

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

August 18, 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: Matthew Santos, Chair; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary and Jes Stugelmayer. Absent with Notice: John Miller, Vice Chair and Riley Sweeney.

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; 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; Theresa Morrison, Children's Service Coordinator; Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator/Librarian; Katrina Carabba, Deming Library Branch Manager; Hana Boxberger, Youth Services Librarian; Jonathan Jakobitz, Blaine Branch Manager; Alix Prior, Ferndale Branch Manager; Cynthia French, Communications Specialist; Tamar Clark, Teen Services Coordinator; Emma Radosevich, Collection Development Librarian.

Guest(s): Ed Trott

Call to Order

Matthew determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Matthew asked the Board to consider switching the Compensation Study Report to take place as agenda item 3, the Consent Agenda as item 4 and the Financial Report to take place as item 5.

Jes moved to approve the adjusted agenda. Seconded. Unanimous approval of the adjustment of the agenda.

Compensation Study Report

Christine reminded the Board about the Compensation and Classification study which is being spearheaded by Gallagher & Co. The Gallagher team joined the Board meeting to provide an executive summary of the study. The team presenting included Georg Krammer, Managing Director; Jaime Parker, Project Manager; Shiloh Venable, Consultant; and Lynda Guerra, Analyst.

Jaime provided an overview of the study, including data sources and survey methodology. She said that WCLS is closely aligned with the market. There were three structures proposed that will be brought to our annual union negotiation sessions in early October.

Jackie brought to attention to the Board that, because a lot of staff live in Bellingham, WCLS wants to be sure to factor cost of living in, as well, not just cost of labor. Danielle asked Jackie to create a spreadsheet to compare the options to see side by side. Jackie confirmed that she will work on this.

Next steps in the process will be to share this information with compensation study committee. In October, the information will be used during union negotiations. Once an agreement has been reached, both the union and the WCLS will have the opportunity to vote on it.

Matthew shared his appreciation of the thoughtful questions. He felt that the presentation was thorough. He thanked the Gallagher team and the team left the meeting.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the July 21, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, authorization to cancel a warrant, a resolution to declare a capital asset as surplus, and the following 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

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the July Notes and Highlights section. Jackie highlighted that revenue currently stands at 55%. She noted that intergovernmental revenues (aka timber taxes) have dropped over the past few years, as reflected in the budget. This year's revenue, however, is running ahead of budget. The next big influx of property taxes will be seen in October.

Jackie is keeping an eye on expenses, particularly office supplies, fuel and utilities. Utility charges are currently at 58% but these months are generally the higher usage months.

Jackie is beginning to work on the 2027 budget. She is looking at the preliminary numbers that have been provided by Gallagher and will be scheduling meetings with Department Heads and Branch Managers to start discussing budget needs for 2027.

Matthew moved to amend the agenda to hear the Policy Review as item 6, the Amendment to MOU with Lynden School District as item 7, followed by the Break as item 8, and finally the Trustee Education as item 9. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Policy Review

Collection Policy 3.01 – Christine and Mary Kinser shared that, due to an updated link to Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors, Policy 3.01 needs to include the May 29, 2025 date with that line.

Matthew moved to approve the updated Collection Policy 3.01, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02 – The Board reviewed policy 3.02 and all agreed no changes needed.

Amendment to MOU with Lynden School District for ConnectED

Christine shared the amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding between Lynden School District and WCLS for the ConnectED program. Lynden School District requested that there be an amendment which includes clear information about how students and parents can monitor what is checked out on ConnectED accounts. Christine and Thom agreed that the amendment was acceptable and Christine will sign the agreement, if approved.

Danielle asked for clarification about the makeup of the ConnectED council. Theresa confirmed that the council is a group which includes a representative from each Whatcom County school district to communicate with WCLS staff.

Matthew moved to authorize 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. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Break

Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:00-10:10 a.m.

Trustee Education: First 500 Picturebook Subscription Service

Theresa Morrison, Children's Service Coordinator; Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator/Librarian; and Katrina Carabba, Deming Library Branch Manager Parker introduced themselves to the Board. Theresa began the presentation by describing the reasons for beginning the First 500 Program. She shared that one of the main goals of the program is to teach the love of literature beginning at an early age. The program helps to promote and strengthen early literacy, library affinity and library advocacy in children. Theresa presented physical book examples that provide positive print association, print awareness, vocabulary, narrative skills, letter knowledge and phonological awareness. The program makes it easy for parents and children by having all their books pre-checked out, placed in a bag that is ready for pickup.

Carmi informed the Board that this program is currently being offered at the Blaine, Deming and South Whatcom branches. If a family is interested in the program, they will come to one of these three branches to fill out a short form and select the day of the week to have their pickup ready. If a family is gone on vacation or unable to pick up, they are welcome to pause the program until they return. If a bag pickup is missed 3 weeks in a row, the subscription is automatically paused, and a notice is sent to the family.

The Deming branch was the first branch to launch the First 500 program. Katrina and the Deming team were able to work through the steep learning curve. The first month of the program, there were about 5 subscribers. Having a lower number of subscribers helped behind-the-scenes workers finetune the process to ensure smooth deliveries. Katrina confirmed that staff do not curate bags for patrons, as to encourage a broader array of books being read. This practice may not work for every family; the team makes it clear that there will be a large variety of items received.

Jes asked if there is a limit to the total subscriptions at each branch. It was confirmed that it will depend branch by branch based on the size of the patron base, the physical size of the branch and the collection of picture books at the branch. For example, the South Whatcom branch will be limited to 12 subscribers. Carmi confirmed that they are currently working on the numbers to narrow in on the amount of subscriptions they will be able to honor.

The Board meeting was running ahead of schedule so there was time to view the First 500 Program video. The video can be found here: [The First 500 Program](#).

The Board thanked Theresa, Carmi and Katrina for their presentation. The group left the meeting.

Strategic Plan 2027 – 2031 DRAFT

Christine presented the draft of the 2027 -2031 Strategic Plan to the Board. She reminded the Board of the process beginning with the surveys that were sent out to stakeholders, cardholders, and non-users. All the feedback and input received were sifted through and used to prepare this draft.

For this Strategic Plan, the word G.R.O.W. (Galvanize, Read, Optimize and Welcome), has been chosen to represent the next 5 years. This year, staff from every department had opportunities to provide review and provide input. Overall, there seems to be quite a bit of support from staff.

Christine gave the Board a moment to review the document and asked if there were any questions. The Board did not have questions but agreed that the draft feels like a good start. Christine confirmed that any general impressions, questions, and input are welcome.

Jes said that she is taking it all in and noted that she would like to see each objective have a key result tied to it, as well as what department is responsible for making the result happen. This way each objective is able to be tracked. Matthew appreciated that many items are already on our radar. He does not feel that it is too much, given the feedback and that this is for a 5-year plan. Danielle said that she appreciates that there are many items that harken back to listening and planning sessions during the Levy Lid Lift.

Christine confirmed that she is planning on meeting with John and Riley, separately, to review and discuss the plan. She reiterated that this is just a draft and she will be working on a final version to be completed by September. She encouraged Board members to continue their review to make sure they are comfortable with approving a final version in September. She requested that if there are any questions, clarifications or changes, to please reach out to her within the next couple of weeks.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine praised Dianne Marrs-Smith and Michael Cox for the amount of thought that was put into the Birch Bay construction kickoff event. She specifically noted the spoons designed as golden shovels for the treats provided by the Friends of the Birch Bay Library.

Christine also noted that she is excited about WCLS soon offering Whatcom Museum passes for checkout. Bellingham Public Library already offers this to patrons and Whatcom Museum has agreed to let WCLS piggyback onto their efforts. This is yet another reason why our partnership with BPL is beneficial to our patrons.

Christine finished her report by pointing out the article she included that spoke about the closing of the job training center in Goodwill.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Michael shared his report. He said that the North Fork Meeting Room is now available for reservations. He also shared that, with input from WCLS Cultural Liaison staff from Lummi and Nooksack tribes, the WCLS Land Acknowledgment webpage has been updated.

Michael also updated the Board on the Birch Bay renovations stating that they are well underway and are (as of this moment) still within the budget. With the older building, surprises are expected and there may be future change orders that go beyond the project contingency. Christine thanked Ryan for being the boots on the ground and in good contact with the architect. The group celebrated that there is progress being made.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Christine shared Thom's report on Thom's behalf. She said that there has been great feedback from participants regarding the Dungeons & Dragons camp for teens which was offered at all 10 locations.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She noted that September is library card sign up month and WCLS has new card designs. These designs were created by Keith Negley, who has also been featured in the *New Yorker*, and Lummi/Nooksack artist Sienum (Jason LaClair), who drew our land acknowledgement art. Mary shared her gratitude for both artists for allowing WCLS to showcase their designs.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that door counts are up July 2025 to July 2026. He mentioned that when talking with staff, they feel that the Summer Reading program has been working well and driving folks to the library.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine reminded the Board that Branch Out is taking place on Friday, September 11.

It was also noted that September's Board meeting may have a location change due to the upcoming Administrative Services parking lot repair. Updates will be sent to all trustees and documents will be updated if necessary.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on September 15, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

<u>/s/</u>	<u>09-15-2026</u>	<u>/s/</u>
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant