



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Whatcom County Library System
August 18, 2026

Via Teams and Administrative Services
5205 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226

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.
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. Resolution 08/18/26-08 Authorizing the Cancellation of a Warrant
 - d. Resolution 08/18/26-09 Declaring a Capital Asset as Surplus
4. 9:20 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Finance Committee Report
5. 9:30 a.m. **Compensation Study Report** - Gallagher
6. 10:15 a.m. **BREAK**
7. 10:25 a.m. **Trustee Education: First 500 Picturebook Subscription Service** – Theresa Morrison, Carmi Parker, Katrina Carabba
8. 10:45 a.m. **Policy Review**
 - a. Collection Policy 3.01
 - b. Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02
9. 10:55 a.m. **Amendment to MOU with Lynden School District for Connected**
10. 11:00 a.m. **Strategic Plan 2027 – 2031 DRAFT**
11. 11:40 a.m. **Staff Reports**
12. 11:45 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
13. 11:50 a.m. **Announcements and Adjourn**
 - a. Branch Out, September 11
 - b. Possible Board meeting location change in September due to A.S. parking lot repair; we will email update if necessary.

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, August 17, 2026. Written comments may be submitted to Allyson.McBride@wcls.org prior to the meeting.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	8/18/2026
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?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Supporting Documents:	☒ Yes ☐ No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of consent agenda items

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of consent agenda items as presented

Summary:

Meeting Minutes:

- July 21, 2026 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- June 16-30, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1047650517-1047650521 and voucher nos. 566943-567101 totaling \$273,295.85 and July 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1047808265-1047808268 and voucher nos. 567106-567265 totaling \$271,882.75.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, payroll processing fees, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$119,596.13; \$71,583.84 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 2026-27G: warrant nos. 1279394-1279417 totaling \$33,624.56
- Claim 2026-28G: warrant nos. 1279630-1279658 totaling \$148,426.95
- Claim 2026-29G: warrant nos. 1280261-1280287 totaling \$84,327.35
- Claim 2026-30G: warrant nos. 1280746-1280767 totaling \$101,327.73

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2026-17C: warrant no. 1279418 totaling \$1,022.50
- Claim 2026-18C: warrant nos. 1280288-1280290 totaling \$244,685.89
- Claim 2026-19C: warrant no. 1280768 totaling \$1,985.10

Authorization to Cancel a Warrant

- Resolution 08/18/26-08 cancelling warrant 1274350

Resolution to Declare a Capital Asset as Surplus

- Resolution 08/18/26-09 declaring a capital asset as surplus

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 that there were no General Journal entries made in July.

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

July 21, 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 Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

In Attendance

Trustees: 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; Thom Barthelmess, Youth Services Manager; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Mary Kinser, Collection Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Allyson McBride, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Rosie Everson, ILL & Circulation Specialist – Lending; Katie Kerr, ILL & Circulation Specialist – Borrowing; Emma Radosevich, Collection Development Librarian.

Guests: Ed Trott

Call to Order

As Matthew attended the meeting remotely, John determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the June 16, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- May 16-31, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1047309745-1047309748 and voucher nos. 566622-566779 totaling \$279,954.76 and June 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1047473546-1047473549 and voucher nos. 566783-566938 totaling \$270,070.12.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, payroll processing fees, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$92,923.26; 49,445.42 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 2026-22G: warrant nos. 1277670-1277685 totaling \$42,172.82
- Claim 2026-23G: warrant nos. 1277942-1277974 totaling \$164,571.38

- Claim 2026-24G: warrant nos. 1278175-1278201 totaling \$28,687.64
- Claim 2026-25G: warrant nos. 1278634-1278662 totaling \$28,277.74
- Claim 2026-26G: warrant nos. 1279135-1279152 totaling \$72,318.87

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2026-12C: warrant no. 1277686 totaling \$27,756.96
- Claim 2026-13C: warrant nos. 1277975-1277976 totaling \$11,795.67
- Claim 2026-14C: warrant no. 1278202 totaling \$89,534.18
- Claim 2026-15C: warrant nos. 1278663-1278664 totaling \$2,613.72
- Claim 2026-16C: warrant no. 1279153 totaling \$888.90

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jes joined the meeting at 9:02am.

Jackie reviewed her report, including the June Notes and Highlights section. She shared that, as of June, WCLS has received 54% of the budgeted revenue for the year in property taxes. She also noted that operating expenditures are currently below budget. Jackie pointed out that Collection Materials and Office and Operating expenses are above last year's costs by 20% and 60% respectively. This is because we were intentionally conservative with spending last year due to the pending levy lid lift election.

Jackie confirmed that the interlocal agreement, allowing for piggy backing on Whatcom County procurement processes and approved by WCLS Trustees at last month's meeting, was formally approved by Whatcom County Council. The new fuel agreement with Nelson-Reisner should be executed on August 1st, the same date as the County's.

Jackie presented a budget amendment to the Board. The amendment shows an increase of \$15,000 to revenue and a decrease of \$4,550 in expenditures, resulting in a net increase of \$19,550 to the ending fund balance. Riley thanked Jackie for all the hard work that she has done. John added that she does a great job of sensible financial predictions for the year.

Riley moved to approve Resolution 07/21/2026-06 amending the 2026 General Fund Budget. Seconded. Unanimous board approval.

Trustee Education: Interlibrary Loan

Rosie Everson, ILL & Circulation Specialist – Lending, and Katie Kerr, ILL & Circulation Specialist – Borrowing, introduced themselves to the Board. Rosie and Katie provided a brief overview of Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and how it is a vital service here at WCLS.

Katie described ILL as a cooperative network of libraries and institutions that share materials all over the world. Katie and Rosie are the two individuals that handle ILL services here at WCLS. Katie shared the process of receiving requests from patrons. Katie works with WCLS selectors to determine whether or not WCLS should purchase the titles to add to our collection or borrow them from other libraries. Katie shared some borrowing

statistics including the fact that they receive about 620 requests in a month and about 580 of those requests get filled. Occasionally, patrons will ask for materials that are not available to borrow.

Rosie shared an overview of the lending side of ILL. She confirmed that she does not lend anything that is newer than a year old, this way our patrons have ample time to borrow new material. In her statistics, Rosie shared that she receives a little over 1,200 requests a month and roughly 570 of those meet our criteria and are fulfilled.

Rosie shared an interactive map of borrowing and lending locations from January 2026 so that the Board could see where WCLS materials get sent and where we receive materials from. It was discussed that WCLS is thankful to have connections with libraries all around the nation, and world, whose collections may be more extensive or more niche. Via ILL, we are able to provide patrons with unique materials that do not have enough demand to warrant purchase. Rosie shared that WCLS patrons are allowed to request 10 items, across all categories, a month.

Katie shared an experience she had with an Idaho patron who called her directly to request an ILL item. Katie had the opportunity to connect this patron with their local library and have them set up the official ILL request. This experience shows that even “back of house” staff at Administrative Services have opportunities to provide excellence public service and educate patrons on all that we have to offer.

The Board thanked Katie and Rosie for their presentation. Katie and Rosie left the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Policy Review and/or Updates

Christine shared that WCLS will begin reviewing policies and procedures to ensure all are up to date and relevant. Christine brought the policies related to the Board of Trustees to the meeting to allow the group the chance to review them together. Matthew asked for clarification whether all need to be approved. Christine confirmed that only the documents with proposed changes need to be approved by the Board. The others are for review only.

Board of Trustees Bylaws Policy 2.01 – The Board reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 2.01. All agreed that the changes are relevant.

John moved to approve the updated Board of Trustees Bylaws Policy 2.01, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Trustee Code of Ethics Policy 2.02 – The Board reviewed Policy 2.02 and agreed that no changes are needed.

Conflict of Interest Policy 2.03 – The Board reviewed Policy 2.03 and agreed that no changes are needed.

Roles of the WCLS Board of Trustees and the Executive Director Policy 2.04 – The Board reviewed the proposed changes to Policy 2.04. All agreed that the changes are relevant.

Riley moved to approve the updated 2.04 Policy, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Addressing the Library Board of Trustees Policy 2.05 – The Board reviewed Policy 2.05. It was noted that the language in this needs to be updated to reflect that visitors have the option to sign in, but it is not required. The group agreed to update the language to say, “volunteers who would like to address the Board are asked to sign in before the meeting”.

John moved to amend Policy 2.05, as discussed. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Board of Trustees Guest Sign-In Form Procedure 2.05.01 – The Board reviewed Policy 2.05.01. The group agreed to update language to mirror the language in Policy 2.05 stating that, “volunteers who would like to present the Board are asked to sign in before the meeting”.

Danielle moved to amend Procedure 2.05.01, as discussed. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Parking Lot Repair and Maintenance Bid Award

Ryan shared the results of the Parking Lot Repair and Maintenance Bid Award. The addendum was not acknowledged by one of the two companies who submitted bids. The bid was awarded to Huizenga Enterprises the sole responsive bidder. Danielle asked if WCLS has worked with them before. Ryan confirmed that he has not personally worked with them, but they recently completed work at Deming library for the Friends of the Library, and Ryan was impressed with their work.

Riley moved to award Administrative Services and North Fork lot Repair and Maintenance public works contract to Huizenga Enterprises. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Break

John adjourned for a break from 9:57 – 10:07 a.m.

Birch Bay Utility Easement

Ryan informed the Board that WCLS was told that Puget Sound Energy will require an easement on the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express property. As this involves a land transaction, Board approval is required. Ryan requested the Board approve authorization for the Executive Director to execute a utility easement with PSE.

Riley moved to approve Resolution 07/21/2026-07 authorizing Executive Director to execute a utility easement with Puget Sound Energy. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine thanked Michael and Jackie for covering while she was on vacation. She mentioned a few events that took place while she was gone. A series of thefts and some vandalism happened at multiple branches. Thankfully the vandalism was minimal. After reviewing footage, it appears that the same individual is responsible for these incidents. Christine gave her thanks to Jackie for working with

multiple police departments through these issues and gave her thanks to Michael for contacting the individual who is responsible to encourage him to return the stolen items to the library.

Christine informed the Board that the Lynden School District met last week and agreed to continue to support the ConnectED program for their students.

Matthew provided a small update around the potential new City of Blaine building. He confirmed that a committee reviewed the RFP responses received and the Blaine City Manager will be bringing forward a recommendation to the Blaine City Council and this will be discussed at the next City Council meeting. Matthew appreciates the representation from Blaine and their interest in supporting the Blaine branch of WCLS.

Christine shared with the Board that a staff member, Janette Yadon, a page at North Fork, passed away unexpectedly. Janette was an integral part of the North Fork community and will be greatly missed.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael praised the recent event hosting author Ann Patchett. To read more about it, there are great articles in *The Cascadia Daily News* and in the *Lynden Tribune*. Michael gave his thanks to Mary Vermillion, Mary Kinser and Claire McElroy.

Michael also commented that some WCLS branch libraries have been selected as distribution points for fan filter kits. Michael ended his report by reminding the Board that the Birch Bay Library Kickoff celebration takes place today at 2 p.m.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and took a moment to appreciate the support from Public Services this year. He also thanked Community Relations and the entire Youth Services team for their hard work through the summer programs. Jes noted that she has heard nothing but glowing raves about the youth camps that have taken place this summer.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She mentioned that it has been fun to raise awareness of the high-quality resources and events through Summer at the Library marketing. Mary noted that she is looking forward to providing a summer-end wrap-up for the Board with Public Services and Youth Services.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael said that we are staying on target with the trends for the year. He confirmed that Sumas is now open, so we are starting to get numbers back. Danielle noted that if visitors are inconvenienced with the WiFi shutdown at the library site during construction, they can come to Birch Bay Visitors' Center and she will provide them access to internet there.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

No official reports were submitted.

John brought up the strategic plan pop ups that are taking place at various county events. Christine confirmed that all staff who have been attending these events have provided notes for her review. Jes noted that she has attended 3 or 4 events, so far, and feels that everything discussed at these events has been fairly in line with where we want to go with the Strategic Plan. She also mentioned that this past weekend she witnessed a patron, who is a fan of our podcast, get to meet Neil. She found it endearing that the patron knew Neil's voice before they knew who he was.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Christine shared with the Board that Whatcom County Library Foundation member, Cheryl Fear, passed away. Cheryl was also a Friend of Ferndale Library. Cheryl gave a keynote address about her love of libraries at a past Branch Out event.

Announcements and Adjourn

Riley thanked WCLS for their participation in the Ferndale Pride event.

Jes noted that she participated in the Bellingham Pride parade and it was a great experience. She shared a moment that sticks out specifically from that day which was when a young boy ran out to the library group and yelled "I love reading!"

John shared a bit about the Canoe Journey 2026 that is currently taking place. Maps, which show each stop before ending the trip at the Nisqually tribe, were printed out. There is a stop in Birch Bay on July 22 and in Lummi on July 23.

John adjourned the meeting at 10:47 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on August 18, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary

08-18-2026
Date

Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant



RESOLUTION NO. 08/18/26-08

**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, the warrant was lost or not received by the vendor and has not been redeemed; and,

WHEREAS, the vendor has completed an application for duplicate instrument; and,

WHEREAS, a replacement warrant has been issued and WCLS is now current with said vendor;

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
1274350	March 31, 2026	Crystal Garcia	\$490.95

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 18th day of August, 2026:

Matthew Santos, Board Chair



RESOLUTION NO. 08/18/26-09

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT
DECLARING A CAPITAL ASSET AS SURPLUS**

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees approved the Asset Policy on April 15, 2008; and,

WHEREAS, the policy requires that assets with an original purchase price greater than \$5,000 be declared surplus by a resolution of the Board of Trustees prior to their disposal; and,

WHEREAS, a Nissan Sprinter van purchased by Whatcom County Library System in 2013 has been replaced by a newly purchased Ford Transit van; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following equipment be declared surplus property and withdrawn from inventory as indicated:

Property Number	Description	Original Purchase Price	Inventory Status	Anticipated Disposal Method
7781	2013 Nissan NV 2500 High Roof van	\$35,915	Surplus	Local Auction

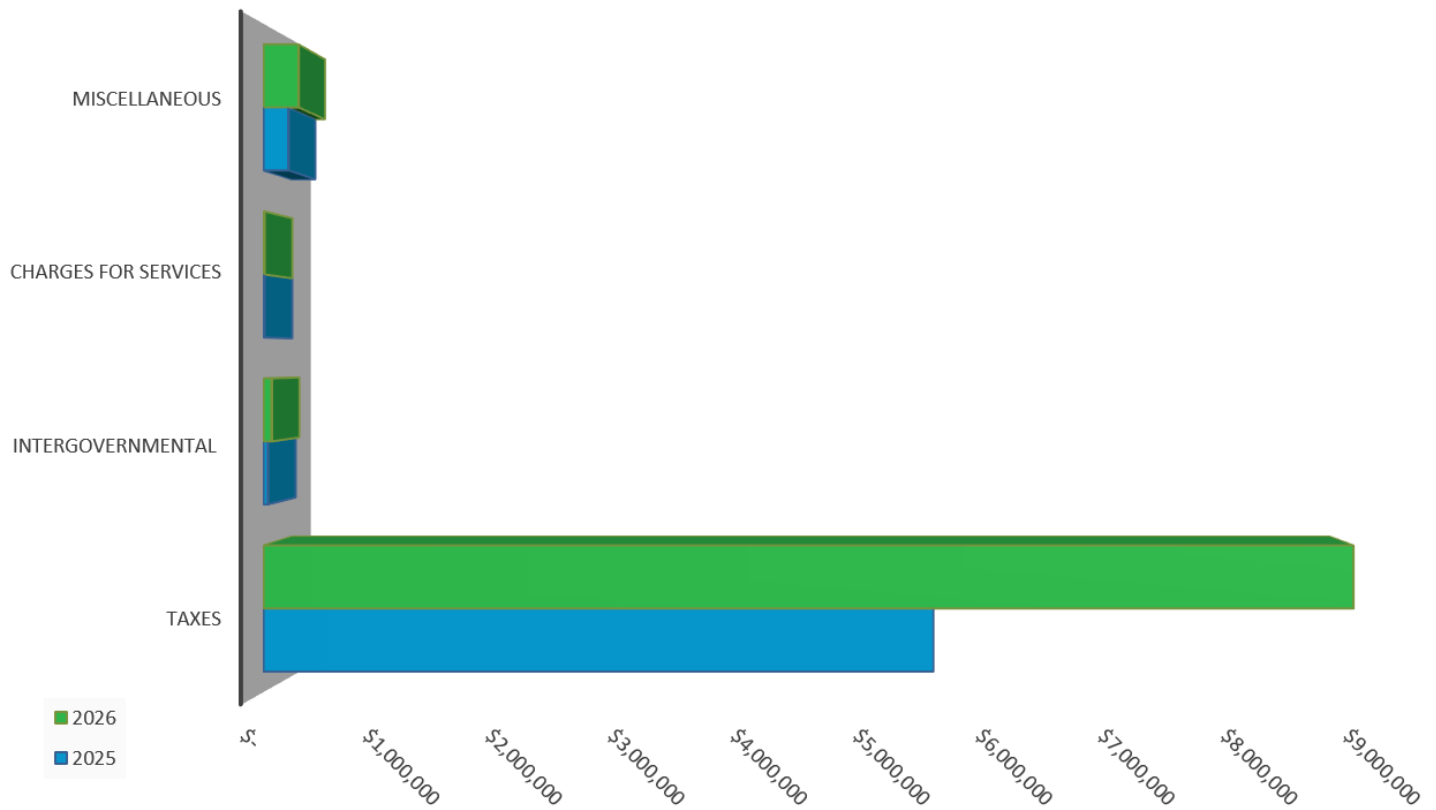
Approved by the Whatcom County Rural Library District Board of Trustees this 18th day of August, 2026.

Matthew Santos, Board Chair

2026 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date July 2026 (58% 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	\$ 9,224,837	96.14%	54.86%	\$ (7,591,248)
	TOTAL TAXES	16,816,085	9,224,837	96.14%	54.86%	(7,591,248)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	46,591	0.49%	103.54%	1,591
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	21,629	0.23%	72.10%	(8,371)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	75,000	68,220	0.71%	90.96%	(6,780)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	7,000	5,530	0.06%	79.00%	(1,470)
347.2002	Library Use Fees	13,000	620	0.01%	4.77%	(12,380)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	20,000	6,150	0.06%	30.75%	(13,850)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	404,800	200,051	2.08%	49.42%	(204,749)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	4,000	2,926	0.03%	73.15%	(1,074)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	103,000	73,133	0.76%	71.00%	(29,867)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	70	0.00%	70.00%	(30)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	1	0.00%	0.00%	1
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	24,750	14,263	0.15%	57.63%	(10,487)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	10,000	5,404	0.06%	54.04%	(4,596)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	546,650	295,848	3.08%	54.12%	(250,802)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	17,457,735	9,595,056	100.00%	54.96%	(7,862,679)
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	\$ 17,457,735	\$ 9,595,056	100.00%	54.96%	\$ (7,862,679)

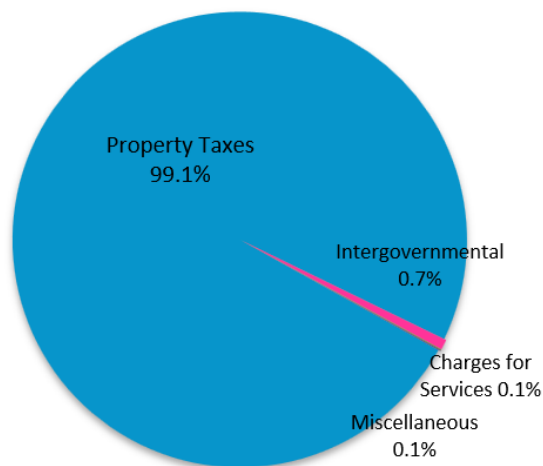
General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year



Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison

	2025	2026	% Change
Taxes	\$ 5,670,423	\$ 9,224,837	62.68%
Intergovernmental	35,544	68,220	91.93%
Charges for Services	4,806	6,150	27.98%
Miscellaneous	210,637	295,848	40.45%
Total Operating Revenue	5,921,410	9,595,056	62.04%
Other Financing Sources	-	-	0.00%
Total Revenue	\$ 5,921,410	\$ 9,595,056	62.04%

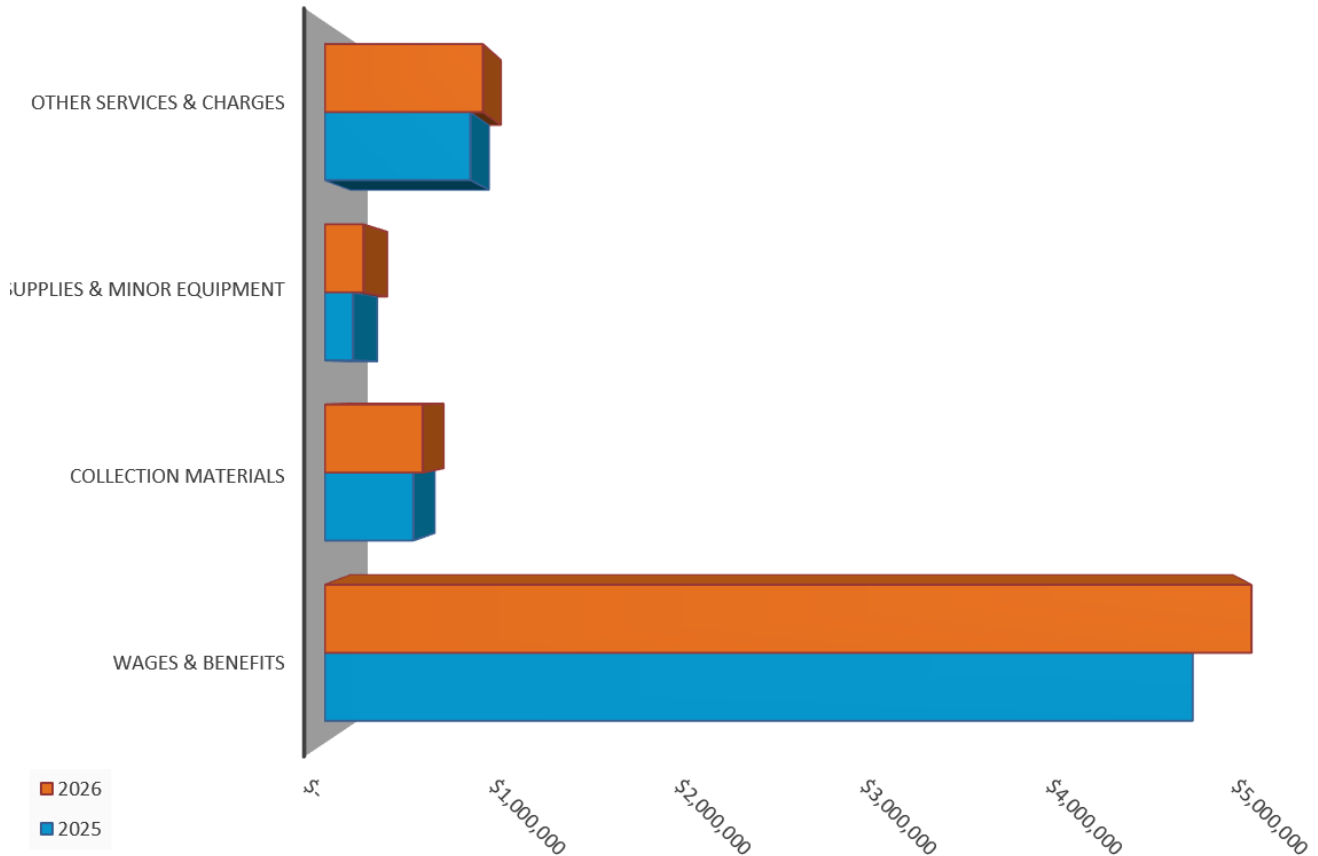
YTD Revenue by category



**2026 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date
July 2026 (58% 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	3,920,695	57.46%	56.81%	\$ (2,980,751)
572.2000	Benefits	2,203,925	1,256,649	18.42%	57.02%	(947,276)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	9,105,371	5,177,344	75.88%	56.86%	(3,928,027)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	186,725	91,201	1.34%	48.84%	(95,524)
572.3032	Fuel	30,150	15,694	0.23%	52.05%	(14,456)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,400,000	546,642	8.01%	39.05%	(853,358)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	239,800	109,070	1.60%	45.48%	(130,730)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,856,675	762,606	11.18%	41.07%	(1,094,068)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	724,325	461,951	6.77%	63.78%	(262,374)
572.4042	Communication	140,450	68,613	1.01%	48.85%	(71,837)
572.4043	Travel	53,025	22,905	0.34%	43.20%	(30,121)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	750	438	0.01%	58.36%	(312)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	32,447	14,289	0.21%	44.04%	(18,158)
572.4046	Insurance	122,634	89,466	1.31%	72.95%	(33,168)
572.4047	Utilities	186,066	108,368	1.59%	58.24%	(77,698)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	120,255	60,338	0.88%	50.18%	(59,917)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	118,965	56,562	0.83%	47.55%	(62,403)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,498,918	882,930	12.94%	58.90%	(615,987)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	12,460,963	6,822,881	100.00%	54.75%	(5,638,083)
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	\$ 13,460,963	6,822,881	100.00%	50.69%	\$ (6,638,083)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ 3,996,772	2,772,176			\$ (1,224,596)
	FUND BALANCE SUMMARY					
	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,115,981	9,115,981			
	Net Income	3,996,772	2,772,176			(1,224,596)
	Ending Fund Balance	\$ 13,112,753	11,888,156			\$ (1,224,596)

General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year

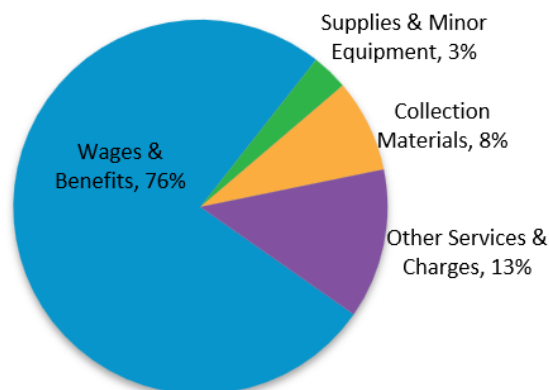


Actual General Fund Expenditures Year to Date Comparison

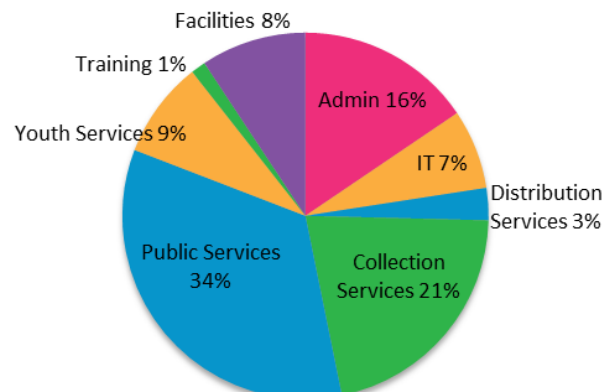
	2025	2026	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$ 4,848,520	\$ 5,177,344	6.78%
Collection Materials	494,116	546,642	10.63%
Supplies & Minor Equipment	156,651	215,964	37.86%
Other Services & Charges	812,988	882,930	8.60%
Total Operating Expenditures	6,312,276	6,822,881	8.09%
Other Financing Uses	78,164	-	0.00%
Total Expenditures	\$ 6,390,440	\$ 6,822,881	6.77%

Net Operating Income	\$ (469,030)	\$ 2,772,176	691.04%
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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	17,457,735	9,595,056
Expenditures	(11,399,284)	(13,460,963)	(6,822,881)
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 9,115,981	\$ 13,112,753	\$ 11,888,156

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	\$ 4,107,993
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	10,279,933
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation	186,623	1,927,819	1,608,223
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$ 9,115,981	\$ 13,112,753	\$ 11,888,156

July Summary

- As of the end of July (58% of the budget year), revenue is at \$9,595,056, which is 55% of budget. Operating expenditures are at \$6,822,881 (43%), leaving us with a year-to-date net income of \$3,670,433. Our fund balance at the end of July is \$11,888,156.
- 2027 Budget preparations are underway! Over the next month I will meet with department heads and branch managers to compile data and start building the 2027 budget. Facilities Services Manager Ryan Cullup will be joining me when I meet with branch managers to discuss facilities needs for the coming year.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	8/18/2026
Committee or Department:	Collection Services Department
Subject:	Policy Review
Prepared By:	Mary Kinser
Impact upon Budget?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Supporting Documents:	☒ Yes ☐ No

Recommendation or Request: Review of the following policies

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Motion to approve Collection Policy 3.01 as presented. No motion for Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02, for review only.

Summary:

In keeping with our efforts to review policies on a regular basis, we are asking for review of policies in Section 3.0, Library Collection.

- a. Collection Policy 3.01 – update suggested
- b. Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02 – review only

Alternatives: As discussed.

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Comments:



COLLECTION POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 3.01

SCOPE

This policy designates responsibility for selecting materials for the library's collection to library staff and provides guidelines for selection.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Whatcom County Library System Collection Policy guides library staff in the management of WCLS's collection (both physical and digital content) and informs the public of the principles used to build and maintain the collection.

1. WCLS's collections are designed to meet the needs of Whatcom County's population, taking into account demographics and elements of WCLS's Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees recognizes that within the service area there are groups and individuals with widely diverse interests, backgrounds, cultures, values and needs. The WCLS collection strives to serve the interests and needs of all residents in the WCLS service area.
2. The Board of Trustees believes that reading, listening to, viewing and using library materials are individual, private matters, and that while one is free to select or reject materials for oneself, one cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, view or inquire.

The Board also recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening and viewing of their own minor children. WCLS does not stand *in loco parentis* (that is, in place of a parent, or charged with a parent's rights, duties and responsibilities).

The Library Board adopts and declares that it will adhere to and support:

- [Library Bill of Rights](#): Adopted June 19, 1939 by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996; amended January 29, 2019.
- [Freedom to Read Statement](#): Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.
- [Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#): Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, June 30, 2004, July 2, 2008 *under previous name* "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; ~~and June 25, 2019;~~ and May 29, 2025.
- [WLA Intellectual Freedom Statement](#): Ratified April 6, 2001.

SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY AND SCOPE

To serve Whatcom County's diverse community, library selectors choose a balance of materials representing a wide range of non-fiction topics, fiction genres, authors, performers, and styles. The responsibility of administering and maintaining the library collection lies with professionally trained library staff under the direction of the Executive Director and Collection Services Manager. The focus of the collection is breadth

rather than depth, and materials suitable for the general reader rather than the advanced student or the expert. While the collection should serve the individual needs of students, it is not intended to be a substitute for school or homeschool curricular needs.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Materials are selected based on multiple factors, including budget, space constraints, reviews and demand. Criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Favorable reviews from professional resources and/or critical acclaim;
- Patron requests and/or anticipated popular demand;
- Reputation of author or publisher;
- Artistic, literary, and/or scientific merit;
- Support of early/emergent literacy;
- Suitability for the lay person;
- Contribution to the balance of the collection;
- Representation of ideas that are unique, alternative, experimental or controversial;
- Documentation of the content creator in the case of AI-generated content;
- Anticipation of new trends in literature, technology, leisure and culture;
- Durability sufficient to withstand the intended use;
- Technical characteristics (such as paper quality, binding, margins);
- Utility and value to the patron (for Library of Things);
- Conditions imposed by licenses (for electronic materials);
- Price, stewardship of resources and availability of purchase.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Digital resources fall into two categories: owned materials and accessed materials. Accessed materials include databases and subscription collections and are made available through licensing agreements. Accessed digital resources may be curated by third-party sources in which case the library does not select the content. Digital content that is selected by WCLS staff is subject to the general guidelines for selection. Digital resources from third-party sources are evaluated annually to review their relevance to the collection. WCLS may participate in consortia to share expenses and broaden the number of digital resources we are able to offer.

DONATIONS

WCLS accepts gifts of books and other materials as outlined in the Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12. Authors who wish to bring their content to the attention of selectors should fill out the Collection Suggestions from Authors form found on the Library Policies page at wcls.org.

DESELECTION

WCLS has an established process for regularly assessing the materials in its collection for retention or withdrawal. Except for local history and local documents, WCLS does not serve an archival function. (See Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02)

COMMENTS ON LIBRARY MATERIAL

WCLS welcomes the comments of WCLS cardholders about library materials and has an established process for reviewing and responding to comments if a WCLS cardholder wishes to initiate the process. Comments

submitted through this process will receive a written response. As part of this process, materials under review will remain available.

RELATED POLICIES: [Diversity Statement 1.03](#); [Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02](#); [Borrower's Policy 4.01](#); [Postings, Petitions and Exhibit Policy 7.04](#); [Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCES: U.S. Constitution Amendment I; [RCW 27.12.210\(9\) Library trustees](#) — Organization — Bylaws — Powers and duties; [RCW 27.12.270 Rules and regulations](#) — Free use of libraries.

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
March 20, 2001	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
September 17, 2002	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
December 16, 2003	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
July 22, 2008	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
March 18, 2014	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
December 20, 2016	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
March 19, 2019	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
April 15, 2025	Revised.	Lisa Gresham	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rod Lofdahl
<u>August 18, 2026</u>	<u>Revised.</u>	<u>Mary Kinser</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	

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DISPOSAL OF LIBRARY MATERIALS POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 3.02

SCOPE

This policy safeguards that withdrawn library materials are disposed of in an orderly and legal manner, and identifies disposal methods.

The Board of Trustees of the Whatcom County Library System authorizes the Executive Director, or designee(s), to withdraw and dispose of library materials.

In order to maintain a collection of materials that best serves the public, WCLS must periodically withdraw library materials (books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, etc.) from the collection for a variety of reasons according to library best practices.

Library materials will be disposed of according to the following priorities:

1. By making them available to nonprofit Friends of the Library groups to support their book sales. Each Friends group that takes materials within the calendar year will be assessed an annual fee of \$10 by WCLS.
2. By transferring them to nonprofit organizations that specifically exist to benefit WCLS, primarily the Whatcom County Library Foundation.
3. By using them for outreach to nonusers to introduce them to the library and library materials.
4. By donating them to other institutions or nonprofit organizations so that they may continue to be used.
5. If the materials cannot otherwise be disposed of, or are damaged, they will be recycled or discarded.

WCLS employees may only purchase withdrawn library materials through Friends or systemwide book sales.

RELATED POLICIES: [Collection Policy 3.01](#); [Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCE: [RCW 39.33.070 School districts and libraries](#) – Disposal of obsolete or surplus reading materials – Procedures.

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
November 16, 1999	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
December 13, 2010	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
March 18, 2014	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
December 20, 2016	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke

DRAFT



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	8/18/2026
Committee or Department:	Administrative Services
Subject:	First Amendment to ConnectED MOU with Lynden School District
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	☐ Yes ☒ No
Supporting Documents:	☒ Yes ☐ No

Recommendation or Request: Authorize Executive Director to sign the First Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding By and Between Lynden School District and the Whatcom County Library System as presented.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Motion to approve authorizing the Executive Director to sign the First Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding By and Between Lynden School District and the Whatcom County Library System as presented.

Summary:

The Lynden School District met on July 17 and discussed the ConnectED program with WCLS. According to Superintendent David VanderYacht, the partnership “received a strong, public endorsement.”

VanderYacht requested that we consider an amendment to our existing MOU to clarify that PIN numbers established for student accounts are universal. This is consistent with current practice and in the spirit of honoring our partnership and collaboration, we drafted the amendment, attached.

Alternatives: As discussed.

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Comments:

We are pleased to know the Lynden School District recognized the value of the ConnectED program to their students.

FIRST AMENDMENT
TO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BY AND BETWEEN
LYNDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT AND
THE WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

This FIRST AMENDMENT is made as of the latest date written below, by and between the Lynden School District ("LSD") and the Whatcom County Rural Library District, doing business as the Whatcom County Library System ("WCLS"). Collectively, these entities are referred to as the "Parties."

WHEREAS, in June 2023 LSD and WCLS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to which the two institutions will work in partnership to facilitate public library use for district students through limited use library accounts; and,

WHEREAS, the MOU sets forth the obligations of LSD and of WCLS with regard to data-sharing, record-keeping, information management, and communication; and,

WHEREAS, questions about account access warrant clarification;

NOW, THEREFORE, LSD AND WCLS AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING REVISIONS TO SAID MOU:

Item 9 is revised as follows:

9. Duties of WCLS Regarding Implementation and Promotion.

- a) At the beginning of each school year, WCLS will establish or renew Connected accounts for every student included in the data transfer. WCLS will set individual account numbers as the Student ID number plus a prefix identifying the school/school district. WCLS will set a uniform PIN (personal identification number) for all accounts and communicate that PIN to LSD.
- b) WCLS will maintain a space on its webpage (www.wcls.org/connected) with updated information about the program, its availability and use.
- c) WCLS will convene the Connected Council.
- d) WCLS will offer training in Connected value and practice by WCLS staff for teachers, staff, and/or administrators.
- a) WCLS will offer instruction in Connected usage by WCLS staff for students.

SIGNATURES:



David VanderYacht, Superintendent
Lynden School District

8.6.2026

Date

Christine Perkins, Executive Director
Whatcom County Library System

Date



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	8/18/2026
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Strategic Plan DRAFT
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	☒ Yes ☐ No
Supporting Documents:	☒ Yes ☐ No

Recommendation or Request: Review draft of Strategic Plan and provide input.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: None; discussion only.

Summary: Our Strategic Planning process included Stakeholder, Cardholder, and Non-User surveys, staff input gathering at All Staff Learning Day, community conversations at gatherings and events county-wide, review of plans from peer libraries, and more. This draft assembles and organizes our goals and objectives for the next five year period. It has been reviewed and refined by every department team and is ready for board input.

Alternatives: As discussed.

Fiscal Impact: Will depend based on final plan adopted.

Comments:

WCLS Strategic Plan 2027 – 2031

The successful passage of the Levy Lid Lift in 2025 means Whatcom County Library System's budget is stable for at least the next five years – and longer, with careful and deliberate planning.

Knowing that our basic financial requirements have been met gives us a unique opportunity to assess public input and make strategic decisions that improve public service, strengthen WCLS's resilience, and guide the future of the library system.

Our plan centers around the concept that to thrive over the long-term, WCLS needs to GROW – adding outlets and refining the services that our growing service area population wants and needs while continuing to learn and evolve as a system. Growth must be deliberate and sustainable, and as with every robust garden, succeeds with judicious pruning of programs and projects that are outdated or no longer serving us optimally. Together, WCLS staff will consider opportunities to innovate and evolve service delivery while carefully stewarding taxpayer dollars.

The four components of our plan are as follows:

G – GALVANIZE

Goal: WCLS inspires more Whatcom County residents to use and support their libraries.

Objective 1: Improve access to WCLS locations and outlets.

- Improve open hours, especially at small and medium-sized libraries.
- Pilot after-hours access at WCLS-owned facilities and/or other sites.
- Advocate for ongoing and improved service in south Whatcom County.
- Initiate library service area analysis for the Laurel/Meridian community.

Objective 2: Enhance physical locations.

- Support the City of Blaine's efforts to build an expanded, modern library in Blaine.
- Expand number of small meeting spaces in branches.
- Seek opportunities for a larger, flexible Administrative Services building which may allow us to:
 - Add to Library of Things collection.
 - Support larger collection space.
 - Provide space to facilitate ConnectED holds pickups in schools.
 - Provide co-working spaces and flexible meeting spaces.
 - Build capacity for new opportunities.

- Avoid costly long-term maintenance at existing location.
- Consider co-location with other organizations.

Objective 3: Inform the public about the benefits of WCLS services.

- Enhance marketing budget to reach new audiences.
- Target messages to people who live in areas of the county with low library card penetration.
- Deliver messages about the value of WCLS and libraries in general.
- Establish baseline measurement and research schedule to measure awareness of and satisfaction with library services.

R – READ

Goal: WCLS cultivates and celebrates a love of reading with people of all ages.

Objective 1: Surround young people with a culture of reading, at WCLS libraries, at home and at school.

- Enhance outreach to youth, focusing on homeschool, preschool and K-12 students and their parents or caregivers.
- Enhance partnerships with Cultural Liaisons and Mobile Services to bring stories to young people in underrepresented communities.
- Integrate ConnectED holds and checkouts into regular WCLS circulation processes.
- Provide analog experiences for children and families as alternatives to screens.
- Align Youth Services staff hours with school district enrollment and local demographics.

Objective 2: Reduce wait times for popular materials.

- Explore new ways to prioritize WCLS cardholders' holds.
- Strategically purchase multiple copies of high-demand titles.
- Continue to advocate for fair pricing and terms for eBooks, eAudiobooks and other digital resources and communicate purchasing and lending challenges to the public.

Objective 3: Promote reading and provide multiple opportunities for Whatcom County residents to celebrate books, authors and reading.

- Refine existing efforts such as Summer Reading, Whatcom READS, author visits, *Whatcomics*, *A Forest of Words*, and Open Book.
- Champion the restorative value of immersive reading in our marketing, outreach and everyday work.

O – OPTIMIZE

Goal: Optimize staff, services, programs and partnerships to improve impact and resiliency.

Objective 1: Support staff to thrive professionally.

- Implement compensation study recommendations, as negotiated and approved by the union and the Board of Trustees.
- Gradually increase a number of positions to full-time benefited, as opportunities arise.
- Reinforce learning organization culture to support curiosity, skills and leadership growth.

Objective 2: Strengthen the library staff's role as information professionals.

- Build staff competencies related to critical thinking, digital literacy, and AI.
- Conduct thorough reference training for public services staff.
- Offer other opportunities for people of all ages to increase their literacy, digital literacy, information literacy and critical thinking skills.
- Champion intellectual freedom by educating about and advocating for access to information and the right to read.
- Explore reference librarian support for systemwide efforts.

Objective 3: Craft meaningful online and in-person experiences for patrons.

- Provide enhanced customer service training.
- Improve online patron experience.
 - Investigate a mobile app that will make it easier and more convenient for patrons to access their library card and other library services on their devices.
 - Implement catalog and website upgrades (including event registration) to improve user experience.
- Consider ways to integrate BiblioCommons registration into card registration process.
- Identify optimal printing, copying, faxing, and computer registration management tool and implement it.

- Evaluate user experience at branches and adopt recommendations. Include consideration of the browsing experience.
- Evaluate library collections to align collections and shelving spaces with evolving patterns of patron usage while maintaining adequate space for other in-library functions.
- Increase funding for programming aimed at reducing social isolation and providing low-barrier opportunities for art, craft, local history, culture and learning.

Objective 4: Enhance resilience and ability to withstand natural disasters and other unexpected challenges or service disruptions.

- Finalize Continuity of Operations Plan and develop Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- Reduce disruptions due to Nooksack River flooding through proactive design, continued development of response plans, and collaboration with community and municipal partners.
- Prepare WCLS and the public to be climate-resilient.
- Strengthen records management practices for print and digital records.

Objective 5: Steward physical and fiscal assets to maximize taxpayer investment and sustain services as long as possible with existing levy funding.

- Continue ongoing building maintenance to preserve physical assets and to minimize unexpected expenses.
- Maintain integrity of computer network by following IT industry best practices and conducting triennial cybersecurity audits.
- Approach projects with fiscal and environmental sustainability in mind – looking for solutions that are cost-effective over the long term and have a minimal negative environmental impact (e.g. “double bottom line”).
- Refine long term capital budget plan for fleet, furniture, fixtures, and equipment as well as capital facilities investment strategy.
- Identify and sunset materials / collections / projects / services that no longer serve us to make space for new opportunities.

Objective 6: Expand private fundraising and advocacy capacity to support capital projects and major initiatives countywide.

- With WCLF, identify ways to increase staff support for fundraising efforts.

- Explore ways to add staff hours and/or grantwriting capabilities.
- Consider contracting for additional services.
- Collaborate with Friends of the Library organizations to advocate for libraries.

W – WELCOME

Goal: All people feel welcome at WCLS.

Objective 1: Work proactively with vulnerable communities to reduce barriers, promote equity, and ensure quality library service.

- Build on existing work of Cultural Liaisons.
- Leverage collections, programs, and services to reflect the diversity of Whatcom County, by focusing on targeted groups, which could include (TBD):
 - Hispanic community
 - Punjabi community
 - Lummi Nation
 - Nooksack Tribe
 - New adults
 - Senior citizens
 - Disabled people
 - Neurodivergent people
 - Faith-based communities
 - LGBTQIA+ communities
- Provide staff and trustee education to support culturally competent library services and policy.

Objective 2: Provide young people ways to play at WCLS libraries, indoors and outside, to support their learning, expression and growth.

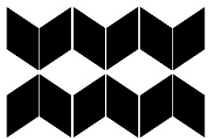
- Choose “things” for youth Library of Things that encourage narrative play (dolls, puppets, role playing games, etc.)
- Explore opportunities to install outdoor play structures at or adjacent to WCLS facilities, to attract families and offer young people a library space to develop motor and social skills.

Strategic Plan Outcomes

- Increased number of WC residents using WCLS services.
- Increased number of active cardholders.

- Increased number of WC residents who perceive value in WCLS.
- Improved user experience through skillful staff interactions and enhanced physical and online spaces.
- Increased reading and library engagement for people of all ages.
- Young people become their best selves through literature, connection, and play.
- Strengthened resilience for WCLS and the community in the face of economic or other hardships.
- Staff find opportunities to develop and flourish professionally.

###



whatcom county
library system

Executive Director's Report

August 2026

COMMUNITY



A joyful group gathered July 21 to celebrate the kickoff of the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express Renovation Project. Washington State Senator Sharon Shewmake and Whatcom County Councilmember Kaylee Galloway joined library supporters, project architects, Friends of the Birch Bay Library volunteers and others on the lawn. Due to the potential for cultural artifacts on the property, we

did not hold a “groundbreaking”. Instead, the Friends prepared individual “dirt cakes” with crumbled cookie “sand” to put on top, and provided mini “golden shovel” spoons to eat them.



ACCESS

Coming soon: family passes to the Whatcom Museum and Spark Museum available for checkout. We have the go-ahead to offer a small number of free passes to WCLS cardholders each week. Online Services Coordinator Neil McKay is collaborating with our partners at Bellingham Public Library to share the interface for patrons to reserve the passes. We will provide an update once this is ready to launch.

RESOURCES

WCLS patrons can check out eBooks and eAudiobooks using Libby (OverDrive) because we are a member of the Washington Digital Lending Consortium (WDLC). Recently, WDLC began offering “Lucky Day” copies of high demand eMaterials to help circulate these items more quickly and reduce lengthy holds queues. Lucky Day eBooks have 14-day lending periods (regular eBooks can be checked out up to 21 days). When a Lucky Day eBook is returned, everyone in the holds queue gets a notification that it could be their lucky day. The first person to check out the eBook gets it, and as soon as they do, the Lucky Day notification disappears for everyone else. This is just one of the ways that WCLS and our partners are working to satisfy patron demand.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Now that the Sumas Library has re-opened, we are resuming our plans to work with Sustainable Connections to install a Freedge in the library lobby. This effort reduces food waste and helps address food insecurity.

STEWARDSHIP

Today's Compensation Study report is the first step towards aligning our employee pay scale more closely with market comparators. This helps ensure that our employees are compensated fairly and may help reduce turnover. In turn, this reduces the need to onboard and train new employees as often.

Christine Perkins, Executive Director

Business

Goodwill closing job centers in Bellingham, Mount Vernon

Cascadia Daily News | By [Sophia Gates](#)

Published July 25, 2026 at 7:00 AM PDT



Hailey Hoffman / Cascadia Daily News

Evergreen Goodwill hosted a job and resource fair in Bellingham to connect local refugees and immigrants with local organizations in 2022. The nonprofit's Bellingham job center is among those closing temporarily due to a reworking of job programming.

Evergreen Goodwill temporarily closed its job training and education centers in Bellingham, Mount Vernon and Bremerton on Monday as part of a reworking of programming it said was motivated by shifts in the job market.

Goodwill's leaders plan to reopen centers at these locations in the future once the service organization works out a new curriculum, said spokesperson Alyssa Grigg. "Our intention is not to abandon those communities."

Classes will resume in October at the nonprofit's Seattle and Everett centers after a summer pause. Students outside of those areas can participate remotely, Grigg said. Staff are calling students previously receiving Goodwill services individually to refer them to other resources.

When classes resume, the nonprofit will focus its education efforts on high school completion and "industry-recognized credentials," as leaders believe these are the paths most likely to lead to jobs, Grigg said, noting changes to work following the introduction of artificial intelligence and more employers requiring post-secondary (college or training) credentials.

Evergreen Goodwill's reach in Northwest Washington spans King, Kitsap, Snohomish, Whatcom and Skagit counties. Its programs have provided adult basic education at no cost, including computer and English as a second language classes.

In 2022, the nonprofit's Bellingham location [hosted a job fair](#) for immigrants and refugees. A Goodwill "digital equity bus" has also brought adult education [to east Whatcom County](#), serving as a mobile classroom.

Evergreen Goodwill has reported net losses in tax filings since 2023, including a \$9.3 million deficit this year. Grigg acknowledged the nonprofit has laid off staff in recent years, but said this consolidation is "fundamentally different" from previous cutbacks.

"This is not about trimming the fat to meet a budget," she said. "This is about a very intentional pause and restructuring of our entire program offering."

For at least one former employee, however, the move feels like a continuation of past trends.

Marie, a staffer at the Bellingham location laid off with the closure this week, said employees have known for at least a month that the organization was facing a budget shortfall. Pointing to previous terminations, she said she assumed that could mean layoffs. She asked to be identified only by her middle name for fear that future employers would view her comments unfavorably.

She believes it will be harder for people from marginalized communities to find jobs without the support the centers provided. Marie added other agencies offering similar services may become overburdened.

With these closures, "rural places are being even more underresourced," Marie said.

To find referrals to free or low-cost resources in your area, enter your ZIP code at the bottom of the webpages for the Whatcom and Skagit job centers: evergreengoodwill.org/locations/job-training-education-center-whatcom-county/ or evergreengoodwill.org/locations/job-training-education-center-skagit-county/.

Sophia Gates, covering rural Whatcom and Skagit counties for [Cascadia Daily News](#), is with the [Washington State Murrow Fellowships](#), a local news program [supported](#) by state legislators.

<https://www.knkn.org/business/2026-07-25/goodwill-closing-job-centers-in-bellingham-mount-vernon>

Your Reading is Out of Control

Which is why it is becoming popular to say it's "over"

[Rachael Gabriel](#)

Jul 28, 2026

But we're being sold a new story about reading, and how bad we all are about it, for two political reasons:

1. If we believe most people (not you, of course, but most people) are illiterate, we are less likely to believe them, trust them or protect their right to vote.
 - a. Same if we think they read, but not the right stuff, so obviously they have no critical thinking abilities. poor things.
2. If we believe that buying books from a bookstore and then conspicuously consuming them is a form of virtue signaling, we're more likely to tune into new hardbacks and bestsellers — latching more completely to the corporate censorship firehose that lulls us into assuming we have choice and access rather than being fed a steady diet of what those-who-own-publishing-companies want us to want.

We have been so worried about book bans we don't see the layers of censorship preventing books from being published in the first place.

1. If we stay focused on what's wrong with people these days, we may not notice what's right with We The People and wrong with Oligarchs and despots. We are being distracted in ways that are so obvious it's embarrassing how well it's working

It's a damn lie that people aren't reading

The hype is based largely on two surveys - one is a survey of participation in the arts, the other is a survey of leisure time, which asks about *minutes of leisure time spent reading* - not minutes of reading. Some of us read all day for work and family - sometimes we're reading things others might consider pleasure reading, but we don't. Turns out, what you measure, how and in what context, matters for the findings you produce. A [2025 review](#) of these by Bone, Bu, Sonke and Fancourt explains:

...evidence is mixed on whether fewer people are now reading in the US...measures of reading are likely subject to social desirability bias, as many people believe that they should read.³ Furthermore, most previous research has asked people about reading habits retrospectively over a one-year period, which is subject to substantial recall biases. Apparent fluctuations in rates of reading may also be a result of combining findings from multiple short-term studies with inconsistent methods.⁵

It seems to really matter who and how you ask. The results are not all dismal. [The Pew survey](#) of 8,000 adults found that 75% of adults, or 1 in 4 reporting starting or finishing a book in the last 12 months.

The [NEA's survey of 4,adults](#) (5x the size) found less than half of people read a book in 2022. This is in the context of a survey of arts participation with reading being one of many arts with which you might engage.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' [national time use survey](#) showed Americans older than 15 spend an average of 16 minutes a day *"reading for personal interest."*

A [yougov](#) survey with around 2,000 respondents explained that there are some super-readers out there reading TONS of books (13+ in a year), so even though the median is 2, the average read is 8.

These surveys are not about reading. They are about book-reading or "personal interest reading." I think the moral panic-eneduced fear-mongering surrounding reports of these surveys is actually fear about all the not-book reading people are doing.

I give you exhibits A-to-525,600 of just a few examples of all the very serious reading of connected text - both fiction and nonfiction- people are creating and consuming.

There are new, niche newspapers with all the features.

Some of the most gorgeous magazines you can imagine that come right to your door focused on specific interests (and virtues) like running, poetry, music and hiking.

There are niche hobby publications that will actually change your mood and your life.

Subscriptions that will mail you poems, observations, books and book reviews along with the candle, stationary, sticker, pressed flower and craft that should go with it.

You can get letters serialized stories you await like episodes in the latest show you wish you could binge watch.

There are even magazines and newsletters for people who would rather be outside doing things other than reading.

Some that arrive as magazines, but might be saved like books.

And there are literary journals, magazines about reading, and book reviews that you can read to help you pick your next book or not-book.

There are publications that aim to spark intellectual curiosity, spread cutting edge insight and connect people with specific issues and communities.

Do you know how I found all these? Quick scroll on social media where I *read* the captions, photos and patterns that the algorithm curates when I ask it to find things for me. The array of options is nothing short of an omnivore's dilemma. We are reading (and writing!) against all odds and in all different ways, places and modalities.

When you amplify the moral panic about people not reading books you're offering free support for a fascist movement to strip the people of literacy altogether.

Recipe for stripping literacy from society:

First, convince them their neighbors are not literate.

Next, convince them to read books — because they are the most tightly controlled medium we have.

Then, sit back and watch people virtue signal their way into self-brainwashing by consuming only what you tell them they should read.

This will happen, because, we actually are a nation of readers. A big one.

- Book sales are up, new book stores are opening
- Library visits are up
- The number of official periodicals published is up, and the number of underground, independent and punk texts is innumerable
- There are more ways and reasons for reading as a social activity today than ever...see [here](#), which is partly a reaction to the failures of book publishers to represent the people and ideas we are hungry to read, and partly evidence that reading and writing with and for each other is a human activity and humans are going to human. You can't stop them.

Don't get distracted

Lionizing books is a good way to distract us from the significant and ongoing issues of bias, prejudice and ethical dilemmas in book publishing. I recently finished an incredible page-turner of a book. A multiple award-winner. One that stuck with me and whose characters I felt I knew so much I actually miss them now that I am done visiting as I read. The brand new paperback was about \$12 in Scotland from a big box store.

The average price of a new paperback in the US is \$18-22. Book Riot says that US has been in a book [affordability crisis](#) **which has now been exacerbated by tariffs**. Woah, not the US creating and then blaming people for a crisis!?

[Jeffrey Lawrence](#) has written about how Spain has managed to become/stay a nation of readers, in part, by creating conditions for [book culture](#).

The Spanish government sponsors book fairs, gives subventions to small presses, funds travel for Spanish authors, and pursues a range of other initiatives both domestically and internationally. The municipally-run Madrid book fair, which takes place every year from late May to mid-June, hosted over 700,000 visitors in 226. Independent publishers in Spain often compete for notable authors with the imprints of the two major corporate publishers (Penguin Random House and Grupo Planeta), in part because they exist within a well-funded literary ecosystem.

This literary ecosystem that supports a booming book culture is not an issue of personal responsibility. It requires the attention and investment of government. The flurry of think pieces that make us think Americans are post-literate, illiterate or otherwise not reading books/in their leisure time is being amplified all over the interwebs as an attempt to frame this as an individual moral failure instead of evidence of high levels of censorship and oppression.

My \$12 paperback will never be for sale in the US, even at a higher price point, because it includes some Scots language. Distributors here have ruled that a US audience won't buy that.

BTW, you can order it from [Waterstones](#), and you should. It was that good. It's a YA novel, one of the fastest growing categories because publishers know that "young adults" absolutely do read, especially when they can choose texts that interest them.

The way Scots is used in this book is not significantly different from the ways that languages are infused in this year's Booker Prize winner, *Taiwan Travelogues*, published by SpringHill, a small Taiwanese publisher, and then in translation by [And Other Stories](#), which describes their mission this way:

We aim to push people's reading limits and help them discover authors of adventurous and inspiring writing. And we want to open up publishing so that from the outside it doesn't look like some posh freemasonry...While our books are distributed widely through bookshops, it's also our subscribers' support that give us the confidence to publish what we do.

They operate as a non-profit, with stringent environmental commitments as a company, and significant equity and parity commitments as a publisher. It's worth giving these a read. It's a reminder that less than 10% of books published in the US are published by black authors. 80% of the market share of books in the U.S. is controlled by one of the "Big Five" companies.

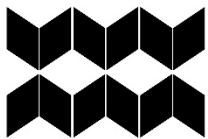
So, 4 out of 5 books you see on a bookstore's shelf has been carefully formulated to be a U.S. commercial success. Listen, I love a US bookstore and want to read more of what I find in them, not less. I just know there is so much MORE out there we don't see in what looks like limitless options (but isn't). If literary awards are any indication, readers *do* want texts that push boundaries, mix languages, modalities, voices, perspectives, topics and tropes, but:

- Imagine how an electorate that was interested in a multilingual world would vote.
- Imagine how people who sharpened their perspective-taking abilities on stories by and for people with different identities would participate in a democracy.
- Imagine how people who saw themselves, and others and multiple potential futures in the texts they consume would threaten the usefulness of propaganda and the storylines of oligarchs.

The next time you read, see or share something that says people don't read, reading is dying, it's a post-literate society remember that this is an entirely manufactured crisis and your belief is your participation in the movement to squelch free thinking and communication.

Instead, get yourself a super niche periodical. Find an independent publisher's website and see what they've got coming soon. Peruse the catalogues of university presses for the nichiest niches you ever niched. Sign up for a letter, newsletter or package of the month club. Start your own. Seriously, literally everybody's doing it.

[Your Reading is Out of Control - by Rachael Gabriel](#)



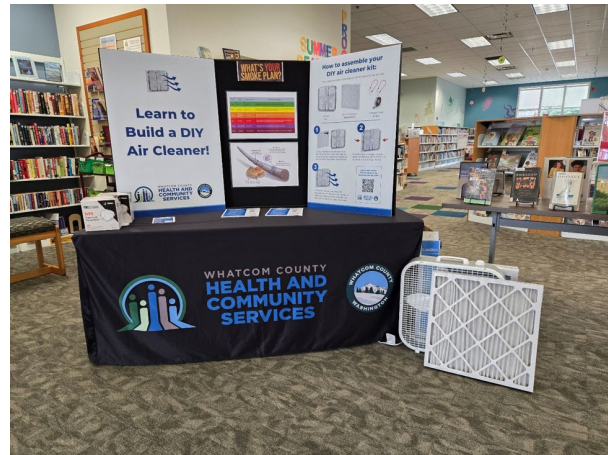
whatcom county
library system

Deputy Director Report

August 2026

ACCESS

The North Fork Library Meeting Room is now available for reservations. With the grant funded operable wall installation complete the meeting room space is now ready for use by the public. Pictured here is a meeting with the Foothills Community Alliance, one of the funders of the project. They have struggled over the past three months to find a reliable meeting space, and they found this space perfect to meet their needs. Other room reservations have already been submitted, providing access to a private space for a job interview and for a community agency to meet with people seeking help with computers.



RESOURCES

Do you have a smoke plan? Whatcom County Health and Community Services has been tabling at various WCLS library locations to talk with patrons about staying safe during the wildfire and smoke season as well as how to make your own DIY air cleaner. Several WCLS libraries were selected to be distribution points for fan/air filter kits, and 100 kits have been distributed so far this summer.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

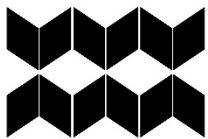
With input from WCLS Cultural Liaison staff from Lummi and Nooksack tribes, the [Land Acknowledgement](#) webpage was recently updated. In addition to acknowledging the ancestral territory where our libraries are now located, we also highlight some direct actions being taken by WCLS that demonstrate our sincere commitment to building lasting relationships with our Indigenous communities.

STEWARDSHIP

The Birch Bay Vogt Library renovation project is well underway with demolition work complete. There have been a number of necessary additions to the scope of work including abatement of hazardous materials discovered during demolition, substantial structural reinforcement, and additional measures required to take down the pole building located just inches away from RVs parked near the property line. Architectural services have also required additional hours due to reporting and permitting work required by Whatcom County. This additional work has begun to spend down budgeted contingency funds. At this point there is no need to request a budget amendment.

Michael Cox

Deputy Director



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Youth Services Report

August 2026

COMMUNITY

Among the many wonderful programs the Youth Services Department put on this summer was a series of Dungeons & Dragons Camps for teens. With lots of investment from the YS Team and our colleagues in Public Services we were able to offer the camp at all 10 locations. These Dungeons & Dragons Camps furthered our Youth Services work in meaningful ways:

Autonomy

The nature of Role-Playing Games depends on participants driving the narrative. This game provides a structure inside of which players adopt characters with particular strengths and liabilities and work together to go on a quest and accomplish a joint mission, battling monstrous forces along the way. Each player is responsible for their character's action and conduct, which in turn impacts the party's success. They learn to trust their companions and to earn the trust put in them, adding stakes to their self-determination, all in the relative safety of a game.

Belonging

The game involves lots of improvisation and on-the-fly decision-making. Some of that activity is performative, and much of it requires a good amount of vulnerability. The structure of the game gives players some guardrails, which can make participation a little easier, and the structure of the camps, with consecutive days of play, allowed our teens to get comfortable with each other. Over the course of the camp we could see teens investing themselves in the experience and in the place, and really feeling like they belonged at the library.

Literature

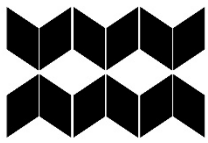
There are lots of books and other media about Role Playing Games in general and Dungeons & Dragons in particular, and staff connected our camp experiences to those resources as players built characters and engaged in play. But, more importantly, the game is all about narrative, creating an epic story in real time. Participants got to see and feel what it's like to create story, and appreciate the ways different people respond to and engage with narrative.

Empathy

In the camp setting young players register for the program and are grouped into parties by library staff. Occasionally teens came with friends or siblings. Most often, though, they were playing alongside other teens they were just meeting, and having to attend to strangers' feelings and needs, building new muscles of caring and support. New friendships were forged.

Thom Barthelmess

Youth Services Manager



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Community Relations Report

August 2026

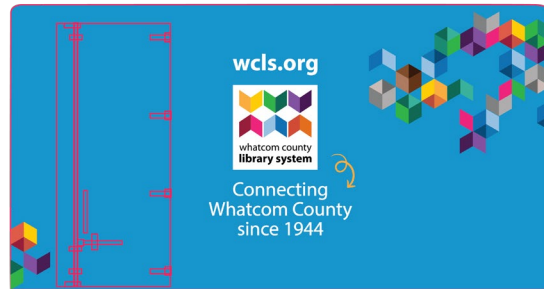
COMMUNITY/RESOURCES



We will unveil two new library card designs by local artists during Library Card Sign-Up Month in September. Nationally known illustrator and author Keith Negley created our Open Book illustrations. We liked them so much that we asked if we could also use his work on a card. Lummi Nation/Nooksack Tribe artist Sienum Jason LaClair drew our land acknowledgement art. It, too, is ideal for a card. We are grateful to both artists for allowing us to showcase their designs on cards that are bound to be popular choices for new — and current — cardholders.

We will feature the cards on social media and elsewhere in September. We hope library supporters will share the new card choices with friends and family members who aren't currently cardholders as an incentive during Library Card Sign-Up Month.

Our new box truck vinyl wrap also looks sharp. Designed by Communications Specialist Amy Jones, the illustration celebrates WCLS's more than 80 years of service connecting Whatcom County. Amy also created wraps for our new electric vehicles. The designs have been or soon will be applied to the new vehicles.



Podcast: [No. 60, Surprise Selection](#) with Mary Kinser and Sarah Miller
wcls.org/podcast or subscribe on your favorite podcast platform

Book Reviews

- *The Northern Light*, July 1, 2026, *Blaine book review: "Atmosphere"*
- *Cascadia Daily News*, July 5, 2026, *Review: 'Farther: Eight Months on America's Triple Crown Trails' by Heather Anderson*
- *Cascadia Daily News*, July 26, 2026, *Review: 'The Husbands' by Holly Gramazio*

Media Coverage

Ann Patchett Author Event, Saturday, July 11, 2026

- *Lynden Tribune*, July 15, 2026, *Best-selling, award-winning author Ann Patchett visits Whatcom County*
- *Cascadia Daily News*, July 11, 2026, *Can friendship be romantic? Author Ann Patchett thinks so*

Event photos





Other media coverage

- *Lynden Tribune*, July 1, 2026, [Whatcom Resource Information Collective grows efforts](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, July 1, 2026, [Everson Summer Festival brings family fun July 10-11](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 2, 2026, [What to know so far about Blaine's goals for new library, housing and childcare](#)
- *Bellingham Herald*, July 6, 2026, [Nonprofit brings hundreds of books to Whatcom County jail](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 9, 2026, [Sun's out, fun's out: How to keep your kids busy this summer](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 10, 2026, [Semiahmoo children's author donates book proceeds to Blaine Library](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, July 9, 2026, [Weekly Watchdog: July 10–16, 2026](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, July 15, 2026, [GALLERY: A little bit of everything at Everson Library's kids craft fair](#)
- *Ferndale Record*, July 15, 2026, [Summer Reading program draws in families](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 16, 2026, [Find short interviews of August election candidates on league's website](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 16, 2026, [Aug. 4 primary election ballots mailed to voters](#)
- *Seattle Times*, July 18, 2026, [In Point Roberts, lives are upended as politics repel Canadian tourists](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, July 21, 2026, [PHOTO GALLERY: Local youth performers bring Shakespeare to Hovander](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, July 22, 2026, [PHOTO GALLERY: Whatcom Grooves in Sumas](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, July 22, 2026, [Lynden Schools plan safety and facility projects](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 23, 2026, ['A big deal for us' as Birch Bay celebrates library construction after decade of effort](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, July 28, 2026, [Library quick picks: Aug.](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 29, 2026, [Reminder: Primary ballots are due Tuesday, Aug. 4](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 29, 2026, [Connect with first responders at National Night Out in Birch Bay](#)
- *The Northern Light*, July 29, 2026, [In the Garden with Kelle: How to identify and remove these lovely, dangerous weeds](#)

Mary Vermillion

Community Relations Manager

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	297,519	445,453	742,972

Circulation	Jul 2025	Jul 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	12,296	12,317	94,671	82,506	-12.8%
Bookmobile & Outreach	5,794	6,819	37,282	42,479	13.9%
Deming	7,543	7,719	52,387	56,044	7.0%
Everson	8,648	9,050	59,148	61,660	4.2%
Ferndale	31,131	29,087	210,242	192,839	-8.3%
Island	2,054	1,879	12,271	11,984	-2.3%
Lynden	37,219	34,293	247,557	236,629	-4.4%
North Fork	3,669	3,439	24,039	23,381	-2.7%
NWIC	8	13	196	69	-64.8%
Point Roberts + PRX	3,369	2,862	16,200	14,649	-9.6%
Sumas + SLX	2,389	1,903	17,200	6,621	-61.5%
South Whatcom	9,525	9,582	56,303	61,250	8.8%
NDX	3,680	4,180	26,911	28,428	5.6%
Physical Circulation Total	127,325	123,143	854,407	818,539	-4.2%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	23,718	21,550	167,217	151,452	-9.4%
All other materials	101,247	98,368	666,803	648,284	-2.8%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	37,726	38,270	260,761	266,905	2.4%
eMagazines	5,378	6,050	41,040	44,070	7.4%
eMusic	17,332	8,812	81,964	70,815	-13.6%
Streaming Video	2,788	3,115	23,211	20,420	-12.0%
Digital Circulation Total	63,224	56,247	406,976	402,210	-1.2%
Grand Total	190,549	179,390	1,261,383	1,220,749	-3.2%

Visitors (Door counts)	Jul 2025	Jul 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
Blaine	6,774	7,448	47,828	45,222	-5.4%
Deming	2,584	3,125	18,713	20,328	8.6%
Everson	3,792	4,090	24,507	24,875	1.5%
Ferndale	13,785	12,430	88,655	82,961	-6.4%
Island	3,091	2,850	12,237	12,875	5.2%
Lynden	12,482	13,288	82,815	84,714	2.3%
NDX	330	375	2,208	2,479	12.3%
North Fork	2,128	2,801	12,815	15,614	21.8%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,901	2,407	10,028	11,104	10.7%
Sumas + SLX	1,509	1,488	9,605	2,187	-77.2%
South Whatcom	4,546	4,415	22,755	23,969	5.3%
Total	52,922	54,717	332,166	326,328	-1.8%

New Borrowers	Jul 2025	Jul 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
	615	548	4,076	3,885	-4.7%

Interlibrary Loan	Jul 2025	Jul 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	11,158	9,897	82,364	73,203	-11.1%
Lent to BPL	21,756	21,431	153,482	149,799	-2.4%
Borrowed: other libraries	711	540	4,242	4,019	-5.3%
Lent: other libraries	584	611	4,218	4,016	-4.8%

Electronic Resources	Jul 2025	Jul 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	38,159	43,680	270,309	307,700	13.8%
Bibliocommons Sessions	117,620	82,103	648,662	624,389	-3.7%
Internet Sessions	4,157	4,299	28,473	28,629	0.5%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	8,601	8,877	54,618	55,078	0.8%

Activities	Jul 2025	Jul 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2026	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	126	123	772	745	-3.5%
Teens	66	76	271	275	1.5%
Children	89	97	628	582	-7.3%
Total	281	296	1,671	1,602	-4.1%
Attendance					
Adults	2,053	2,163	8,362	8,984	7.4%
Teens	631	421	7,544	5,146	-31.8%
Children	2,368	2,926	20,695	21,526	4.0%
Total	5,052	5,510	36,601	35,656	-2.6%

Notes/Corrections:

Sumas Library re-opened June 17, 2016 after flood closure

Birch Bay WiFi access discontinued for construction as of June 24, 2026