



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; 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; Lisa Gresham, Collection 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; Alix Prior, Ferndale Library Manager; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Lynden Library Clerk; Ruth Nail, Minutes Recorder.

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. Michael directed attendees to the WCLS Land Acknowledgement banner at the bottom of the WCLS.org webpage and the "Read more" link that displays an expanded version of our statement and more information about land acknowledgements and associated resources.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the October 17, 2023, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting and the October 31, 2023, Board of Trustees Special Meeting, as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- September 16-30, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1035987561-1035987563 and voucher nos. 556485-556632 totaling \$213,402.86 and October 1-15, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1036151588-1036151595 and voucher nos. 556641-556799 totaling \$236,850.28.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$107,346.06; \$56,733.15 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance

premiums, Health Savings Accounts, state long-term care fund premiums, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).

- Claim 2023-38G: warrant nos. 1177169-1177180 totaling \$5,744.70
- Claim 2023-39G: warrant nos. 1177704-1177718 totaling \$94,446.59
- Claim 2023-40G: warrant nos. 1178059-1178085 totaling \$16,727.54
- Claim 2023-41G: warrant nos. 1178479-1178507 totaling \$118,378.10
- Claim 2023-42G: warrant nos. 1178969-1178981 totaling \$25,876.34

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2023-18C: warrant no. 1177181 totaling \$1,400.00
- Claim 2023-19G: warrant nos. 1178218-1178219 totaling \$1,785.10
- Claim 2023-20G: warrant nos. 1178708-1178709 totaling \$2,742.20

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

EV Charging Stations Discussion

Ryan delivered a presentation regarding the potential installation of public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at the library system's branches, as well as fast-charging stations at the Administrative Services facility for fleet vehicles. He emphasized that such measures would help meet the needs of EV drivers in our county and support our strategic goal of environmental stewardship. Ryan reviewed some benefits and fiscal impacts of these charging stations and transitioning the system's fleet vehicles to EVs, noting that initial capital expenses can be fully or partially funded by granting organizations. He provided lifecycle cost analyses of both propositions, including ongoing budgetary effects and maintenance considerations for the library system.

Ryan outlined the parameters and requirements of two grants that are of current interest to WCLS. One is available via the Washington State Department of Commerce (DOC) and the other from Puget Sound Energy (PSE). The DOC grant could provide partial funding for public (Level 2) charging stations at certain branches. The PSE grant could provide funding, up to a maximum amount of \$250,000, for the installation of fast-charging (Level 3) EV chargers specifically for WCLS fleet EVs at Administrative Services. This grant requires the purchase of two EV fleet vehicles. He estimated a cost of \$120,000 to replace two of our fleet vehicles, which are already scheduled for replacement in 2024 and included in the 2024 preliminary budget and capital plan. Ryan noted that there is a ten-year service agreement required with the PSE grant, during which PSE will service the fleet EV charging equipment.

Ryan answered trustees' questions about the grants and equipment, clarifying that, with the DOC grant for public charging stations:

- There is a December 1, 2023, deadline to apply. If the application is successful, WCLS has a choice to accept or decline the DOC grant contract.
- The number of charging stations per branch is scalable.
- There may be fines associated with non-electric vehicles parking in EV designated spaces.
- There would be a charge to the public to use the EV charging stations at the branches, and WCLS would likely pursue a third-party service to maintain the chargers and process payment transactions to recover costs to provide electricity.
- For branches not owned by WCLS, an additional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be required that addresses the EV charging stations.
- Not all branches are currently being considered for EV charging stations. For example, the City of Lynden is independently pursuing charging stations, and the City of Ferndale has other public works projects slated for the near future.

- There may be additional insurance requirements associated with the charging stations. Jackie and Ryan will investigate the requirements and costs further.

Conversation occurred about county demographics, the availability and location of EV charging stations, equitable usage of parking spaces, range anxiety and other obstacles to EV conversion from combustion-engine vehicles, the length of time required for charging, and infrastructure technology and possible software requirements for charger payment and maintenance systems. Matthew asked for the input of branch managers in attendance, Lynden Manager Dianne Marrs-Smith and Ferndale Manager Alix Prior. Dianne noted that the Lynden Library has a large parking lot, and she could see the value of the public being able to charge their EV while using the library's WiFi. She voiced concerns about the impact on library staff and patrons if the chargers or the payment service were inoperable, or if users had to wait for a station to become available or for their EV to charge. Alix echoed Ryan's earlier statement regarding the City of Ferndale's focus on working on a new city hall building. She added that, since city hall is adjacent to the library, assessing the parking lot will be a part of that project, so EV charging stations in Ferndale may be something to explore in the future.

Matthew moved to approve the December 1, 2023, application for the DOC grant for public chargers at the branches. Seconded. Discussion followed. After the vote, motion did not carry.

Rod moved to approve the December 1, 2023, application for the DOC grant for public chargers at the branches, provided there are no negative impacts for reapplication if this application is successful and we do not accept the grant contract at this time. Seconded. Unanimously carried.

There is not an immediate deadline to submit a request for the PSE grant for fast-charging stations for fleet vehicles at Administrative Services, so infrastructure discussions can continue in the following months. Initial replacement costs for the two fleet vehicles preliminarily budgeted for 2024 are comparable between combustion-engine and EV models, with varying operational costs over a ten-year lifecycle. Current next steps include Board approval of the preliminary budget and capital plan at this meeting, followed by approval of the final budget next month. Future changes to the budget would require an approved resolution by the Board.

Erika departed the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

2024 Strategic Action Plan

Christine presented the 2024 Strategic Action Plan, which has not had significant changes since she presented it to the Board at the Budget Retreat on October 31. She has added some more details and a couple programs, which she highlighted, including repeat scheduling of Open Book and Pride in the Park. Christine reported that both programs were a great success previously and have been scheduled again for next year. The funding for Open Book has not been included in the preliminary budget for 2024, and the cost is estimated at \$25,000. The Whatcom County Library Foundation is interested in supporting next year's festival and will seek additional sponsors. If the Board approves the 2024 Strategic Action Plan today, Jackie will include additional pertinent expense and revenue lines in the final 2024 budget to be presented to the Board for approval next month.

Rod moved to approve the 2024 Strategic Action Plan, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the October Notes and Highlights section. As of the end of October we have received \$9,196,755 in property tax revenue, with another \$694,000 expected in November and December. This influx of revenue has allowed us to replenish the Cash Flow reserve fund, which was utilized in September. With anticipated receipts, we should have sufficient cash reserves to operate through 2023.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2024 Operating Budget Revenue Sources and Preliminary Budget

Rod announced the beginning of the public hearing on proposed 2024 operating budget revenue sources and preliminary budget.

Jackie stated the 2024 Preliminary Budget has been discussed at length at the October 31 Board Budget Retreat. She presented Resolution 11/21/23-10 Authorizing an Increase in the Regular Property Tax Levy and summarized its contents. There were no questions.

Rod moved approval of Resolution 11/21/23-10 Authorizing an Increase in the Regular Property Tax Levy. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Jackie reviewed the 2024 Preliminary Budget, highlighting what has been updated since the October 31 Board Budget Retreat and the estimated net operating deficit of roughly \$635,000. She presented the proposed 2024 Operating Budget Revenue Sources and Preliminary Budget, detailing items contained therein, fiscal impacts upon them, and changes from 2023. Jackie outlined General Facilities Services projects planned for 2024, followed by larger projects included in the 5-year Capital Plan for 2024-2028. There were no questions.

Jackie presented Resolution 11/21/23-11 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary General and Capital Fund Budgets and Resolution 11/21/23-12 Adopting the 2024 Preliminary Capital Plan.

Rod moved approval of Resolution 11/21/23-11 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary General and Capital Fund Budgets, as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Matthew moved approval of Resolution 11/21/23-12 Adopting the 2024-2028 Preliminary Capital Plan. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Rod announced the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

2024 Addendum to Agreement with the Whatcom County Library Foundation

Christine presented Addendum No. 13 (2024) to the Agreement with the Whatcom County Library Foundation, noting the modest changes made since the prior Addendum No. 12 (2023). There were no questions.

Matthew moved approval of the 2024 Addendum No. 13 to the Whatcom County Library Foundation Agreement as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

Break

Rodney adjourned for a break from 11:03-11:10 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the success of the Open Book festival. She expressed thanks to Mary Vermillion for her vision and Michael for his execution. The festival spotlighted the wide variety of services available at WCLS and attendees represented communities county-wide.

Christine noted her inclusion of a *Lynden Tribune* opinion piece to her written report and the appreciation of Lynden Library services expressed therein. She also included a *Cascadia Daily News* article on property taxes and levies, which provided valuable explanations of these often-complicated topics and may be a good resource for future conversations with community members.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared photos from the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) program, which was held at the Everson Library as a coordinated effort between Everson Library Hispanic Cultural Liaison PSA Diana Antaño and Lynden Library Hispanic Cultural Liaison PSA Amelia Martinez. There were around 150 in attendance. Next year, this program may be presented at the Ferndale Library.

Michael highlighted other community-building programs. The camas bulb cultivation program centered around this edible staple of our Indigenous communities. Fresh bulbs were available to take home for cultivation and boiled bulbs were offered to taste at the event. In September and October, the North Fork Library opened early to hold Post Drop-Off Pick-Me-Up opportunities for parents to gather after dropping off their children at the school across the street.

Michael announced that WCLS has accepted the approved DOC grant contract that provides the majority of funding for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express (BBX) location. He outlined the planning timeline, including the solicitation for Requests for Quotation and the process to hire an architect and other contractors. A BBX Design Committee will be established to facilitate this process. Christine gave a brief description of the involvement requirements of the committee members. Matthew and Rod volunteered for assignment to the BBX Design Committee. Michael will coordinate committee meeting dates and candidate interviews with Matthew and Rod. A site visit is currently scheduled for December 7, with a possible architect recommendation being presented for Board approval at the February 20 meeting. Upon successful candidate selection and contract negotiations, March 1 is the target date for design services to begin.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Christine reported that Thom was unable to attend today's meeting because he was covering for absences within the Youth Services team. With recent departures and internal shifting in personnel, the team is spread thin now. Interviews are underway and we're looking forward to a full Youth Services roster soon.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She noted Open Book's success and shared photos of the billboard on Interstate 5, along with resoundingly positive post-festival comments from emails and survey responses. The Washington State Arts commission also noted the palpable community spirit felt at the event. With this year's success, Mary hopes for even more media coverage next year. Another aspect of Open Book was the creation of the 2023 WCLS Gift Guide, which features a broad spectrum of wonderful reading recommendations and top checkout titles of 2023. The guide is available in print and online, as well as at all WCLS branches.

Mary highlighted that November is Native American Heritage Celebration month and that Friday is Native American Heritage Day. She directed attendees to the [booklists for adults](#) and [young people](#) that have been curated by Cultural Liaison PSAs Joshua Olsen and Coreen Kurtz.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael noted that October's physical circulation at North Fork Library has surpassed last October's numbers. He is pleased with the continuing positive trends in eMusic and eMagazine circulation. WCLS continues to see increases in door counts across all locations, compared to 2022. Michael indicated that the 2019 column was our previous high-water mark, and both Ferndale and South Whatcom branches have exceeded their 2019 door counts.

Michael reported that we continue to see new borrower registrations and that more Adult Programming is being planned in coordination with branch managers.

Digital and database usage remains strong, with sustained increases in Overdrive unique new users. The new ticket system is in full swing on our video streaming platform service, Kanopy. Use reached new highs in October with the hit title, *A French Village*.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee reported that they have met with several potential trustee candidates, with possibly more to be scheduled. This candidate will fill the position being vacated by Vice Chair Lori Jump, whose second term expires January 31, 2024. The committee will bring its report to the Board in December. Christine added that, if there were multiple strong candidates, Erika would support a second trustee's nomination to allow her step away from her position on the WCLS Board.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Jenn reported that the Foundation has exceeded its fundraising goal for the year. She expressed thanks for the Foundation's many and varied donors. WCLF has two open board positions and welcomes interested applicants.

Executive Session to Discuss the Executive Director's Annual Review per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g)

At 11:46 a.m., Board Chair Rod Lofdahl moved the meeting to Executive Session, as per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), to discuss the Executive Director's annual performance review. He announced that the Executive Session would end at 12:05 p.m.

At 12:05 p.m., Rod briefly reconvened Open Session to announce the Executive Session would be extended until 12:10 p.m.

At 12:10 p.m., Rod reconvened Open Session.

Executive Director's Annual Review

Rod reported that the Board has decided to continue the discussion Executive Director's annual performance review at the December meeting when trustee Erika Lautenbach could be present.

Announcements and Adjourn

All-Staff Learning Day is scheduled for Friday, March 8, 2024, and trustees are encouraged to attend.

Rod adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be December 19, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services. Address: 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham.

_____/s/
Rodney Lofdahl, Board Chair

12/19/2023

Date

_____/s/
Ruth Nail, Minutes Recorder