

Board of Trustees
Minutes
May 12, 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, May 12, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Board members present were: Heather Augustyn, Kathryn Cochran, Will Scharp, Nick Tilden, and Rondi Wightman.

Board members absent: Michele Corazzo and Abbe Trent

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Lisa Stamm, Library Assistant Director Heather Chaddock, Thomas Reference Department Manager Kimberly Wiseman, Attorney Lisa Baron, and Minutes Recorder Christine Hoover.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Kathryn Cochran at 7:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes – Executive Session

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2022 Executive Session Board meeting as presented. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Nick Tilden abstaining from voting, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Will Scharp to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2022 regular Board meeting as presented. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Nick Tilden abstaining from voting, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

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

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Nick Tilden to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of April 15, 2022 through May 12, 2022 as presented. Heather Augustyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Director Stamm introduced the new Thomas Reference Department Manager Kimberly Wiseman. Board members introduced themselves and welcomed Ms. Wiseman to the Westchester Public Library.

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 April, 17,933 people visited the Library. Staff created ten (10) in-person programs with 68 attendees, and 14 Live Virtual programs with 258 Live Virtual attendees. Staff answered 37 reference questions, 123 tech help questions, and 112 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided.

The Friends of the Library recently held a Technology Sale and netted \$870. This sale was a good way for the Library to dispose of technology items that are near or at their years-of-life span while helping those in the community who may not have the means to purchase brand new technology.

Delta Theta Tau made a donation of \$150 to the Library. The Flora Richardson Foundation made a donation of \$2,000 as thanks to the Museum for housing the Flora Richardson collection. This donation will fund the purchase of a used, high-end digital camera that can handle the digitization of large-format items and large books.

In April, three \$250,000 LIRF CDs and one \$250,000 Rainy Day CD matured and were reinvested by Horizon Trust & Investment Management into two-year US Treasury Bonds at an interest rate of 2.5% each.

Director Stamm participated on a Duneland School Corporation (DSC) panel to interview candidates for DSC Teacher of the Year awards. While every candidate was strong, the panel was unanimous in choosing Becky Holmen as the Elementary Teacher of the Year.

Director Stamm outlined to the Board issues that have been coming up in libraries all over the country in which some individuals and groups aim to censor materials in school and public libraries. Recently, a local patron wrote a note of complaint about a children's book in the Library's collection that had a male gay couple as protagonists. This patron declined to be contacted. Director Stamm evaluated the material and it will remain in the collection. Staff understand that, in the case of a comment such as this, they are to listen to the patron in a calm and professional manner, they are not to offer any personal opinions, and they are to offer the patron a copy of the WPL Collection Development Policy. They should explain that the Library has trained professionals doing reasoned, inclusive, and balanced collection development for the whole community which includes many different people and viewpoints.

Director Stamm advised that there is something called a First Amendment "audit", and its definition by the Indiana State Library legal department was provided for the Board. It involves individuals who enter public facilities while videorecording the settings and people in it. Individuals that target public facilities contend they are testing the degree to which their First Amendment rights are recognized in particular settings. These videos are typically posted to social media either live or after the fact. Auditors contend they are simply exercising their constitutional rights and educating others about them; others contend that auditors simply want to get clicks, followers, and viewers.

Staff have been told that it is permissible for someone to come into the Library and record or livestream staff and patrons without consent, but it is not permissible for someone to violate any Library policy including but not limited to what is outlined in the WPL Unacceptable Behavior Policy, nor invade the privacy of other patrons' viewing or reading selections, nor prevent or disrupt patrons from using the Library, nor prevent staff from doing their jobs, nor go into staff-only areas, nor film or take pictures in restrooms.

Library Managers and staff have been advised how to respond to First Amendment audits. They should remain professional, answer questions, and help these patrons as they do for any other patron visiting the Library. Staff were also instructed how to handle the situation of another patron expressing concern or becoming upset about the videorecording. While staff can express their understanding for the patron's concern, they are to let the patron know that the best course of action is to not engage with the videorecorder and continue using the Library as usual.

Managers and their staff have conducted role-playing scenarios regarding the topics of recordings and materials complaints so they are able to assist, address, and serve any patrons who may want to express concern about materials or who may be present if an “audit” occurs.

The Library turns 50 this year, and in August there will be a birthday celebration with month-long activities and prizes.

The Baugher Center and Emily Peterson meeting rooms will be reopening to the public beginning in June. This information has been noted on the Library website meeting room page and promoted in the newsletter. Rotary and Kiwanis have been notified, and they and other interested groups may now complete and submit an application for the review and booking process. Library use of these meeting rooms takes precedence, and not all requests will be able to be reserved.

The Plexiglas shields installed during the shutdown will be left in place for now since these shields prohibit large respiratory droplets from moving between people on either side, and they are unobtrusive and do not interrupt airflow.

Staff changes for the month include the hiring of Thomas Reference Department Manager Kimberly Wiseman, part-time Clerks Rachel Beard and Matthew Schott, and part-time Cleaner Richard Gaines. Staff separated this month were Thomas Reference Department Manager Colleen Good, and part-time Clerk Valerie Russell.

Old Business

Thomas Doors

Last month, it was reported that the exterior double-door replacement at Thomas was incomplete due to one bowed section of steel framework on the building. A special order and subsequent installation of a custom section of steel solved the issue, and the doors now operate, close and lock smoothly. This last part of the project was completed by Kleckner Interior Systems on April 20.

Thomas HVAC

The Library will not request a waiver for permits from the Town of Chesterton. The Library will pay the approximate permit fees of \$1,800 to support the town.

Dune Acres

Director Stamm researched stipulations surrounding the sale of land and learned from a State Board of Account (SBOA) directive that a library board may sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of real property and personal property no longer needed for library purposes. If the Library sells a gift, including a piece of land, proceeds from the sale would go into the Unrestricted Gift Fund. The Library may donate a gift with monetary value to another nonprofit entity. Library Attorney Lisa Baron was asked further questions from last month’s Board meeting, and she composed a memo answering these and other questions. A copy of this memo was provided to the Board.

The Board held a discussion on this matter. Director Stamm read a letter from the attorney overseeing the warranty deed of the Dunes Acres property that stated: “We hope this property, or the funds that can be procured by its sale, will be of benefit to the Library.” Heather Augustyn stated that, in keeping with the original owner’s intent in giving this parcel to the Library, the only benefit to the Library would be to sell the parcel and put the funds in the Library’s Unrestricted Gift Fund. A representative of the Shirley Heinz Foundation was contacted regarding the possibility of the Library donating the property to this Foundation. Their reply was that they were not interested in this property. The Town of Dune Acres has not replied to any further correspondence from Director Stamm.

The Board decided to table a decision on this issue until the rest of the Board is in attendance.

Museum Assessment

At the April 2022 Board meeting, the Board voted that the Library purchase the Brown Mansion. The formal assessment by Kil Architecture and estimated repair costs would be \$192,115. In late April, Director Stamm met with DSC Superintendent Chip Pettit and DSC Board President Tom Schnabel to explore options surrounding a potential sale. DSC was provided with the full assessment by Kil Architecture, along with the assessment invoice of \$10,711.14 that was paid for by the Library.

Mr. Pettit expressed that DSC would like to keep the green space to the east and west of the Museum; and if the area and old DSC gymnasium is built into mixed-use space, there may be new driveways installed. Director Stamm advised that the Library would be fine with the continued shared use of the half-loop driveway and preserving the traffic flow of DSC busses, but if at some far-off point, the surrounding area is built up, the Library would be interested in it being separated as a matter of safety.

Director Stamm proposed the Library purchase the Brown Mansion from DSC for \$1, thereby assuming all maintenance, financial, and other responsibilities. Mr. Pettit said his next steps will be to have DSC's attorney look into legal requirements for such a sale. This may take a few months to work out details and apprise their Board. Both Director Stamm and Mr. Pettit felt that this was acceptable, because the current modified lease (at half the monthly rate) ends on December 31, allowing plenty of time.

Following the meeting with DSC, Director Stamm met with Library Museum Curator and they gave additional thought to the actual, present-day use of the driveway by DSC including snow plowing. Several questions were raised, and these questions were sent via email to Mr. Pettit and provided to the Board. Mr. Pettit's response to the questions raised was to suggest that the Library and DSC start thinking about creating a separate, segregated lot used solely by the Library. Director Stamm answered that the mansion and its existing one-way circle drive and parking lot is perfect for the Library's use and that the close proximity of the parking lot to the house is ideal especially if patrons have mobility issues. Other suggestions were given regarding this shared driveway and parking lot, and another meeting is set up with Mr. Pettit to discuss in person.

Director Stamm and Mr. Pettit again met, and Mr. Pettit posed the question of the Library entering into a 100-year lease for \$1 with DSC, and DSC retaining control over the site overall since they are not sure what is going to happen in the future to the middle school building. WPL would assume the responsibilities of property maintenance. DSC would look at a way to cut off traffic around the Museum. Mr. Pettit will come up with one to three options to discuss with the DSC attorney, and then he can bring these options to the DSC Board. These options would then be discussed with WPL.

The Board discussed this matter and raised the question of what if the new owner of the current middle school property wants the Brown Mansion property if it is under a lease? Attorney Baron talked of the perils of a lease and what provisions would be allowable and potentially unenforceable without legal ramifications. Rondi Wightman asked if it would be possible to move the Brown Mansion to existing Library property. It was generally agreed this would be an extremely costly project and a risky venture to move this structure. Generally, the Board felt that purchasing the Brown Mansion would be the more desirable option.

Director Stamm stressed that the talks with Mr. Pettit regarding the future of the Brown Mansion have been extremely productive, and both sides want to make this sale work to the advantage of both parties.

New Business

2022 Resolution to Establish and Renew Nonresident Fees

There are no changes to the Nonresident card or corresponding parameters set by the Indiana State Library, and Director Stamm recommended this fee remain at \$175.

A motion was made by Nick Tilden to approve the unchanged 2022 Resolution to Establish and Renew Nonresident Fees. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed. Board members then signed this Resolution attesting to their approval.

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

Memorials for Terry Hiestand and Drew Rhed

Board member Heather Augustyn asked if there was any new information regarding the purchasing of some type of memorials for Terry Hiestand and Drew Rhed. Ideas were shared for items such as benches or a bird feeding station. Funding for these memorials would come from the Unrestricted Gift Fund and community and family donations. The board discussed where to put these memorials, and Director Stamm will look into it further and present her ideas at a future meeting.

The date of the next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be on Thursday, June 9, 2022 at the Baugher Center.

Kathryn Cochran made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Hoover, Minutes Recorder for
Heather Augustyn, Secretary