



---

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:** Matthew Santos, Vice Chair; Holly Robinson, Secretary and Danielle Gaughen. Absent: Rodney Lofdahl, Chair and John Miller, both absent with prior notice.

**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, Birch Bay and 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.

**Guests:** None.

---

Call to Order

---

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

---

Open Public Comment

---

No public comment.

---

Consent Agenda

---

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the October 22, 2024, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- September 16-30, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1040341226-1040341227 and voucher nos. 560272-560428 totaling \$233,972.81 and October 1-15, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1040503280-1040503285 and voucher nos. 560434-560604 totaling \$269,424.50.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$117,901.55; \$64,326.55 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 2024-39G: warrant nos. 1200650-1200668 totaling \$52,169.65
- Claim 2024-40G: warrant nos. 1201027-1201047 totaling \$47,558.42

- Claim 2024-41G: warrant nos. 1201285-1201312 totaling \$115,681.59
- Claim 2024-42G: warrant nos. 1201927-1201944 totaling \$65,039.52
- Claim 2024-43G: warrant nos. 1202552-1202574 totaling \$69,376.33

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2024-18C: warrant no. 1200669 totaling \$10,682.12
- Claim 2024-19C: warrant no. 1201313 totaling \$5,133.90
- Claim 2024-20C: warrant no. 1201945 totaling \$11,944.00
- Claim 2024-21C: warrant no. 1202575 totaling \$1,022.97

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the October Notes and Highlights section. WCLS received a large amount of the remaining property tax revenue in October but has received less of the levy than is typical for this time of year. Jackie contacted the Whatcom County Treasurer’s Office to inquire about the lag and was assured this is simply a timing issue, with additional revenues posting to our account in early November. The remaining property tax levy should be received in November and December. This situation speaks as to why WCLS needs cash flow reserves on hand.

***Holly motioned to move Staff Reports ahead of the Public Hearing on the agenda due to being ahead of the agenda schedule. Seconded. Passed unanimously.***

Staff Reports: Executive Director

This agenda item was moved before the Public Hearing due to being ahead of schedule.

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the attendance at the Citizen’s Advisory Committee meeting last week at the Ferndale Library. Danielle stated that additional meetings are needed to reach more of the community and encouraged having smaller group discussions. Matthew agreed with Danielle and suggested appointing group facilitators ahead of time to help manage the limited time during the meetings. Many comments were received from the participants and will be shared prior to the next Board meeting. Christine conveyed that the format for the next meeting will be breakout groups for focused discussion on different topics. She asked the trustees present if they were open to attending smaller meetings at different branches and they responded positively.

The Freedge had its soft opening at the North Fork Library. Once the weather improves this spring, the shed housing the Freedge will be painted. Sustainable Connections is currently pursuing another grant opportunity in conjunction with the City of Sumas to have a second Freedge installed in the lobby of the Sumas Library.

Christine reviewed the 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting schedule with the trustees. At the previous board meeting some trustees expressed interest in resuming the practice of holding meetings at different branches. Danielle stated that visiting other branches poses a timing issue for her and she may not be able to attend these meetings in person. Matthew stated that visiting the other branches would provide trustees with the opportunity to be out in the community more. Changes to the proposed schedule were requested. The decision to approve the schedule was delayed until December so that Rod and John may give input.

Christine asked the trustees for their opinions regarding staying half an hour after board meetings or arriving half an hour early for trustees to learn more about each other on a personal level. Matthew and Danielle both brought up concerns of time constraints and scheduling. This idea will be further explored when all trustees are present.

Matthew announced the beginning of the public hearing on proposed 2025 operating budget revenue sources and preliminary budget at 9:25 a.m.

Jackie reviewed the fund balance, revenue and expense items in the 2025 Preliminary Budget, noting changes made since the draft shared in October. She noted that some designated amounts in the fund balance have been changed to undesignated.

Jackie also reviewed the 2025-2029 Capital Plan. Capital projects planned for 2025 include completion of the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express and installing electric vehicle charging stations in a few locations.

Jackie presented Resolution 11/19/24-13 Authorizing an Increase in the Regular Property Tax Levy and summarized its contents. Christine reminded Trustees that the budget presented today includes an operating deficit, therefore she and Jackie recommend Trustees approve increasing the levy by our statutorily allowed 1%. There were no questions.

**Holly moved approval of Resolution 11/19/24-13 Authorizing an Increase in the Regular Property Tax Levy. Seconded.**

Discussion took place. Clarification was asked for the percentage of increase WCLS is requesting for the regular property tax levy.

**Unanimously approved.**

Jackie presented Resolution 11/19/24-14 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary General and Capital Fund Budgets and Resolution 11/19/24-15 Adopting the 2025 Preliminary Capital Plan.

**Danielle moved approval of Resolution 11/19/24-14 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary General and Capital Fund Budgets, as presented. Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

**Holly moved approval of Resolution 11/19/24-15 Adopting the 2025-2029 Preliminary Capital Plan. Seconded. Unanimously approved.**

Matthew announced the conclusion of the public hearing at 10:07 a.m.

---

Break

---

Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:07-10:21 a.m.

---

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

---

Staff Reports continued after the break and began with the Deputy Director report.

Christine shared Michael's report since he had to depart the meeting early. In addition to his written report, Christine spoke about patrons bringing pets into the library. This does not include service or support animals, nor animals authorized for program related visits. Two incidents in the past year have brought this topic into focus. In both instances, the pet was permanently trespassed from the library. The Safety Committee will be discussing this topic again. Danielle would like to know how allowing pets into the library affects WCLS insurance rates. Matthew believes that consistent and clear communication throughout the branches is necessary and the risk assessment piece of this concerns him. The administration team will continue to discuss this topic with the Safety Committee and follow up with insurance rate inquiries.

---

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

---

Thom shared his written report and highlighted the Youth Services Department online Staff Shelf. It helps young people find new books that they may not have found at their branch or at all if they are not able to visit and browse the shelves. Thom walked the Board through how to locate the Staff Shelf on wcls.org and interact with

it. Youth Services staff share this feature when they are out in the community. This helps kids realize how easy it is to find their next read, place a hold and check out that item. Youth can also use the Staff Shelf to communicate with a Youth Services staff member.

Special thanks to Youth Services Assistant Tess Reding Hoffart, who migrated individual items on the Staff Shelf when the website was recently updated, and to Online Experience Coordinator Neil McKay, who ensured everything was looking great and working as expected.

---

### Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

---

Mary discussed her written report, noting that her report is focused on Open Book. Now that the event has passed, it is time to pause and reflect on what was accomplished and the community feedback that was received. There were many focal points such as the Libby fortune teller booth and the photo booth featuring Lloyd the dragon created by Birch Bay artist Kim Morris.

Danielle commented that she had heard that Open Book may not return in 2025. Christine spoke about the need to focus staff time on other things in 2025 as well as the importance of finding multiple sponsors for the event. WCLS would love to do Open Book again in the future and will be looking into ways to bring the event back or repackage the idea on a smaller scale.

The Whatcom County Library Foundation made this possible with their generous sponsorship of Open Book this year. Village Books was a great partner and advertiser for Open Book. Dianne mentioned that WCLS has talented staff, and they love that Open Book is staff-driven. Mary thanked the Community Relations team for the work they did promoting Open Book.

---

### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

---

In addition to the written report, Christine stated that the trends in materials usage WCLS has been experiencing are continuing. The increase in digital materials circulation and decrease in physical materials circulation is expected to persist. WCLS should pass the two million item checkout mark by the end of the year.

There was an all-time high of new OverDrive users in October, specifically in eAudiobooks. Peterson's Test Prep has taken off in use. LinkedIn Learning programs related to AI have increased.

Holly asked about the pricing of eAudiobooks. Lisa explained that the pricing is not much different than the eBook pricing model of having to purchase a temporary license.

---

### Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

---

The Personnel Committee reported they have finished gathering feedback for the Executive Director annual review. This information will be discussed during the Executive Session planned for the December Board of Trustees meeting.

---

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

---

Branch Out this year was very successful. The event came in under budget and the Foundation saw an increase in donations from 2023. As of now, they will end the year 46% over the total fundraising goal set by their Board for 2024. WCLF will be able to make a sizable transfer from the general fund to the endowment fund. The WCLF 2025 draft budget will be approved at the next Foundation Board meeting.

---

### Announcements and Adjourn

---

No further announcements.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 11:13 a.m.

---

**Next Meeting**

---

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on December 17, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

                  /s/                    
Holly Robinson, Board Secretary

          12/17/2024            
Date

                  /s/                    
Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant