



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Whatcom County Library System
February 18, 2025

Via Teams and Blaine Library
610 3rd Street
Blaine, WA 98230

WCLS Vision: *An engaged community where curiosity is cultivated, literacy flourishes and democratic ideals thrive.*

1. 9:30 a.m. **Call to Order.** Quorum determined. Land Acknowledgement.
We are on the ancestral homeland of the Nooksack, Lummi and other Coast Salish peoples. They have been its stewards since time immemorial, respecting the land, river and ocean with the understanding that everything is connected, related and alive. We acknowledge the elders and their collective and individual plights and achievements. We consider the legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together today. And we pursue ongoing action, to build lasting relationships and grow together so that all may prosper.
2. 9:35 a.m. **Open Public Comment Opportunity**
This period is set aside for persons wishing to address the Board. Each person may have up to three minutes for this purpose. Written comments may be submitted to Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.
3. 9:45 a.m. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Meeting Minutes
 - b. Expenditures
 - c. Authorization to void warrants
4. 9:50 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Finance Committee Report
 - b. Resolution 02/18/25-02 Amending the 2025 General Fund Budget
5. 10:00 a.m. **Friends of Deming Library Update – Virginia Naef**
6. 10:10 a.m. **Trustee Education: Blaine Library Tour and Update**
7. 10:40 a.m. **BREAK**
8. 10:50 a.m. **Policy Update:**
 - a. Required Leave Policy 12.36
9. 10:55 a.m. **Birch Bay Easement**
10. 11:00 a.m. **Budget Listening Sessions Report**
11. 11:15 a.m. **Staff Reports**
 - a. Executive Director
 - b. Deputy Director
 - c. Youth Services Manager
 - d. Community Relations Manager
12. 11:25 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
 - a. Performance Measures
 - b. IT Services Committee

Board of Trustees Meetings are open to the public in accordance with RCW 42.30. The Board is currently holding meetings with options for in-person or remote participation. Persons wishing to be provided with an internet link or telephone number to access the meeting are asked to please email Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org before 4:00 p.m. Monday, February 17, 2025. Written comments may be submitted to Rheannan.Pfnister@wcls.org prior to the meeting.

- c. Personnel Committee – Trustee Appointment
- d. Whatcom County Library Foundation

13. 11:30 a.m. **Announcements and Adjourn**

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Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Consent Agenda – Board Meeting Minutes, Monthly Expenditures, Resolutions to Void Warrants
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of consent agenda items

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of consent agenda items as presented

Summary:

Meeting Minutes:

- January 21, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- December 16-31, 2024 payroll: check nos. 1041464254- 1041464262 and voucher nos. 561251-561403 totaling \$234,635.02 and January 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1041677506-1041677510 and voucher nos. 561409-561564 totaling \$239,877.11.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services, annual insurance premiums and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$123,211.63; \$65,400.37 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 2024-52G: warrant nos. 1250002-1250021 totaling \$97,183.90
- Claim 2024-53G: warrant nos. 1250068-1250112 totaling \$112,076.10
- Claim 2024-54G: warrant nos. 1250664-1250677 totaling \$8,507.63
- Claim 2025-01G: warrant nos. 1250022-1250024 totaling \$18,015.43
- Claim 2025-02G: warrant nos. 1250297-1250308 totaling \$181,396.68
- Claim 2025-03G: warrant nos. 1250678-1250689 totaling \$65,959.18
- Claim 2025-04G: warrant nos. 1251380-1251395 totaling \$99,322.87

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2024-27C: warrant nos. 1250025-1250026 totaling \$909.89
- Claim 2024-28C: warrant nos. 1250690-1250691 totaling \$2,820.00
- Claim 2025-01C: warrant no. 1251396 totaling \$5,838.30

Authorization to Void Warrants

- Resolution 02/18/25-01 voiding warrants 1250070, 1250097, 1250101, 1250102 and 1250307

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: Expenditures for approval paid from available 2024 and 2025 budgeted funds.

Comments: The Finance Committee has reviewed the General and Capital Fund claims listed above. They reviewed that there were no General Journal entries in January.



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

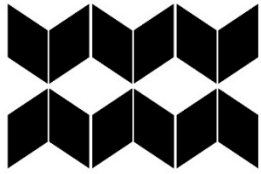
The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on February 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Blaine Library, 610 3rd Street, Blaine WA 98230.

Matthew Santos, Vice Chair

02/18/2025

Date

Rheannan Pfnister, Exec. Assistant



whatcom county
library system

RESOLUTION NO. 02/18/25-01

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT
AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF WARRANTS**

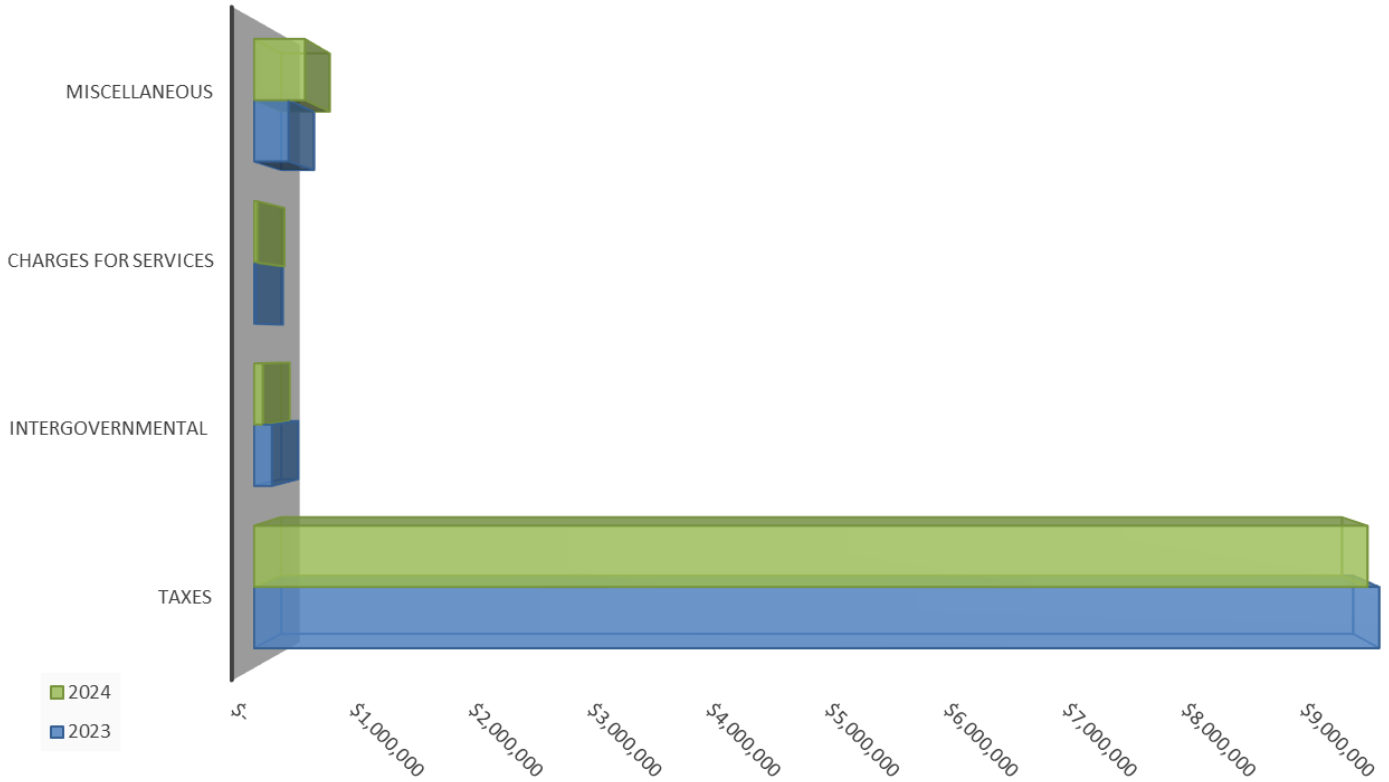
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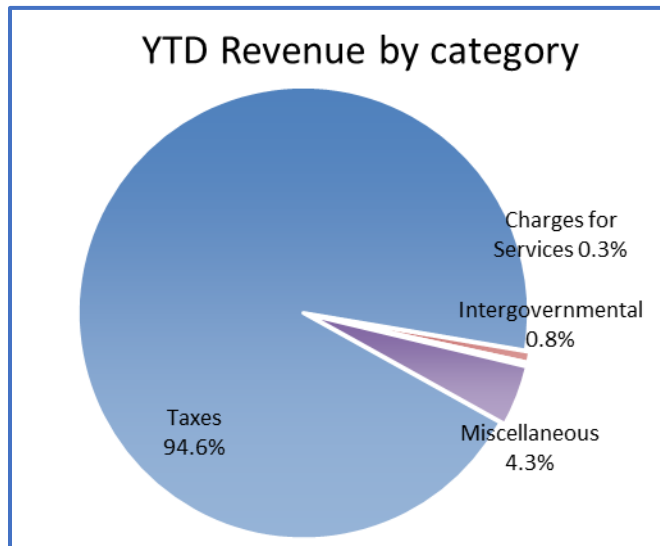
2024 General Fund

2024 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date						
December 2024 (100% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Revenues	Actual Revenues YTD	% of Actual Revenues YTD	% of Budgeted Revenues Received YTD	Budget Variance
310	TAXES					
311.10	General Property Taxes	9,769,533	\$ 9,724,963	92.46%	99.54%	\$ (44,570)
	TOTAL TAXES	9,769,533	\$ 9,724,963	92.46%	99.54%	\$ (44,570)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	2,500	-	0.00%	0.00%	(2,500)
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	54,589	0.52%	121.31%	9,589
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	23,575	0.22%	78.58%	(6,425)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	77,500	78,164	0.74%	100.86%	664
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	4,000	5,802	0.06%	145.04%	1,802
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,300	24,440	0.23%	198.70%	12,140
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	16,300	30,242	0.29%	185.53%	13,942
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	291,780	351,048	3.34%	120.31%	59,268
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,500	950	0.01%	27.14%	(2,550)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	73,500	61,655	0.59%	83.88%	(11,845)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	80	0.00%	80.00%	(20)
369.4100	Judgements & Settlements	-	67	0.00%	0.00%	67
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	1	0.00%	0.00%	1
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	20,000	21,484	0.20%	107.42%	1,484
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	10,624	0.10%	96.58%	(376)
369.9106	COBRA Reimbursement	733	550	0.01%	75.02%	(183)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	400,613	446,460	4.24%	111.44%	45,847
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	10,263,946	10,279,829	97.74%	100.15%	15,883
390	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES					
395.1000	Proceeds from Sale of Capital Assets	7,752	7,752	0.00%	100.00%	-
397.3000	Transfers from Designated Fund Balance	230,000	230,000	2.19%	100.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	237,752	237,752	0.00%	100.00%	-
	TOTAL REVENUE	10,501,698	10,517,581	100.00%	100.15%	\$ 15,883

General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year

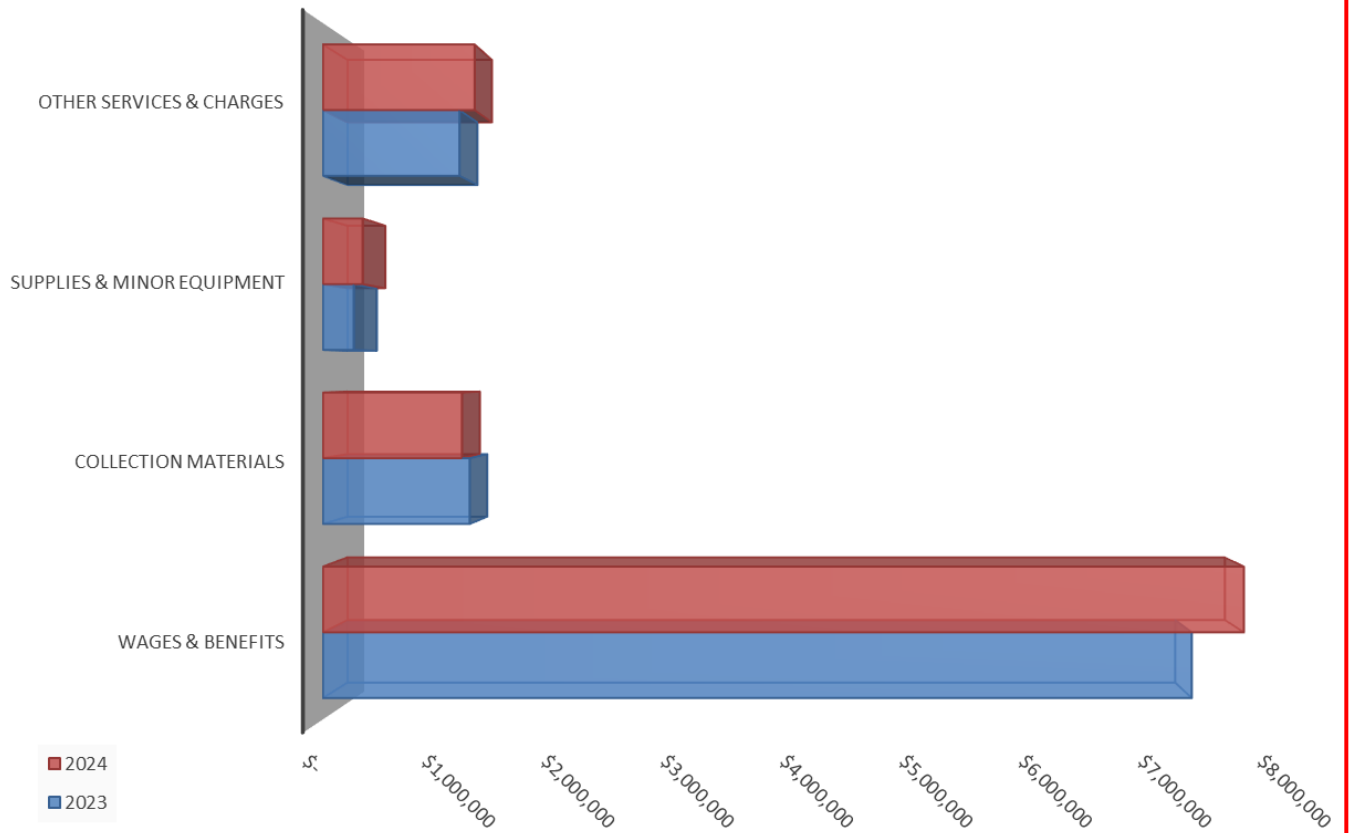


Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison			
	2023	2024	% Change
Taxes	\$ 9,827,497	\$ 9,724,963	-1.04%
Intergovernmental	157,899	78,164	-50.50%
Charges for Services	16,991	30,242	77.99%
Miscellaneous	303,410	446,460	47.15%
Total Operating Revenue	\$ 10,305,797	10,279,829	-0.25%
Other Financing Sources	\$ -	237,752	
Total Revenue	\$ 10,305,797	\$ 10,517,581	2.05%



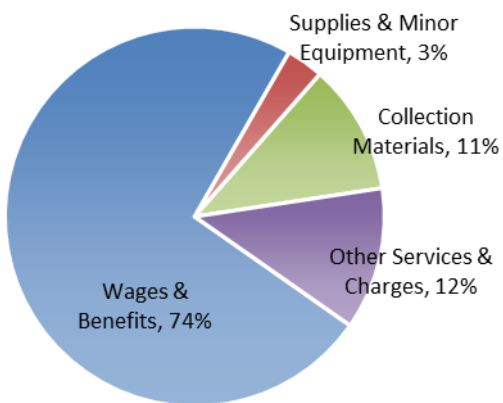
2024 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date						
December 2024 (100% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Budgeted Expenditures Spent YTD	Budget Variance
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS					
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	6,010,093	\$ 5,931,178	54.08%	98.69%	\$ (78,915)
572.2000	Benefits	2,112,922	2,069,542	18.87%	97.95%	(43,380)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	8,123,015	8,000,720	72.95%	98.49%	(122,296)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	168,410	181,280	1.65%	107.64%	12,870
572.3032	Fuel	26,050	19,525	0.18%	74.95%	(6,525)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,250,000	1,208,590	11.02%	96.69%	(41,410)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	185,075	145,104	1.32%	78.40%	(39,971)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,629,535	1,554,499	14.17%	95.40%	(75,036)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	582,140	573,916	5.23%	98.59%	(8,224)
572.4042	Communication	152,500	157,003	1.43%	102.95%	4,503
572.4043	Travel	46,250	44,529	0.41%	96.28%	(1,721)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	400	500	0.00%	125.06%	100
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	64,271	64,806	0.59%	100.83%	535
572.4046	Insurance	91,874	112,500	1.03%	122.45%	20,626
572.4047	Utilities	171,176	160,964	1.47%	94.03%	(10,212)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	133,240	114,105	1.04%	85.64%	(19,135)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	92,910	90,001	0.82%	96.87%	(2,909)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,334,762	1,318,324	12.02%	98.77%	(16,438)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	11,087,312	10,873,543	99.14%	98.07%	(213,770)
590	OTHER FINANCING USES					
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	94,135	94,135	0.86%	100.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	94,135	94,135	0.86%	100.00%	-
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	11,181,447	10,967,678	100.00%	98.09%	(213,770)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (679,749)	(450,097)			\$ 229,652

General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year

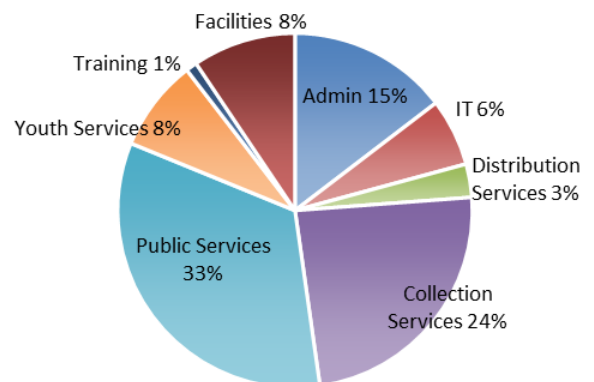


Actual General Fund Expenditures Year to Date Comparison			
	2023	2024	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$ 7,547,508	\$ 8,000,720	6.00%
Collection Materials	1,275,608	1,208,590	-5.25%
Supplies & Minor Equipment	268,862	345,909	28.66%
Other Services & Charges	1,186,599	1,318,324	11.10%
Total Operating Expenditures	10,278,576	10,873,543	5.79%
Other Financing Uses	\$ 275,000	94,135	-65.77%
Total Expenditures	\$ 10,553,576	\$ 10,967,678	3.92%

YTD Expense by Category



YTD Expense by Department



Fund Balance Summary			2024
	2023 Actual	2024 Budgeted	Actual to Date
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 10,630,324	10,612,545	10,612,545
Revenue	10,305,797	10,501,698	10,517,581
Expenditures	(10,553,576)	(11,181,447)	(10,967,678)
Transfer to (from) Reserves	230,000	(230,000)	(230,000)
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 9,702,796	9,932,448
Ending Fund Balance Designation Detail			
	2023 Actual	2024 Budgeted	2024 Actual to Date
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Cash Flow	\$ 3,502,655	\$ 3,639,587	\$ 3,639,587
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Emergency	892,009	926,588	926,588
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Capital Transfer	45,000	94,135	94,135
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Reserve	14,403	14,662	14,662
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund Reserve	600,000	600,000	600,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund Reserve	3,192,315	3,192,315	3,192,315
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund	650,000	650,000	650,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Operating Cost Stabilization Fund	250,000	250,000	250,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Collection Project Fund	172,000	172,000	172,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Abeyance Fund	230,000	-	-
Total Designated Ending Fund Balance	9,548,382	9,539,286	9,539,286
Beginning Fund Balance less designated funds	1,081,942	1,073,259	1,073,259
Transfer to (from) Reserves	230,000	(230,000)	(230,000)
Net Income	(247,779)	(679,749)	(450,097)
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation	1,064,163	163,510	393,163
Ending Designated Funds	9,548,382	9,539,286	9,539,286
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$ 10,612,545	9,702,796	9,932,448

2024 General Fund Summary

Operating Revenues totaled \$10,517,581, which is \$15,883 (.15%) above budget. Of note:

- Revenue from property taxes was \$44,570 less than budgeted. This is likely due to an ongoing property valuation in dispute and funds in abeyance for the 2024 levy.
- Intergovernmental revenue was at \$78,164. The amount budgeted from this revenue source (primarily consisting of DNR sales and leases and excise taxes from private timber harvests) was reduced earlier in the year as income has decreased over the past few years.
- The Whatcom County Jail annual payment was received in December 2024 rather than January 2025, resulting in two payments posting in 2024. This will continue to be paid in December going forward, so no adjustment is needed for the 2025 budget.
- We received \$351,048 in investment interest, exceeding the budget by \$59,268 (20.3%). However, due to a financial system update at the County, our January 2025 interest payment posted to our account on December 31 (rather than January 1), so it is recognized in 2024.

Operating expenditures totaled \$10,873,543, 1.9% below budget. Of note:

- Personnel costs were \$122,296 (1.5%) below budget due to unused hours and position vacancies, along with the benefits associated with them.
- Office Supplies spending was \$12,870 (7.6%) above budget. This is due to inflationary cost increases as the quantity of supplies purchased has not changed significantly.
- Collection Materials spending was \$41,410 (3.3%) below budget. This is primarily a payment timing issue.
- Small tool and equipment spending was \$39,791 (22%) under budget. This is due to IT and Facilities purchases postponed or no longer needed.

- Property/auto/liability insurance spending was above budget by \$20,626 due to a change in premium payment timing for certain policies. A few flood insurance policies that renew on January 1 were paid in December; this schedule will continue going forward.
- Repair and maintenance costs were \$19,135 (14.4%) under budget due to unused contingency funds.
- Total expenditures, which include a transfer to the Capital Fund, are \$10,967,678, resulting in a decrease to the ending fund balance of \$450,097.

2024 Capital Fund

Project	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement program		
Birch Bay New Branch Furnishings	\$ 150,000	\$ -
Branch Renovations/Upgrades	99,990	54,078
Sub-Total Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement Program	249,990	54,078
Building Repair and Maintenance Program		
Admin Services Maintenance & Improvements	26,024	17,698
Branch Building Updates	42,985	42,985
Exterior Signage Updates	25,000	-
Sub-Total Building Repair and Maintenance Program	94,009	60,683
Equipment Replacement Program		
Vehicle Replacement	201,379	69,156
Storage Container	4,674	4,674
Sub-Total Equipment Replacement Program	206,053	73,830
Land Purchase/New Branch/Branch Upgrades		
Birch Bay Library Design and Construction	1,788,193	70,492
AS Feasibility Study	62,000	49,813
Electric Vehicle Charging Initiative	375,000	3,755
Sub-total Land Purchase/New Branch/Branch Upgrades	2,225,193	124,060
Total Expenditures	\$ 2,775,245	\$ 312,651
Funding Summary:		
	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
Investment Interest	\$ 35,000	\$ 73,807
Grants/Reimbursements	2,822,280	874,179
Transfer From General Fund	94,135	94,135
Prior Period Ending Fund Balance	1,526,242	1,526,242
Total Funding	\$ 4,477,657	\$ 2,568,363
Fund Balance:		
	2024 Budget	2024 Actual
Assigned Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 1,294,342	\$ 1,294,342
Designated Beginning Fund Balance - Emergency	231,900	231,900
Total Beginning Fund Balance	1,526,242	1,526,242
Revenues	2,857,280	947,986
Transfer From General Fund	94,135	94,135
Expenditures	2,775,245	312,651
Net Income	176,170	729,470
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 1,702,412	\$ 2,255,712

January 2025 General Fund Report

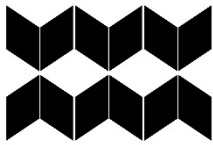
2025 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date						
January 2025 (8% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Revenues	Actual Revenues YTD	% of Actual Revenues YTD	% of Budgeted Revenues Received YTD	Budget Variance
310	TAXES					
311.10	General Property Taxes	10,206,689	\$ 182,124	98.58%	1.78%	\$ (10,024,565)
319.8300	Refund Interest	-	(96)	-0.05%	0.00%	(96)
	TOTAL TAXES	10,206,689	\$ 182,028	98.53%	1.78%	\$ (10,024,661)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	2,000	\$ 400	0.22%	20.00%	\$ (1,600)
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	29	0.02%	0.06%	(44,971)
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	141	0.08%	0.47%	(29,859)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	77,000	\$ 570	0.31%	0.74%	\$ (76,430)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	6,000	\$ 596	0.32%	9.94%	\$ (5,404)
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,400	72	0.04%	0.58%	(12,328)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	18,400	\$ 668	0.36%	3.63%	\$ (17,732)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	352,000	\$ 0	0.00%	0.00%	\$ (352,000)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,000	295	0.16%	9.83%	(2,705)
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	38,000	241	0.13%	0.63%	(37,759)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	-	0.00%	0.00%	(100)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	2.05	0.00%	0.00%	2
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	22,000	360	0.19%	1.64%	(21,640)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	583	0.32%	5.30%	(10,417)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	426,100	\$ 1,481	0.80%	0.35%	\$ (424,619)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	10,728,189	\$ 184,747	100.00%	1.72%	\$ (10,543,442)
390	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES					
395.1000	Proceeds from Sale of Capital Assets	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	\$ -
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	\$ -
	TOTAL REVENUE	10,728,189	\$ 184,747	100.00%	1.72%	\$ (10,543,442)

2025 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date						
January 2025 (8% of FY)						
Acct No	Description	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Budgeted Expenditures Spent YTD	Budget Variance
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS					
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	6,224,118	\$ 503,929	52.57%	8.10%	\$ (5,720,189)
572.2000	Benefits	2,184,008	184,642	19.26%	8.45%	(1,999,366)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	8,408,126	\$ 688,571	71.83%	8.19%	\$ (7,719,555)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	148,570	\$ 6,785	0.71%	4.57%	\$ (141,785)
572.3032	Fuel	24,050	-	0.00%	0.00%	(24,050)
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,275,000	3,166	0.33%	0.25%	(1,271,834)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	214,500	12,081	1.26%	5.63%	(202,419)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,662,120	22,031	2.30%	1.33%	\$ (1,640,089)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	680,765	\$ 151,106	15.76%	22.20%	\$ (529,659)
572.4042	Communication	132,088	12,622	1.32%	9.56%	(119,466)
572.4043	Travel	30,600	946	0.10%	3.09%	(29,654)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	550	55	0.01%	9.99%	(495)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	22,423	1,366	0.14%	6.09%	(21,058)
572.4046	Insurance	97,529	73,977	7.72%	75.85%	(23,552)
572.4047	Utilities	166,424	5,677	0.59%	3.41%	(160,746)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	112,740	1,443	0.15%	1.28%	(111,297)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	101,920	761	0.08%	0.75%	(101,159)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,345,040	247,953	25.87%	18.43%	\$ (1,097,087)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	11,415,286	958,555	100.00%	8.40%	\$ (10,456,731)
590	OTHER FINANCING USES					
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	75,000	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	\$ -
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	75,000	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%	\$ -
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	11,490,286	\$ 958,555	100.00%	8.34%	\$ (10,531,731)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	(762,097)	(773,808)			\$ (11,711)

2025 Levy Summary

The recent settlement of a property valuation dispute has added complexity to the calculation of our 2025 levy. The settlement resulted in the property owner paying back-taxes at the beginning of the year, and WCLS received a distribution of these back-taxes in January. These funds are above and beyond our 2025 levy. However, the funds are in abeyance and will be returned to taxpayers through reduction of the levy, ultimately resulting in no change to the overall amount of property taxes collected by WCLS in 2025.

2024 Highest Lawful Levy (HLL) (This is the amount the allowable 1% increase is calculated from)	\$9,884,012.35
1% of 2024 HLL	\$98,840.12
New Construction & State Assessed Valuations	<u>\$125,103.44</u>
2025 HLL (This is the amount the allowable 1% increase is calculated from for the 2026 levy)	\$10,107,955.91
Administrative Refund	\$45,761.17
Settlement distribution	\$162,625.01
Property Taxes in abeyance	<u>- \$162,625.01</u>
Total Property Tax to be collected in 2025	\$10,153,717.08
Property Taxes collected	\$10,153,717.08
Property Taxes in abeyance	<u>- \$162,625.01</u>
2025 Levy	\$9,991,092.07
2025 Levy Rate	\$0.25852



whatcom county
library system

Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration
Subject:	Resolution 02/18/25-02 Amending the 2025 General Fund Budget
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of Resolution 02/18/25-02 amending the 2025 General Fund Budget

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of Resolution 02/18/25-02 amending the 2025 General Fund Budget as presented.

Summary:

This resolution adjusts the General Fund Budget as follows:

- The beginning balance is updated to reflect the 2024 ending balance.
- General Fund revenue is updated to include the final 2025 levy amount as determined by the Whatcom County Assessor’s Office and additional revenue in the Miscellaneous Revenues category.
- General Fund expenditures are increased to reflect an increase to personnel costs resulting from a position reclassification and benefit enrollment changes.
- Expenditures are also increased to reflect additional funds needed for Office and Operating Supplies, Small Tools and Minor Equipment, Professional Services, Insurance, and Miscellaneous costs.
- The amount budgeted for transfer from the General to Capital fund is updated to reflect 2024 intergovernmental revenues.

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact:

General Fund: an increase of \$92,146 to the Beginning Fund Balance, a decrease of \$36,972 in revenue, an increase of \$131,949 in operating expenditures, and an increase of \$3,164 to the transfer to the Capital Fund, resulting in a net decrease of \$79,938 to the Ending Fund Balance.

Comments: N/A

WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
2025 General Fund Budget Amendment
February 18, 2025

Revenue

Acct No.	Description	2025 Budget Adopted	Amended Amount	Adjustment Amount	Notes
308	BEGINNING FUND BAL	\$ 9,840,302	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 92,146	Updated per 2024 ending balance
310	TAXES				
311.10	General Property Taxes	10,206,689	10,153,717	(52,972)	Updated per final amount from
	TOTAL TAXES	10,206,689	10,153,717	(52,972)	County Assessor's office
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE				
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	2,000	2,000	-	
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	45,000	-	
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	30,000	-	
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	77,000	77,000	-	
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES				
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	6,000	6,000	-	
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,400	12,400	-	
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	18,400	18,400	-	
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES				
361.1100	Investment Interest	352,000	352,000	-	
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,000	3,000	-	
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	38,000	39,000	1,000	Additional funds from WCLF
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	100	-	
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	22,000	22,000	-	
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	11,000	-	
369.9105	E-Rate Reimbursement	-	15,000	15,000	New in 2025
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	426,100	442,100	16,000	
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	10,728,189	10,691,217	(36,972)	
390	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES				
395.1000	Proceeds from Sale of Capital Assets	-	-	-	
397.3000	Transfer from Reserves to Operating	-	-	-	
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	-	-	-	
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 10,728,189	\$ 10,691,217	\$ (36,972)	

WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
2025 General Fund Budget Amendment
February 18, 2025

Revenue					
Acct No.	Description	2025 Budget Adopted	Amended Amount	Adjustment Amount	Notes
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS				
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	\$ 6,224,118	\$ 6,289,075	\$ 64,957	Position reclassification
572.2000	Benefits	2,184,008	2,210,792	26,784	Per above plus new PERS eligible staff & insurance enrollment changes
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	8,408,126	8,499,867	91,741	
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT				
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	148,570	156,570	8,000	Based on 2024 totals
572.3032	Fuel	24,050	24,050	-	
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,275,000	1,275,000	-	
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	214,500	217,500	3,000	Facilities project carry forward
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,662,120	1,673,120	11,000	
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES				
572.4041	Professional Services	680,765	705,465	24,700	Multi-year discount for IT service,
572.4042	Communication	132,088	132,088	-	Facilities project carry forward
572.4043	Travel	30,600	30,600	-	
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	550	550	-	
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	22,423	22,423	-	
572.4046	Insurance	97,529	99,537	2,008	Updated premium amounts
572.4047	Utilities	166,424	166,424	-	
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	112,740	112,740	-	
572.4049	Miscellaneous	101,920	104,420	2,500	Local group memberships & printing costs (offset by WCLF)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,345,040	1,374,247	29,208	
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	11,415,286	11,547,235	131,949	
590	OTHER FINANCING USES				
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	75,000	78,164	3,164	Updated per 2024 DNR & timber tax revenue amounts
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	75,000	78,164	3,164	
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	11,490,286	11,625,398	135,112	
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (762,097)	\$ (934,181)	\$ (172,084)	
FUND BALANCE SUMMARY					
	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,840,302	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 92,146	
	Net Income	(762,097)	(934,181)	(172,084)	
	Ending Fund Balance	<u>\$ 9,078,205</u>	<u>\$ 8,998,267</u>	<u>\$ (79,938)</u>	

WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
2025 General Fund Budget Amendment
February 18, 2025

Fund Balance Summary

	2025 Budget		Adjustment
	Adopted	Amended Amount	Amount
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,840,302	9,932,448	\$ 92,146
Revenue	10,728,189	10,691,217	(36,972)
Expenditures	(11,490,286)	(11,625,398)	(135,112)
Use of Fund Balance	-	-	-
Ending Fund Balance	<u>\$ 9,078,205</u>	<u>\$ 8,998,267</u>	<u>\$ (79,938)</u>
Committed and Unreserved-Designated Fund Balances			
Cash Flow Reserve	\$ 3,767,044	\$ 3,767,044	\$ -
Emergency Reserve	951,274	951,274	-
Capital Transfer Reserve	75,000	75,000	-
Unemployment Compensation Reserve	15,560	15,560	-
Birch Bay Operating Fund Reserve	58,000	58,000	-
Facility Ownership Fund	2,967,315	2,967,315	-
Facility Maintenance Fund	550,000	550,000	-
Operating Cost Stabilization Fund	-	-	-
Collection Project Fund	-	-	-
Abeyance Fund	-	-	-
Total Committed and Assigned Ending Fund Balance	<u>8,384,193</u>	<u>8,384,193</u>	-
Unassigned Ending Fund Balance	694,011	614,074	(79,938)
Total Ending Fund Balance	<u>\$ 9,078,205</u>	<u>\$ 8,998,267</u>	<u>\$ (79,938)</u>



RESOLUTION NO. 02/18/25-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT AMENDING
THE 2025 GENERAL FUND BUDGET**

WHEREAS, at the December 17, 2024 Board of Trustees meeting the Board approved the Final 2025 General Fund budget by a vote of three to zero, with two trustees absent; and,

WHEREAS, the beginning fund balance needs to be adjusted to reflect the actual balance at the beginning of the 2025 budget year; and,

WHEREAS, revenues need to be adjusted to reflect the final 2025 Property Tax revenue amount and additional Miscellaneous Revenues; and,

WHEREAS, expenditures need to be adjusted to reflect increased costs for wages and benefits; and,

WHEREAS, expenditures need to be further adjusted to reflect additional expenditures for Office and Operating Supplies, Small Tools and Minor Equipment, Professional Services, Insurance, and Miscellaneous costs; and,

WHEREAS, the amount budgeted for transfer from the General to Capital Fund needs to be amended to reflect timber, Forest Board, and other miscellaneous tax receipts received in 2024 and earmarked for the 2025 Capital Fund; and,

WHEREAS, an amendment to the 2025 General Fund budget is needed to reflect these transfers, adjustments, and estimated fund balances;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that budget amendment Resolution No. 02/18/25-02 be adopted, amending the 2025 General Fund Budget to \$20,623,665 as follows:

General Operating Fund - Budgetary Accounts		
308 Beginning Fund Balance	\$9,932,448	
310-360 Operating Revenue	10,691,217	
572 Operating Expenditures		\$11,547,235
590 Transfers Out		78,164
508 Ending Fund Balance		8,998,267
Total	\$20,623,665	\$20,623,665

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees this 18th day of February, 2025:

Rodney Lofdahl, Board Chair



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Update to Required Leave Policy 12.36
Prepared By:	Beth Andrews
Impact upon Budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of Required Leave Policy 12.36 as presented.

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of Required Leave Policy 12.36 as presented.

Summary: WCLS Administration would like to amend the Required Leave Policy 12.36 to explicitly include payment to staff in situations where a work related-incident or event impacts a staff members ability to complete their shift.

Alternatives: Staff will be required to use their own sick or vacation accruals or take unpaid leave in order to go home early when work-related incidents occur that impact their ability to complete the rest of their shift, which feels unfair for situations that impact them due to work, at no fault of their own.

Fiscal Impact: A few hours a year may be billed to a different pay code.

Comments: none



REQUIRED LEAVE POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 12.36 (Formerly 12.22)

SCOPE

This policy applies to all WCLS employees.

In the event of unusual circumstances and ~~at the sole discretion of the Executive Director~~ with expressed approval as outlined below, an employee may be ~~suspended~~ sent home with pay, without the required use of sick leave or other paid or unpaid leave.

If a staff member is not able to complete their shift due to a work-related incident or illness, with supervisor approval, they may be sent home and they will be paid for the duration of their scheduled shift. Examples include (but are not limited to) a work-related injury, illness resulting from exposure to fumes or substances in the workplace, or in response to an extraordinarily upsetting work event. The incident must be documented with a WCLS Incident Report Form or Staff Report of Injury or Illness Form. Additional time off beyond the shift in which the incident took place may require use of paid or unpaid leave.

Required Leave may also be applied at the sole discretion of the Executive Director, for investigatory or similar purposes, until a decision is reached about the parameters and steps for continued employment.

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
August 16, 2005	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
February 20, 2018	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke



REQUIRED LEAVE POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 12.36

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Required Leave may also be applied at the sole discretion of the Executive Director, for investigatory or similar purposes, until a decision is reached about the parameters and steps for continued employment.

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
August 16, 2005	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
February 20, 2018	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
February 18, 2025	Revised to include payment for work-related incidents.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	2/18/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Birch Bay Easement
Prepared By:	Michael Cox
Impact upon Budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of Birch Bay Library property easement to be negotiated with owners of Edgewater Estates at a cost to them of no less than \$13,500

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of easement with Edgewater Estates at a cost to them of no less than \$13,500

Summary:

A land survey of the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express site property finds the neighboring property use is encroaching by about 6.5 feet along the entire eastern boundary, representing an estimated 1,091 square feet of land. Site design for the library project has been updated to completely avoid that area, and an easement is being drafted to allow use of much of the encroachment area to be sold to the owners of Edgewater Estates. Any real estate transactions require approval from the Board of Trustees.

The area of this easement is located east of the existing fence owned by WCLS. If an easement is not granted and WCLS reclaims property to the survived boundary, this would impact six units on the neighboring property.

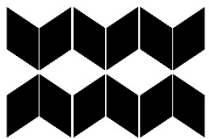
Determining value of easement area:
 land value assessment - \$459,000
 total square footage – 37,462
 cost per square foot - \$12.25
 square footage of easement area - 1,091
 1,091 x 12.25 = \$13,364.75

In addition, fees associated with the development and filing of this easement can be shared.

Alternatives: Retain full property ownership and issue a notice to vacate, potentially stalling construction of the library project

Fiscal Impact: Funds from the sale of this easement could benefit the construction project by about \$13,000.

Comments: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)



whatcom county
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Executive Director's Report

February 2025

COMMUNITY

Whatcom WRITES, an offshoot of Whatcom READS, called on writers across the county to submit 1,500-word entries on the theme "The Book That Changed My Life" -- which aligns closely to this year's featured novel [No Two Persons](#) by Erica Bauermeister. Selected writers will have their works published in our annual anthology and are invited to read at a public presentation. This effort develops a community of writers who love the written word – and libraries.

ACCESS

The snowy weather prompted closure of Administrative Services and several branches, and delayed opening at others. Branch Managers are responsible for assessing local road conditions and whether or not parking lots have been plowed. We are careful to balance patron and staff safety with access to library services.

RESOURCES

The [Winter quarter list of book club picks](#) includes a mystery set in Maine, a memoir of California's first female chief of fire protection, a love story between a reindeer herder in the Arctic Circle and a minister's daughter, a story about a Ukrainian family, and an epic thriller about a scuba diver who is swallowed by a 60-ton sperm whale and only has an hour to escape before his oxygen runs out. There are options for every reader – and every book group. We buy multiple copies of each title to make it easy for all book club members to read the book.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Lummi Cultural Liaison Coreen Kurtz presented with Early Learning Coordinator Theresa Morrison at the Focus on Children Conference at Bellingham Technical College on 2/1. They led a session about WCLS's Since Time Immemorial Early Learning Curriculum Kits and the impact they have on student learning.

STEWARDSHIP

Last week I traveled to Olympia to speak with our state legislators about the Birch Bay Library project. Our interest is in ensuring that Department of Commerce funds are re-allocated so we can begin construction this year. All were very supportive of this project; we're lucky to have strong allies at the Capitol!

Christine Perkins, Executive Director

STEWARDSHIP

At a community meeting in January with leaders at the City of Blaine, the project including affordable housing co-located with a new library and potential childcare facility was discussed. It was recognized that Madrona is now taking the lead on this project following the departure of Kulshan Land Trust last summer. It was also recognized that this project still requires significant funding. This is the latest update in efforts to update library facilities in Blaine. In 2019, the Friends of the Blaine Library funded a design project and series of community meetings which resulted in the development of space planning and initial design concept for a stand-alone library facility. This was preceded by a survey by the City of Blaine which recognized support by the community for an upgraded facility and additional space. WCLS is committed to being a partner in support of improved and expanded library services in Blaine.

Branch Manager Report, by Jonathan Jakobitz

Challenges

Over the last five years we have experienced a near complete staff turnover. We've had to adapt to the loss of years of institutional knowledge, but we've also gained many new perspectives and a willingness to make big changes and try new things. Building and sustaining a positive staff culture has been top of mind for me, and a challenge we've faced over the past several years has been addressing underperforming and unhappy staff members who disrupt the work environment for others.

The Blaine Library faces a variety of challenges with regards to unwanted patron behaviors. Issues range broadly, including: inappropriate comments, staring, excessive noise, minor vandalism, strong body odors, and invading people's personal space. We've worked on building up PSA confidence to address these and other issues directly, rather than delaying and deferring to the manager to address when present.

There is a small but regular segment of unhoused or insecurely housed patrons that we see on a daily or weekly basis. Local community resources for this population are limited, and we try and connect people with agencies that might help them, but most of these patrons are just looking for a warm/safe place to spend the day and not looking for extra social work support from our staff.

Needs

Space is at a premium in Blaine. The Blaine Library is the third busiest branch in the Whatcom County Library System, and its 5,500 square foot building is frequently pushed to its limits. Patron table seating tends to fill up every day, and even after adding the Small Meeting Room

Pod in 2023, we find it hard to meet all the demands for our meeting room spaces. Our library collection (driven by a high holds-use patron base), frequently outpaces our shelf space, requiring collection pull lists or the sending of items to other branches to keep our shelves in a neat and browsable condition.

As a consequence of Blaine School District budget challenges, the Blaine Library has stepped in to fill the gap in school district library services. Blaine ConnectED circulations have risen over 300% from 2023 to 2024. We've had to find new and creative ways to store and manage this large influx of school holds, and our limited shelf space has proved an obstacle.

Additionally, staff spaces are extremely limited for the size of our crew. Our staff breakroom space is tight quarters with minimal room for storage of personal items, and the staff restroom is about the size of an RV bathroom. Staff office spaces are in a multi-occupant room requiring advance planning and coordination to hold private conversations or meetings.

Despite its limitations, we do everything we can to make the best use of the space we have and are always looking for new ways to change things up for greater utilization and to keep the space fresh.

Projects

Over the past several years we've redesigned our teen space, updated shelving in our holds area, the children's area, and our DVD collection. We acquired the meeting room pod, thanks to a generous donation from a community member, and added picture hanging rail to our computer space and along the west wall in the children's area. The hanging rail project has allowed us to partner with local artists for a quarterly exhibit, and also to pilot the addition of framed children's artwork to our Library of Things collection.

This coming year we are looking forward to upcoming facilities projects that will redesign our front circulation space, subdivide the staff office into smaller private spaces, and continue to bring enhancements to our large meeting room space.

Partnerships

The Blaine Library partners with a number of local community organizations, including: Blaine Chamber of Commerce, Blaine CORE, Blaine CAP, Blaine Food Bank, Blaine Arts Council, Blaine Senior Center, Blaine-Birch Bay Parks & Rec Department 2, and the Blaine School District, among others. Through these partnerships we are able to extend the reach of our services beyond the walls of our building. Partnerships provide new opportunities for outreach, library programming, and greater community involvement. Partnerships help keep the library as a vital hub for community engagement in Blaine.

Goals

In the coming year we look forward to enhancing the patron experience here through facility updates. We are actively working on new ways to extend our community impact. One example is that in partnership with the Friends of the Blaine Library, we are planning on joining the Blaine Arts Council's Second Saturday Art Walk as a venue. Another example is that we are currently developing a new library book club to be held at the Senior Center. In 2025 we will

strive to have an active presence at all community events and continue to look for new and innovative ways to provide services to our community.

Michael Cox
Deputy Director

ACCESS

We are working with local school districts to add our locations as stops on school bus routes from middle, junior high, and senior high schools. Students can take the bus to the library and arrange with parents for a ride home from there. The program is up and running with the Mount Baker School District dropping teens at the Deming Library, and with the Lynden School District, dropping teens at the Lynden Library. And we are working with the Nooksack Valley School District to drop teens at the Everson and Sumas Libraries. Branch Managers have been extraordinarily helpful working with us to ensure that teens arriving after school by bus are set up to have the best library experience, and Amy Jones in Community Relations has created a bookmark to spread the word, particularly in conjunction with ConnectED visits and materials.

RIDE THE BUS TO THE LIBRARY

Route 24, Bus #2

You will need to arrange a ride home.

Deming Library Hours:

Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.



RESOURCES

Children's Services Coordinator Theresa Morrison and I met with Tia Collins, the new Family Access Manager with the Opportunity Council, who is working on developing a portal for families across the region to understand and access services for their young children. She was interested in and impressed with the variety and quality of the programs and materials we have and particularly taken with the attention we have paid to programs in Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian, as well as the elements we have built into all of our storytime programs to improve participation for children with sensory processing issues.

COMMUNITY

Even though we're trudging through snow and ice, we are busy planning our 2025 Summer Reading Program. Look forward to something new, splashy, and especially engaging. Special thanks to Youth Services Librarian Sarah Lavender who is guiding a major overhaul with aplomb.

Thom Barthelmess

Youth Services Manager

COMMUNITY/RESOURCES

We use multiple channels to share library messages, including eNewsletters to patrons. Tried-and-true email remains a relevant and effective tactic in our communication plan.

We send two primary library eNewsletters each month: Library News and Read On. Over the past few months, the newsletters have had an average open rate of 39% (national average, 29%). Staff also send an employment newsletter and Surprise Selection email to subscribers. A ConnectED eNewsletter is sent to school contacts. We are able to monitor click-thru rates on each newsletter, which helps us to monitor interests. In the February Library News, 267 people (176 unique) clicked through to learn more about the library listening sessions.



Share your ideas at library listening sessions

Resourceful Reads for the New Year

January is a popular time for building new habits, but sticking to lofty resolutions can be tough. This month we're bringing you reading material to help you **maintain your finances, health and living space** year-round.

If you're trying to make **positive, sustainable changes** in your life, the library is here to help — because it's never too late to start again.

Emma Radosevich and Mary Kinser
Collection Development Librarians



Crush Your Money Goals

After an expensive holiday season, January can be a great time to **take stock of financial goals**.

Whether you need to create a monthly budget or start saving for retirement, personal finance books can help you make a plan. The **financial expertise** in these books will help you approach your bank account from a place of confidence, not fear.

Budgeting and Personal Finance

In 2025, our team will be focusing on segmenting emails so we can reach patrons with messages that appeal to their particular interests. For instance, we can create and send consistent messages to people with young children at home. A recent trial email boosted participation in Pajama Storytime.

Email Trends Forecast

- Hyper-personalization: relevant content based on recipient's interests
- Interactive emails to drive engagement
- Emphasis on privacy and security

- Storytelling and conversational marketing as content
- Focus on accessibility

Other national trends: AI influence (A/B testing, automated campaigns, content creation). WCLS does not currently have plans to employ AI in our email messages.

We will be monitoring effectiveness and sharing updates in the year ahead.

News Releases

- [WCLS hosts 11 budget listening sessions at locations across the county and online](#)
- [Spanish-language phone line connects patrons with library and community resources](#)

Podcast: wcls.org/podcast or subscribe on your favorite podcast platform

- [Episode 52: Whatcom READS, Claire McElroy and Wes Weddell](#)

Book Reviews

- *Cascadia Daily News*, Jan. 10, 2025, [Review: 'The Heart of Winter'](#) by Jonathan Evison
- *The Northern Light*, Jan. 15, 2025, Blaine book club: ['The Cat Who Saved Books'](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, Jan. 25, 2025, [Review: 'Big in Sweden'](#) by Sally Franson
- *Bellingham Alive*, January 2025. See clip below.

Book Reviews

WRITTEN BY MARY KINSER



"The Small and the Mighty: Twelve Unsung Americans Who Changed the Course of History, from the Founding to the Civil Rights Movement"
by Sharon McMahon

In the face of struggle, it sometimes feels like the odds are insurmountable, and that we cannot make an impact on our own. But the people in "The Small and the Mighty" prove otherwise. Here are stories of individual Americans who faced significant obstacles and yet persevered to effect real change, both in their communities and in the nation. Author Sharon McMahon, known as "America's Government Teacher" through her popular podcast and Instagram feed, brings the stories of these everyday heroes to light in a series of engaging essays. Meet Virginia Randolph, whose contributions to African American education rivaled those of Booker T. Washington; Rebecca Brown Mitchell, who brought the vote to Idaho women years before the 19th Amendment; and Daniel Inouye, who distinguished himself as a hero during World War II, even as Japanese Americans were being imprisoned at home. These remarkable people, and many more, inspire pride in the spirit of America and foster hope for the future with a reminder of how change begins: as a single spark.



"Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II"
by Elyse Graham

Mention the word "spy" and most people picture an action hero, not a professor combing through dusty archives. Yet that is exactly who extracted the intelligence necessary for the Allies to win World War II: librarians and academics sent behind enemy lines. "Book and Dagger" brings readers into the Office of Strategic Services, whose charge it was to rebuild the American intelligence community. To do so, the agency recruited scholars and trained them as secret agents, relying on their unique knowledge to gather and decode information. Unassuming as these spies were, their operations were exceedingly dangerous, and they were trained accordingly (one professor even learned to fashion a newspaper into a weapon!). In the end, their contributions led to an Allied victory. This is a page-turner of a book, highly readable and surprisingly gripping. And it's hard not to agree with Graham's premise—that the study of the humanities is vital to a thriving nation. "The war may have been fought on battlefields," Graham asserts, "but it was won in libraries."

Media Coverage

- *Visit Bellingham*, Jan. 2, 2025, [bellingham.org/pressreleases/whatcom-reads-announces-2025-community-author-events](https://www.bellingham.org/pressreleases/whatcom-reads-announces-2025-community-author-events)
- *The Northern Light*, Jan. 3, 2025, [A look back at the year that was ...](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Jan. 7, 2025, [2024 Year in Review: Blaine Public Library](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, Jan. 7, 2025, [2024 Year in Review: A look back at the year that was ... \(July-December\)](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Jan. 7, 2025, [2024 Year in Review: A look back at the year that was ... \(July-December\)](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, Jan. 7, 2025, [2024 Year in Review: Friends of Birch Bay Library](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, Jan. 8, 2025, [A jazzy new year at the Ferndale Library](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, Jan. 10, 2025, [Letters to the editor: Jan. 8, 2025](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, Jan. 18, 2025, [WHATCOM NEWS: Jan. 15, 2025](#) (WCLS seeks applicants for Board of Trustees)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, Jan. 22, 2025, [Weekly Watchdog: Jan. 23-29, 2025](#) (meeting at Ferndale Library)
- *Lynden Tribune*, Jan. 30, 2025, [Library boasts new flooring, new makeover in family bathroom](#)
- *Cascadia Daily News*, Jan. 30, 2025, [Faces in the Crowd: Barry MacHale: Whatcom County jail librarian](#)
- *Bellingham Metro News*, Jan. 31, 2025, [Emotion and Tradition Collide at Whatcom County Charter Meeting](#) (meeting at Ferndale Library)
- *Salish Current*, Jan. 31, 2025, [Whatcom READS builds a community of readers](#)
- *Point Roberts Press*, Jan. 2, 2025. See clips below.

Whatcom READS presents: Buoy painting workshop: Wednesday, February 12, 1 to 2:30 p.m., Point Roberts Library meeting room. Adult activity. Inspired by Whatcom READS selection *No Two Persons*. Painted Buoys will be incorporated into a large art installation at Bellingham Seafest 2025. Info: wcls.org.

Let's Make Valentines: Wednesday, February 5, 3 to 4 p.m., Point Roberts library meeting room. Teen corps volunteers needed from 2:45 to 4 p.m. Come to the library to make valentines cards for all the loved ones in your life. Supplies provided.

- *Point Roberts Press*, Jan. 30, 2025. See clip below.

Point Roberts Book Club: Wednesday, February 26, 6–7:30 p.m., Point Roberts **Library**. All are welcome to join this lively monthly discussion group at the **library**. Call the **library** at 360/945-6545 for this month's selection. Last Wednesday of the month.

LOL 101: Wednesday, March 5, 3 to 4 p.m., Point Roberts **Library**. Grades K-5.

Ongoing Events and Hours

Craft and Game Night: Tuesdays from 5–7 p.m., Point Roberts **Library**. Bring a craft to work on or a board game to play.

Mary Vermillion

Community Relations Manager

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	302,117	387,323	689,440

Circulation	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	10,773	14,427	10,773	14,427	33.9%
Bookmobile & Outreach	3,951	5,154	3,951	5,154	30.4%
Deming	7,343	8,321	7,343	8,321	13.3%
Everson	7,966	9,056	7,966	9,056	13.7%
Ferndale	29,314	29,849	29,314	29,849	1.8%
Island	1,596	1,895	1,596	1,895	18.7%
Lynden	32,810	36,409	32,810	36,409	11.0%
North Fork	3,448	3,634	3,448	3,634	5.4%
NWIC	7	14	7	14	100.0%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,755	2,171	1,755	2,171	23.7%
Sumas + SLX	1,970	2,447	1,970	2,447	24.2%
South Whatcom	6,642	7,434	6,642	7,434	11.9%
NDX	3,008	4,372	3,008	4,372	45.3%
Physical Circulation Total	110,583	125,183	110,583	125,183	13.2%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	24,796	25,877	24,796	25,877	4.4%
All other materials	84,767	96,534	84,767	96,534	13.9%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	36,756	39,303	36,756	39,303	6.9%
eMagazines	6,130	6,128	6,130	6,128	0.0%
eMusic	9,233	9,642	9,233	9,642	4.4%
Streaming Video	1,405	1,478	1,405	1,478	5.2%
Digital Circulation Total	53,524	56,551	53,524	56,551	5.7%
Grand Total	164,107	181,734	164,107	181,734	10.7%

Visitors (Door counts)	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Blaine	6,190	7,465	6,190	7,465	20.6%
Deming	2,775	2,724	2,775	2,724	-1.8%
Everson	2,917	3,440	2,917	3,440	17.9%
Ferndale	11,212	13,249	11,212	13,249	18.2%
Island	998	993	998	993	-0.5%
Lynden	10,660	12,408	10,660	12,408	16.4%
NDX	304	315	304	315	3.6%
North Fork	1,516	1,682	1,516	1,682	10.9%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,299	1,281	1,299	1,281	-1.4%
Sumas + SLX	945	1,317	945	1,317	
South Whatcom	2,376	3,171	2,376	3,171	33.5%
Total	41,192	48,045	41,192	48,045	16.6%

New Borrowers	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
	734	652	734	652	-11.2%

Interlibrary Loan	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	10,977	12,677	10,977	12,677	15.5%
Lent to BPL	21,175	23,195	21,175	23,195	9.5%
Borrowed: other libraries	572	640	572	640	11.9%
Lent: other libraries	565	692	565	692	22.5%

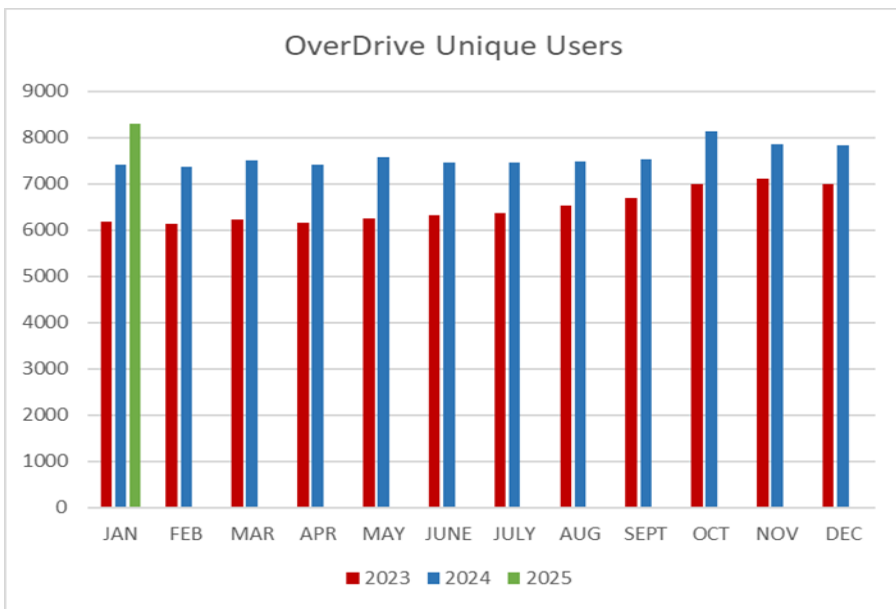
Electronic Resources	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	38,416	39,403	38,416	39,403	2.6%
Bibliocommons Sessions	96,731	94,220	96,731	94,220	-2.6%
Internet Sessions	3,223	4,100	3,223	4,100	27.2%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	5,245	7,352	5,245	7,352	40.2%

Activities	Jan 2024	Jan 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	51	89	51	89	74.5%
Teens	12	26	12	26	116.7%
Children	55	104	55	104	89.1%
Total	118	219	118	219	85.6%
Attendance					
Adults	436	935	436	935	114.4%
Teens	225	973	225	973	332.4%
Children	1,293	1,274	1,293	1,274	-1.5%
Total	1,954	3,182	1,954	3,182	62.8%

Notes/Corrections:

OVERDRIVE UNIQUE USERS

January set a new high for unique users of OverDrive/Libby with 8,306 patrons interacting with content. 418 of these users were new to OverDrive/Libby. Circulation of eAudiobooks (49%) and eMagazines (13%) continues to grow faster than eBook circulation (38%) as a percentage of the whole. Of the top 10 circulating titles in January (excluding eMagazines), 9 were eAudiobook titles. Rebecca Yarros's newly released fantasy novel *Onyx Storm* topped the list with 221 checkouts to WCLS patrons in January. WCLS purchased simultaneous uses (100 for \$130.80, sale price) to fill all outstanding WCLS holds immediately.



DATABASE USAGE

(NOTE: Statistics for Gale databases are estimated this month as their stats reports were not available.) Patrons completed 32 LinkedIn Learning courses on topics such as AutoCAD, accounting, consulting, Excel, time management, persuasive writing and video lighting. The top five languages studied at Mango Languages were Spanish, American Sign Language, French, Japanese and Punjabi. Of the documents viewed at Newsbank, by far the most accessed content was from the *Bellingham Herald* (49%) with the *Seattle Times* a close second (47%) and *Cascadia Daily News* a distant third (3%).

