

Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
December 9, 2021

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Baugher Center, 100 West Indiana Avenue, Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Board members present were: Heather Augustyn, Kathryn Cochran, Michele Corazzo, Abbe Trent, and Rondi Wightman.

Board members absent: Will Scharp and Nick Tilden.

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Lisa Stamm, Library Assistant Director Heather Chaddock, Attorney Lisa Baron, and Minutes Recorder Christine Hoover.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Abbe Trent at 7:04 pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the November 11, 2021 regular Board meeting as presented. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports as presented. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of November 12, 2021 through December 31, 2021 as presented. Heather Augustyn 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.

In the month of November, 14,036 people visited the Library. Staff created one in-person program with five attendees, and 27 Live Virtual programs with 286 Live Virtual attendees. Staff answered 56 reference questions, 68 tech help questions, and 72 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided.

The ongoing Friends of the Library project has been completed, and the Library will resume accepting donated materials. The former Friends room in the Thomas Library is being used for live virtual programs, and a new solid wood door plus frame will be purchased to provide more security and better soundproofing.

The entire water fountain unit on the second floor of the Baugher Center has been replaced. The old unit was extremely old and had recently stopped functioning. It was discovered by Trapmaster Plumbing that the refrigerating components were thoroughly rusted, and upon dismantling, the Freon was leaking. The cost to replace the water fountain plus installation of the new unit by Trapmaster was \$1,600.

The annual health insurance renewal rate for 2022 decreased by 1.27% equaling a monthly premium of \$14,856.82. In 2021, the monthly premium was \$15,048.14. On behalf of the staff, Director Stamm thanked the Board for providing these insurance benefits.

During the week of Thanksgiving, on the night of November 22 and into the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the alarms of the Thomas building security system began to sound. At first, the alarm was constant then it sounded in brief intervals. At 8:30pm, Managers advised Director Stamm of this problem and that the fire department arrived immediately and found no cause for the alarm. Director Stamm advised staff to close the Library 30 minutes early due to the noise nuisance.

Director Stamm called the security company and received a questionable response as to whether or not a technician would be out to remedy the problem. As a temporary measure, the security company suspended the panel system in order to stop the alarm since it was determined there was no threat to the building or personal safety. The security company then advised that a technician would be out first thing in the morning. Temporarily suspending the panel system did not work, and the alarms sounded periodically overnight. Director Stamm then found out that the technician would not arrive as scheduled and the Library was pushed down on the list by two hours.

Director Stamm spoke with the Operations Manager of the security company about the poor service the Library was receiving, and a technician was out within minutes and the Library was given a free month of service. The technician advised that one of the two large batteries powering the panel system had died. These batteries last approximately 8-10 years, and these batteries were around 8 years old. He showed Director Stamm and the Maintenance Manager how to test these batteries when they are close to the expiration timeframe. Both batteries were replaced with new batteries at this time.

Staff annual evaluations are underway. Overall, Director Stamm is very pleased with the entire staff.

President and CEO Denise Koebcke of The Caring Place inquired about partnering in programming efforts to educate people about and help protect them from abusive relationships. The Caring Place has several ready-made programs and could customize these as needed. As a result of these conversations, the Library will offer a live virtual Adult program from The Caring Place called: "How to Talk to Your Teens about Relationships and Red Flags", hosted by Koebcke on February 15 at 6:30 pm. The following week on February 22, a live virtual Teen program called: "Relationships Goals: Healthy Relationship Tips for Teems", will be hosted by Bessie Newkirk, Shelter Client and Community Services Manager for The Caring Place.

A new program for tweens and teens in grades 5-12 was developed called: "Write it Up, Write it Out: Short Story Challenge". There were ten participants in this challenge to write an original short story for a chance to win prizes. Feedback was positive from the participants and their parents. The Chesterton High School Creative Writing Club Advisor shared information about this program with students and is interested in possibly partnering in any other writing challenges hosted by the Library in the future.

Managers are being coached about how to prepare departments in handling fatigued and cranky patrons during this second winter of the Covid-19 pandemic. Library staff are focusing on being gracious as much as possible and have been role playing to practice responding to difficult interactions while remaining professional.

Staff changes for the month are the joining of part-time Clerk Paul Aceveda and the separation of substitute Clerk Betty Parker.

Old Business                      Museum – Assessment and Lease

Director Stamm met with Duneland School Corporation (DSC) Superintendent Chip Pettit last month to talk about the next steps with the Brown Mansion. After explaining the assessment and its estimated, significant cost, Director Stamm proffered that the existing lease be modified to go month-to-month through March 31, 2022 in order to allow time to complete the assessment and make a decision based upon its results. In the interim period, Director Stamm asked that the current rent be cut in half, from \$1,666 per month to \$833. Superintendent Pettit agreed to the suggested lease extension parameters and rate and advised that the DSC Attorney would write up an addendum for signatures. He also suggested that the addendum be written with the option to extend the month-to-month lease for the entirety of 2022, if needed. He requested that DSC be informed of the Library's intent after the assessment by February/March 2022. These terms were agreeable to Director Stamm. After some clarification of the amended lease provided by DSC, appropriate changes were made and Director Stamm and Attorney Lisa Baron were satisfied with the amended lease. Director Stamm recommended that she and the Board President sign this lease tonight. It will then be brought to Superintendent Pettit for signatures.

Museum – Roofing and Repair

Director Stamm brought photos of and spoke to DSC Superintendent Pettit about the current state of the Museum. Pettit advised that DSC will take care of the Museum roof repairs and all related interior repairs. Since this meeting, there has been more activity on making repairs to the Museum, and the patches to the roof appear to have stopped the interior leaking.

On December 6, Director Stamm met with the Museum Curator, Library Maintenance Manager and staff, and DSC contractors to go over final repair plans and set dates. The contractors intend to begin the Museum store ceiling work, which includes repairing its cracked walls and the stairwell drywall repair and painting on December 8. They expect to have everything completed within two weeks or sooner. Once the ceiling work is done, DSC hired contractors will repaint the ceiling and will also repaint the walls. Since the existing paint in the stairwell contains lead, Museum staff will not be present while the painting portion of this project is being done. They will work from either Thomas or the Baugher Center during that period. The Museum will be fully closed to the public beginning December 8 until the repairs and painting are complete. Carpet will also be replaced at the Library's expense.

Museum Assessment

The Museum assessment will not begin until the aforementioned repairs are finished. The Museum Curator had discussions with Todd Zeiger, Director of the State of Indiana Landmarks' Northern Division, regarding his opinion on the cost of the assessment provided by Kil Architecture. Mr. Zeiger advised he felt that the assessment cost provided by Kil was fair and that they have a great deal of historic building experience and would provide a very good overview for the Library.

Director Stamm felt comfortable with the information gathered and will coordinate with Kil on beginning the assessment as soon as the repairs to the Museum store and stairwell are completed.

New Business                      MCLS Strategic Planning

The entire Strategic Plan is complete and ready to be voted upon to implement beginning January 1, 2022. This Plan contains and addresses all State requirements upheld and enforced by the Indiana State Library including a technology replacement schedule.

The MCLS consultant stressed that the Plan and any associated timeframes are fluid and that this document should be viewed as a full working document by which to plan and work. The goals are meant to be worked on over the next five years. Capital projects will encompass much of the biggest

goals, and some goals cannot be achieved until there is enough space to accommodate existing and new staff and projects. The consultant recommended that the community survey be carved into distinct portions based on audience (community) feedback that was received pertaining to the Township overall. This should be its own document that would be delivered to those town leaders who might find this information beneficial. Director Stamm will work on carving the Plan into these separate, useful documents and disseminating them. The Plan in its entirety is for the Library's edification and to send to the State.

Periodically, staff and Board will talk about timelines and projects, and they will be reminded to view this Plan as a dynamic guide.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the Strategic Plan as presented. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

#### End-of-Year Transfers

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman to approve the End-of-Year Minor Transfers as presented. Michele Corazzo seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

#### 2022 Schedule of Meetings: Board of Trustees

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the 2022 proposed schedule of Board meetings as presented. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

#### Capital Assets Policy

The State Board of Accounts (SBOA) has decided that all libraries must calculate and report on this year's Annual Financial Report (AFR) (due alongside the Library Annual Report no later than March 1) every bit of depreciation that every capital asset owned would have encountered. There has been little guidance from SBOA and a lack of specific instructions or parameters.

In summary, SBOA is asking that all Library capital assets start from and list an item or a group's original purchase price/value, then determine the item/group's life expectancy, then figure how much it's depreciated, then calculate all numbers into a final depreciated value with five (5) years total depreciating value range.

SBOA advised they are looking for a "reasonable" amount but that libraries are to document how they get their numbers so SBOA can see documentation if they audit.

SBOA also advised that libraries would have to create or modify a Capital Assets Policy, but there were no guidelines as to what is expected to be reflected in the policy with the new requirements.

Director Stamm asked SBOA for an extension for all libraries to allow more time to figure out a process, but SBOA declined and suggested that libraries just submit the AFR and unsubmit it if something new needs to be added or changed (even though submitting/unsubmitting the AFR can only be done by the Board Treasurer).

The consensus among libraries is to produce the most accurate depreciation numbers in good faith with the limited guidelines that have been given.

The Library currently has a 25-year old Capital Assets Policy that will be updated for Board approval in January.

A motion was made by Heather Augustyn to approve the Librarian's Report as presented. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

#### Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

The next regular Board meeting will be held on Thursday, January 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Baugher Center.

A motion was made by Heather Augustyn to adjourn this meeting at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine Hoover, Minutes Recorder for  
Will Scharp, Secretary