



January 16, 2024

---

### 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; Thom Barthelmess, Youth Services Manager; 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; Jennifer Rick, Foundation Development Director; Alix Prior, Ferndale Library Manager; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Jake Johnson, Lynden Public Services Assistant; Ruth Nail, Accountant; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant.

**Guests:** Scott Hylton, Assistant Audit Manager, and Christy Fazio, Audit Lead, from the Washington State Auditor's Office.

---

### Call to Order

---

Rod determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., followed by a reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement by Michael.

Michael highlighted that Treaty Day is Monday, January 22, 2024. Treaty Day signifies the signing of the Treaty of Point Elliot in 1855 which directly affects Whatcom County. He encourages all to learn more about this historical event by visiting the website of the [Governor's Office of Indian Affairs](#). The site can be accessed through [WCLS.org](#), [clicking Land Acknowledgement](#) under the Visit tab and scrolling to the bottom of the page. The Ferndale School District is closed on January 22 in honor of this day.

---

### Open Public Comment

---

No public comment.

---

### Service Anniversary Recognition

---

The Board recognized Jake Johnson, Lynden Public Services Assistant for his 10-year service anniversary. Dianne Marrs-Smith, Lynden Library Manager, attended the meeting to introduce Jake and speak a little about his time with WCLS. Jake started with WCLS as a Clerk at the South Whatcom branch when it opened. He relocated to Ferndale as a Clerk. These days, Jake is a full-time PSA at Lynden. Jake is great at working with patrons and is caring and thoughtful with both patrons and fellow staff members. Many patrons will wait for Jake because they love interacting and conversing with him and miss him on his days off. He now hosts a book club at Lynden. Recently,

Jake helped organize a pop-up story time at the Pioneer Museum in Lynden for John Deere Tractor Day. He enjoys organizing historical programs and has promoted the historical cemetery tour in Lynden. The research he does on topics and guest speakers makes him a thoughtful and engaging host for library programs. Jake has an adventurous nature and is always open to new ideas. Thank you, Jake, for 10 years of fantastic service!

Christine knew Jake from BPL and is happy WCLS was able to hire him and keep him for so long.

---

## Consent Agenda

---

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the December 19, 2023, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

### Expenditures:

#### General Fund:

- November 16-30, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1036724673-1036724675 and voucher nos. 557123-557271 totaling \$214,933.48 and December 1-15, 2023 payroll: check nos. 1036896920-1036896921 and voucher nos. 557278-557428 totaling \$ 223,065.15.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$96,898.37; \$36,793.84 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 2023-47G: warrant nos. 1181157-1181166 totaling \$6,064.82
- Claim 2023-48G: warrant nos. 1181334-1181357 totaling \$247,546.62
- Claim 2023-49G: warrant nos. 1181586-1181605 totaling \$44,692.74
- Claim 2023-50G: warrant nos. 1182370-1182395 totaling \$119,022.93

#### Capital Fund:

- Claim 2023-24C: warrant nos. 1182633-1182634 totaling \$3,444.52

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

---

## Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

---

Jackie reviewed her report, including 2023 Debt Write-Off and 2023 Small Works Awards. The report this month is brief because the 2023 year closes out on January 20. The report shared in February will include year-end numbers.

Jackie has requested information from the County Assessor's Office regarding the large property tax back-payment received mid-year in 2023. This was in addition to our regular levy amount and in abeyance for 2024. Jackie is confirming the amount in abeyance and if necessary, will include an adjustment in the 2024 budget amendment to be shared at the February meeting.

---

## Review of 2023 Incident Reports

---

Jackie presented a summary of 2023 Incident Reports, providing details about incident occurrences across the system.

The majority of incidents are concentrated at the Ferndale Library. Christine, Michael, Thom and Alix spoke about the different ways that WCLS is responding to the increase in incidents at this branch. Many proactive relationships

with local officials and organizations have been created and fostered. These relationships will continue to grow and serve to benefit WCLS and the community long after the resolution of the incidents.

Michael reminded the Board that they have access to the same Ryan Dowd training that staff does and encourages them to take it. Maggie Mae will send out the links to the training to trustees.

---

## Policy Updates

---

**Public Communication Policy 12.57** – Mary presented this new policy. The objective of this policy is to ensure WCLS external communications are accurate, thorough, timely and representative of the library system's brand.

***Holly moved to approve the updated Public Communication Policy 12.57, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

---

## Staff Reports: Executive Director

---

In addition to her written report, the recent weather has caused Christine to reflect that libraries are a place people often go to stay warm and when extreme weather happens over a holiday closure, which affects some patrons.

Happy lamps are coming to WCLS! BPL recently added some UV light therapy lamps to their collection and the holds list for them is already very large.

In January, Friends of the Birch Bay Library received a pledge of \$100,000 in unrestricted funds from an anonymous donor. Fantastic work by all the Friends to foster a relationship with Whatcom Community Foundation, which led to this gift.

Christine included an article about Future Libraries. Such a big concept! She asked trustees to consider what WCLS could be doing to set our libraries up for the future in such an imaginative way? Christine loves the foresight that projects like the “Future Library” encompass. She hopes the board can support ideas and provide some of their own for potential projects that are reflective of this.

---

## Staff Reports: Deputy Director

---

In addition to his written report, Michael shared an update about the Community Resources page. The page will be updated soon to direct people to one collaborative site for the county to use.

Suggestions for updates to Community Resources can be sent to Michael Cox via email. WCLS is recommending about forty new resources being brought onto the list. Michael thanked Lori for her leadership on this project. It is an evolving tool and part of a bigger effort.

Interviews start this week for the Punjabi Community Liaison and include applicants from around the county. Michael is looking forward to diving into figuring out what new programs and ideas come from this new position.

---

## Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

---

Thom shared his written report and highlighted the newest edition of Whatcomics. One of the requirements for submissions is that they cannot be fan art. Our Teen Intern, Bibi Brown, was crucial in assisting in identifying these types of submissions.

The annual Whatcomics celebration was held this past Saturday in Lynden. Seventy-two artists were in attendance. Their art is still on display in the meeting room and Teen area in Lynden for viewing. Whatcomics art has been installed inside and outside a brand-new WTA bus.

Thom noted that the dollar amount we waived for ConnectED accounts for 2023 was under \$200. Thom believes that the reason it is so low is because of the item limitations on the ConnectED cards. These limits require borrowers to return items to check out more, reinforcing good borrowing behavior.

---

### Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

---

Mary discussed her written report. She noted that the Power of Sharing campaign running from December through March features Kanopy. Results so far have been impressive. Click-through rates have been strong and 154 new Kanopy accounts were activated in December.

---

### Break

---

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:22 to 10:37 a.m.

---

### Agreement Between BPL and WCLS for the Operation and Maintenance of an ILS

---

Christine reviewed the 2024 updated draft of the Agreement Between Bellingham Public Library (BPL) and Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) for the Operation and Maintenance of an Integrated Library System (ILS). WCLS and Bellingham Public Library have partnered on the costs to operate and maintain an Integrated Library System since we first became automated in the 1990s. This update will provide WCLS with increased remuneration for our work done to distribute paper notices on behalf of Bellingham Public Library, accounting for staff time as well as increased postage rates.

***Erika moved to approve the updated agreement, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

---

### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

---

In addition to his written report, Michael shared there was a reduction of about 5% in the circulation of physical materials – CDs and DVDs this month versus December 2022. End of year circulation numbers were up overall thanks to our digital services. This year, eMagazines were integrated into Libby which helped promote the circulation of digital magazines. Christine referenced Bellingham Public Library circulation numbers. Their numbers were also down for the circulation of physical materials. It is a trend that is not unique to WCLS.

2023 seems to represent more of a “return to normal” after the pandemic. Branches have more patrons walking through the doors and attending programs. Rod is encouraged by the door count numbers. Numbers are still not up to 2019 levels but steadily increasing. The board would like to keep 2019 numbers on the charts for now as an easy way to make comparisons.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) activity has decreased and could be due to the general decrease in physical materials being used across the country.

Internet sessions have increased 35% year-over-year. Many factors could be contributing to this trend including inflation, post-pandemic habits returning, Canadian traffic, etc.

The plan is to keep adding hot spots as they become available from vendors. There is a long holds list for the ones in the system.

People are discovering eMagazines, which is great, and circulation numbers are increasing. Kanopy has had its highest three months ever in 2023.

Chilton’s auto repair database is getting strong use lately.

---

### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

---

The Personnel Committee reported it has been a good year!



## ATTACHMENT A



whatcom county  
**library system**

### PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF LORI JUMP

January 16, 2024

WHEREAS, WCLS first became acquainted with Lori Jump when she joined the Library Board of Trustees in December 2014; and

WHEREAS, Lori has served as Vice Chair, Secretary and Whatcom County Library Foundation liaison at various points during her tenure as well as on the Marketing Committee and IT Services Committee among others; and

WHEREAS, Lori regularly celebrates her enthusiasm for lifelong learning and the role libraries can play in expanding one's experience and understanding by attending library events and programs across Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, Lori has provided thoughtful, essential feedback on a wide variety of issues, representing the needs and interests of the rural communities we serve as well as those of families with children; and

WHEREAS, during Lori's lengthy tenure, WCLS:

- Improved library buildings in Ferndale, Point Roberts, Island, South Whatcom, Everson and Sumas;
- Purchased property on Birch Bay Drive for a future Birch Bay Library;
- Conducted a public design process for a new Blaine Library;
- Established the Nooksack Valley Heritage Center at the Everson Library and the Northwest Library Express;
- Eliminated overdue fines and introduced courtesy renewals;
- Completed two strategic planning processes;
- Celebrated WCLS's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and commissioned a new library bookmobile;
- Expanded the ConnectED program to all Whatcom County public school districts, the Lummi Nation School and Lynden Christian Schools;
- Weathered two narrow defeats of Library Capital Facilities Area elections for Birch Bay;
- Recovered after a ransomware attack encrypted WCLS computer networks;
- Survived a global pandemic;
- Participated in multiple PR campaigns including My Modern Library, #BookBrainChallenge, #WCLSPetSelfies, and We Believe in Libraries, which won two John Cotton Dana Awards for library marketing; and
- Oversaw hundreds of interesting library programs, services, and events that brought countless benefits to the people of Whatcom County, and

WHEREAS, Lori has now completed her second term on the WCLS Board;

NOW LET IT BE KNOWN THAT

Whatcom County Library System, its board, staff, supporters, and patrons, are grateful to Lori Jump for her zest for learning, ability to present alternate viewpoints, and lifelong commitment to public libraries.

WITH GRATITUDE,

The WCLS Leadership Team

## The Power of Sharing

5205 Northwest Drive | Bellingham, Washington 98226 | (360) 305-3600 | [wcls.org](http://wcls.org)



whatcom county  
**library system**

## ATTACHMENT B

### PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF ERIKA LAUTENBACH

January 16, 2024

WHEREAS, WCLS first became acquainted with Erika Lautenbach when she joined the Library Board of Trustees in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Erika quickly showed her astute understanding of the political environment and of the needs facing our community and her ability to provide specific, actionable ideas to help WCLS thrive; and

WHEREAS, Erika pioneered the ability for trustees to attend meetings remotely by regularly participating via conference call while serving as a fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Erika capably carried on as library trustee during a multi-year global pandemic when her professional role as Whatcom County Health Department Director was critical and all-encompassing; and

WHEREAS, during Erika's six-year tenure, WCLS:

- Purchased property on Birch Bay Drive for a future Birch Bay Library;
- Conducted a public design process for a new Blaine Library;
- Established the Nooksack Valley Heritage Center at the Everson Library and the Northwest Library Express, opened the new Point Roberts Library, and rebuilt the Sumas Library after a devastating flood;
- Eliminated overdue fines and introduced courtesy renewals;
- Celebrated WCLS's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and commissioned a new library bookmobile;
- Expanded the ConnectED program to all Whatcom County public school districts, the Lummi Nation School and Lynden Christian Schools;
- Recovered after a ransomware attack encrypted WCLS computer networks;
- Survived a global pandemic;
- Participated in multiple PR campaigns including We Believe in Libraries, which won two John Cotton Dana Awards for library marketing; and
- Oversaw a countless interesting library programs, services, and events that brought countless benefits to the people of Whatcom County, and

WHEREAS, Erika's work commitments make it challenging for her to continue to serve on the WCLS Board; and

WHEREAS, Erika has publicly vowed to continue to foster partnerships between the Whatcom County Health Department and WCLS to improve community health and intends to be a lifelong WCLS supporter;

NOW LET IT BE KNOWN THAT

Whatcom County Library System, its board, staff, supporters, and patrons, are grateful to Erika Lautenbach for her service as a WCLS Trustee.

WITH GRATITUDE,

The WCLS Leadership Team

## The Power of Sharing

5205 Northwest Drive | Bellingham, Washington 98226 | (360) 305-3600 | [wcls.org](http://wcls.org)