whatcom county
library system

APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

June 16, 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: **Trustees**: Matthew Santos, Chair; John Miller, Vice Chair; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; Jes Stugelmayer. Absent: Riley Sweeney

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; Mary Kinser, 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, Neil McKay, Online Experience Coordinator; Amy Jones, Communications Specialist; Siri Beckmen, Communications Assistant.

Guests: Kevin White, Senior Director of EMC Research

Call to Order

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

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the May 17, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, Resolution 06/16/26-04 declaring a capital asset as surplus, Resolution 06/16/26-05 appointing applicant’s agent as well as the following expenditures:

General Fund:

- April 16-30, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1046956987-1046956991 and voucher nos. 566303-566458 totaling $266,088.74 and May 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1047138126-1047138129 and voucher nos. 566462-566618 totaling $270,240.88.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, payroll processing fees, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling $93,633.67; $51,369.03 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 2026-18G: warrant nos. 1276149-1276168 totaling $28,755.49
- Claim 2026-19G: warrant nos. 1276425-1276444 totaling $137,608.65
- Claim 2026-20G: warrant nos. 1276736-1276758 totaling $32,099.93
- Claim 2026-21G: warrant nos. 1277133-1277158 totaling $79,810.12

Capital Fund:
- Claim 2026-09C: warrant nos. 1276169-1276170 totaling $12,930.82
- Claim 2026-10C: warrant no. 1276759 totaling $4,545.30
- Claim 2026-11C: warrant nos. 1277159-1277161 totaling $46,173.36

Matthew moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie noted that resolution 06/16/26-05 (on the Consent Agenda) would designate Christine and Jackie as authorized representatives to obtain federal and/or state emergency or disaster assistance funds. In this case, this would be specifically for FEMA processing for the Sumas flooding.

While reviewing her report, Jackie noted that at the end of April we were just shy of half of annual levy funds; additional have come through in May. She confirmed that the rest will come through in October.

Jackie thanked Whatcom County Library Foundation for their support, especially for funding for the Summer at the Library and Open Book programs reported in the Contributions and Donations revenue line.

Jackie presented the expenditures, noting that 42% of the year has passed and we are still trending close to budget.

Non-User Survey Results: EMC Research

Mary Vermillion introduced Kevin White, Senior Director of EMC Research, to discuss the results of the Non-user Survey. Kevin confirmed that a total of 200 surveys of self-reported non-users were conducted, leaving a +/- 6.9% margin of error. The overall results showed that most non-users have a favorable view of WCLS.

Kevin reviewed the detailed survey results with the group which included questions about local community perception, Whatcom County Library System perception, and barriers to and drivers of increased library usage. The Board thanked Kevin for the information he provided. Kevin thanked Mary and Christine and signed off.

Next, the Community Relations team will be looking at the survey results. The Marketing Committee will meet to develop a marketing plan based on these findings and will develop a proposed marketing budget for 2027.

Trustee Education: WCLS Fleet Electric Vehicle Implementation

Ryan reminded the Board that PSE granted WCLS $250,000 for electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure, with the requirement that WCLS purchase of two electric vehicles. WCLS selected two Chevy Blazers and they are ready to go. These vehicles will be used for passenger transportation and by the Distribution Department for traveling to Island and Point Roberts Libraries, and may be used to travel to conferences as far away as Seattle.

Ryan and the Board members took a moment to go look at the new vehicles and charging stations in person.

Break

Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:10-10:20 a.m.

Interlocal Agreement with Whatcom County

Jackie reminded the Board that Whatcom County is terminating our agreement for fuel purchasing. They have gone out to bid for a new contract with a fuel distributor. She provided the Board with an Interlocal Purchasing Agreement between WCLS and Whatcom County that would allow WCLS to piggyback on Whatcom County's new fuel purchasing agreement with Nelson-Reisner.

If approved by the Board, the signed agreement will be sent back to Whatcom County for execution. WCLS will then enter into its own contract with Nelson-Reisner, using the terms negotiated by Whatcom County. The hope is to get this completed by the end of July.

Matthew moved approval to authorize Executive Director to sign an interlocal purchasing agreement with Whatcom County. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

Matthew moved approval to authorize Executive Director to enter into a purchasing agreement with Nelson-Reisner to piggyback onto Whatcom County's, following execution of interlocal purchasing agreement with Whatcom County. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted that staff are currently moving collection materials back to Sumas. She gave her thanks to the Collection Services team for reviewing the collection, to Facilities for re-installing shelving at the branch, to Distribution for getting all of the materials back to the branch safely, and Sumas staff for returning everything to shelves. Christine confirmed that the small meeting room at Sumas is still under construction, but the rest of the library can still operate during this time.

Christine shared that Blaine Branch Manager Jonathan Jakobitz, Ryan Cullup and herself met recently with Blaine City Manager Michael Harmon. Harmon told them that the City is interested in finding a developer to build a mixed-use redevelopment project which would include multifamily housing and a library. The City of Blaine released a public Request For Proposals to give the opportunity for developers to come forward; the closing date for submissions will be July 8. There are many steps between now and anything coming together but WCLS will continue to be in contact with the City of Blaine.

Danielle asked how many stories are being proposed. Ryan said that it depends on the RFP results but it could be four or more. Jes asked if this new building aligns with what we are hearing from patrons on needs. Christine confirmed that surveys have shown a strong interest from Blaine residents for a new, larger library in Blaine.

Christine will continue to provide updates as she receives them.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael had no additional information to share besides his written report.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and pointed out that this month's focus is all about the "Hansel and Gretel" puppet show that the Youth Services team put together. He applauded the time and effort that the team has put in and emphasized that it paid off. Thom felt that the shows turned out to be magic for all. Thom mentioned that there were a couple of opportunities for kids play with the puppets after the shows. He said that watching them create their own stories shows the impact these performances have on kids. Thom confirmed that Paul Fullner, Sumas Branch Manager, and Evie Harman, Youth Services Assistant, are looking for a date to hold the show at Sumas.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. It shows all of the ways Community Relations is reaching out to people and helping them be aware of the Summer at the Library program. Mary is proud that the entire campaign was developed and designed in-house by our talented Community Relations staff. She acknowledged the sheer amount of work they have all put into developing the marketing. Mary celebrated the many extras and add-ons made possible by our sponsors, which include WCLF, Peoples Bank and Whatcom Together. Mary gave a big thanks to them all.

Jes asked if the seagull mascot has a name. Mary confirmed that, yes it does. His name is Livingston C. Gull.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael said that the Blaine library was closed briefly and provided limited services due to renovations and Sumas is still currently closed. Both of these events had an impact of the overall circulation numbers last month. In May 2025, there was a big push for Freegal resulting in the eMusic numbers being much higher than this year's. He also noted that there was a correction made to the April 2026 report due to an Excel error.

Christine asked the Board for permission to forgo the monthly digital statistics that Lisa was pulling. Jes requested that they still be presented quarterly. The group agreed to move forward with providing quarterly information on the database statistics.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Jessica Burson joined the meeting to update the Board on the WCLF Donor Appreciation Luncheon which took place Wednesday, May 20. The luncheon was an opportunity to share updates about WCLS and WCLF with WCLF supporters and an experience that WCLF could provide to donors without giving an ask. Jessica confirmed that there was a very good turnout of approximately 70 individuals. Attendees included donors from the very beginning of WCLF, some members of Friends of the Library groups and even some brand new donors. There were also some current corporate sponsors in attendance.

Christine and Jessica presented some examples of what these donors have been supporting with their donations and the impact they have had. One of the presentations included a video interview with a mother and son who were the first ones to complete the First 500 program by reading 500 books together. The video is linked at https://www.wcls.org/first500/. Jessica said she was thankful for the conversations that took place and having those connections with families. She thanked Neil McKay, WCLS Online Experience Coordinator, for his help with the last-minute filming of the video and helping it all come together. Jessica finished her presentation to the Board of Trustees by reading an email that was received from a lifetime donor from Blaine who applauded the luncheon.

During her portion of the presentation, Christine focused mainly on the current Strategic Planning Process. Christine applauded Jessica and was glad that she was able to put this event together.

Jessica confirmed that Branch Out is being planned for September 11 at the Bellwether Hotel. She is working on a new corporate sponsor option list and will send it to the Board of Trustees for them to review and add any organizations that they feel would be interested in participating.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine gave an update on the Classification and Compensation study. She informed the Board that job analysis questionnaires (JAQs) went out this week for all staff to complete. Staff will have two weeks to complete the questionnaire.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on July 21, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

/s/	07-21-2026	/s/
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant