



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; John Miller and Danielle Gaughen. Absent: Rodney Lofdahl 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; Geoff Fitzpatrick, IT Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Birch Bay & Lynden Library Manager and Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) President; 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 Michael. Michael reminded the Board that tomorrow is Treaty Day in Washington State.

Open Public Comment

No public comment.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the December 17, 2024, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- November 16-30, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1041067975-1041067979 and voucher nos. 560932-561084 totaling \$225,411.63 and December 1-15, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1041293464- 1041293467 and voucher nos. 561090-561245 totaling \$229,201.71.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$109,313.83; \$53,701.16 of this is for employee funded contributions to dental insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2024-48G: warrant nos. 1204952-1204972 totaling \$85,441.19
- Claim 2024-49G: warrant nos. 1205251-1205280 totaling \$172,669.60

- Claim 2024-50G: warrant nos. 1205467-1205500 totaling \$189,383.20
- Claim 2024-51G: warrant nos. 1206494-1206510 totaling \$44,515.26

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2024-25C: warrant no. 1205281 totaling \$5,080.25
- Claim 2024-26C: warrant no. 1205501 totaling \$1,455.00

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

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the December Notes and Highlights section. The 2024 fiscal year-end numbers and reports are not yet available from Whatcom County. There will be another property tax refund in 2025. Unlike previous refunds that crossed years, this one should be distributed and withheld in the same year and will therefore not impact the 2025 fund balance. Jackie provided the debt write-off summary for 2024. These include charges that are more than six years old, charges on accounts that transitioned from youth to adult status, and other charges subject to write-off.

Jackie shared the 2024 Incident Report Summary with the Board. She discussed the various incidents throughout the system and what measures have been put into place to help provide support for WCLS staff. Staff are encouraged to fill out an incident report anytime 911 is called, even if it is something minor. Michael spoke about the process of welcoming suspended patrons back into the library once their suspension period has expired.

Trustees discussed how often they would like to see updates to the incident report summary and suggested a semiannual update. Discussion of certain incidents could be helpful to trustees to make informed decisions about policy. Matthew asked about staff training on addressing incidents and if staff were trained to fill out incident report forms.

Maggie Mae spoke about the onboarding process for new staff and the training received around incidents and filling out incident reports. Jackie and Beth spoke about the communication and guidance provided to managers and supervisors. Michael also provides feedback to staff who have filled out an incident report to ensure that staff are being objective and informative. Thom mentioned that the form has been updated recently and there is now a follow-up section at the end of the form that is very useful for supervisors and staff.

Discussion took place about a few incidents that happened at various WCLS locations throughout 2024.

Trustee Education: Media Review

Mary spoke to the Trustees about the ways WCLS works and partners with the media in Whatcom County. Libraries and the media share a goal of public enlightenment. Traditional and non-traditional media services help WCLS achieve this goal. Whatcom County has many traditional and non-traditional media sources. Mary shared some examples of each. Mary spoke about the factors that go into consideration when the media may or may not feature a story or publish a news release. She reviewed the role of the Trustees with WCLS and the media and times when a Trustee might be the spokesperson for WCLS instead of a staff member.

Policy Updates

Substitution Policy 12.16 – Jackie presented this policy update, which clarifies the calculation of rate of pay for staff subbing in a position below their current pay rate.

Holly moved to approve the updated Substitution Policy 12.16, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Public Records Policy 21.01 – Jackie presented this policy update, which builds in flexibility for hours that AS is open for inspection of public records.

Holly moved to approve the updated Public Records Policy 21.01, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Break

Matthew adjourned for a break from 10:20-10:31 a.m.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine highlighted the large number of WCLS patrons who use only digital materials. WCLS will be looking at ways we can interact with this demographic on a more personal level in the future.

Interviews for the Foundation Development Director have begun. In-person interviews will take place on January 31. Matthew will be the WCLS Board liaison on the interview committee. The interview committee will also be comprised of two Foundation Board members, Christine and Beth, and a representative from Whatcom Community Foundation. Accountant Ruth Nail has been assisting with WCLF bookkeeping by processing checks and payments.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared the success of the recent jazz concert at the Ferndale Library. There will be another concert in Deming with a different band. All are invited to come and experience local live music at no cost.

Michael and WCLS Cultural Liaison staff will be presenting a session to WebJunction. This session will focus on the valuable resources that Cultural Liaisons can provide for an organization and the success that WCLS has had in the community through ours.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Thom shared his written report and highlighted the Whatcomics celebration earlier this month that took place at the Lynden Library. Many of the published artists attended and brought their friends and family to celebrate their artwork. Thom thanked all the people who worked hard to make Whatcomics happen and the Lynden Library for the great job they did hosting the celebration.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary discussed her written report. She noted that the latest issue of *Explorations* is out in the hands of the public via mail and local branches. There is a new WTA bus with the art from the recent Whatcomics publication out in the community as well.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael compared the year-end stats from 2023 and 2024. WCLS continues to see physical circulation going down and digital circulation increase. This trend is not unique to WCLS and is happening across the country.

New borrower numbers have stayed close to the same as 2023. Danielle inquired if there is a way to track if new borrowers are new to Whatcom County or just new to WCLS. Discussion took place on the logistics of this. Lisa said that digital services had over 4,000 new users. Some of these new digital users may be new borrowers.

Program attendance has increased in the past year. Thom mentioned that the Youth Services team has nine staff members, and they saw over 44,000 attendees at Youth Services programs. Public Services staff have assisted with these programs, but this explains why the Youth Services team takes time off from programing in August and December.

Lisa spoke about the increase in use of eAudiobooks with patrons. Database use was slow in December, as expected. Lisa shared some of the types of topics patrons were accessing on the databases.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee reported that so far, they have received one application for the Trustee position that Holly is vacating. The position posting is open until February 7. With Holly leaving, there will be an open position on both the Personnel and Marketing Committees.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

Nothing to report.

Announcements and Adjourn

Christine reviewed the schedule of Listening Sessions throughout the branches with the trustees.

A reminder that the Citizen’s Advisory Committee Meeting is on January 30 at the Ferndale Library.

All Staff Learning Day is on Friday, March 7. Rheannan will send out the registration link to the Trustees. Registration closes on February 4.

The Board bid Holly farewell and thanked her for her time on the WCLS Board of Trustees.

Matthew adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on February 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Blaine Library, 610 3rd Street, Blaine WA 98230.

/s/
Matthew Santos, Vice Chair

02/18/2025
Date

/s/
Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant