



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; 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; Maggie Mae Nase, Learning Coordinator; Rheannan Pfnister, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Claire McElroy, Adult Programing Coordinator.

Guests: None.

Call to Order

Rod determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m., followed by a reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement for an audience of young people by Michael.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the March 19, 2024, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- February 16-29, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1037776289-1037776290 and voucher nos. 558066-558219 totaling \$219,847.06 and March 1-15, 2024 payroll: check no. 1037987617 and voucher nos. 558226-558381 totaling \$242,697.86.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$102,847.78; \$20,196.70 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2024-09G: warrant nos. 1186689-1186708 totaling \$44,596.01
- Claim 2024-10G: warrant nos. 1186967-1186986 totaling \$156,694.65
- Claim 2024-11G: warrant nos. 1187279-1187298 totaling \$16,775.02

- Claim 2024-12G: warrant nos. 1187758-1187788 totaling \$116,398.67

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2024-05C: warrant nos. 1187789-1187790 totaling \$6,769.03

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report and the Levy Lid Lift projections update. There was an increase in property tax revenue since February, but we continue to need to dip into Cash Flow reserves until the next property tax payment deadline April 30. March's report from Whatcom County Finance included a transaction correcting another transaction in February 2023, resulting in a negative total in the Local Grants, Entitlements & Other revenue category. Jackie has requested more information from County staff. Financially, WCLS expenditures are at 24% of the 2024 budget in the first fiscal quarter. The invoice for the 2022-2023 State Audit came in and was less than expected. WCLS saved close to \$3,000. Jackie highlighted the savings and recognized the Finance Department for their diligent work maintaining comprehensive and organized files.

Jackie updated the Levy Lid Lift projections based on the 2023 year-end financials and the first quarter of 2024. Many assumptions go into this projection, including no new staff positions or new expenses arising. According to the projection, without the passage of a levy lid lift, WCLS is at risk of depleting the cash reserve below the mandated policy requirement by 2028.

Christine spoke about the need to time a levy lid lift request well and consider that it might not pass the first time on the ballot. When WCLS does decide to pursue a levy lid lift, the current fund balance needs to be considered along with the recent results of other levies from fire and school districts. The trustees believe that 2025 is a good time to strive for. Danielle mentioned that a training Christine presented to Leadership Whatcom in the past would be very beneficial for the community, provide an educational perspective and would be appealing to voters. Holly and John have been following the media coverage of the Seattle Public Library and their funding and staffing levels. A recent Seattle Times article referenced by the trustees appears to reflect that the issues SPL is experiencing are due to lack of staff, not necessarily funding. Christine will follow up with the Seattle Public Library Director. The discussion was tabled.

Trustee Education: Whatcom READS

Mary Vermillion, along with Adult Programming Coordinator, Claire McElroy, shared the mission and vision of Whatcom READS and why so much passion, energy and resources are put into this annual event. They spoke about the history and statistics from previous years. Claire gave more information about what is expected from an author when they agree to be a part of Whatcom READS as well as what kind of criteria are in place for the selection of a Whatcom READS title. Claire talked about the programming surrounding a Whatcom READS event and how they are spread throughout the county to bring people together. The 2025 Whatcom READS selection is the novel *No Two Persons* by Erica Bauermeister. Selection of the 2026 book is currently underway. This annual effort is supported by many local organizations including Whatcom County Library Foundation, Village Books and Allied Arts.

Beyond Book Bans: Risk Assessment for Public Libraries

Christine highlighted two recent articles that touch on the many ways book bans are not the only threat to public libraries and led the Board of Trustees in a risk assessment exercise for WCLS.

Matthew appreciated having this exercise. It helps keep national trends and news, as well as potential future circumstances, in our minds as we move forward. Articles like the ones discussed reinforce the concept that it is invaluable to maintain relationships with local cities and communities for many reasons.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:52-11:00 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the recent passage of Second Substitute Senate Bill 5444 that amends RCW 9.41.300. This will amend the current law regarding open carry of firearms, which will be prohibited in public libraries and goes into effect on June 6. Christine spoke with the Ferndale and Blaine Police Departments, and they gave advice on signage and enforcement in their respective communities. Christine is waiting to hear back from the other city Police Departments and the Whatcom County Sheriff's office. Instructions to staff will be given once all law enforcement agencies have weighed in on how to move forward and address any situations that may arise after June 6.

Christine attended an All Hands Whatcom event that included the screening of a film about the people impacted by the opioid epidemic. It was a powerful experience to watch the movie put together by the Children of the Setting Sun Productions. It was a very meaningful film and a beacon of hope.

A brief discussion regarding Birch Bay and the research and feasibility study taking place regarding incorporation took place.

WCLS is in contact with DentALL, a mobile dental lab. Christine has a meeting to discuss the possibility of a pop up at different branches. Thank you to Matthew for putting us in touch with this resource.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that the project kickoff meeting for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express with Osborn Architects is this Thursday. Beginning from his first Board of Trustees's meeting in 2015, Michael gave the trustees a brief glance at the history and evolution of the establishment of a WCLS location in Birch Bay. This included the extensive efforts of the Friends of the Birch Bay Library and the grant awards for this project to date.

The North Fork Library is currently looking into ways to better utilize their space by incorporating a moveable wall to create a flexible meeting space. Thank you to the Foothills Alliance and the Friends of the North Fork Library for providing support for this project.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

On behalf of Thom, Christine shared his written report and highlighted the Forest of Words celebration in May. It is a great celebration for the youth who participated in A Forest of Words and gives them an opportunity to celebrate with family, friends and the community.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She also handed out the 2023 Community Report (formerly known as the Annual Report) to the trustees.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that door counts are up at every location. The number of materials that WCLS circulates via BPL has increased.

Program attendance was up for March. Whatcom READS was likely the driving force behind this increase.

