

Westchester Public Library
Board of Trustees
Minutes
February 11, 2021

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 7:00 pm. This meeting was held electronically due to the current public health emergency.

Board members present electronically were: Kathryn Cochran, Michele Corazzo, Michael Livovich, Abbe Trent, and Rondi Wightman; Board member absent: Nick Tilden.

Also present at this meeting electronically were Library Director Lisa Stamm, Attorney Terry Hiestand, and Minutes Recorder Christine Hoover.

This meeting was called to order by Board Vice President Michele Corazzo at 7:12 pm.

(Since this meeting is being conducted electronically due to the current public health emergency, all action items have been voted on by roll call.)

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2021 regular Board meeting as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of January 15, 2021, through February 11, 2021 as presented. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Librarian's Report

Service highlights were related from the past month featuring positive feedback and gratitude expressed by patrons regarding their Library experiences.

During January, 20,057 people visited the Library. Staff created three (3) Recorded Virtual programs with 432 attendees/views, and 21 Live Virtual programs were created with 448 Live Virtual attendees. Staff answered 107 reference questions, 75 tech help questions, and 68 new library cards were registered. The Facebook challenge engaged 128 people. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided. Also noted was that 8,168 items were downloaded from the Library's electronic collections (eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMusic, eVideos, and such) in 2019; and in 2020, that number increased to 27,691 items downloaded. This is an increase of 339%.

From August through December 2020, 904 Craft Kits were created, supplied, and distributed to patrons.

The United Way Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax preparation services to taxpayers. This year, their information packets will be available to patrons in person and via Curbside Pickup at Thomas and Hageman branches.

NIPSCO advised that they are planning to replace telephone poles in the alley behind Thomas and that when they do this work, the power at Thomas would be shut down for a day and the power at the Baugher Center would also be shut down for a day. There are numerous steps that need to be taken before shutting off the power; and in prepping for this, it was discovered that the main switches for all of the power coming into Thomas and the Baugher Center have not been properly identified or updated over the years as issues or modifications occurred. Ellis Electric will be hired to correctly examine and identify the switches on the day of the NIPSCO work right after the power is turned off. Ellis will also double-check the lines and wires to be sure that NIPSCO replaces them in the correct sequence ("phase rotation") as soon as the transformers from the old telephone poles are installed onto the new poles. The Library IT Manager is also working to safeguard against the Library servers receiving a surge and to be sure they are properly turned off and on. This power shutoff will take place on Sunday when Thomas and the Baugher Center are closed so there will be no staff or patron interruption. The estimated cost for the work to be done by Ellis Electric is \$1,475.65 for Thomas, and \$1,213 for the Baugher Center for a total of \$2,688.65. However, the final cost may be less, depending upon how long NIPSCO takes to do the work.

A property owner next to the Hageman Branch had a sewer backup, and in the process of repair through a shared manhole access to the pipeline, the plumber alerted the Library that Hageman's sewer lines looked close to being clogged. The Library hired Trapmasters Plumbing to check and clean out the Library pipes. In doing so, Trapmasters utilized a camera to check the condition and material of the pipes. It was discovered that the pipes were almost plugged up to the manhole in the alley with only two inches of opening of the eight-inch diameter, and 90% of the blockage was from paper towels. Paper towels were removed from the restroom at Hageman, and the issue was addressed with the Branch Manager. The drain pipes were determined to be cast iron under the building, and they appear to be in good shape. The cost of the work totaled \$400.

In late summer of 2020, OverDrive (the Library eBook and eAudiobook provider) advised that they were buying RBDigital Magazines. This type of change requires much work on the backend at the Library to ensure a seamless transition for patrons and staff. After last-minute specifications from OverDrive, the transition was managed smoothly. The eMagazine package now includes 2,300 titles versus the 120 titles that were being purchased from RBDigital for less than half the total cost. Previously, the cost for eMagazines was approximately \$10,000, and it is now approximately \$5,000 for the complete OverDrive package with platform fess included in the existing subscriptions.

Currently, the Library has only a select number of licenses to access Polaris (ILS system) offsite, and these licenses are loaded onto specific laptops used by Managers. There was enough offsite access to remain functional during the Stay at Home, but it would be beneficial to have a few more laptops with that capability. The price quoted for individual license additions was too high. Polaris offered an alternate service that would give unlimited web-based access to the ILS; meaning, any Library laptop could be used anywhere and have access to the Polaris system. They quoted \$10,000 for the service and were told by Director Stamm that this was far too much money.

In November, Polaris advised that with the next regular upgrade, they are offering the web-based service option for free with the normal subscription. There will be brief downtime for staff and patrons during the technical work of the upgrade slated to occur March 25.

Two \$250,000 Library Improvement Reserve Fund (LIRF) CDs matured and were reinvested through Horizon Trust & Investment Management.

In January, Homebound Delivery patron Mr. Richard Awald thanked the Library for their services with a donation of \$50 to the Unrestricted Gift Fund. Ms. Doris M. Swanson (nee Carlson) formerly of Chesterton recently passed away in New Jersey. Her obituary listed Westchester Public Library as a recipient of memorials in her name. If any donations are received in her name, a personal letter of thanks will be sent to the family, as is done with all donors.

Director Stamm, Managers, and frontline staff took a training webinar from the Indiana Library Federation (ILF) who partnered with 2-1-1 on how to assist patrons with registering for the Covid-19 vaccine through ourshot.in.gov. Normally, the Library avoids involvement in patron medical or legal needs, but as these are unprecedented times of a worldwide public health emergency, staff will help patrons with vaccine registration. Consent forms from the Indiana Department of Health must be provided or read to patrons, and patrons must grant staff permission to assist them. Director Stamm wrote lengthy guidance and instructions to staff on the process. To date, there hasn't been a significant need for help from patrons on this matter. However, if this should change and staff become bogged down by assisting patrons on this matter, the process will be revisited.

The Porter County Health Department made a surprise visit to Thomas Library with an inspection. They were pleased with the Covid-19 signage, safety protocols, proper mask wearing by employees, and free masks.

Baker & Taylor, the Library's primary book supplier, has recently re-staffed and reopened their warehouses, and book deliveries are very close to their "street dates" (publisher release dates) rather than receiving them long after as has been the case during the pandemic.

Beginning February 1, the quarantine period on all circulating materials was changed from three days to 24 hours. From the scientific research about how the virus primarily spreads (from airborne droplets and close contact), experts have determined that the virus cannot sustain itself for longer than several hours on inanimate items. Therefore, a 24-hour quarantine on inanimate items is sufficient. Staff were educated about this change to process, and simple signs were made for patrons to notify them of the change and to reiterate that the Library is continuing all of its safety procedures.

All staff were anonymously surveyed as to their preferences regarding potential mental health support from the Library. Of those who responded, most were interested in being able to watch webinars during their shift geared toward mental health support and stress relief and to be able to talk about concerns casually with their department colleagues. Vetted, appropriate, professional mental health webinars will be provided for staff to watch and participate in during their shifts. Patron service shall not be interrupted by staff watching these webinars. Consideration is being given to hiring a professional to create a custom webinar on self-care for staff.

Full-time employees have the option in their Library health insurance coverage to have one-on-one private counseling. Full-time staff were reminded of the fact that mental health support coverage is available to them and that federal law permits professional counseling fees to be paid from Health Savings Accounts.

The Library Annual Report is due to Indiana State Library (ISL) before the end of the month, and it is almost finished. ISL added to the 2020 report a section devoted to answering specific questions regarding adaptive measures taken by Libraries during the pandemic to ensure patrons were being served in a safe manner. The Library was pleased to be able to answer “Yes” to each category.

In January, an additional \$79 was spent on pandemic-related expenditures. The total expenditures to date for pandemic-related supplies is now \$13,884.66.

There were no staff changes during the past month.

Old Business CSK Contract Template

Attorney Terry Hiestand continues to work out details with CSK Architects on the general contract template the Library will utilize.

New Business Employee Coronavirus Sick Time Temporary Policy Update

Director Stamm recommends this Policy be amended to require that persons awaiting negative Covid-19 test results and/or in isolation follow CDC guidelines, rather than requiring a negative Covid-19 test result to return to work. Staff would follow CDC guidelines and time frames for isolation and must then be symptom- and fever-free without medication for 24 hours before being permitted to return to work. Director Stamm would like to extend the policy beyond April to a date in the summer, since the vaccine should be widely available by then, and asked that she be granted permission to, on a case-by-case basis, continue the policy for those who have used all of it. As of now, only two staff members have used most or all of the Library supplemental Covid-19 sick time policy.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to extend the Employee Coronavirus Sick Time Temporary Policy through June 30, 2021 and also to make the revisions to the policy as recommended and provided by Director Stamm at this time. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Treasurer Role

With the untimely and sad passing of Trustee and Treasurer Drew Rhed, the Board must determine who among them may be able to assume the role of Treasurer.

Kathryn Cochran nominated Rondi Wightman as Treasurer of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to close the nominations and elect Rondi Wightman as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

Other Business Honoring Drew Rhed

Board members shared their thoughts and memories of Library Trustee Drew Rhed. It was decided that Board members would personally obtain restaurant gift cards to be given to the family of Drew Rhed along with a condolence card expressing their thoughts and wishes for the Rhed family.

The date of the next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 7:00 pm at the Baugher Center, or TBD.

Rondi Wightman made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Hoover, Minutes Recorder for
Abbe Trent, Secretary