Hansel and Gretel at every branch. Thom reported to Christine that the shows happened exactly how he wanted them to: the kids were very involved and engaged. The puppet shows are a wonderful experience for youth, as well as staff, to experience.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She commented on the Summer at the Library t-shirts that the Board received at today's meeting. Mary encouraged the Board to brainstorm how they would answer the question, "What is summer at the library?" These shirts will be a good conversation starter to encourage library events, different branches, the library game, etc. Mary gave her thanks to Whatcom County Library Foundation, Whatcom Community Foundation, and Peoples Bank for their support with Summer at the Library promotions, such as the t-shirts. Mary will share a full campaign summary at the June Board meeting.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael said that though there were a fewer number of programs in May, there was a higher number of attendees. George Takei's graphic novel, *They Call Us Enemy*, was the highest reserved last month, most likely due to the One Book, One Coast program. He also noted the number of people who are utilizing the system to learn languages as well as some engagement with AI literacy learning.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No updates were received.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

No updates were received.

Announcements and Adjourn

John mentioned to the group that, as a radio listener, he has been pleased with how much coverage One Book, One Coast is receiving in locally and in Canada. Matthew requested that Jessica Burson join the next meeting to give an update on how the Whatcom County Library Foundation Donor Appreciation Luncheon went on May 20.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on June 16, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, Bellingham, WA 98226.

<u> /s/ </u>	<u> 06/16/2026 </u>	<u> /s/ </u>
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant