



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. Land Acknowledgement.
We are on the ancestral homeland of the Nooksack, Lummi and other Coast Salish peoples. They have been its stewards since time immemorial, respecting the land, river and ocean with the understanding that everything is connected, related and alive. We acknowledge the elders and their collective and individual plights and achievements. We consider the legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together today. And we pursue ongoing action, to build lasting relationships and grow together so that all may prosper.
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 Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.
3. 9:10 a.m. **Trustee Education: Summer Reading** – Sarah Lavender
4. 9:30 a.m. **South Whatcom Library Lease Agreement**
5. 9:45 a.m. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Meeting Minutes
 - b. Expenditures
6. 9:50 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Finance Committee Report
 - b. Resolution 06/18/24-04 Amending the Capital Fund Budget
7. 10:00 a.m. **BREAK**
8. 10:10 a.m. **Administrative Services Energy Study** – Western Washington University students
9. 10:30 a.m. **Transitioning Juvenile Accounts to Adult Accounts**
 - a. Resolution 06/18/24-05 Waiving Lost and Damaged Item Fees When Patrons Turn 18
10. 10:40 a.m. **Freedge Memorandum of Understanding Agreement**
11. 10:50 a.m. **Staff Reports**
 - a. Executive Director
 - b. Deputy Director
 - c. Youth Services Manager
 - d. Community Relations Manager

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 Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org before 4:00 p.m. Monday, June 17, 2024. Written comments may be submitted to Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.

12. 11:00 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
- a. Performance Measures
 - b. IT Services Committee
 - c. Personnel Committee
 - d. Whatcom County Library Foundation
13. 11:15 a.m. **Announcements and Adjourn**
- a. Union Negotiations dates have changed to October 14, 15, 16 with backup date of October 21.
 - b. October Board of Trustees Meeting date has been changed to October 22.

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Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/18/2024
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	South Whatcom Library Lease Agreement Update
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approve Executive Director to sign the South Whatcom Library Lease Agreement.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval to authorize Executive Director to sign the South Whatcom Library Lease Agreement.

Summary: Our current agreement with the Sudden Valley Community Association to operate the South Whatcom Library in SVCA's Adult Center will be reaching the end of its term on June 30, 2024. That agreement included the Friends of the Library as a third party due to the long history of Friends involvement in fundraising for a library facility. It is no longer relevant, and overly complicated, to continue to involve the Friends in this lease agreement, so they have been removed.

Alternatives: As discussed, although this will require further negotiation with SVCA and our current agreement expires June 30, 2024.

Fiscal Impact: As discussed.

Comments: None



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/18/2024
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Consent Agenda – Board Meeting Minutes, Monthly Expenditures
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of consent agenda items

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

Summary:

Meeting Minutes:

- May 21, 2024 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- April 16-30, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1038489282-1038489283 and voucher nos. 558749-558854 totaling \$229,783.34 and May 1-15, 2024 payroll: check no. 1038669197 and voucher nos. 558861-559016 totaling \$235,069.20.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$101,169.38; \$36,910.00 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2024-18G: warrant nos. 1191419-1191433 totaling \$11,149.12
- Claim 2024-19G: warrant nos. 1191698-1191722 totaling \$134,367.80
- Claim 2024-20G: warrant nos. 1191997-1192012 totaling \$11,610.79
- Claim 2024-21G: warrant nos. 1192554-1192576 totaling \$103,907.07

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2024-06C: warrant nos. 1191469-1191470 totaling \$5,668.76

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: Expenditures for approval paid from available 2024 budgeted funds.

Comments: The Finance Committee has reviewed the General and Capital Fund claims listed above. They reviewed that there were three General Journal entries in May.



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: Rodney Lofdahl, Chair; Matthew Santos, Vice Chair; Holly Robinson, Secretary; John Miller and Danielle Gaughen. 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; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) President; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator/Librarian.

Guests: None.

Call to Order

Rod determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., followed by a reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement by Michael.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Service Anniversary Recognition – Ashley Romana

The Board recognized Ashley Romana, Public Services Clerk at Lynden, for her 10-year service anniversary. Dianne joined the meeting to share a bit about Ashley.

Ashley was hired as a page in 2014 and promoted to a Public Services Clerk in 2019. She has helped the Lynden branch through many collection moves and building projects, such as the Children’s area remodel and the recent new carpet installation. Ashley excels in many areas, including keeping branch supplies stocked and the branch well organized. She also keeps all the plants inside the Lynden Library looking their best. Ashley is a thoughtful and natural leader, but she prefers to provide support to staff and patrons behind the scenes. She has helped train other staff, including the new Lynden Public Services Clerk. At staff meetings, she always has great materials to share. Ashley speaks Punjabi and loves to help with multicultural programming. Congratulations, Ashley, on 10 years!

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the April 16, 2024, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- March 16-31, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1038144230- 1038144231 and voucher nos. 558388- 558539 totaling \$227,138.57 and April 1-15, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1038309235-1038309236 and voucher nos. 558546-558697 totaling \$231,273.02.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$110,763.78; \$44,028.89 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, state paid family medical leave and long-term care fund premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2024-13G: warrant nos. 1188263-1188275 totaling \$5,916.65
- Claim 2024-14G: warrant nos. 1188620-1188631 totaling \$103,289.01
- Claim 2024-15G: warrant nos. 1189468-1189490 totaling \$21,167.32
- Claim 2024-16G: warrant nos. 1190142-1190170 totaling \$109,691.09
- Claim 2024-17G: warrant nos. 1190705-1190718 totaling \$35,797.44

Capital Fund:

- None this month

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 draft of the Annual Report for the State Auditor.

The end of April brought a large influx of tax revenue payments. Jackie noted that local grants and entitlements revenues are down this year. She shared that several hundred acres of Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands in Whatcom County have recently been designated as protected and will not be harvested. This is a positive step for local environmental efforts, although it will impact revenue that is typically designated for the Capital Fund. We may need to consider how Capital projects are funded in future budget years.

WCLS's investment revenue income is ahead of projections. The expenditures on wages and benefits are where they should be for the year. Operating supplies and utilities are being closely monitored by Jackie as these are most impacted by inflation. Overall operating expenses are at 32% and on track for the year.

WCLS received the first payment from Washington State Department of Commerce for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express project. This check covers the purchase price for the property and the feasibility study done on the property in 2022.

Emergency food and water supplies purchased for the system in 2018 have expired and were replaced in April. Next, Jackie will work with branches to make sure their first aid kits are updated.

The annual report to the State Auditor is due May 29. Jackie briefly reviewed the most current draft of the annual report for the Board and answered questions for clarification about the notes section towards the end of the report. She will submit the report later this week.

Trustee Education: IT Network

Geoff educated the Board about the network that IT Services manages for WCLS. This network keeps the branches connected to the internet and to Administrative Services. Certain branches have a direct connection to

AS and Ferndale and other branches do not. WCLS makes the greatest effort to get the best possible internet access for each branch. However, not all branches are able to have ideal connections, such as the Lummi Island Library which still has a DSL connection and the Bookmobile which is connected to the network using a cellular connection.

Rod inquired if there are statistics about internet reliability at branches that are not directly connected to AS. Geoff said there are not. The internet at these locations is mostly reliable but can be much slower.

The Trustees were shown a list of what data does and does not live on the servers at AS. Geoff went into detail about what WCLS keeps stored at different locations and with different vendors. WCLS tries to keep as little as possible stored on premises and uses other storage companies to host our data. It is more efficient and cost effective for WCLS to contract data hosting and storage out to other businesses.

John asked how many Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests WCLS receives a year and if personnel information is adequately safeguarded. Christine touched on former practices regarding personnel information and how this information is now stored. Jackie spoke about the number of FOIA requests and the information that WCLS is or is not required by law to provide for these requests.

Geoff announced that the IT Services Committee will be meeting soon. Committee members should watch for a scheduling poll in the near future.

Policy Updates

Pets and Service Animals in the Workplace Policy 12.58 – Beth presented this new policy, which addresses expectations regarding employee pets in the workplace. This policy will unify how the system and branches respond to pets and service animals in the workplace and how to facilitate accommodation requests.

Rod moved to approve the new Pets and Service Animals in the Workplace Policy 12.58, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Disability, Serious Illness, and Accommodation Policy 12.48 – Beth presented this policy update, which has been updated to better reflect the process for accommodation requests.

Matthew moved to approve the updated Disability, Serious Illness, and Accommodation Policy 12.48, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Fixed Asset Policy 20.05 – Jackie presented this policy update, which has been updated to simplify the policy language and remove grouped capital assets.

John moved to adopt the updated Fixed Asset Policy 20.05, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Birch Bay Incorporation

A group of residents in Birch Bay have an interest in incorporating the Birch Bay area into a city. The group approached WCLS to inquire about the impact this would potentially have on library services provided to the residents inside the proposed city limits. Christine reached out to our legal counsel, who let her know that immediately upon the incorporation of Birch Bay taking effect, residents of the City of Birch Bay would no longer be part of our library district. In order for City of Birch Bay residents to qualify for WCLS library cards, the City would need to approve a contract with WCLS that the City would pay WCLS an annual amount equivalent to what property owners would have paid to WCLS pre-incorporation. The contract would also require City officials to encourage City residents to vote to annex into WCLS. A contract with the City of Birch Bay cannot be signed until after the creation of the city, and after an election has been held to elect city officials who can sign this contract. None of this can be guaranteed prior to the incorporation vote. WCLS will be upfront and explain to future potential leaders of Birch Bay that the way to receive library services after incorporating is to vote for and sign a contract with the library district, and eventually for residents to vote to annex into the district.

John asked about contracts we have with other cities. Christine said that all of the other incorporated cities in Whatcom County have annexed into the library district. The contracts we have with municipalities are Interlocal Agreements for Exchange of Services.

Discussion took place about the impacts of a city not annexing into the library district for both the library and the existing patrons inside the city limits.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:26-10:35 a.m.

eBook Legislation

Carmi Parker discussed the current state of the eBook publishing industry and its effect on public libraries. Carmi is WCLS's Integrated Library System Coordinator and serves as the Chair of the Washington Digital Lending Consortium (WDLC). WCLS and Bellingham Public Library are the two biggest library systems in WDLC. WDLC purchases eBook licenses through an aggregator, OverDrive, who in turn works directly with eBook publishers. Carmi shared statistics about the difference in price between a print item and a digital item. License fees for digital items have increased dramatically over the past decade. Assuming the pattern continues, purchasing digital content will not be sustainable for libraries. Libraries across the U.S. are looking into other options. Carmi detailed the efforts to draft eBook legislation to compel publishers to sell eBooks to libraries with fair terms. WCLS is part of a larger group of libraries that are actively working on a bill for legislation to curb the restrictions publishers continue to add to the terms of an eBook license. The group currently has a draft out for review to libraries across the state. The hope is to have a final draft ready for the 2025 legislative session. One claim of the publishing lobby is that authors are hurt by licensing digital materials to libraries, which is not accurate. The entities controlling what authors make are the publishers and not libraries. Theoretically, a potential downside of this measure successfully passing is that a publisher could refuse to sell eBooks entirely in Washington State. WDLC spends approximately \$1 million annually on eMaterials; large systems like King County Library System, Pierce County, Sno-Isle, SPL and others spend tens of millions each. It would be hard to imagine all eBook publishers walking away from this significant amount of business, particularly if other states followed suit with similar legislation.

Christine spoke about why legislation and other strategies are necessary, and the potential peril for public libraries if eBook publishing trends are allowed to continue.

Rod inquired why all libraries in the state are not part of the Washington Digital Lending Consortium. Carmi explained there could be many reasons a library may have been excluded from participating initially, including the size of the library system and preexisting contracts with Overdrive and publishers.

Digital formats are a growing part of library circulations and a large part of the future of libraries are digital books. The Board agreed that based off the pricing model and current pricing trends for eBooks, WCLS is compelled to advocate for libraries.

South Whatcom Library Lease

Christine spoke about the South Whatcom Library building lease in Sudden Valley. She gave background on the history of the South Whatcom Library and the situation that led to WCLS leasing the current location. The current lease expires at the end of June. The previous agreements were between the Sudden Valley Community Association (SVCA), the Friends of the Sudden Valley Library and WCLS. The new lease will be between WCLS and the SVCA only. Christine updated the Board on the most recent proposed terms of a new lease. Christine has not yet heard back from the SVCA General Manager about the negotiations of terms. Discussion ensued about the negotiations between Christine and the SVCA and the hopeful outcome as well as the long-term goals and impacts on library services.

EV Charging Grants Update

Christine and Ryan updated the Board on the EV charging station grants that Ryan applied for on behalf of WCLS in December of 2023.

WCLS has been awarded two grants for multiple charging stations at different locations. The Department of Commerce awarded WCLS a grant for installation at the Deming, North Fork, and Birch Bay Vogt Library Express locations as well as at Administrative Services.

The second grant is from PSE and was awarded to the Administrative Services location for installation and infrastructure improvements to add EV charging stations for WCLS-owned fleet vehicles. The PSE grant requires that WCLS purchases two EV vehicles. This purchase was already planned for the 2022-2025 WCLS Strategic Plan and calculated into the fiscal budget for 2024. This grant also requires a 10-year agreement to reside on the current Administrative Services property. If WCLS decides to leave the current location of Administrative Services after the completion of the AS Feasibility Study, WCLS would have to repay PSE the grant in full if that date is before the fulfillment of the 10-year commitment. The Board indicated that this risk is one worth taking.

Matthew motioned to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with PSE regarding the installation of the EV fleet charging stations. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Rod motioned to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with the Department of Commerce regarding the installation of the EV public charging stations. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the upcoming Nooksack Water Rights Adjudication (WRIA 1). Staff will be receiving directions on how to assist patrons that come into our libraries and need assistance with this process.

This week, conversations will be happening about a potential partnership with the Nooksack Tribal Library.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that at the Chardi Kala Celebration this past weekend, he and WCLS Punjabi Cultural Liaison Harneet Sidhu were each presented with a siropa, a ceremonial scarf. This is reflective of the growing relationships in the community and services that WCLS cultural liaisons are cultivating.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and highlighted the 2024 Summer Reading Program which starts at the beginning of June and continues through August. This year, WCLS is partnering with Whatcom Million Trees Project again with the goal of planting 250 trees in the fall. WCLS has gradually moved away from prize associated summer reading programs and has been working to create a program that has a balance of structure and freedom for readers of all ages. Thom thanked everybody involved with the planning and organizing of this year's summer reading program.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary presented her written report. She noted the next Marketing Committee Meeting is Tuesday, June 4 from 3–4:30 p.m. at Administrative Services.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

Michael briefly recapped his written report and shared that despite trends, April 2024 saw a slight increase in physical circulation compared to April 2023. He indicated that the April 2024 program attendance for adults should be corrected from 127 to 527.

Thom noted that attendance for some children's programming may decrease over the next year due to staffing levels at local schools. Many of the children's programs at our libraries are promoted at schools by Youth Services staff during school visits. Staffing levels at the local schools are low and may not allow for many Youth Services visits during the 2024-2025 school year.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

Nothing to report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Jenn said that the Foundation is ahead of schedule and has reached the 50% mark of their annual fundraising goal for 2024. Some upcoming events that the Foundation is supporting are Pride in the Park on July 14 and the Whatcom Grooves events hosted at branches throughout the system over the summer.

Announcements and Adjourn

There is a Community Engagement Session for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express on Monday, June 10 from 6 – 7:30 p.m. on the lawn of the Birch Bay property.

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

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on June 18, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

Holly Robinson, Board Secretary

06/18/2024

Date

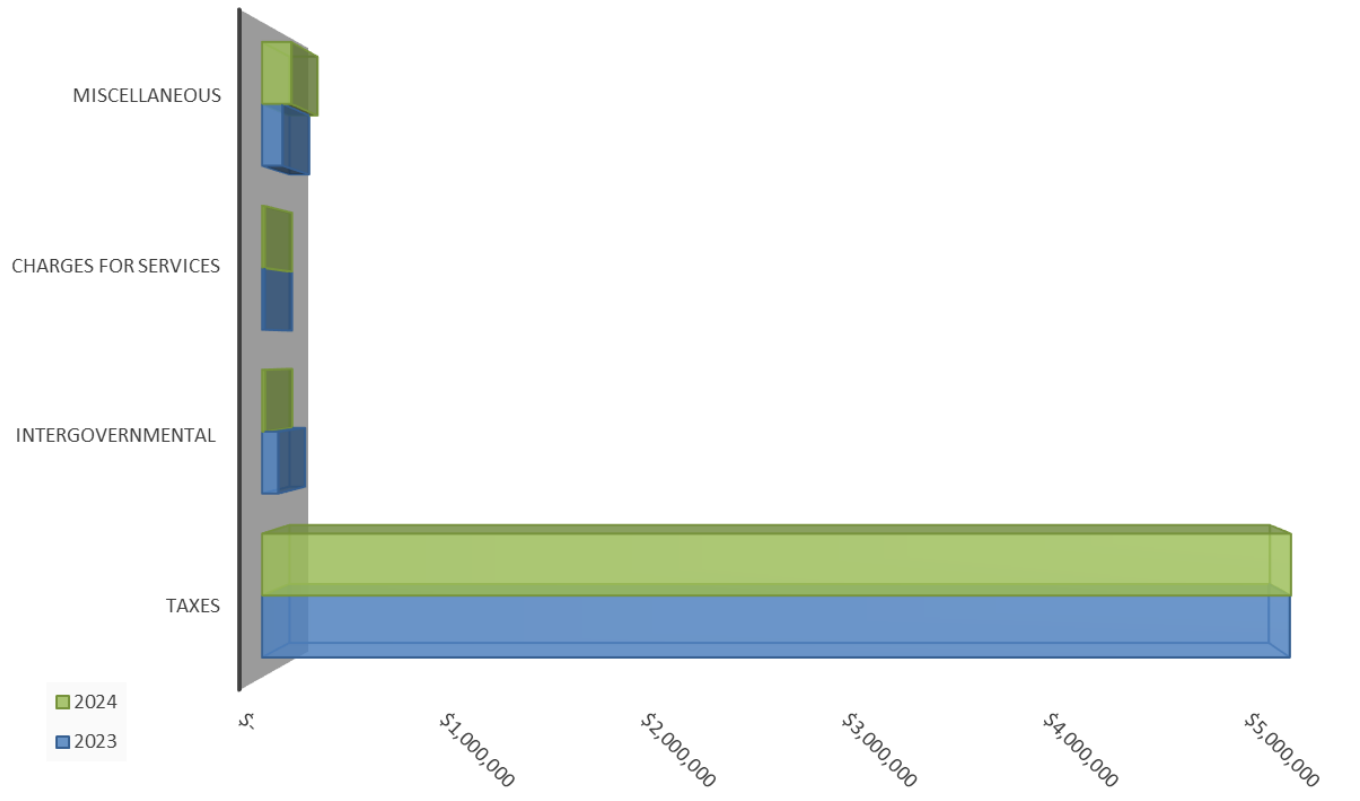
Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant



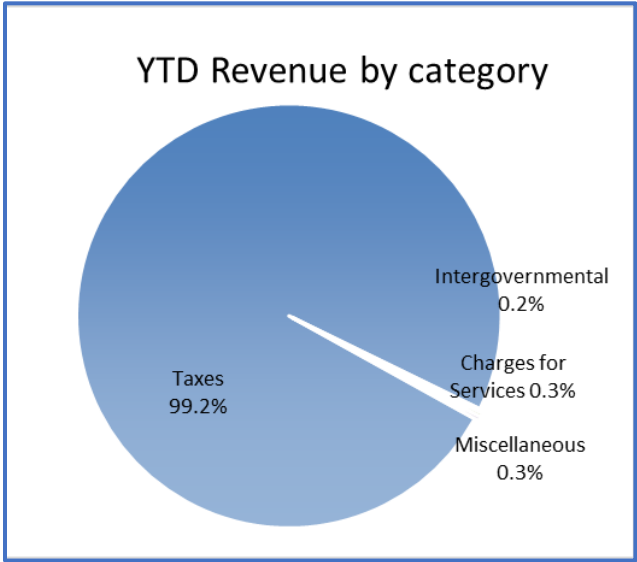
May Revenue

2024 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date						
May 2024 (42% 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	\$ 9,769,533	\$ 5,310,526	96.68%	54.36%	\$ (4,459,007)
	TOTAL TAXES	\$ 9,769,533	\$ 5,310,526	96.68%	54.36%	\$ (4,459,007)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	\$ 2,500	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	\$ (2,500)
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	70,000	2,142	0.04%	3.06%	(67,858)
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	13,226	0.24%	44.09%	(16,774)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	\$ 102,500	\$ 15,368	0.28%	14.99%	\$ (87,132)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,064	0.04%	51.59%	\$ (1,936)
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,300	12,220	0.22%	99.35%	(80)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	\$ 16,300	\$ 14,284	0.26%	87.63%	\$ (2,016)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	\$ 215,000	\$ 121,052	2.20%	56.30%	\$ (93,948)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,500	570	0.01%	16.29%	(2,930)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	67,500	17,942	0.33%	26.58%	(49,558)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	50	0.00%	50.00%	(50)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	(4.67)	0.00%	0.00%	(5)
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	20,000	7,484	0.14%	37.42%	(12,516)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	5,143	0.09%	46.75%	(5,857)
369.9106	COBRA Reimbursement	-	367	0.01%	0.00%	367
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	\$ 317,100	\$ 152,603	2.78%	48.12%	\$ (164,497)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$ 10,205,433	\$ 5,492,780	100.00%	53.82%	\$ (4,712,653)
390	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES					
397.3000	Transfers from Designated Fund Balance	\$ 230,000	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	(230,000)
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	\$ 230,000	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	\$ (230,000)
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 10,435,433	\$ 5,492,780	100.00%	52.64%	\$ (4,942,653)

General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year



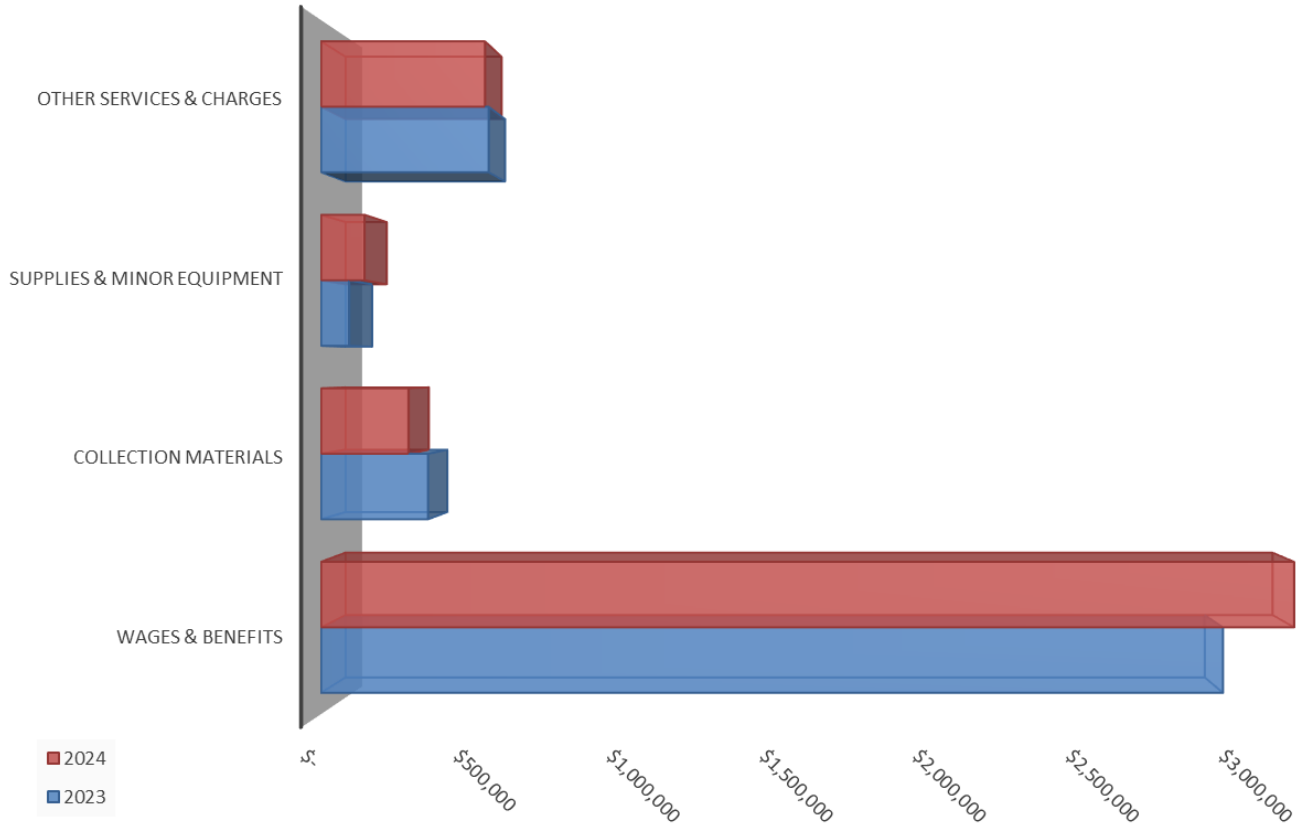
Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison			
	2023	2024	% Change
Taxes	\$ 5,304,569	\$ 5,310,526	0.11%
Intergovernmental	84,897	15,368	-81.90%
Charges for Services	13,980	14,284	2.17%
Miscellaneous	106,982	152,603	42.64%
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 5,510,427	5,492,780	-0.32%
Other Financing Sources	\$ -	-	0.00%
Total Revenue	\$ 5,510,427	\$ 5,492,780	-0.32%



May Expenditures

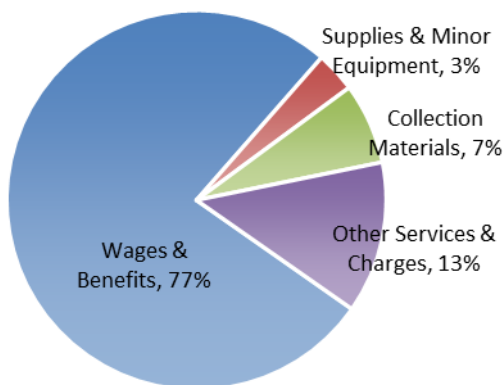
2024 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date						
May 2024 (42% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Budgeted Expenditures Spent YTD	Budget Variance
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS					
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	\$ 6,028,193	\$ 2,438,392	56.71%	40.45%	\$ (3,589,802)
572.2000	Benefits	2,141,573	861,031	20.03%	40.21%	(1,280,542)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	\$ 8,169,766	\$ 3,299,423	76.74%	40.39%	\$ (4,870,344)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	\$ 146,450	\$ 58,566	1.36%	39.99%	\$ (87,884)
572.3032	Fuel	26,050	7,844	0.18%	30.11%	(18,206)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,250,000	296,832	6.90%	23.75%	(953,168)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	202,575	80,926	1.88%	39.95%	(121,649)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	\$ 1,625,075	444,168	10.33%	27.33%	\$ (1,180,907)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	\$ 541,038	\$ 236,301	5.50%	43.68%	\$ (304,737)
572.4042	Communication	134,780	64,367	1.50%	47.76%	(70,413)
572.4043	Travel	43,850	16,620	0.39%	37.90%	(27,230)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	400	200	0.00%	49.96%	(200)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	18,737	8,878	0.21%	47.38%	(9,859)
572.4046	Insurance	91,874	89,635	2.08%	97.56%	(2,239)
572.4047	Utilities	171,176	62,604	1.46%	36.57%	(108,572)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	131,440	38,499	0.90%	29.29%	(92,941)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	92,910	38,841	0.90%	41.81%	(54,069)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	\$ 1,226,206	555,945	12.93%	45.34%	\$ (670,261)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$ 11,021,047	4,299,536	100.00%	39.01%	\$ (6,721,512)
590	OTHER FINANCING USES					
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	\$ 94,135	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	\$ -
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	\$ 94,135	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	\$ -
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 11,115,182	\$ 4,299,536	100.00%	38.68%	\$ (6,815,647)

General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year

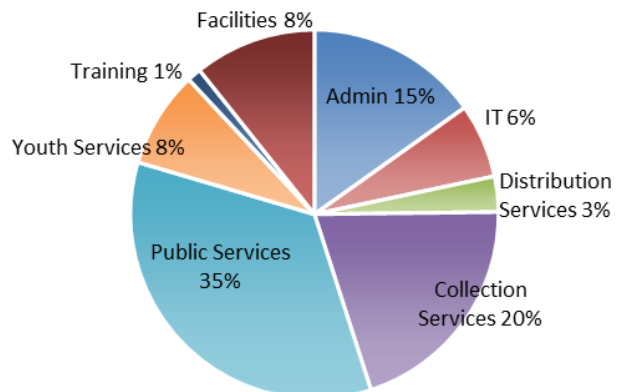


Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison			
	2023	2024	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$ 3,058,108	\$ 3,299,423	7.89%
Collection Materials	362,975	296,832	-18.22%
Supplies & Minor Equipment	95,336	147,336	54.54%
Other Services & Charges	568,421	555,945	-2.19%
Total Operating Expenditures	4,084,841	4,299,536	5.26%
Other Financing Uses	\$ -	-	0.00%
Total Expenditures	\$ 4,084,841	\$ 4,299,536	5.26%

YTD Expense by Category



YTD Expense by Department



Fund Balance Summary	2024		
	2023 Actual	2024 Budgeted	Actual to Date
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 10,630,324	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 10,612,545
Revenue	10,305,797	10,435,433	5,492,780
Expenditures	(10,553,576)	(11,115,182)	(4,299,536)
Transfer to (from) Reserves	230,000	(230,000)	-
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 9,702,796	\$ 11,805,789
Ending Fund Balance Designation Detail	2024		
	2023 Actual	2024 Budgeted	Actual to Date
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Cash Flow	\$ 3,502,655	\$ 3,639,587	\$ 3,639,587
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Emergency	892,009	926,588	926,588
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Capital Transfer	45,000	130,000	130,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Reserve	14,403	14,662	14,662
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund Reserve	600,000	600,000	600,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund Reserve	3,192,315	3,192,315	3,192,315
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund	650,000	650,000	650,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Operating Cost Stabilization Fund	250,000	250,000	250,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Collection Project Fund	172,000	172,000	172,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Abeyance Fund	230,000	-	230,000
Total Designated Ending Fund Balance	9,548,382	9,575,151	9,805,151
Beginning Fund Balance less designated funds	1,081,942	1,037,394	807,394
Transfer to (from) Reserves	230,000	(230,000)	-
Net Income	(247,779)	(679,749)	1,193,245
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation	1,064,163	127,645	2,000,639
Ending Designated Funds	9,548,382	9,575,151	9,805,151
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 9,702,796	\$ 11,805,789

May Summary

- In addition to the property tax revenue received in April, we received another \$804,169 in May, bringing the total for the first half of the year to \$5,310,526, which is 54% of the budget.
- Operating expenditures are on track with 39% of the budget spent through the end of May, leaving us with a year-to-date net income of \$1,193,245. This surplus will provide cash flow until the next property tax payment deadline in October.
- Last month I shared a draft of the 2023 Annual Report to the State Auditor’s Office. The final report was submitted on May 24. The SAO offers a [handy resource](#) for reviewing our audits and fiscal health on their website.

WCLS Account Summary

WCLS follows the Washington State Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS). Below is a brief description of revenue and expense accounts.

Revenue Accounts:

Taxes: This section includes taxes on real and personal property, which are the primary revenue source for the library system, making up 95% of operating revenues received. The bulk of property tax revenue is received in April and October of each year.

Intergovernmental Revenue: Sources of intergovernmental revenue include grant revenues received from state and federal sources and revenues resulting from the leasing of, or sale of, timber and other products from state forest lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources. It also includes taxes from private harvest timber sales.

Charges for Goods and Services: This category includes fees received from library printing and copying services. It also includes use fees from the sale of library cards to non-residents and from contracted services with other entities, such as the Whatcom County Jail.

Miscellaneous Revenues: This source of revenue includes investment interest earned through participation in the Whatcom County Investment Fund. It also includes fees received for library meeting room use, private grants and donations, charges for lost or damaged library materials, and other miscellaneous revenue such as rebates and reimbursements.

Other Financing Sources: This category includes non-revenue items such as proceeds from the sale of capital assets and insurance recoveries.

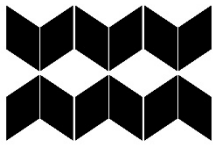
Expense Accounts:

Salaries, Wages, and Benefits: This expense category includes wages and fringe benefits for WCLS employees, including medical and dental insurance; contributions for employees enrolled in the State of Washington Public Employee Retirement System (PERS); contributions into the Social Security and Medicare systems; workers' compensation (Labor and Industries); state Paid Family and Medical Leave; long-term disability insurance; and unemployment compensation.

Supplies and Minor Equipment: This section includes office, program, maintenance, and custodial supplies, as well as fuel. It includes small tools and equipment items such as computer hardware, furnishing and fixtures, shelving, book returns and carts, etc. It also includes the collection materials budget that comprise WCLS's lending collection.

Other Services and Charges: This category includes costs for professional services, such as legal, payroll, programming, cataloging, and Interlibrary Loan services. It includes communication costs, such as postage, courier services, and phone and internet charges. Travel; use and excise taxes; auto, liability and property insurance; utilities; repairs and maintenance; and other miscellaneous expenses are also reported here.

Other Financing Uses: This category includes transfers to the WCLS Capital fund. This transfer is equal to the prior year's revenue received from certain intergovernmental sources, such as those resulting from the sale of timber and other products from state forest lands.



whatcom county
library system

Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/18/2024
Committee or Department:	Administration
Subject:	Resolution 06/18/24-04 Amending the 2024 Capital Fund Budget
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of Resolution 06/18/24-04 amending the 2024 Capital Fund Budget

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of Resolution 06/18/24-04 amending the 2024 Capital Fund Budget as presented

Summary:

This resolution adjusts Capital Fund expenditures as follows:

- Additional \$14,765 for furnishings at the Sumas Library; these funds were originally budgeted for the renovation project in 2023 but need to be moved forward to the 2024 budget
- Additional \$1,485 for the cost sharing arrangement with the City of Lynden to replace carpeting in the Lynden Library
- A \$40,000 contribution to HVAC system upgrades in the Sudden Valley Adult Center which houses the South Whatcom Library
- \$81,379 for a sooner-than-anticipated box truck replacement
- Additional \$12,000 for the AS Feasibility Study based on the quote from our selected firm

These expense increases are offset by reduction of other costs:

- A generator and parking lot improvements for Administrative Services have been deferred pending the Feasibility Study, saving \$103,976 this year
- We spent less than we budgeted for a storage container at Administrative Services, saving \$5,326

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: A net increase of \$40,327 in expenditures, resulting a corresponding decrease to the ending fund balance.

Comments: N/A

2024-2028 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND BUDGET							
Project	2024 Budget	Amendment June 18, 2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Est. plan Total
Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement program							
Birch Bay New Branch Furnishings	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150,000
Branch Renovations/Upgrades	85,225	99,990	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	399,990
Sub-Total Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement Program	235,225	249,990	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	549,990
Building Repair and Maintenance Program							
Admin Services Maintenance & Improvements	130,000	26,024	300,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	701,024
Branch Lighting Retrofit Upgrades	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Branch Building Updates	41,500	82,985	45,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	277,985
Exterior Signage Updates	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	-	-	75,000
Electric Vehicle Charging Initiative	375,000	375,000	-	-	-	-	375,000
Sub-Total Building Repair and Maintenance Program	571,500	509,009	370,000	200,000	175,000	175,000	1,429,009
Equipment Replacement Program							
Vehicle Replacement	120,000	201,379	100,000	80,000	100,000	-	481,379
Storage Container	10,000	4,674	-	-	-	-	4,674
Sub-Total Equipment Replacement Program	130,000	206,053	100,000	80,000	100,000	-	481,379
Land Purchase/New Branch/Branch Upgrades							
Birch Bay Library Design and Construction	1,788,193	1,788,193	-	-	-	-	1,788,193
AS Feasibility Study	50,000	62,000	-	-	-	-	62,000
Sub-total Land Purchase/New Branch/Branch Upgrades	1,838,193	1,850,193	-	-	-	-	1,788,193
Total Expenditures	\$ 2,774,918	\$ 2,815,245	\$ 545,000	\$ 355,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 250,000	\$ 4,248,571
Funding Summary:							
	2024 Budget	Amendment June 18, 2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Est. Plan Total
Investment Interest	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 175,000
Grants/Reimbursements	2,822,280	2,822,280	-	-	-	-	2,822,280
Transfer From General Fund	94,135	94,135	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	694,135
Prior Period Ending Fund Balance	1,526,242	1,526,242	1,662,412	1,302,412	1,132,412	967,412	
Total Funding	\$ 4,477,657	\$ 4,477,657	\$ 1,847,412	\$ 1,487,412	\$ 1,317,412	\$ 1,152,412	

Fund Balance:	2024 Budget	Amendment June 18, 2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
Assigned Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 1,294,342	\$ 1,294,342	\$ 1,430,512	\$ 1,070,512	\$ 900,512	\$ 735,512	
Designated Beginning Fund Balance - Emergency	231,900	231,900	231,900	231,900	231,900	231,900	
Total Beginning Fund Balance	1,526,242	1,526,242	1,662,412	1,302,412	1,132,412	967,412	
Revenues	2,857,280	2,857,280	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	
Transfer From General Fund	94,135	94,135	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	
Expenditures	2,774,918	2,815,245	545,000	355,000	350,000	250,000	
Net Income	176,497	136,170	(360,000)	(170,000)	(165,000)	(65,000)	
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 1,702,739	\$ 1,662,412	\$ 1,302,412	\$ 1,132,412	\$ 967,412	\$ 902,412	



RESOLUTION NO. 06/18/24-04

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT AMENDING
THE 2024 CAPITAL FUND BUDGET**

WHEREAS, at the December 19, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting the Board approved the Final 2024 Capital Fund budget; and,

WHEREAS, additional funds are needed for Capital improvement projects and equipment purchases at WCLS branches and the Administrative Services Locations; and,

WHEREAS, funds are no longer needed for projects or equipment purchases that have been deferred; and,

WHEREAS, expenditures are further reduced for a project that was completed under budget; and

WHEREAS, an amendment to the 2024 Capital Fund budget is needed to reflect these adjustments;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that budget amendment Resolution No. 06/18/24-04 be adopted, amending the 2024 Capital Fund budget to \$4,477,657 as follows:

Capital Fund - Budgetary Accounts		
308 Beginning Fund Balance	\$1,526,242	
360 Miscellaneous Revenue	2,857,280	
397 Transfers In	94,135	
594 Capital Expenditures		\$2,815,245
508 Ending Fund Balance		1,662,412
Total	\$4,477,657	\$4,477,657

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 18th day of June, 2024:

Rodney Lofdahl, Board Chair



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/18/2024
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Transitioning Juvenile Accounts to Adult Accounts
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approve Resolution 06/18/2024-05 Waiving Lost and Damaged item Fees When Patrons Turn 18.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of Resolution 06/18/2024-05 Waiving Lost and Damaged Item Fees When Patrons Turn 18.

Summary: Earlier this year, Bellingham Public Library started waiving fines when converting youth accounts to adult accounts. We have an interest in aligning our procedures and offering a similar patron experience. This practice offers young patrons turning 18, who we will now consider solely responsible for their library accounts, a clean slate with which to start their adult library use.

Alternatives: Leave fines on accounts

Fiscal Impact: In 2023, if WCLS and BPL had waived fines on cards of patrons turning 18, approximately \$6,600 in charges for lost WCLS items would have been waived. In 2024, annualizing first quarter fines on cards of patrons turning 18 indicates that approximately \$7,300 in charges for lost WCLS items may be waived by year's end. A portion of these fines were likely to go uncollected regardless, as WCLS waives all charges after six years in accordance with the Write-off of Uncollectable Debts Policy 20.13.

Comments: None



RESOLUTION NO. 06/18/24-05

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WHATCOM
COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT WAIVING LOST
AND DAMAGED ITEM FEES WHEN PATRONS TURN 18**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Rural Library District strives to be a diligent steward of public assets and resources for the roughly 658,000 items available for public use in its collection; and,

WHEREAS, WCLS is committed to serving communities in Whatcom County in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner; and,

WHEREAS, current WCLS practice is to assess replacement fees equal to the cost of replacement for materials that are not returned or are willfully damaged by borrowers; and,

WHEREAS, the revenue generated from such fees is modest and WCLS does not rely on this revenue for operations; and,

WHEREAS, such fees can create barriers for young patrons turning 18 and entering adulthood, who are now solely responsible for their library accounts; and,

WHEREAS, WCLS Leadership believes waiving such charges offers a clean slate for these patrons to start their adult library use; and,

WHEREAS, Bellingham Public Library, a close partner of WCLS, has been waiving such fees since early 2024 and WCLS has an interest in aligning procedures to offer a similar patron experience;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees, WCLS staff are authorized to waive lost and damaged item fees incurred prior to age 18 when a patron turns 18 years of age.

Approved by the Whatcom County Rural Library District Board of Trustees this 18th day of June, 2024.

Rodney Lofdahl, Chair



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/18/2024
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Freedge MOU
Prepared By:	Christine Perkins
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Authorize Executive Director to sign Memorandum of Understanding with Sustainable Connections to Implement a Freedge at the North Fork Community Library.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval to authorize Executive Director to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Sustainable Connections to Implement a Freedge at the North Fork Community Library.

Summary: Earlier this year, the Board attended a presentation about Freedges (free refrigerators) and directed the Executive Director to begin a pilot program with community partner Sustainable Connections. Plans have progressed, and before we begin making necessary infrastructure improvements and other purchases, we would like to have an MOU in place that clarifies the responsibilities of both parties.

Alternatives: As discussed.

Fiscal Impact: As discussed.

Comments: None.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BY AND BETWEEN
WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
AND SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS AND
WSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP-ED)**

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (this “MOU”) is made and entered into by and between SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS (“SC”) and WSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP-ED) and the WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM (“WCLS”).

WHEREAS, SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS promotes a program TOWARD ZERO WASTE which aims to reduce food waste; and;

WHEREAS, SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS partners with community organizations such as the Whatcom County Health Department, WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education Program (SNAP-Ed) and the Foothills Community Food Partnership to address food insecurity in the Foothills / North Fork Valley region of Whatcom County; and;

WHEREAS, WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM’s mission is to “connect information, ideas and community” and WCLS develops partnerships with local organizations to further their missions to serve local community members; and;

WHEREAS, SC and WCLS recognize that 70% of the children at Kendall Elementary qualify for free or reduced lunch, indicating a high level of food insecurity in this community; and;

WHEREAS, WCLS operates the North Fork Community Library in Kendall, which is very visible from the Mount Baker Highway roundabout and across from Kendall Elementary School; and;

WHEREAS, SC, WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed) and WCLS wish to leverage the library’s location and role as a community hub, as well as the presence of library staff to inspect any installed equipment;

NOW, THEREFORE, SC, WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed), AND WCLS agree as follows:

1. **Goals and Scope.** SC, WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed), and WCLS will conduct a 12-month pilot program to implement a free refrigerator (or “FREEDGE”) program at the North Fork Community Library at 7506 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266. The intent is to increase access to food to people in the North Fork Community and reduce food waste.
2. **Term; Termination.** After the 12-month pilot program, the parties will determine the effectiveness of the program and whether it will continue. Should the parties determine that the program will continue, a new MOU between the parties will be developed to

incorporate lessons learned. Should the parties decide to discontinue the program, each party will remove their assets from WCLS property at the respective parties' cost.

3. Duties of Sustainable Connections (SC).

For the duration of the pilot program, Sustainable Connections will:

- Work with the Whatcom County Health Department and WCLS to acquire necessary permits;
- Assist in providing a shelter for the Freedge;
- Recruit and train volunteers needed to maintain and clean the Freedge;
- Recruit and coordinate food donations;
- Provide templates for donor, volunteer, and visitor guidelines;
- Promote location and opening on website, social media, and in newsletters regularly;
- Provide up to \$500 for supplies for cleaning the Freedge as well as packaging and labeling food;
- Build a data tracking system; and report out to partners periodically with metrics;
- Coordinate with WCLS when volunteers and food donors are unavailable;
- Provide up to \$1,000 in mileage reimbursement to qualified volunteers;
- Facilitate periodic meetings with partners to discuss management and needs for Freedge operations.

4. Duties of WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed)

For the duration of the pilot program, WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education Program (SNAP-Ed) will:

- Provide funds needed to purchase a refrigerator to be used as the Freedge for the North Fork Community Library;
- Arrange and pay for maintenance and repair of refrigerator as needed;
- Assist in recruitment and training volunteers needed to maintain and clean the Freedge;
- Assist in recruitment and coordinate food donations;
- Act as a liaison with Foothills Food Bank and Mt Baker School District in connecting staff and students with the Freedge.

5. Duties of WCLS.

For the duration of the pilot program, WCLS will:

- Perform site prep to accommodate the Freedge, including making any necessary electrical improvements and pouring a concrete pad;

- Maintain site and shed exterior in a clean manner that promotes use of the Freedge;
- Report issues with refrigerator to WSU Cooperative Extension SNAP-Ed;
- Design, print and laminate printed materials;
- Design and provide blueprints to Instinct Builders as well as coordinate delivery to North Fork Library;
- Pay for WCLS staff at the North Fork Community Library to obtain Food Handler's Permits;
- Assist Sustainable Connections as needed in the permitting process;
- Open and close the Freedge each day in concurrency with the library open hours;
- Promote the Freedge and contents regularly to community, including hosting information about the program on library website;
- Pay the electric bill associated with keeping the unit plugged in and operating;
- Check on the Freedge when volunteers aren't available. Tasks include: checking temperature, cleaning out old food, wiping up spills, organizing supplies;
- Share challenges and successes with Sustainable Connections.

6. Notices.

All notices under this MOU shall be in writing and sent to the address listed below for each party:

Sustainable Connections

ATTN: Brandi Hutton
 Toward Zero Waste Program Coordinator
 1701 Ellis Street, Suite 221
 Bellingham, WA 98225

WSU Cooperative Extension Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed)

ATTN: Noelle Beecroft
 600 Dupont Street, Suite A
 Bellingham, WA 98225

Whatcom County Library System

ATTN: Christine Perkins
 Executive Director
 5205 Northwest Drive
 Bellingham, WA 98226

7. Entire Agreement. This instrument contains the entire agreement between the parties hereto and may be modified only in a document executed by all parties.

8. Facsimile and Scanned Signatures. This MOU may be executed in one or more counterparts and via facsimile signature, the counterparts and facsimiles of which, when taken together, shall be deemed to constitute an entire and original of this MOU.

Signatures of organizations' authorized representatives

SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIONS

By

Printed Name & Title

Date

Signature

WSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP-Ed)

By

Printed Name & Title

Date

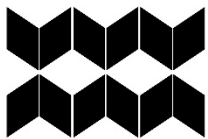
Signature

WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

By

Christine Perkins, Executive Director

Date



whatcom county
library system

COMMUNITY

One of the ways WCLS can be a good community partner is to write letters of support for local organizations seeking grant funding. I recently wrote letters for the Point Roberts Park & Recreation District #1 and for the Friends of the Deming Library in support of solar panels. I also submitted another letter at the request of the City of Ferndale and the Ferndale School District seeking a grant for a District Resource Officer in Ferndale who will work with youth.

ACCESS

We are collaborating with Devyn Nixon, ARNP, MSN to explore ways to provide access to telehealth services to the Mount Baker region (at Deming and/or North Fork libraries). She's working on her PhD / Master's In Public Health dual degree at Johns Hopkins and is connected to the work identified in the Washington State Health Equity Zones initiative.

RESOURCES

WCLS Integrated Library Systems Coordinator Carmi Parker co-authored this article in the June edition of *Computers in Libraries* [FEATURE - The State of Digital Content in Public Libraries \(infotoday.com\)](#). She reviews the need for libraries to take action to address significant cost increases by the Big Five publishers and various strategies including legislative proposals, public advocacy, partnering with publishers, and adjusting library approaches to meeting consumer demand. A copy of the article is attached.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

WCLS locations will be closed for the Juneteenth holiday on June 19. Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in the United States and is a federal and state holiday. WCLS staff maintain a reading list [Juneteenth: Resources for Adults | Whatcom County Library System | BiblioCommons](#) for people to learn more.

STEWARDSHIP

The recent energy audit of the Administrative Services building conducted by students from WWU's Institute of Energy Studies is one example of things we are exploring to reduce our energy use. We are pleased that library building owners in Point Roberts and Deming are also engaged in this work, actively seeking funding to transition to solar energy.

Christine Perkins, Executive Director

FEATURE

The State of Digital Content in Public Libraries

by Michael Blackwell and Carmi Parker

While the relationship between public libraries and the Big Five publishers on ebook access has been strained for more than a decade, it has become even more contentious in the last 6 years.¹ In 2018, Penguin Random House switched from a perpetual license to 24-month expiration on all ebooks. In 2019, Hachette and Simon & Schuster switched from a perpetual license to 24-month expiration on all ebooks and e-audiobooks. Also in 2019, Macmillan “windowed” all library ebooks for 8 weeks after release. However, the publisher restored delivery on the street date in March 2020 after finding that library demand for its titles was negatively impacted by the policy.

Libraries are generally unable to make a shift to primarily digital holdings even as the number of patrons who want digital comes to rival or even exceed the number of patrons who want print.

Macmillan provoked librarians to try legislative action to get fair terms. These efforts found some success at the state level: A Maryland bill became law, and a New York bill passed. The New York bill was vetoed by the governor under great pressure not only from book publishers, but by associations for film, television, music, and advertising—in short, any media outlet with a stake in having digital content licensed rather than owned by consumers. The Maryland law, which was based on proposed federal law, did not withstand a legal challenge in 2022. It was struck down under copyright as going too far by mandating that publishers set certain price terms.

However, librarians have learned from this example. Legislators in many more states have taken up the gauntlet, using new terms that are more likely to pass a legal challenge. From the librarian perspective, there is need for legislation: The Big Five—with their vast percentage of bestselling and high-demand titles—have still higher costs associated with them than before. Many libraries, especially smaller ones, struggle to provide digital content even though demand is higher than ever. In addition to legislation and advocacy, a number of innovative practices—and with medium-sized and independent publishers pioneering license terms—demonstrate some necessary progress toward more sustainable library digital content operations.

TABLE 1: BIG FIVE CONSUMER PRICES FOR DIGITAL AUDIOBOOKS

AUDIBLE PRICES	MAY 2022	DECEMBER 2023	% CHANGE
Hachette	\$25.29	\$21.23	-16.0%
HarperCollins	\$26.41	\$20.98	-20.5%
Macmillan	\$22.61	\$16.71	-26.1%
Penguin Random House	\$27.51	\$19.90	-27.7%
Simon & Schuster	\$21.31	\$16.60	-22.1%
Average	\$24.63	\$19.08	-22.5%

TABLE 2: KINDLE EBOOK CONSUMER PRICES

KINDLE ON AMAZON	MAY 2022	DECEMBER 2023	% CHANGE
Hachette	\$14.04	\$14.44	2.8%
HarperCollins	\$12.88	\$13.09	1.7%
Macmillan	\$14.19	\$14.25	0.4%
Penguin Random House	\$14.74	\$13.84	-6.1%
Simon & Schuster	\$13.24	\$14.69	11.0%
Average	\$13.82	\$14.06	1.8%

TABLE 3: CONSUMER PRICES FOR PRINT EDITIONS

PRINT PRICES ON AMAZON	MAY 2022	DECEMBER 2023	% CHANGE
Hachette	\$16.13	\$17.98	11.5%
HarperCollins	\$16.71	\$16.00	-4.2%
Macmillan	\$16.52	\$16.47	-0.3%
Penguin Random House	\$17.41	\$17.52	0.6%
Simon & Schuster	\$16.43	\$17.75	8.1%
Average	\$16.64	\$17.14	3.0%

TABLE 4: LIBRARY PRICES FOR OVERDRIVE E-AUDIO TITLES

OVERDRIVE E-AUDIO	MAY 2022	DECEMBER 2023	% CHANGE
Hachette	\$65.00	\$65.00	0.0%
HarperCollins	\$67.56	\$79.39	17.5%
Macmillan	\$55.49	\$52.88	-4.7%
Penguin Random House	\$89.30	\$91.20	2.1%
Simon & Schuster	\$76.99	\$78.99	2.6%
Average	\$70.87	\$73.49	3.7%
Multiple of Audible price	2.88	3.85	

TABLE 5: LIBRARY PRICES FOR OVERDRIVE EBOOK TITLES

OVERDRIVE EBOOK	MAY 2022	DECEMBER 2023	% CHANGE
Hachette	\$64.25	\$68.25	6.2%
HarperCollins	\$24.10	\$28.39	17.8%
Macmillan	\$60.00	\$60.00	0.0%
Penguin Random House	\$55.00	\$55.00	0.0%
Simon & Schuster	\$58.19	\$61.44	5.6%
Average	\$52.31	\$54.62	4.4%
Multiple of Kindle price	3.79	3.88	
Multiple of print price	3.14	3.19	

**The Need for Action:
Big Five Cost
Increases to Libraries**

A comparison of Big Five title prices for consumers compared to costs for libraries shows an interesting and conflicting trend. In ReadersFirst’s Publisher Price Watch

TABLE 6: PERCENT OF BUDGET FOR REPLACING EXPIRED DIGITAL COPIES AT SELECTED LIBRARY SYSTEMS

LIBRARY SYSTEM	POPULATION SERVED	% OF ANNUAL BUDGET TOWARD REPLACING EXPIRED COPIES
Digital Downloads Collaboration (Ohio)	+1 million	8%
Fairfax County Public Library (Virginia)	+1.14 million	10%
Ocean State Libraries (Rhode Island)	+1.1 million	22%
Washington Digital Library Consortium (Washington)	850,000	22%

TABLE 7: HOLD RATIOS

	12-MONTH LICENSE	ALL OTHER LICENSES	RATIO
Tier 1	Less than \$20	Less than \$40	6-to-1
Tier 2	\$20-\$30	\$40-\$60	9-to-1
Tier 3	\$30-\$40	\$60-\$80	12-to-1
Tier 4	More than \$40	More than \$80	18-to-1

(readersfirst.org/publisher-price-watch), there’s an apples-to-apples comparison on the same titles in audiobook and ebook formats between the two groups; it is instructive to see what the publishers are doing in the retail case as context for price changes in the library market.² Notably, Big Five prices for consumer titles in digital audiobooks (using Audible titles) have gone down markedly from May 2022 to December 2023, with the average being a decrease of 22.5% (see Table 1).

Ebook prices on the Kindle format for the same titles have risen slightly on average, up 1.8%, with one publisher making a larger increase and another a larger decrease (see Table 2).

Consumer print costs have gone up slightly more than consumer ebook costs, at 3%, perhaps reflecting higher costs in physical materials (see Table 3).

By contrast, the cost of these items for libraries on OverDrive has risen dramatically. Other library vendors might offer different pricing, but most vendors generally accept and pass along the publisher’s library retail price, often without lowering it (a habit we deplore) when the publishers may offer the infrequent sale. Digital audio shows a substantial increase, especially when compared to the even larger decrease that consumers are seeing. We thank Macmillan for lowering costs slightly, but

HarperCollins—which had been offering somewhat better prices—has apparently decided that library costs should be much, much more. A 17.5% increase in a year? Really?

The average costs are up nearly 4%. Titles are now on average 3.85 times above the cost for the same consumer title (see [Table 4](#)). Ebook costs have also increased for libraries and at a higher percentage than for consumers. We thank Penguin Random House and Macmillan for holding the line. We call out HarperCollins again for a huge increase (see [Table 5](#)).

That libraries are paying four times as much on average than consumer digital costs is nothing surprising. Librarians have long noted a figure of three to four times the consumer amount, so that ratio is simply holding true. More interesting is that libraries are paying for digital more than three times what consumers pay for print, when libraries actually pay even less for print than consumers. Through our print jobbers, discounts off new-title Big Five hardcover prices are typically more than 40%. With Big Five titles, libraries buy many, many more print copies than we license in digital. But library print buying is not generally seen as a threat to publishers' existence or to authors' royalties in a way that, as we shall see, library digital is sometimes portrayed. Indeed, publisher participation in library conferences is common and even lavish. This discrepancy begs the question of why libraries are charged so much more in digital. We shall explore this topic later, but for now, we suggest that it is little wonder why libraries increasingly find digital content unsustainable.

We cannot offer as many titles as we could even 3 years ago, especially since most libraries are unable to raise their materials budgets, with everything else costing more and funding often remaining flat. Shifting funds from print to digital is problematic: We cannot ignore our print readers, especially children—the print book experience is often better for young readers than digital is—and those on the wrong side of the digital divide. Even factoring in the need for processing, shelving, and moving between branches, print still offers a far better “bang-for-book.” It is hard to justify paying \$75 for a 2-year ebook license on Colleen Hoover’s *Too Late* and Erin Hilderbrand’s *The Five-Star Weekend* when the print price is \$11.50; a hardcover often easily lasts more than 2 years and even 100 or more circulations. Higher prices than the already previously high costs when compared to print are driving increasing librarian advocacy.

The need for action is exacerbated by the other licensing terms under which we get digital. We thank Penguin Random House for adding a 1-year metered license to the existing perpetual (not that we think any license will be forever) one-copy/one-user model on e-audiobooks. A lower-price metered license coupled with a perpetual license better allows libraries to meet high demand up front without paying over and over for the same titles. We wish Penguin would adopt this option for ebooks as well, as our collection breadth is negatively impacted by continually replacing ebooks rather than diversifying our holdings with new books, as we do with print. We surveyed four library systems to get some idea of just how much library budget must go to trying to maintain the existing digital collection (see [Table 6](#)).

No system replaces digital titles unless they have at least one existing patron reserve. Existing demand and the need to keep up with high-demand new titles generally prevent even well-funded libraries from keeping titles without holds once their license expires. The proportion of titles with expiring (aka “exploding”) licenses has increased since 2018, now comprising 60%–70% of the collections. The percentage of the budget spent on replacements varied widely by library/consortium, depending on the demand for items, holds ratio, price of items, number of copies originally licensed, need to keep up with new titles on limited budgets, importance of keeping a title in the collection for long-term use (especially, perhaps, popular series titles), and length of the item (especially if an audiobook is many hours long). Little wonder, then, that at least for Big Five titles, library digital collections are a shadow of our print holdings. Building a deep and rich digital collection featuring worthwhile older titles, debut authors, or niche publications is all but impossible under today’s license terms. Libraries are generally unable to make a shift to primarily digital holdings even as the number of patrons who want digital comes to rival or even exceed the number of patrons who want print.

Library Response

Libraries have responded to the challenge of unsustainable digital collections through formal legislative action, by partnering with some smaller publishers, and by developing new and creative selection processes. The legislation, it should be noted, is generally aimed at the Big Five and some large academic publishers that generally offer perpetual access but at prices that can range into the many hundreds of dollars. The aim is to create more fair licensing options while stretching limited funds as much as possible.

Legislative Efforts

While the Maryland ebook law being struck down was a disappointment for libraries in 2022, the setback has suggested more fruitful legal strategies. Six state legislatures have put forward bills since then: Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Vermont. At the time of this writing, none have passed; however, Connecticut and Massachusetts’ bills look poised to be the next ones to become law. The Association of American Publishers (AAP) has launched determined opposition, including hiring lobbyists and sending letters to legislators threatening to sue. A last-minute lobbying tactic derailed the Hawaii bill in 2023, vacating a vote by a favorable legislature. Legislators are generally favorably disposed to the library cause, as an article from two Connecticut bill sponsors suggests.³ Legislators support bills to ensure greater access to content, especially by less advantaged constituents, while pointing to a fiscally irresponsible drain on tax dollars under the current terms.

State library associations and librarian advocates have been instrumental in helping to bring the bills forward, but they have been mightily assisted by Kyle Courtney and Juliya Ziskina of the Ebook Study Group (ebookstudygroup.org). Both are attorneys and copyright experts. They have drafted sample legislation, “law based on consumer protection, contract law, and contract preemption to regulate library ebook contracts with publishers,” and they will customize proposed legislation based on an individual

state's existing consumer laws.⁴ Rather than mandate that a publisher set prices, as the Maryland law did, the new language stipulates what a state considers fair pricing. Publishers do not have to adjust their prices accordingly, but they can only license in a state under the state's fair terms. Publishers that do not meet those terms are locked out. Unlike the Maryland law, these bills do not run afoul of copyright: "They do not mandate contracts between publishers and libraries or force publishers to sell to libraries. Instead, they regulate the terms of those contracts."⁵ Some legislation adopted by various states includes other important terms, such as the following:

- Libraries may make preservation copies, even of licensed titles, as they are allowed to do with print works.
- Libraries may lend digital works via interlibrary loan systems, a practice that Big Five licenses often forbid.
- Libraries are not blocked from licensing materials at the time of publication to the public.
- Libraries are not prevented from sharing the terms under which they license digital materials. (Revealing contractual terms is currently prevented by many vendor licenses.)

If these laws pass, libraries in those states could see Big Five publishers cease to license there, leaving the market to independent publishers, which mostly already offer fair terms. Major publishers that choose this course would also be facing risk. Librarians in other states might voluntarily choose to refrain from licensing from publishers that pull out of markets. Libraries spend considerable sums on digital content. The Big Five publishers have seemingly been uncomfortable in the library ebook market, but losing a large share of it would arguably not be in their economic interest.

Public Advocacy

Advocacy with the public, often in support of ebook bills, has been undertaken by many groups. ALA,⁶ state library associations, the Urban Libraries Council and Canadian Urban Libraries Council,⁷ Chief Offices of State Library Agencies (COSLA) and its members,⁸ and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)⁹ have worked to expand library access and to call out unfair terms. The ReadersFirst Working Group—to which both authors belong—has pivoted from advocating for a better library digital experience through technology to advocacy of, and studies on, fair terms.¹⁰ Fight for the Future has created a petition signed by more than 1,000 authors, opposing a future in which "libraries are reduced to a sort of Netflix or Spotify for books, from which publishers demand exorbitant licensing fees in perpetuity while unaccountable vendors force the spread of disinformation and hate for profit" and saying that "[p]ublishers must balance profits for the most prominent authors and shareholders with the right of the public to free, un surveilled access to knowledge and information—as well as the right of emerging authors to be collected, preserved, and discovered."¹¹ In 2024, Library Futures (libraryfutures.net), led by Jennie Rose Halperin and Michelle Reed, in addition to

other advocacy efforts, released the Ebooks For Us (ebooksforus.com) site. It includes comics and games such as *The Price Is Wrong*, in which visitors are asked to guess what costs less than \$500 among an espresso maker, a stand mixer, or a library ebook. Upon guessing, the visitor discovers that “[d]igital textbooks can cost over \$600 for e-books that are limited to one user,”¹² with specific examples. The aim is to bring awareness, and concern or outrage, to the problem for people who are not library insiders. The site can be useful in states that are putting forward legislation. It does have a Take Action option, in which citizens or legislators can sign up to get more information. Should a coalition of the aforementioned groups decide to act in concert nationally, or internationally with Canadian libraries and readers, the site could be one place to organize efforts.

Publisher Partnerships

While the Big Five terms are making library digital content unsustainable, librarians cannot lay all their troubles at the doors of the publishers. By continuing a model in digital that works well enough in print—boosting circulation and pleasing many patrons by loading up on many copies of popular titles—librarians have exacerbated the problem. Of course, we want to give as many readers as we can what they want as quickly as we can. But paying high prices for this premium Big Five content, as we have seen in many instances, gives publishers no incentive to compete and all but guarantees that our ebook holdings will largely remain boutique collections. Some vendors and librarians have begun to experiment with ways to deliver more sustainable, but still quality (if not the top bestselling), titles.

The DPLA has been one leader in this movement, under the guidance of the director of ebook services, Micah May. One effort has been to bring both exclusive Amazon and Audible content to libraries for the first time, through the independent and nonprofit Palace Project. The Audible exclusives in particular, available through no other source, are likely to be in high demand. Of particular note are the licensing terms. Titles may be licensed for 40 circulations (10 of which may be simultaneous) for 2 years with unlimited loans (one at a time), 26 loans, or five loans. This variety provides librarians with some choice for spending funds most effectively, and we wish the Big Five would consider greater flexibility. Older titles are priced very competitively, while new titles are at least competitive with Big Five prices. On the downside, no perpetual access licenses are offered, complicating long-term access to titles we might wish to keep.

The DPLA has been able to strike deals for the same variable licensing with some 100 medium-to-small publishers and include a perpetual option at competitive pricing. Also available on a perpetual license are high-quality titles from independent publishers. For example, Jon Fosse, who won the 2023 Nobel Prize in Literature, has perpetual access books (in translation) on license for \$17.95. And while some of these works would be available from many library ebook vendors, the DPLA has gone a step further with the Indie Selections project. Reviewers pick out titles that may escape more traditional library review sources, bringing notice to worthwhile reads, including diverse material, and supporting lesser-known authors on terms that are very sustainable for libraries.

Discovery is one of the main challenges preventing a great deal of library access to such works. This is a worthy adjunct to the long-standing work of the Indie Author Project, which has “assisted in getting more than 12,000 indie authors into their local libraries [and] worked with top curation partners and librarians to identify hundreds of these as the best indie ebooks available to readers—so they can be sustainably circulated to library patrons with confidence.”¹⁴

The DPLA and Palace Project have worked with Unlimited Listens to bring more than “3,500 titles [including] Christian, Classics, Children’s, Westerns and Clean Romance titles from more than 60 publishers. More than 50 titles per month will be added, [with] Spanish, Self-development, and other catalog verticals by Q4. Unlimited Listens offers a tremendous value with its unlimited access subscription model start[ing] as little as \$500.” When one 2-year audiobook license from the Big Five can cost \$135, it is nice to see a possible bargain. It is also nice to see an organization offering a subscription model. Having a variety of titles always available at a set cost is advantageous. Pay-per-use models—in which patrons select from a range of titles and the library pays every time—can be budget busters. They can create patron resentment if a library needs to scale back services. The proof of utility will be in the title list. Will patrons want them? With patrons often choosing something that is on hand at the moment even as they wait for high-demand titles, it seems likely these titles will be a helpful and cost-effective supplement.

Libraries and (again) some small publishers are further experimenting with an ownership model. Rather than licensing, libraries would actually own the ebooks, as they do with print, doing away with the licensing model that the big publishers are working so hard to keep. The Brick House Cooperative has been one pioneer through its BRIET project, which touts “ebooks, for libraries, for keeps.”¹⁵ Authors and publishers upload their ebooks by invitation and tag them with metadata. Librarians can then browse the titles, buy them for costs in the \$10 range, and upload them into catalogs accessible for online reading. Integration into ebook platforms, where most librarians would like them, may require some additional work. Still, this is a promising start. Ownership would certainly solve the problem of long-term access presented by licensing, even the so-called perpetual access model, which only holds for as long as the publisher has the rights.

The DPLA has also begun work on a model that would allow owned digital titles to be accessed without “building the tech infrastructure required to host hundreds of thousands of ebooks. ... [I]n the model we are developing, libraries would own the titles, just as they do with physical books. Libraries would be able to both transfer their books to other libraries and to update books as needed for preservation or to adapt to new formats. Rights holders would retain copyright to their works and all subsidiary rights. Lending would be restricted to one reader at a time with DRM unless waived by the rights holder. We would also provide libraries the option of hosting their books in Palace Marketplace or another provider.”¹⁶ Seamless ownership of ebooks integrated into libraries’ existing digital platform offers great advantages for possible preservation, especially of important local content. We doubt that the Big Five will ever embrace this

model, but partnerships with other publishers have considerable potential for sustainable and quality digital content.

Variable Hold Queues

The problem of meeting increasing demand in a time of rising costs has prompted some librarians to question the traditional licensing strategy of meeting demand for pricey Big Five bestsellers. Ordering librarians typically have a hold ratio: the number of reserves that are placed against the quantity of copies owned before obtaining more. For example, a well-funded system might have a hold ratio of 2-to-1 for bestselling hardcovers. If 10 copies are owned, more copies will be ordered if more than 20 patrons place reserves on the title. Digital titles are also ordered based on hold ratios, but it would be the rare library in which digital books use the same hold ratio as the print collection due to the higher digital costs. A hold queue of 6-to-1 might be more common, but these numbers vary greatly by library. Rather than relicense all titles at this standard hold ratio, however, ordering librarians are looking at how less costly but still-in-demand items might instead be prioritized by using variable hold queues. Parker's hold ratios look like [Table 7](#).

Items exceeding \$80 on a 2-year or perpetual license will only have copies added if at least 18 patrons are waiting for every copy, while items under \$40 will be relicensed more frequently. This way of selecting is a significant paradigm shift. In effect, high-priced digital audiobooks—many of which cost more than \$80—and some expensive ebooks will be relicensed but only when demand is spectacularly high. These titles might be eagerly sought by patrons, but the waiting list will be long. Meanwhile, less costly items are likely to become more readily available. Since adopting these variable ratios, Parker's consortium has seen the collection grow while the cost-per-circ fell by 25%. As much as we might wish to provide ready access to pricey titles, the practice is simply not sustainable. We know from one study that the most avid digital readers like bestsellers but are satisfied with waits on those titles if many other interesting titles are available to read in the moment.¹⁷ This strategy has proven beneficial in the following three ways:

- More books are immediately available—Browsing patrons who want something new to read right away have much more to choose from. There are hundreds of indie publishers offering excellent, reasonably priced books in a range of genres and subjects.
- More books will remain in the collection over time—Indie publishers mostly offer perpetual use licenses, so this tactic allows the collection to grow and get better, rather than remaining static.
- We use taxpayer funds more responsibly—We still offer access to the most popular bestsellers from the Big Five but constrain how many of their expensive titles we offer in the midrange of popularity. We channel the longtail of our purchasing to the publishers who provide books that are just

as good as those of the Big Five, with prices and terms that are much more aligned with our stewardship obligations.

Intellectual Freedom and Digital Books

The biggest threat to library access for many Americans is not Big Five licensing practices or even (for once) public funding for libraries. Rather, it is unprecedented legislative efforts to ban books fueled by small, but vocal groups based on partisan political grounds. Some bills go so far as to threaten librarians with fines and even jail time for providing access to “obscene” books, even though none of the books in question meet the definition of obscenity. Library digital content provides an innovative way to support reading while these frankly unconstitutional laws go down in legal battles. We laud the efforts of Books Unbanned, a group of five large urban libraries that provide free library cards to anyone age 13–21 nationwide to access books that are banned in many areas.¹⁸ The funding comes from library foundations, since local public funding cannot work outside local areas. We also salute the DPLA’s Banned Book Club, which uses geolocation to offer a free Palace Project card to anyone living in an area where books have been banned, enabling access to frequently removed works.¹⁹ Although funded in part through grants, the DPLA is a nonprofit. The ability to protect reading through digital works will be difficult under current Big Five licenses, at least if their works are to be included.

We also wish to thank the Big Five publishers, most especially Penguin Random House, for their work supporting libraries and fighting legislation that’s hostile to reading during this time. Perhaps this shared fight will be one path to a better partnership. Librarians need quality works to fulfill our mission and thus need publishers. Publishers, we assert, need libraries. Would print-equivalent library digital prices, even under licensing, really disadvantage publishers—and their authors—when a balanced print book market has existed with libraries for hundreds of years? We think not. Until such time as federal action might clarify how copyright law is to apply to licensed work, however, libraries will have no choice but to continue legislative advocacy, increase partnerships with and reward innovative smaller publishers, and form creative, new strategies to fulfill our traditional mission of providing reading through shared public resources in an increasingly digital age.

A Justification of Library Advocacy

Until now, this article has made much of how current Big Five terms are unfair, without examining the publishers’ concerns or counter arguments. We should, in fairness, consider those. We will not engage in mere straw-man arguments. The AAP (Association of American Publishers) presented arguments on behalf of the publishers in testimony about the Massachusetts ebook bill, as fairly represented by Alison Kuznitz. We summarize from her report:¹³

Library ebooks bills conflict with the U.S. Copyright Act.

False. Publishers can publish what they want and charge what they want. They just can't license in states with ebook laws except under the state's fair terms.

Under these bills, authors will not be compensated.

False. If given fair terms, librarians would probably put more funds into digital licenses. In fact, more authors would be compensated, especially those whose books are not bestsellers, as libraries strive for varied and deeper content. The income might be distributed differently, but the total amount of income could grow. Readers would discover—and perhaps buy—more books. Libraries, we argue, help with discovery of titles. Access through us often leads to sales, especially of new authors. We suggest that the library/publisher relationship is symbiotic. Publishers could easily ensure authors were compensated with the additional amounts.

Intellectual property would be devalued.

False. We pay far less for print per title than for digital, and fair digital costs would simply reflect roughly what publishers get from print from libraries. How would this devalue the content?

Greater access to ebooks through libraries would lead to piracy.

False. Piracy is a problem, but it does not stem from library ebooks. They are digitally protected. The people borrowing them don't need to pirate. Not only is there no proof of this claim, but it defies logic.

This legislation threatens the entire creative economy.

False. Fair ebook laws do not undermine licensing, if that is the concern, as it appears to be. They merely regulate licenses. These laws would discourage the publishers from taking advantage of a loophole in current copyright that allows them to charge unfair prices when compared to print through licensing.

Referencing licensing as the basis of the creative economy brings up a point that the AAP seems eager to hide. Digital is being treated differently—and arguably unfairly to libraries and readers—than print. They are all books. It is high time to look at copyright with an eye to fulfilling its dual purpose. It exists to protect creator rights but also—as copyright law dictates—to “promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts.” Why should licensing be allowed to be so unfair when compared to hundreds of years of practice that has led to a balance between author and reader? Does it make sense for libraries to pay far more for something they will never own? Perhaps if four or five states pass fair ebook laws, Congress will find reason to act.

Endnotes

1. For a detailed treatment of this history, please see the ReadersFirst "eLending Position Paper"; readersfirst.org/position-papers.
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17. See "Digital Patron Segmentation Study 2022" posted on ReadersFirst.org. static1.squarespace.com/static/53765f6fe4b060b2a3d3586b/t/6414fb4c4f2ebf0887b889e5/1679096653255/Digital+Patron+Segmentation+Study+2022.pdf.

18. See Books Unbanned. bklynlibrary.org/books-unbanned.

19. See "The Banned Book Club." thebannedbookclub.info.



Michael Blackwell (L) (mblackwell@stmalib.org) is director of St. Mary's County Library and the project and communications coordinator for ReadersFirst. A past chair of the ALA eBooks Interest Group and a member of the ALA Digital Content Working Group, Blackwell has frequently presented and published on public library ebook matters.



Carmi Parker (R) is a librarian with Whatcom County Library System and an executive committee member for the Washington Digital Library Consortium. She is also a guest faculty member with the University of Washington's iSchool and a ReadersFirst Working Group member. Parker is honored to be named a 2021 Mover & Shaker by Library Journal.

[FEATURE - The State of Digital Content in Public Libraries \(infotoday.com\)](#)

ACCESS

Our Whatcom Grooves Summer Music Series is another way WCLS provides access to culture and learning – seven concerts, free of charge, hosted at local libraries. We’ve got a great lineup spanning multiple musical genres, from jazz to country and Americana, to salsa, funk, and rock. There are three Junior Groove events, too, so kids can learn more about jazz. Find details in Explorations or our [online calendar of events](#).

RESOURCES

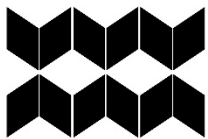
Moving materials across WCLS branch libraries and other partner locations is a daily task accomplished in part with a collection of heavy-duty plastic totes. These totes have been in use at WCLS for well over 25 years and are falling into disrepair. Distribution Manager, Sam Wallin, developed a proposal included in the 2024 budget to purchase 1,000 totes, a full replacement. The Bellingham Public Library replaced their totes a few years ago. Some Friends of the Library groups have requested use of the old totes. The Friends of the Blaine Library developed a partnership with a group called Blaine Community Orchards for Resources and Education (CORE). For many years [Blaine CORE](#) has provided regular programming on all topic relevant to gardening. Now, they are using old WCLS book totes to build [BookWorm Bins](#) for home composting. Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Blaine Library.

STEWARDSHIP

A meeting was held to share details of the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express project on June 10.



Michael Cox
Deputy Director



whatcom county
library system

Youth Services Report

June 2024

COMMUNITY

The Youth Services Department is partnering with the Child and Family Services Program to bring parent education out into the county. We'll be hosting a Family Connections program this series this fall, with six weeks of simultaneous adult education for parents and play and learn engagement for kids, followed by a communal meal. The program is focused on building community and a network of mutual support among the families, and we have received funding from the Whatcom Community Foundation, through a Project Neighborly grant.

ACCESS

The Youth Services Department enjoys the partnership support of our WCLS Community Liaison staff as we work with young people in schools to promote and deliver library services where they are. Here are a few recent examples of that cooperation:

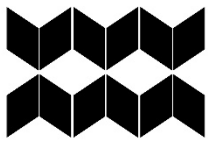
Coreen Kurtz joined Sarah Lavender and Theresa Morrison for multiple Ferndale school visits recently, adding important cultural relevancy and delightful disposition to storytimes and Kids' programs. Coreen spent every Tuesday and one Wednesday in May visiting kindergarten classrooms for our Salmon Storytimes. She introduced herself, talked about the importance of salmon in Lummi culture, and read *I Love to Fish the Salish Sea*, a photo story created by Heather Jefferson and Cliff Cultee for our Since Time Immemorial (STI) kits. Coreen also read *Salmon Boy* to a group of visiting fourth graders. It was fun to hear comments like: "My dad is a fisher too;" "I'm Lummi also;" and "That kid looks like me."

Coreen also accompanied Tamar Clarke for a Summer Reading visit and book talks at Lummi Nation School this past week. Middle and high schoolers in their last week of classes before summer break do not make for an easy audience but they all perked up and took notice when Coreen introduced herself as both library staff and a member of the Lummi Nation. She shared book recommendations and every single one of those books was checked out. We can talk all day long about how the library belongs to these young people but having Coreen there really makes those words feel real to them.

Thom joined Amelia Martinez and Diana Antaño at a Bilingual Parent Night for families of K-12 students in the Nooksack Valley School District. The evening was an orientation to special services, and it was great to have WCLS featured among them. Some young families were new to the library and appreciated an endorsement from a trustworthy community member. Others couldn't stop talking about all of their wonderful library experiences!

Thom Barthelmess

Youth Services Manager



whatcom county
library system

Community Relations Report

June 2024

COMMUNITY/ACCESS/RESOURCES

The summer issue of [Explorations](#) includes library news and events for June-August 2024. Summer Reading is the focus but there are also articles about the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express project and sensory kits, links to books lists, and event listings for Whatcom Grooves, Pride in the Park, Teen Camps, Friends of the Library books sales and many other free, fun library programs.

Whatcom Grooves kicks off June 22 at the Ferndale Library. In 2023, we piloted a three-concert series with the help of the Friends of Blaine, South Whatcom and Ferndale libraries. This year, under the guidance of Adult Programming Coordinator Claire McElroy and with the support of branch staff, the free music series has expanded to seven concerts at WCLS libraries or nearby outdoor settings. Some concerts require reserved seats. Make plans now to attend one or more concerts in Ferndale, Lynden, Glenhaven, Deming, Point Roberts, Kendall or Blaine at wcls.org/grooves. Thank you to the Friends of Lynden, South Whatcom and North Fork libraries and the Whatcom County Library Foundation for financial support of this lively new summer tradition at WCLS branches. Other Friends groups will have a presence at the events.

News Releases

- [WCLS and Friends of Birch Bay Library host June 10 community meeting](#)
- [Summer Reading begins June 1](#)

Podcast: wcls.org/podcast or subscribe on your favorite podcast platform. In May, we passed the 5,000-download mark.

- [Episode 47: Mango with Maggie Mae Nase](#)



Book Reviews

- *Cascadia Daily News*, May 5, 2024, [Review: Here with You: A Memoir of Love, Family, and Addiction](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, May 28, 2024, [Review: Ten Tomatoes That Changed the World](#)

Book Notes 43

Book Reviews

WRITTEN BY MARY KINSEY



"The Kamogawa Food Detectives"
by Hisekhi Kashiwagi

From childhood favorites to special meals with friends or family, few things bring us back to the past as immediately as the smell or taste of a particular dish. But sometimes foods become lost to time and circumstance, and that's where Nagare and Koishi Kamogawa come in. From their unassuming restaurant in the backstreets of Kyoto, the father-daughter team runs a side business recreating significant culinary experiences in order to help clients relive treasured memories, resolve past issues, and move forward into their future. Working from scant details, Nagare and Koishi deliver healing and hope in the form of beloved dishes, earning them a host of grateful customers in the process. This charming novel was a smash hit in Japan before making its way to the U.S. It's the perfect light read for those who love stories of food, family and connection—just be sure to have your own comfort foods at the ready!



"The French Ingredient: Making a Life in Paris One Lesson At A Time"
by Jane Bertch

Midwesterner Jane Bertch wasn't much of a world traveler when her job in finance took her overseas. But after spending several years in London, she felt ready to sign on to life in Paris. It wasn't long before she fell in love with the city—and with the idea of opening her own business there. Together with her partner, Jane embarked on what seemed an impossible dream: starting a cooking school for tourists. In this warm and engaging memoir, Jane relates her journey to opening Le Cuisine Paris with no culinary background and only a few connections. She faces a host of obstacles, some of which she expects (the famously thorny French bureaucracy) and others that come out of nowhere, like complaining neighbors, pandemic lockdowns, and even a surprisingly significant Dijon mustard shortage. Through it all, Jane keeps pushing on. Readers will be enchanted by her drive to turn Le Cuisine into a world-renowned destination for foodies. Full of candor, wit, and plenty of butter, this can-do memoir is a can't-miss read.

Literary Events

May 3, 2-3 p.m.
The Fiction Collective/Fiction Collective 2's 50th Anniversary
Village Books, 1203 12th St., Bellingham
360.671.2626, villagebooks.com

The Fiction Collective was founded in 1974 by authors hoping to avoid the ever-growing machine of commercial publishing. Revamped in 1989 as Fiction Collective 2, authors in this publishing collective make all their own business and editorial decisions. Celebrate 50 years of independence with four Fiction Collective 2 authors performing readings at Village Books!

May 4, 5-9 p.m.
Skagit River Poetry Foundation's Annual Auction - "May the 4th" Be With You
Hickory Park Lodge, 1727 S. 13th St., Mount Vernon

Join the Skagit River Poetry Foundation for their annual auction in support of their efforts to inspire young minds and improve literacy through verse by hosting resident poets at high schools around the valley. May the force (of poetry) be with you!

May 11, 1-2:30 p.m.
Book Launch: Cheryl Grey Bostrom, "Leaning on Air"
Lynden Library, 236 4th St., Lynden
360.354.4883, wclslibcal.com

Whatcom County author Cheryl Grey Bostrom is back with "Leaning on Air," the sequel to her award-winning novel "Sugar Birds." Characters Celia Burke and Burnaby Hayes return in a tale that explores nature, human behavior, and how the two intertwine. Book purchases will be available through Village Books at the event, and you can even get your copies signed!

Media Coverage

- *State of WA Department of Ecology*, May 2, 2024, [WRIA 1 Nooksack adjudication filing](#)
- *The Bellingham Herald*, May 17, 2024, [Anthony Zold Obituary \(1944 - 2024\) - Lummi Island, WA](#)
- *My Bellingham Now*, May 22, 2024, [Mary Therese Keast Obituary](#)
- *The Northern Light*, May 29, 2024, [Design for Birch Bay library express to be revealed](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, May 31, 2024, [Rose and George are leaving](#)
- *Bellingham Herald*, May 28, 2024, [Nine free date ideas in Bellingham, Whatcom County Washington](#)
- *Salish Current*, May 10, 2024 (clip below)

Library talk. Bellingham City Club hosts a program with directors Rebecca Judd of Bellingham Public Library and Christine Perkins of Whatcom County Library System presenting the features that define today's modern libraries. May 22, 12 p.m. [Reservations.](#)

- *All Point Bulletin*, May 2, 2024 (clips below)

Rose Momsen goodbye party: Saturday, June 8, at the library. The Point Roberts Library team wishes her all the best! Rose, an exemplary assistant who is always reaching out to the community and its children in her library work, deserves a great thank you and a great send-off!

Interruption to online library services: Sunday, May 5, 5 p.m. to midnight. There will be an interruption in on-line library services and there won't be access to Kanopy, Freegal, Consumer Report and any other on-line database. The self-check out at Library Express will also be unavailable. You will be able to look at the catalog in Bibliocommons but not put books on hold.

Significant Social Media Engagement

Thank you to Ferndale Library Clerk Catherine Watson and her husband, Anthony Nguyen, for allowing us to share their wedding joy. Catherine and Anthony were married May 4 at the Ferndale Library. So far, 63,566 people “attended” the nuptials, making this our most engaging social media post ever. Cheers to #librarylove.

Whatcom County Library System
Published by Neil McKay · May 24 at 6:16 PM · 🌐

#LIBRARYLOVE! We were honored that Ferndale Library Clerk Catherine Watson chose the Ferndale Library to hold her Elopement Ceremony with her now husband, Anthony Nguyen on May 4. Catherine told us:

"We chose the library for our elopement ceremony and pictures because it's a beautiful building, and I've always had fond memories of going to the library. From an aesthetic viewpoint, the stripes of colors from the books create a great backdrop, and the Ferndale building has a beautiful back wall of windows looking over the garden. Maybe it's a little weird to get married where you work, but I don't have any negative feelings here. Personally, the library has always been a safe space for me."

Congratulations, Catherine and Anthony! And thank you for making the library a part of your love story!

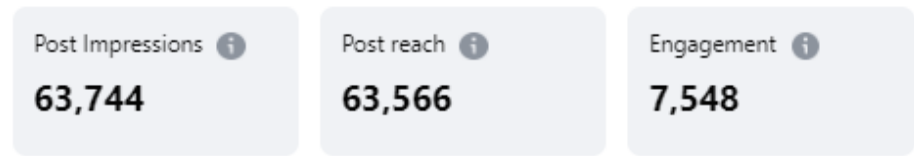
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Robin Aerial Growden
Gosh, this is the sweetest! Congrats to Catherine and Anthony! ❤️❤️



Mary Vermillion
Community Relations Manager

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	308,373	350,135	658,508

Circulation	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	11,994	13,751	48,690	49,911	2.5%
Bookmobile & Outreach	4,301	4,422	18,076	17,460	-3.4%
Deming	7,572	7,629	31,570	31,409	-0.5%
Everson	9,134	8,938	38,073	34,975	-8.1%
Ferndale	32,325	32,997	127,597	127,931	0.3%
Island	1,821	1,568	7,737	6,444	-16.7%
Lynden	37,493	36,582	153,686	142,970	-7.0%
North Fork	4,446	3,633	17,487	15,120	-13.5%
NWIC	10	6	50	30	-40.0%
Point Roberts + PRX	2,057	1,972	8,778	8,080	-8.0%
Sumas + SLX	2,268	2,208	5,873	9,068	54.4%
South Whatcom	7,657	7,164	30,549	29,334	-4.0%
NDX	3,063	3,552	13,072	13,192	0.9%
Physical Circulation Total	124,141	124,422	501,238	485,924	-3.1%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	27,036	25,818	109,895	103,810	-5.5%
All other materials	96,065	97,804	387,123	377,980	-2.4%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	30,950	36,016	126,695	143,852	13.5%
eMagazines	1,666	3,306	6,647	21,188	218.8%
eMusic	11,647	9,598	42,634	41,320	-3.1%
Streaming Video	1,618	1,075	6,964	5,134	-26.3%
Digital Circulation Total	45,881	49,995	182,940	211,494	15.6%
Grand Total	170,022	174,417	684,178	697,418	1.9%

Visitors (Door counts)	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg	Apr 2019
Blaine	6,295	6,981	24,700	26,878	8.8%	8,857
Deming	2,009	2,913	8,941	11,389	27.4%	3,905
Everson	2,832	3,201	11,302	12,527	10.8%	5,668
Ferndale	10,141	14,514	42,048	52,649	25.2%	17,333
Island	679	1,159	2,868	4,422	54.2%	1,450
Lynden	9,729	11,488	38,229	44,924	17.5%	17,316
NDX	265	313	1,146	1,282	11.9%	
North Fork	1,198	1,952	5,025	6,729	33.9%	2,826
Point Roberts + PRX	1,092	1,411	4,315	5,160	19.6%	1,318
Sumas + SLX	1,032	1,519	2,036	4,599	125.9%	1,724
South Whatcom	1,479	2,737	6,398	10,961	71.3%	2,207
Total	36,751	48,188	147,008	181,520	23.5%	62,604

New Borrowers	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
	405	554	2,345	2,508	7.0%

Interlibrary Loan	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	11,089	12,285	46,900	48,710	3.9%
Lent to BPL	21,448	21,409	87,932	88,231	0.3%
Borrowed: other libraries	441	722	2,116	2,680	26.7%
Lent: other libraries	520	640	2,156	2,461	14.1%

Electronic Resources	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	35,679	38,552	148,604	154,164	3.7%
Bibliocommons Sessions	49,778	101,314	210,876	394,670	87.2%
Internet Sessions	3,125	3,796	12,050	14,294	18.6%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	5,822	7,683	25,310	25,722	1.6%

Volunteers	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
	907	782	2,952	3,070	4.0%

Activities	Apr 2023	Apr 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	56	80	197	275	39.6%
Teens	22	7	76	55	-27.6%
Children	101	127	378	413	9.3%
Total	179	214	651	743	14.1%
Attendance					
Adults	420	539	2,542	3,261	28.3%
Teens	277	106	1,582	1,864	17.8%
Children	2,297	2,413	9,689	8,370	-13.6%
Total	2,994	3,058	13,813	13,495	-2.3%

Notes/Corrections:

As of mid-September 2023, OverDrive changed the way it counts magazine circulations

Jan - June 2023 stats for Bibliocommons & WCLS.org track entrances not sessions due to Google Analytics update in July 2023

Jan - Dec 2024 Kanopy stats now track titles played per state library guidance and are not comparable with Jan - Dec 2023, which tracks Kanopy views

Due to a technical error at OverDrive, digital magazine circulation is unusually low.

6/6/24: Adult program attendance corrected from 127 to 539

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	307,731	353,029	660,760

Circulation	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	12,022	13,088	60,712	62,999	3.8%
Bookmobile & Outreach	4,359	4,686	22,435	22,146	-1.3%
Deming	8,035	7,487	39,605	38,896	-1.8%
Everson	8,257	8,385	46,330	43,360	-6.4%
Ferndale	30,285	31,876	157,882	159,807	1.2%
Island	1,754	1,693	9,491	8,137	-14.3%
Lynden	36,430	36,607	190,116	179,577	-5.5%
North Fork	4,434	3,701	21,921	18,821	-14.1%
NWIC	12	10	62	40	-35.5%
Point Roberts + PRX	2,339	2,278	11,117	10,358	-6.8%
Sumas + SLX	2,294	2,240	8,167	11,308	38.5%
South Whatcom	7,397	7,447	37,946	36,781	-3.1%
NDX	3,325	3,580	16,397	16,772	2.3%
Physical Circulation Total	120,943	123,078	622,181	609,002	-2.1%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	25,864	26,016	135,759	129,826	-4.4%
All other materials	94,039	95,962	481,162	473,942	-1.5%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	31,283	36,914	157,978	180,766	14.4%
eMagazines	1,594	4,983	8,241	26,171	217.6%
eMusic	13,998	12,383	56,632	53,703	-5.2%
Streaming Video	1,615	1,231	8,579	6,365	-25.8%
Digital Circulation Total	48,490	55,511	231,430	267,005	15.4%
Grand Total	169,433	178,589	853,611	876,007	2.6%

Visitors (Door counts)	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg	May 2019
Blaine	6,175	6,916	30,875	33,794	9.5%	8,857
Deming	1,955	2,676	10,896	14,065	29.1%	3,905
Everson	2,902	2,972	14,204	15,499	9.1%	5,668
Ferndale	10,211	11,955	52,259	64,604	23.6%	17,333
Island	702	1,556	3,570	5,978	67.5%	1,450
Lynden	10,044	11,340	48,273	56,264	16.6%	17,316
NDX	291	360	1,437	1,642	14.3%	
North Fork	1,108	1,930	6,133	8,659	41.2%	2,826
Point Roberts + PRX	1,136	1,487	5,451	6,647	21.9%	1,318
Sumas + SLX	1,467	1,070	3,503	5,669	61.8%	1,724
South Whatcom	1,025	3,014	7,423	13,975	88.3%	2,207
Total	37,016	45,276	184,024	226,796	23.2%	62,604

New Borrowers	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
	532	622	2,877	3,130	8.8%

Interlibrary Loan	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	11,430	12,013	58,330	60,723	4.1%
Lent to BPL	21,958	21,680	109,890	109,911	0.0%
Borrowed: other libraries	556	635	2,672	3,315	24.1%
Lent: other libraries	485	593	2,641	3,054	15.6%

Electronic Resources	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	36,009	38,835	184,613	192,999	4.5%
Bibliocommons Sessions	51,120	103,159	261,996	497,829	90.0%
Internet Sessions	2,947	3,799	14,997	18,093	20.6%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	5,914	7,227	31,224	32,949	5.5%

Volunteers	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
	648	757	3,600	3,826	6.3%

Activities	May 2023	May 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	50	76	247	351	42.1%
Teens	30	16	106	71	-33.0%
Children	77	96	455	509	11.9%
Total	157	188	808	931	15.2%
Attendance					
Adults	287	534	2,829	3,795	34.1%
Teens	2,162	1,762	3,744	3,626	-3.2%
Children	3,226	3,840	12,915	12,210	-5.5%
Total	5,675	6,136	19,488	19,631	0.7%

Notes/Corrections:

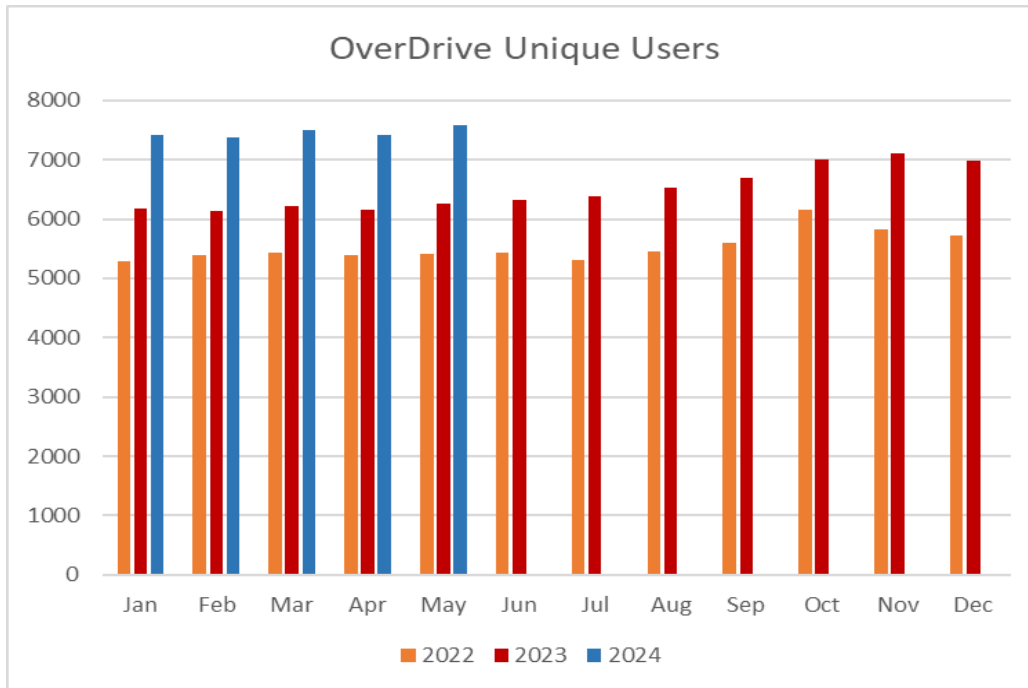
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OVERDRIVE UNIQUE USERS

May 2024 was another highest ever month for number of unique users accessing OverDrive content as our digital user base just continues to grow. The number of checkouts by WCLS patrons in May 2024 compared to May 2023 grew by over 27% (32,877 checkouts in May 2023 and 41,897 checkouts in May 2024). Digital audiobooks continue to account for half of all circulation, with eBooks and eMagazines comprising the other half. Top circulating item last month was *The New Yorker* (336 checkouts).



DATABASE USAGE

As Community Relations continues to focus the spring marketing campaign on Mango Languages, usage was once again strong - our second highest month ever with 709 total sessions in May 2024. (As a comparison, there were 392 total sessions in May 2023.) Patrons made good use of Peterson's Test Prep and LinkedIn Learning, with 13 Learning Courses completed at LinkedIn on topics such as logo design, Excel pivot tables and photography. On Peterson's Test Prep, 36 unique users completed an online course on Barbering!

