whatcom county
library system

APPROVED MINUTES

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

October 20, 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; 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; 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; Christopher Phillips, IT System Engineer; Emma Radosevich, Collection Development Librarian.

Guests: None.

Call to Order

Matthew 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 September 15, 2026, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, authorization to void a warrant, and the following expenditures:

General Fund:

- August 16-30, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1048303327-1048303331 and voucher nos. 567593-567748 totaling $274,778.42 and September 1-15, 2026 payroll: check nos. 1048454665-1048454667 and voucher nos. 567753-567910 totaling $274,807.19.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, payroll processing fees, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling $91,367.09; $48,984.58 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 2026-35G: warrant nos. 1282296-1282315 totaling $61,142.05
- Claim 2026-36G: warrant nos. 1282575-1282590 totaling $58,461.84
- Claim 2026-37G: warrant nos. 1282917-1282940 totaling $124,853.10
- Claim 2026-38G: warrant nos. 1283285-1283309 totaling $57,360.04

- Claim 2026-39G: warrant nos. 1283762-1283777 totaling $31,035.27

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2026-23C: warrant no. 1282316 totaling $72.75
- Claim 2026-24C: warrant nos. 1282591-1282592 totaling $210,418.11
- Claim 2026-25C: warrant nos. 1282941-1282942 totaling $1,863.85
- Claim 2026-26C: warrant nos. 1283778-1283784 totaling $45,526.81

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

Closed Executive Session to Discuss 2027 Wage & Benefit Negotiations

At 9:02 a.m., Board Chair Matthew Santos moved the meeting to Closed Session, as per RCW 42.30.140(4)(a), to discuss an MOU to the 2025-2029 Bargaining Unit Contract and the 2027 Wage and Benefit Agreement. He stated that the Closed Session would end at 9:30 a.m.

At 9:30 a.m. the meeting was reopened to convey that the Closed Session will be extended to 9:35 a.m.

At 9:35 a.m. the meeting was reconvened to convey that the Closed Session will be extended until 9:45 a.m.

At 9:45 a.m., Board Chair Matthew Santos reconvened Open Session for final action on the MOU to the 2025-2029 Bargaining Unit Contract and the 2027 Wage and Benefit Agreement.

2027 Wage & Benefit Negotiations

Riley moved to accept the 2027 Wage and Benefit Agreement. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

Riley mentioned that this update speaks in favor to the Levy Lid Lift campaign where a common discussion was that the library's most valuable assets are not its books, it is the people who work there. Riley is glad to have the Board invest in the library's most valuable asset. John thanked WCLS management and employees that were involved in the negotiations. Christine thanked the union representatives for being good partners and helping find a solution that worked for all.

Riley moved to approve the 2027 MOUs and the resulting drafts of the 2027 Salary Structure and benefit rates and structure, and the 2027 holiday calendar. Seconded. Approved unanimously.

Birch Bay Update

Ryan provided an update for the Birch Bay library, including a PowerPoint to show progress photos, to the Board. He confirmed that there is an archaeological observer onsite at all times to review construction. Ryan also informed the Board of the removal of rotted trees on site. There was some negative feedback from a few community members, but the removal had to be done due to safety issues. The goal is to be completed with construction by January 31st to allow facilities and IT to complete internal work before we open to the public.

Ryan included a budget update in his report. He confirmed that OAI has determined the need to adjust the proposed amount to complete the project from $1.56 million to $1.87 million. Jackie noted that the additional cost can be absorbed within the 2026 Capital budget, which was reviewed later in the meeting.

Christine alerted the Board to a situation involving an easement with the owners of neighboring property at Edgewater Estates and PSE. Edgewater Estates needs to sign the agreement in order to move forward with the easement for PSE. Obtaining this signature has been difficult. Ryan confirmed that there is a temporary power

pole in place. Trustee John Miller gave his opinion that the Board should not accept any power other than the underground service. Christine and Ryan agreed to continue working on obtaining the signature. Ryan will pursue gathering a cost estimate for the potential of taking a different route rather than the easement.

Blaine Update

Christine provided an update regarding the Blaine building project, including the potential new library. She confirmed that the current plan lists 9,000 square feet for the potential library space. The Board agreed that there are still many unknowns around this project that need to be better understood to know how best to move forward. Better understanding the costs of tenant improvements is a high priority for the group. The Board would like to see staff create a subcommittee to narrow the focus for this project and provide updates to the Board as it moves along. Christine agreed that she supports this subcommittee and will keep the Board updated on the committee's behalf.

Break

Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:38 - 10:50 a.m.

Matthew moved to approve adjusting the agenda by moving Item 11 Policy Review and Updates and Item 12 Updated Agreement for the Exchange of Services with the Friends of Island Library to Items 9 and 10. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

Policy Review and Updates

Meeting Room and Facilities Use Policy 7.03 – The Board reviewed policy 7.03. No recommended updates and all Board members agreed to keep policy as is.

Meeting Room and Facilities Use Policy 7.03 Attachment A – Schedule of Fees – Michael presented this policy update, which adds new meeting spaces and the renames certain meeting rooms. This also includes an update to Schedule B fees (commercial use of a meeting room) to be more accurate and improving the document's language to be more clear.

Matthew moved to approve the updated Meeting Room and Facilities Use Policy 7.03 Attachment A – Schedule of Fees, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Updated Agreement for the Exchange of Services with the Friends of Island Library

Michael shared an updated agreement, with changes requested by the Friends of the Island Library. John asked if the staff are happy with the adjustments. Michael confirmed that it was reviewed and approved by staff. Christine confirmed she also thinks it is reasonable and appropriate.

Matthew moved to approve the updated agreement as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the September Notes and Highlights section.

Jackie provided a Capital budget update for the Board. A few 2026 projects have been completed under budget and others will be delayed until 2027. These variances will allow us to cover additional costs associated with the Birch Bay Library project. She also noted that FEMA funding for the 2025 Sumas flood event is still pending but is

at a point that she feels confident to include this revenue. The net of all changes is an increase of $12,600 to the ending Capital Fund balance. She clarified that formal approval from the Board is not necessary.

Jackie presented resolution 10/20/2026-12 to the Board which would reassign the change fund from the Bookmobile to the new Birch Bay Vogt Library Express.

Danielle moved to approve resolution 10/20/2026-12 as presented. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

A prereview of the 2027 General Fund Budget was then presented; nothing will be voted on until the official presentation in November.

2027 Strategic Action Plan

Christine shared the updated 2027 Strategic Action Plan draft with the Board.

Danielle left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Christine discussed the action plan for 2027 which includes Birch Bay Library needs, outreach for homeschool families, championing for long form reading and AI training.

After the review of the draft, Riley noted that he is excited to see an emphasis on marketing for the 2027 year. Jes mentioned that she is glad to see a focus on improving open hours and wait times for popular items, and John claimed that this is an ambitious plan but he fully supports it. After the discussion, Christine requested the Board vote to approve the Strategic Action Plan for 2027.

John moved to approve the 2027 Strategic Action Plan as presented. Seconded. 2027 Action Plan approved 4-0.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

Nothing noted beyond the written report.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

Nothing noted beyond the written report.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Nothing noted beyond the written report.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She said that Open Book is taking place again this year on November 8 at the Ferndale Events Center. Mary mentioned that local artists Keith Negley and Jason LaClair designed our newest library cards.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael noted that usage continues on trend.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, John Miller noted that this was his third year participating in union negotiations. He said that it was an enjoyable experience and was very collaborative. Jes said it was her first year participating and noted that the negotiations went smoothly. They announced that the next task for this committee will be the Executive Director's annual review.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Nothing reported.

Announcements and Adjourn

- All-Friends Gathering at Lynden Library October 21 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- Open Book November 8 at Ferndale Events Center from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m.
- Reminder to Vote! Dropbox locations around WCLS include Blaine Library parking lot, Deming Library parking lot, North Fork Library parking lot and behind the Lynden Library on 4th St.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on November 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

/s/	11-17-2026	/s/
Danielle Gaughen, Board Secretary	Date	Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant