



September 19, 2023

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Location

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This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance at Everson McBeath Community Library, 104 Kirsch Drive, Everson, WA 98247.

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In Attendance

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**Trustees:** Rodney Lofdahl, Chair; Lori Jump, Vice Chair; Erika Lautenbach, Secretary; Matthew Santos and Holly Robinson. Absent: None.

**Staff:** Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager and Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) President; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Em Olpinski, Administrative Assistant; Paul Fullner, Everson Library Manager; Alix Prior, Ferndale Library Manager.

**Guests:** Joe Downes, AFSCME Local No. 1581 Council 2 Representative.

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Call to Order

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

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Open Public Comment

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No public comment.

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Service Anniversary Recognition

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The Board recognized Maggie Mae Nase, WCLS Learning Coordinator, for her ten-year service anniversary. Maggie Mae first began working at WCLS as a Page at Ferndale Library during August of 2013. During her time at WCLS she has also worked as a Clerk, a Public Services Assistant, and in the Collection Services Department. She has been in the Learning Coordinator position since 2021. She also serves on several committees at WCLS, is a graduate of WCLS' Emerging Leaders program, and is currently working towards her Master's in Library and Information Science.

Beth said that she is thankful for all the work that Maggie Mae does, and Christine commented that it has been wonderful to watch Maggie Mae move through the System. Dianne said that Maggie Mae is organized, prepared, and always thinking about ways to improve. The trustees thanked Maggie Mae for her service at WCLS.

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Consent Agenda

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The Consent Agenda included minutes of the August 15, 2023 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Meeting Minutes:

- August 15, 2023 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- July 16-31, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1035250452-1035250454 and voucher nos. 555853-556002 totaling \$219,527.26 and August 1-15, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1035450938-1035450942 and voucher nos. 556010- 556160 totaling \$227,259.34.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$103,049.39; \$31,018.43 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2023-30G: warrant nos. 1173928-1173945 totaling \$101,602.49
- Claim 2023-31G: warrant nos. 1174141-1174157 totaling \$11,920.40
- Claim 2023-32G: warrant nos. 1174727-1174753 totaling \$94,921.99
- Claim 2023-33G: warrant nos. 1175367-1175376 totaling \$34,279.11

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2023-14C: warrant nos. 1175041-1175042 totaling \$45,840.39

Authorization to Void Warrants

- Resolution 09/19/23-08 voiding warrants older than one year

***Holly moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

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Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

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Jackie reviewed her report, including the August Notes and Highlights section. She shared that a property valuation dispute was recently resolved in favor of the Assessor's Office. The property owner now must repay the back taxes that were on hold during the dispute, and these funds will ultimately be refunded to other taxpayers. This resulted in us receiving additional property tax revenue of \$230,000 in August. Jackie said that this means \$230,000 will now be withheld from our property tax levy in 2024, impacting the 2023 and 2024 bottom lines. Jackie will clearly note that the \$230,000 we received in August was in advance of our 2024 Levy.

Jackie then presented a 2024 Budget Planning Schedule, which outlines the steps that will need to be taken to approve and adopt the 2024 Budget. She also shared that WCLS is due for a biennial audit, but due to a backlog driven by a high number of Federal audits statewide, the State Auditor's Office will conduct our audit early next year.

Rod asked Jackie if it would be beneficial to do a line item in the 2023 budget to help track the property taxes we received in August. Jackie replied that this would be helpful and said that she will bring a resolution to add a line item to the budget in October.

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Trustee Education: Labor Relations

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Beth, Dianne, and Joe Downes gave a presentation to the trustees on WCLS' union partnership with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local No. 1581. Diane is the president of WCLS' union, and Joe Downes is a union representative for AFSCME and works with WCLS' chapter.

Beth summarized our current contract and the process for updating it. In addition to wage and benefit information, the contract notes process such as filling vacancies, accruing paid leave, addressing disciplinary

matters and guidelines for topics such as subbing, holidays, breaks and shift lengths. She explained the differences between WCLS' Bargaining Agreement with the union and WCLS' personnel policies.

Dianne shared the history of WCLS' union with the trustees and explained what her role as union president is. Joe said that he helps bargain union contracts throughout Northwest Washington. Joe can help represent employees who are being disciplined and can meet with agency management to discuss workplace issues. Dianne provided a summary of interest-based bargaining (IBB), the negotiation style used by the union and WCLS' management team. She noted that the Public Employee Relations Commission (PERC) was initially present for negotiations but hasn't been needed in several years.

Joe commented that WCLS is an organization with a great amount of trust between union membership and management. Dianne is thankful that such open conversations can happen between staff and management at WCLS. Rod said that he has served on the WCLS negotiation team the past few years, and he is always impressed by the level of cooperation fostered between WCLS and the union.

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## Policy Updates

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### **Copying and Printing Services for Patrons Policy 4.02**

Michael shared that we implemented our current printing credit system at the beginning of the pandemic, which provides patrons with a weekly free print credit of \$7.00. Holly asked Michael why we have a limit on patrons' weekly free printing, and how much staff time it takes to monitor weekly print credits. Michael responded that a \$7.00 printing credit accommodates most patrons' needs. Christine commented that putting a cap on free printing allows us to be good stewards of our resources. Michael added that our current printing system requires significantly less staff time than our pre-pandemic procedure, where patrons had to log-in to a WCLS computer to submit a printing job.

About 60% of our printing revenue is received through CASSIE, a printing software on WCLS computers. A staff question recently made us realize that CASSIE is unable to accurately charge while in duplex mode, Michael said, improperly charging patrons for blank pages. To reconcile our printing policy with the capabilities of our software, we are updating printing rates to be on a "per sheet" basis, instead of a "per page" basis.

***Holly moved to approve the update to Policy 4.02, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

### **Family and Medical Leave Policy 12.23**

Beth presented an update to Policy 12.23, which was formally our Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) policy. The policy has been updated to include Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (WaPFML), which became available to employees in 2020. We have discussed the spirit of our policy with our union representatives, and it has been decided that WCLS will administer benefits and have employees use accruals the same way for both FMLA and WaPFML. We have also decided that when an employee is on an approved medical leave, their benefits will be protected regardless of if they are on FMLA or WaPFML. Beth said that WCLS has been following the law since WaPFML was introduced, but we are now updating the language in our policy to reflect this. This policy has also been updated to use inclusive language.

***Holly moved to approve the update to Policy 12.23, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

### **Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21**

Beth said that Policy 12.21 has also been updated to include guidelines for WaPFML where formerly only FMLA was referenced.

***Holly moved to approve the update to Policy 12.21, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

Erika exited the meeting.

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## Break

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Rodney adjourned for a break from 10:34-10:40 a.m.

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## Tour of Everson McBeath Community Library

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Paul Fullner, Manager of the Everson Library, gave the trustees a tour of the library. The library was built by volunteers in 1977 and was expanded in 1983 and 1997. A recent remodel of the library was completed in early 2022. The trustees thanked Paul for the tour.

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### Staff Reports: Executive Director

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Christine shared that she recently met with Paul Schissler of Madrona Community Development and Andrew Krzysiek of Zervas Architects to discuss the proposed mixed-use library project in Blaine.

Christine shared that the initial grant funding for the project secured by the Kushan Community Land Trust is restricted to being used solely for the design process of the affordable housing section of the project. During the meeting it was also discussed how to fit a library of the size WCLS needs with the number of affordable housing units necessary to make the project feasible on the proposed project site. Having adequate parking for both the library and the housing units was also discussed.

Holly asked if the city could choose to move forward with building only affordable housing on the property and not a new library. Christine responded that this is a possibility. The most recent design for a new library in Blaine was for a 10,000 square foot library. Our goal is to provide the City of Blaine with a library of this size, but some adjustments may need to be made for the mixed-use project to be feasible. Christine is interested in further discussing the mixed-use library project with Blaine's Mayor, Mary Lou Steward, and the Blaine City Council.

Holly commented that as more people switch to using eMaterials, we may not need to as much square footage as we have in the past.

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### Staff Reports: Deputy Director

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Michael shared that it was the summer of pop-up library events. Earlier in the year, Mary advocated that we purchase three more 10' x 10' branded canopies. These canopies allowed WCLS to have a presence at 30 community events throughout the summer, where staff could sign people up for cards and check out materials.

Michael will be attending the Association of Rural and Small Libraries Conference with PSA-Cultural Liaisons Diana Antaño and Joshua Olsen, where they will present a session titled "Building Community Connections by Hiring for Cultural Knowledge." Katrina Carrabba, Deming Library Branch Manager, and Erin Suda, PSA, will also be presenting a session at the conference.

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### Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

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In Thom's absence, Christine shared that the Restorative Practices discussion sessions of Lauren Wolk's novel *Wolf Hollow* recently concluded. Thom has said that it was great to begin having conversations with staff about Restorative Practices and to begin laying a groundwork of shared values with staff. Matthew said that he enjoyed the novel and engaging with staff during the discussion session he attended.

Christine also shared that contracts have been signed with all six public school districts in Whatcom County, in addition to the Lummi Nation School and Lynden Christian School, for the ConnectED program. It is great to have these stable partnerships with local schools. Carmi Parker, ILS Administrator, is currently integrating new student ID numbers into our system. The ConnectED program allows students to use their student ID numbers to check out materials and access some online resources.

Thom and Theresa Morrison, Children's Services Coordinator, will be running a Library Advocate for Preschoolers (LAP) Certification program this fall. This program will help empower adults to support the literacy and library-use of young children in their lives.

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### Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

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Mary discussed her written report, highlighting that September is Library Card sign-up month. The Community Relations team has invited library staff to share moments of library joy on social media. The response to this campaign has been very positive. Mary also shared that the September to December issue of Explorations was recently sent out to county residences. The issue is a great resource for learning about upcoming library programs and offerings.

Mary also shared information with the trustees that WCLS' digital advertising is currently performing above industry standard. All WCLS advertising is created in-house. The significant increase in new borrowers WCLS has observed in 2023 is likely in-part because of our advertising. WCLS' presence at community events has also likely helped encourage people to sign-up for their first WCLS card.

The staff at the Blaine Library were recently invited to begin writing book reviews for the *Northern Light*. Mary will be including these reviews with other WCLS media coverage in her monthly report.

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## Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

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Michael presented August Performance Measures, sharing that in August overall circulation was down, which was being led by decreases in physical circulation. The circulation of eMaterials was up in August, but not enough to offset the decline in physical circulation.

Door counts at most branches were up in August, as compared to August 2022. The IT Department is currently testing new styles of door counters, as the laser counters currently used at WCLS branches have been discontinued.

Christine commented that Bellingham Public Library's (BPL) circulation was also down in August. This is a trend being seen at libraries across the country. She also said that the new BPL branch located in the Bellis Fair Mall is potentially helping serve county residents.

Rod pointed out that the increase in circulation of eMaterials almost offsets WCLS' decrease in physical circulation. Holly said that with the changes in the ways that patrons are engaging with libraries, we may not need as many physical materials available at branches. Michael noted that the majority of our circulation still comes from browsing.

In Lisa's absence, Michael reported that unique users to Overdrive continued to increase in August. Lisa also predicts that Database use will begin increasing again now that local schools are back in session.

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## Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

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Christine said that the board will have a trustee vacancy at the end of January. The Personnel Committee is beginning to communicate with the County Executive about the upcoming vacancy, which will be posted to the Whatcom County website soon.

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## Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

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In Jennifer's absence, Christine reported that Branch Out was a success. So far, the event has brought in \$38,000. Several WCLS staff helped run the event, and Darrell Hillaire, Lummi leader and founder of Children of the Setting Sun Productions, gave a presentation about his book *Jesintel: Living Wisdom from Coast Salish Elders*.

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## Announcements and Adjourn

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Christine said that the All Friends and Foundation Gathering will be September 20 at the Ferndale Library, and the next WCLF meeting will be on Thursday, September 21, at Administrative Services.

The Open Book Festival will be November 5 at the Ferndale Events Center from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Maggie Mae announced that All Staff Learning Day 2024 will be March 8 at Cornwall Church.

Jackie reminded Rod and Holly that wage and benefit negotiations will be at Administrative Services on:

October 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

October 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

October 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (backup date)

Jackie also reminded the trustees about the upcoming Budget Retreat, which will be on October 31 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Ferndale Library.

Rodney adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m.

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### Next Meeting

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Next meeting will be October 17, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services.  
Address: 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham.

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Rodney Lofdahl, Chair	Date	Jackie Saul, Dir. of Fin. and Admin.