

Board of Trustees
Minutes
April 14, 2022

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, April 14, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

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

Board members absent: Nick Tilden

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Lisa Stamm and Library Assistant Director Heather Chaddock acting as Minutes Recorder.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Kathryn Cochran at 7:10 PM.

Approval of Executive Session Minutes

A motion was made by Will Scharp to approve the Executive Session Minutes from the March 10, 2022 meeting as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the March 10, 2022 regular Board meeting as presented. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. Will Scharp and Heather Augustyn abstained from voting. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

As a result of business conducted at the executive session meeting held immediately prior to this regular meeting, a motion was made by Will Scharp that based on the job performance evaluation, an additional 10 personal days would be added to the Director's paid time off, effective immediately. This motion was seconded by Heather Augustyn. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Will Scharp to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports as presented. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Will Scharp to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of March 11, 2022 through April 14, 2022 as presented. Rondi Wightman 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. The Women's History Month Scavenger Hunts at each branch, as well as daily Facebook posts featuring historic women of Duneland, inspired meaningful connections between patrons, especially among the family and friends of the highlighted women.

In the month of March, 17,552 people visited the Library. Staff created 2 In-Person programs with 81 attendees, and 18 Live Virtual programs with 210 Live Virtual attendees. Staff answered 40 reference questions, 81 tech help questions, and 111 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials

circulation statistics were provided.

WPL is scheduled for the next regular version upgrade to its ILS (integrated library system) in the early hours of May 9th. This upgrade is part of a slate of common maintenance for functionality and security. There are no costs associated with this upgrade.

The next Library Technology Sale is scheduled for Saturday, April 23rd, from 9am-12pm in the Thomas computer classroom. Typically, the items in these sales sell out far sooner than the scheduled end time of the sale.

Director Stamm purchased another batch of "We Love Our Library" yard signs, as patrons both new and existing see them in neighborhoods and consistently request their own. 400 signs with wire stakes were purchased from Acme Print Copy Design for a cost of \$1,950, paid from Operating fund line 3.32 Printing & Advertising.

The Duneland Garden Club will hold their annual plant sale fundraiser on May 14th in the Thomas Library west parking lot.

In March three, \$250,000 LIRF CDs matured and were reinvested, alongside interest, by Horizon Trust & Investment Management at the following rates:

Barclay's Bank 1.55%

JPMorgan Chase Bank 1.50%

Ally Bank Utah 1.35%

The second post-pandemic Friends of the Library Book Sale was a success. The sale generated \$4,520.90, all of which will help to support Library programming and initiatives. Director Stamm expressed her gratitude to the Friends for their ongoing support of WPL.

The Westchester Township History Museum has been collaborating with the Field Museum and the Porter County Museum since 2019 on a large-scale, traveling exhibit that will culminate with all participants' exhibit components displayed together at the Field Museum. The exhibition series is called "Calumet Voices, National Stories," and focuses on the national significance of the Calumet region. The History Museum contributed artifacts from its collection, including ceramics and glass items from local factories, protest and activism signs, and more. The entire series is part of an application by the National Park Service to make the region a National Heritage Area. The public is invited to attend the exhibit open house at the Porter County Museum on May 19th from 5-8 PM.

National Library Week, a week set aside to celebrate and champion libraries and library staff, ran from April 3rd - 9th. In honor of National Library Workers Day on April 5th, Director Stamm purchased gift certificates for all staff members from Red Cup for \$8 apiece. The total of \$512, paid from the Unrestricted Gift fund, allowed staff members to choose their own treats while supporting a local business. Staff were vocal about their appreciation for the gift.

The staff transition to mask-optional has been a smooth and positive change. The Library is looking to mid-summer for meeting rooms to reopen to the public and staff are working on the details now; the Bertha Wood Room at Thomas will be unavailable indefinitely, as it is needed for staff during the HVAC project (and also needs to be appropriately outfitted and wired in advance). This leaves the Emily Peterson Room at Hageman and the Baugher Center for all meeting room needs. Staff are currently blocking off the meeting spaces for known and forecasted Library use, before they announce availability to the public and start the detailed process of applications and scheduling.

On another positive note, the pandemic-mandated OSHA anonymous reporting boxes (meant for staff to complain about Covid-19 safety practices, or lack thereof) have been retired, and they have remained empty for the duration.

At the end of March, the Library was a victim of fraud involving a \$5000 check for services provided by Attorney Lisa Baron. The check was altered as payable to a woman with a Chicago address unknown to anyone at either the Library or the attorney's office. When the woman attempted to deposit the altered check into her personal account at Huntington Bank, the Bank flagged the check as suspicious and alerted Horizon Bank, who then alerted WPL, and Director Stamm confirmed that the check had been altered. She spoke with both Attorney Lisa Baron and the office manager of her firm, and they informed her that their mail is received into a locked building in Rosemont, IL, outfitted with a security guard, and is further stored inside of a locked room that is only accessible by signing-in and utilizing a key. The Library Bookkeeper dropped off the mail directly into the Chesterton post office, therefore, it seemed likely that the mail was intercepted somewhere in the carrier process before reaching the building in Rosemont.

After consultation with a Horizon representative, Director Stamm filed a report with the Chesterton Police Department, which the banks will use to continue their investigation and any subsequent prosecution for fraud. For security reasons, Director Stamm instructed Horizon to cancel the account and create a new account. Horizon transferred WPL's balance from the old account to the new account and credited the \$5,000 that was in limbo from the fraud alert. All fraud documentation was submitted to the Horizon Bank Fraud Department, who have taken over the case and are working with the Huntington Bank Security Department.

Old Business

Appointment

Director Stamm attended the regular meeting of the County Commissioners in mid-March to address them in support of the reappointment of Trustee Rondi Wightman; they approved the recommendation and appointed another 4-year term. Attorney Lisa Baron filed the relevant paperwork with the County Clerk.

Thomas Doors

Kleckner Interior Systems replaced the old door to the former Friends of the Library room in Thomas, in order to secure it and make it better suited for the room's new use as a live virtual programming studio. This work was completed in March, with satisfactory results. Kleckner was also slated to replace the exterior Thomas double steel doors to the Maintenance workroom and mechanical room, which were in poor shape due to rust and age deterioration, and this replacement has become a problem. Due to the building settling and decades-old state of the frames, the middle of the frame on the right-hand door bows out slightly. Despite careful measuring, the new doors would not close and lock without brute force. After much maneuvering and discussion, Kleckner was advised by Director Stamm to explore cutting away the right piece of framework and replacing it with a custom section of steel frame that is 1/4" thinner than the existing section. This would permit the double doors to close and lock with ease. In the meantime, the doors have been forced into a closed and locked position. The original price for this job was \$5,500; Kleckner estimated an additional \$1000-\$1200 to remedy the remaining issues, and plans to complete the job within the next week.

Thomas HVAC

On March 23rd CSK Architect Tom Kuhn and Director Stamm held a pre-construction meeting with all relevant parties, in order that everyone could meet one another and discuss loose timeframes. Supply chain issues are a growing complication, and while some smaller portions of the project can be accomplished and are being scheduled, the bulk of the work has been pushed out even farther.

The rooftop condenser units for Thomas won't be available for installation until approximately 32 weeks from now (landing in mid-October), and each of the four phases will take 8 or so weeks to complete, ensuring this project will go into 2023 before it's finished.

Concerned by the likelihood of the project extending beyond 2022 and legal protocol for its \$2.2 Additional Appropriation, Director Stamm reached out to DLGF and SBOA for guidance. DLGF advised that the Additional could be encumbered into the following year. SBOA agreed, stating, "It is our audit position that the library can encumber the appropriation into 2023 as long as contract or purchase order exists by December 31, 2022 and the library board approves the encumbrance in the last meeting for the year." The referenced, written guidance from the December 2021 SBOA Library Bulletin was provided in the Board documents. Director Stamm is working with WPL's architect and bookkeeper, and will bring to the Board at the December meeting the encumbrance amounts with a purchase order and all other stipulations as written in the aforementioned Bulletin.

Director Stamm is also working with Anton Insurance, who requested to see the standard A1A contract that was developed with CSK Architects and Terry Hiestand, and that Attorney Lisa Baron also reviewed and approved, on "special perils" coverage. During the pre-construction meeting, Tom Kuhn of CSK made sure Director Stamm was aware that the Library should carry standard "special perils" coverage, and she shared that with Anton.

Director Stamm heard back from Anton in the form of a quote (in Board documents) for a "builder's risk /renovation policy" from Selective Insurance for the project, at a proposed deductible of \$5,000 and an annual premium of \$2,249. The premium would be prorated based on the actual time of the project and would automatically renew until the carrier is informed that the project is finished. If the work is finished or the policy cancelled in the middle of a policy term, the premium would be returned pro-rata.

Director Stamm sent the insurance quote to Attorney Lisa Baron and architect Tom Kuhn for review and they were satisfied that the coverage met the Library's needs; Kuhn advised that coverage should only begin when workers are onsite, and that since that won't occur for months from now, to hold off on implementing the policy. Director Stamm communicated this to Anton and they agreed; she asked about the length of coverage since the project will likely extend into next year, and they said it would renew as needed.

WPL is also adding the Thomas roof to the scope of work for the asbestos specialists in their testing and preparing before work begins. The roof must be core-drilled to ensure that there is no asbestos within any layers, since the portions of the roof will be disrupted in the installation of the new condenser units.

Director Stamm reached out to Town Engineer Mark O'Dell to request that Town of Chesterton waive construction permit fees for the Library, and to request inclusion on the Town Council's Agenda in late April. O'Dell let her know to submit plans with a building permit application to the Town of Chesterton, in order to petition the Council for a Waiver of Building Permit Fees. Bob Nicksic advised Director Stamm that the Library could request the permit details from the contractor now, even though work won't begin for a while, and so all involved parties are working on that process.

Dune Acres

In March, Director Stamm contacted the Shirley Heinz Land Trust regarding the Dune Acres parcel of land gifted to the Library several years ago, and spoke with their Executive Director, Mr. Kris Krouse. Krouse explained that the Heinz Trust would not find the property a good fit for their purposes, and that in fact they have been gifted numerous noncontiguous small parcels of land, adjacent to residences, in the same area and have been considering donating them to the Town of Dune Acres.

The question of intent is relevant to next steps concerning this gift – did the donor wish the Library to sell it for financial gain; to keep and use it for some purpose the donor imagined would benefit the Library’s mission; or to keep it in its natural state, noted as a gift of thanks from a longtime patron? To find an answer, Director Stamm read through the entire file she received from the office of Terry Hiestand about the gift, and found a letter from an attorney overseeing the warranty deed; in this letter, the attorney states: “We hope this property, or the funds that can be procured by its sale, will be of benefit to the Library.” A copy of the letter was included in the Board documents.

Director Stamm stated that the decision of whether to gift the land to the Town of Dune Acres, strictly within the parameters of their offer that it shall remain in its native state in perpetuity, or to attempt to sell the land for monetary gain for the Library, is up to the Board. Director Stamm suggested that if the Board wishes to pursue selling it, they should contract with a real estate expert who can take on the entire process, independent of but reporting to the Library Director and, subsequently, Library Board. The Board continued with further discussion on this topic, with Trustees Abbe Trent, Heather Augustyn, Kathryn Cochran, and Will Scharp ultimately in favor of utilizing a realtor to sell the property, in order to financially benefit the Library and its patrons. Trustee Michele Corazzo wanted to know, if the property were to be donated, whether the Library could add a restriction that the land must be preserved in perpetuity. Director Stamm will refer that question to Attorney Lisa Baron, and the Board ultimately agreed to discuss this issue again at their next regular meeting.

New Business

Museum Assessment

Kil Architects submitted the final copy of the assessment of the Brown Mansion, and there were no significant surprises or drastic concerns. The full report was included in the Board documents.

Other than the large, obvious items (roof replacement and accompanying roof-related work), it was determined by Director Stamm and the Museum Curator that WPL’s Maintenance crew can accomplish many of the tasks listed in the report. They also believe that WPL has at least a year and a half to begin some tasks, such as the furnace, as it is functioning sufficiently and can continue to be kept in good repair.

The total estimated, probable repair costs are \$192,115. If the Mansion was owned by the Library, WPL could attend to the to-do list and absorb these and other costs within its Operating budget (versus continuing to pay rent and relying on the school to complete any planned or unplanned work). WPL was paying rent of \$1,666 per month, which Director Stamm asked the DSC to cut in half (\$833) while conducting the assessment, and they submitted that any new lease the Library may enter into with them would be at a higher monthly rent rate of \$1,750 (\$21,000 annually).

Director Stamm gave a recommendation to the Board that the Library approach the Duneland School Corporation with the intent of purchasing the Brown Mansion. If the Board agrees, she will reach out to DSC Superintendent Chip Pettit and continue the conversation, looping in attorneys as necessary.

A motion was made by Will Scharp for Director Stamm to approach the Duneland School Corporation with an offer to purchase the Brown Mansion. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. Rondi Wightman abstained. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Librarian's Report

A motion was made by Heather Augustyn to approve the Librarian's Report as presented at tonight's meeting of April 14, 2022. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

The next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, May 12 at the Baugher Center.

Heather Augustyn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Chaddock, Minutes Recorder for
Heather Augustyn, Secretary