

Board of Trustees
Minutes
July 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, July 14, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

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

Board member absent: Will Scharp

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Lisa Stamm, Library Assistant Director Heather Chaddock, Attorney Lisa Baron, and one member of the public.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Kathryn Cochran at 7:02 pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the June 9, 2022 regular Board meeting as presented. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Heather Augustyn abstaining from voting, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Abbe Trent 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 Nick Tilden to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of July 1, 2022 through July 14, 2022 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.

Director Stamm shared updates about the 2022 Summer Reading program and its exponential growth in participation this year compared to 2021; the increase in the Tween/Teen program is particularly noteworthy, due to ongoing efforts of the Young Adult Librarian to connect with this population.

In addition, 108 children joined the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program in the first half of 2022.

In the month of June, 23,384 people visited the Library. Staff created 41 in-person programs with 954 attendees. Staff answered 34 reference questions, 121 tech help questions, and 164 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided.

On June 10th at around 4pm, a resident next door to the Hageman Branch brandished a gun at someone in his household and then barricaded himself inside his own house. Police officers wearing tactical gear were on site. Director Stamm advised the Branch Manager to close the branch with staff safely locked inside, just in case the person wielding the gun or anyone related to the incident tried to run inside the branch. Fortunately, police resolved the issue quickly and the branch was able to re-open to the public shortly thereafter.

On June 14th, one of two air conditioning units on the Thomas roof failed, resulting in no cooling on the first floor; the second floor was technically unaffected. Precision Controls was contacted, and Library

staff were instructed that they could drink free cold bottled water to stay hydrated during their shifts. Precision found that the unit's coils were plugged with Cottonwood dander, and they returned the next morning at 6 am to clean the other unit of dander. The issue was thought to be resolved, until the unit failed again on Saturday the 18th. Precision returned the following week and discovered that two switches inside the unit had aged out. They were able to power the unit using a temporary fix, and the Library again had cool air while awaiting new switches, which were installed on the 22nd.

Also on June 22nd, the Hageman Branch lost power and closed at 3pm. The entire surrounding neighborhood was without power for several hours, until the utility company resolved the issue at around 6pm.

On June 20th, the Museum also lost power, but staff opted to and were able to work despite the increased temperatures. Since the Museum is closed to the public on Mondays, patrons weren't affected. Power to the Museum was restored by the following day. There were several power outages in the Town over a period of several days, due to the heat and subsequent strain on power sources.

Director Stamm shared with the Board that she has heard, and corroborated with news articles, that there may be rolling blackouts planned in the Midwest this summer, as power companies may not be able to keep up with demand for electricity. At this time, concrete details are not to be found regarding this possibility. Director Stamm is considering staff safety needs, and the need to advertise building closures to the public, if there is enough notice given of a planned blackout. The Board had no additional information or concerns to share regarding the potential for rolling blackouts, and Director Stamm said that she would keep an eye on this situation, and will revisit if needed.

The Library received notice from lawn care provider David's Lawn Care that they are adding a \$20 fuel surcharge per cut, due to increased fuel costs. One "cut" consists of mowing all three lawns they are contracted to mow at WPL. As to when the surcharge may be removed, they only stated when prices were "more normal." Director Stamm insisted upon clarification in writing, so David's Lawn Care updated their June 1 contract to state that they would be "...introducing a fuel surcharge in the amount of \$20 (to include all three sites) until gas returns to a somewhat 'normal' price. We are hoping to be able to remove this fee once gas is under \$4.50/gallon."

In light of the recent rise in shootings in public spaces, Director Stamm reached out to the Porter County Sheriff's office about potentially implementing an app-based alert system for staff, to be used in the case of an emergency at any WPL location. Porter County uses an app called Guard911.com. Director Stamm contacted Guard911 and requested that, if WPL chose to utilize their app, they give WPL the same pricing as they give to public schools, at \$99/month per location, instead of \$199/month per location for general public entities, and they agreed.

Director Stamm acknowledged that Guard911 is an expensive tool, with one-time set up fees totaling \$3,000 and monthly charges of \$396, equaling \$4,752 annually. After sharing these details, Director Stamm opened discussion among the Board. Trustee Heather Augustyn expressed that she definitely wants to equip staff with what they need to be safe, but disliked that Guard911 is a for-profit company, and that overall, she found it exploitative. She asked if the purpose was to act as an alert system between staff for emergencies, and Director Stamm said yes, as well as alerting all of the on and off-duty police in the area to come and help stop any intruders. Director Stamm agreed that she had mixed thoughts about the app, but wanted to bring it to the Board as a possibility. Board President Kathryn Cochran wanted to know who would be coordinating the rapid influx of a lot of law enforcement personnel, as well as overseeing training of the police responders from the app. Trustee Nick Tilden asked what our local police in Westchester Township think about the app; Director Stamm said that she would

follow up with them to find out. Trustee Heather Augustyn shared that Purdue Northwest uses an alert app called Pulse to convey information about security incidents to all students and staff on campus, and that messages can be customized about anything. Trustee Abbe Trent said that she likes the idea of a unified alert system, but does not like the idea of potential vigilantism among Guard911 responders. Director Stamm said that she would look into these issues, the Board's questions, and alternative alert/safety options before next month's meeting.

After separating the outdoor summer concerts from the movies this year, attendance statistics have verified what staff were expecting: there is high attendance for music, and low attendance for movies. After seeing outdoor movie attendance averages in the 40s in 2018, to 30s in 2019, and barely 20s in 2022, WPL is going to alter the presentation of outdoor movies. After this summer, WPL will move toward standalone, special movie events. Examples include a planned Halloween outdoor movie, which may become annual, and a single outdoor movie as part of a summer reading finale next year.

As attendance is steadily high for live outdoor music, averaging 100-150+ attendees per concert, WPL will look toward shifting some of the time and money formerly spent on the summer outdoor movie series to expanding the concert series for next summer. Board members voiced their support of this change, and that they agreed that the reasoning behind it is sound.

WPL's 50th birthday will be celebrated throughout the month of August with special programs, increased outreach presence, and giveaways. All Library staff and trustees will receive custom tee shirts with a modified WPL logo in a 1970s style, at a total cost of approximately \$850. As part of the 50th celebration, the Library worked with Chesterton Feed and Garden to procure individual packets of "Autumn Beauty" tricolor sunflower seeds to give to patrons at Library service desks beginning August 1st (while supplies last). 570 packets were purchased for a total of \$500, and each packet will host a sticker displaying both the Chesterton Feed and Garden and the Westchester Public Library logos. Both the tee shirt and sunflower seed expenditures will be paid from the Unrestricted Gift Fund.

Staff changes for the month include the hiring of Kathleen Tomkins, Ashleigh Spencer, and Sarah Pace as part-time Clerks, and the hiring of Arlene Fekete and Carrie Ailes as substitute Clerks. Separations include part-time Clerks Avery McCurdy, Madeline Zandstra, Hailey McKinley, and Alicia Wildfang, and Programming Clerk Tiffany Ezra.

Old Business Thomas HVAC

The IT Manager and Director Stamm determined that Administration will be moved into the IT classroom office area during the phase it would be affected by the HVAC and lighting replacement project. This solution is a better option than utilizing the Bertha Wood Room, as the area is already set up for staff computers and phones, and would require no expenditure to retrofit the room for those same technologies and other items, such as wall partitions. Director Stamm reached out to the Town of Chesterton to inquire about the building permit expiration date of 11/15/2022, and asked whether starting work before that date will suffice, or if WPL will need to extend that expiration date as the starting date for the work to begin draws near. The Town had not responded by the time of this meeting and Director Stamm will report more next month.

Museum Birds

At last month's meeting, Director Stamm shared that there are birds in an upstairs, non-public, closet-like area in the Museum. As of late June, the Duneland School Corporation has been working with a birding company to try to remove the birds safely while simultaneously blocking their entry point so

they cannot return. Due to the Museum roof's height, pitch, and the overall complexity of its different facets and valleys, this is proving to be a difficult task.

In late June, Museum staff discovered a new water stain on the ceiling of the back stairwell that was repaired in December. This indicates that whatever roof patches were done have since failed. DSC hired a roofing company to examine and address the issue, with the determination being that there is a problem with the shingles above that particular spot. The roofing company plans to patch the area, but there is not a set date as to when this will occur.

Director Stamm spoke with DSC Superintendent Chip Pettit about these new issues, and about an update on the potential sale of the Museum. DSC takes seriously their responsibility as a lessor and is working to resolve the problems. As far as a potential sale and its terms, Superintendent Pettit said that things are progressing, although they may take a couple more months to be sorted, and assured Director Stamm that WPL remains a priority. Director Stamm will report more on this as new information becomes available.

Memoriams

The Library has obtained pricing for two outdoor benches, as discussed last month, to honor Trustee Drew Rhed and Attorney Terry Hiestand. The closest distributor of Dumore brand benches, which are the same benches seen in outdoor spaces around Chesterton, would be NuToys Leisure Products out of La Grange, IL. The price of the entirely steel bench with a plaque is \$2,360 each and includes delivery, as well including the engraving and installation of the plaque. The next step would be for the Board to determine wording for the plaques, as there are different sizes, shapes, and pricing of plaques, depending upon the amount of characters. Trustee Michele Corazzo requested that the font for the bench plaques be the same as the font utilized in WPL exterior building signage. Director Stamm asked the Board how they would like to proceed with choosing the wording for the plaques; the Board agreed to ask the families of Drew Rhed and Terry Hiestand for their blessings, and all Trustees would return next month with ideas for wording.

Dune Acres

Following last month's regular meeting, Director Stamm found a realtor who specializes in Dune Acres and the surrounding areas. Her name is Lauren DeFauw with McColly Real Estate. She is compiling some numbers and facts for potentially listing the Dune Acres property for sale, which Director Stamm will share with the Board before taking further action.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

Following the discussion during last month's regular meeting, regarding directives from the Indiana State Library that blanket statements prohibiting "weapons" in library policy must be changed in light of Indiana's new Open Carry Law, Director Stamm shared new proposed language for the Library's Unacceptable Behavior Policy. Attorney Lisa Baron researched relevant Indiana Code and advised that the language was fine as proposed, only suggesting the inclusion of a specific code reference. Director Stamm added code IC 35-47-11.1-4(6) where suggested. Heather Augustyn moved to amend the Unacceptable Behavior Policy to include the new recommended verbiage. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

Draft Budget

Director Stamm announced that she has drafted the 2023 budget for the Board's review. The MLGQ

(Max Levy Growth Quotient) was announced at 5.00%. She made several changes to the budget in light of inflation, plus upcoming capital and other projects.

Director Stamm drafted the cost-of-living increase at 3%, and asked the Board to consider and support this due to it being a more standard, actual cost-of-living increase than 2%. In addition, she expressed that staff consistently merit the increase, even without factoring in the exorbitant inflation the U.S. is currently facing. Director Stamm included a draft with the COL at 2% as well, in case the Board preferred it, with the difference between the two being \$13,984.09.

Michelle Corazzo remembered that the Board had previously discussed doing a salary study, and asked if that should be something to revisit, once the current capital projects are completed. Director Stamm corroborated the prior discussion, and agreed that a salary study would be appropriate to do later in the year, noting it would occur after this current budget was passed. The Board indicated their support of the 3% cost-of-living increase for staff, and the discussion was closed.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Librarian's Report as presented. Nick Tilden seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments at this time.

Other Business

Anton Insurance met with Director Stamm for a risk assessment meeting. This was something new and unexpected, and Director Stamm was happy to report that, after answering all of their questions, the Library has everything needed already in place. This good report directly correlated to much of the work Director Stamm had done to update WPL's employee handbook and several key policies. Anton Insurance made a couple of recommendations for additional, small safety measures, and overall was pleased with the status of the Library.

The date of the next regular Board of Trustees meeting will be on Thursday, August 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Baugher Center.

Nick Tilden made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 7:52 pm. Kathryn Cochran adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Chaddock, Minutes Recorder for
Heather Augustyn, Secretary