

Board of Trustees
Minutes
September 8, 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, September 8, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

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

Board members absent: Nick Tilden, Michele Corazzo

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Lisa Stamm and Library Assistant Director Heather Chaddock. Attorney Lisa Baron attended the meeting virtually via Zoom.

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2022 regular Board meeting as presented. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Rondi Wightman abstaining from voting, 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 Abbe Trent to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of August 12, 2022 through September 8, 2022 as presented. Will Scharp 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 August, 21,216 people visited the Library. Staff created 15 in-person programs with 241 attendees. Staff answered 29 reference questions, 81 tech help questions, and 129 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided.

In August, the Library's programming and outreach initiatives highlighting WPL's 50th were well-received and well-attended. Staff hosted tables at four different community events, and spoke about WPL to a total of 303 people, while giving all of them glitter tattoos or commemorative buttons. Towel tie-dyeing programs for all ages were also popular.

There is an ongoing issue with the 50th anniversary tee shirts, stemming from the manufacturer. WPL is trying to come to a resolution with the local vendor, CLC Embroidery, which sold the shirts. Staff hope to be able to have the 25 shirts that arrived in incorrect sizes replaced at no additional cost to the Library.

Director Stamm continues to look into emergency safety training for staff. She reached out to the Porter County Lieutenant and he is willing to do training sessions for WPL staff, and has done numerous of these trainings at other libraries and county organizations. At Director Stamm's request, he is willing to tailor his PowerPoint to omit Guard911 info, to omit any real-life active shooter footage of violence, and to mute any sounds of actual screams or 911 calls from active shooter violence. This request was made by a Library

Manager and echoed by others during a meeting; Director Stamm agreed that visuals and audio of violence often cause undue distress to trainees.

Discussion ensued, weighing the benefits of preparing for an event by watching or listening to real-life footage against Director Stamm's responsibility to ensure that reasonable requests based in trauma-sensitivity are honored. Staff will be given the option to step out of the room when actual footage is shown during the training, while staff who choose to may remain to watch it. Director Stamm and the Lieutenant are in early stages of discussion but in the coming weeks will develop a plan for training sessions, possibly to occur before or near the end of the year.

Director Stamm gave an update that the refurbishment project on the Thomas Exterior Benches is underway and going well. Two identical exterior benches at the Hageman Branch that were in need of the same treatments have been added to the order.

In September, Trustee and Treasurer Rondi Wightman stopped by the Library to sign checks and encouraged Director Stamm to update the window treatments in her office. The large window had old blinds that didn't work well, nor did they adequately block or contain excessive light, heat, or cold, so a makeshift fix using a tarp had been employed. Maintenance brought in an expert, who also addressed the broken blinds on the same-sized window of the Branch Manager's office, and all three same-sized windows in the computer classroom (where some blinds were also broken). They ordered an identical rolling solar shade for all of the five oversized windows and expect installation to be completed in a few weeks, for a total cost of \$3,815. Maintenance also ordered and installed inexpensive opaque window cling to afford privacy to the interior, public-facing windows of the Assistant Director's office.

Toward the end of August, the lights in the Bertha Wood Room in the Thomas Branch inexplicably stopped working. Ellis Electric was called to assess the problem, and they were able to get the lights to an always-on position. Over the course of several days, Ellis was able to diagnose and remedy the problem (three relays and two light switches had gone bad). The final cost for the repair was \$501.

Director Stamm has been working with the Library's Horizon Bank representative, Mary Wright (VP, Treasury Management Officer) to resolve issues that were discovered after the departure of the former WPL Bookkeeper. The person with overall authority controls for the WPL credit card account was still the former WPL Director and her credit card was still active (though unused), and there was another physical credit card issued a few years ago that was unaccounted for and active (though unused). These issues came to light when Director Stamm completed the Horizon Bank forms to deactivate the former Bookkeeper's credit card.

While making these account changes, the Horizon representative saw an opportunity for the Library to change the entire credit card account to an account designed specifically for municipalities. Director Stamm agreed with the recommendation and had WPL apply for the municipality-specific credit card account to replace all current credit cards. The Horizon representative emphasized that a benefit of this type of account is that no personal guarantee is needed, instead, credit approval is based on the organization, not the assets of its employee cardholders.

Director Stamm is also obtaining information and quotes for WPL to be able to conduct more comprehensive and accurate background checks for potential employees and volunteers, after learning that the background checks had not been run in a timely manner. Additionally, Director Stamm researched and discovered that the Porter County Sheriff's Office (which WPL historically used for background checks) is insufficient for thorough background checks. In fact, according to the Porter County Sheriff's Office webpage, the check they provide "should not be relied upon to determine an individual's actual criminal record." Director Stamm reached out to reputable background check companies and has been haggling over prices and scope, and

expects to have a company in place within the next couple of weeks. The prices will increase significantly, from \$10 each to possibly upwards of \$35 per background check, but these checks will cover all counties in the United States, not just Porter County, for a span of seven years, and would cover criminal records, convictions, and fraud. Going forward, WPL will complete background checks before a person's start date.

Relatedly, Director Stamm is looking into potential HR contractors that WPL may utilize for its personnel records and processes. She is currently in conversation with potential contractors, with the endgame being to secure someone to conduct an HR audit and make recommendations to get the Library up to best practices. Director Stamm will report more on this next month.

The latest Covid variant has proven to be quite contagious; even in the case that individuals are fully vaccinated and boosted, people are getting sick, some mildly and some to alarming degrees. The Library has always followed CDC guidelines, and has now resumed vigilant awareness of what the CDC says to do in the case of quarantine time frames, what to do about repeat positive tests (with or without symptoms), and so forth. As of now, Director Stamm does not plan to suggest a re-enactment of a Covid-related supplementary sick time policy, but she wanted to raise it as a possibility, knowing the unpredictability and upheaval Covid can cause. Trustee Abbe Trent said that it felt premature to make a decision to change the Library's current Covid response at this time, and said that Director Stamm had handled the previous challenges of the pandemic as they arose while taking care of staff well. Director Stamm thanked Trustee Abbe Trent and the entire Board, and agreed that the pandemic has been, and continues to be, a moving target, and will continue to make decisions as needed.

Staff changes for the month include the hiring of part-time Clerk Kathy Ruble. Staff separated this month was part-time Clerk Keegan Palonis.

Old Business

Thomas HVAC

Director Stamm has engaged in many discussions between WPL's architect and contractors, along with meetings with the Assistant Director, Maintenance Manager, and IT Manager. Director Stamm was given a preliminary timeline and phasing breakdown for the HVAC project; all dates in the construction timeline are tentative. As the timeline is written, Thomas Circ and Children's Departments will be under construction during summer reading next year. This is not ideal, but Director Stamm's request to reorder the phases was rejected because, as the contractors explained, the HVAC units service entire floors and subsequent departments in specific pathways, and cannot be broken into multi-floor quadrants. Director Stamm is confident that Library staff are skilled in pivoting and providing strong services in extremely challenging circumstances (as evidenced during and after the 2020 Covid shutdown), and will respond accordingly to this new challenge. Director Stamm anticipates that 2023 summer reading stats may not be as strong as preferred, but that will be an anomaly. Director Stamm insisted that the tentative interior demolition start date of January 3rd be pushed to the following Monday, January 9th, out of consideration of already-scheduled staff time off for the holidays.

Amereco Engineering finished sampling the Thomas Branch roof in August and determined that the tar coating does contain asbestos. They said that this should not be an issue, and that if any cutting of the roof must occur, the asbestos contractor will perform the cutting with all safety measures in place.

More discussion ensued when the contractor asked for payment for the materials they've already purchased, even though the Library cannot utilize them until the rest of the goods arrive. Those goods are slow because of supply chain delays, the same reason the entire project will take one year, which is

much longer than it would have taken in pre-Covid times. In the past, the contractor would normally pay for the goods and install them in a fluid manner, but since everyone must wait for goods without guarantee of delivery dates, the contractor asked that they be paid for whatever necessary goods they were able to purchase at any given time, with those materials then securely stored and insured in the Library's name with a waiver of lien.

Director Stamm told the contractors and architect that she wanted to be certain this was permissible, as the Library cannot and does not issue payment for goods or services until they are received, and told them she would reach out to the Library's attorney and other library Directors for her own edification. Attorney Lisa Baron reviewed the contracts and related documents and confirmed that this was acceptable, as did others. As such, Director Stamm instructed the temporary Bookkeeper to cut a check to the contractor, Circle R, for the materials they purchased and are storing for the Library, for a total of \$26,885.24 from the approved Additional Appropriation from the Rainy Day fund.

In conversations with the architect and contractor, Director Stamm learned that construction workday hours will typically end by 3-4pm and at that point, staff will be able to access the work areas (that are closed to public) to retrieve materials for patron holds after the workers have left each day. WPL will ensure that all staff members follow all safety measures before entering, and while inside, any work areas. Director Stamm and her team are meeting with the architect and contractor to discuss questions and details in-person on September 14th.

Director Stamm wrote a cover piece for WPL's September newsletter informing the public of the impending construction, and worked with the Graphics Manager to develop an image to use repeatedly to alert patrons and others as to updates and activities. She is also working with the Graphics Manager to develop a boilerplate flier to communicate important details, such as open or closed status, that will be updated and released as needed.

After sharing all of these details, Director Stamm requested the Board's thoughts on waiving the requirement that the contractors pay for materials as they are purchased, meaning instead that WPL would pay for materials to be obtained and stored securely by the contractors as we move forward with the Thomas HVAC project, all in the name of avoiding further delays. Will Scharp asked if anything formal needed to be signed to move forward with waiving this requirement, and Director Stamm said that the Board could grant permission now, at the meeting. Kathryn Cochran suggested adding a memorandum of understanding to the contract, in order to have something in writing. Attorney Lisa Baron said it was possible to create an addendum, but there was no need to sign anything additional or to rewrite the contract, as the agreement itself had not changed. The Board agreed that they wished to move forward with the project and to avoid delays however possible, and encouraged Director Stamm to proceed, without an addendum or rewriting the contract.

Museum Birds

Director Stamm reported that the roof patch seems to have worked and stopped the back stairwell water leak and stain. The birds were safely removed and their entry points have been blocked, so, for now, those issues are resolved. As for the potential sale of the Museum, DSC has been working with the Duneland Y on tentative plans for the middle school property as a whole. During a phone call, Superintendent Chip Pettit suggested Director Stamm continue the Museum conversation with the Y. As such, Director Stamm and the Assistant Director are slated to meet with Y Director Dave Kasarda and their consultant about their early ideas for a Healthy Living Campus and related partnerships, on

September 12th. Director Stamm shared that she is open to cross-promotion and other ways of supporting both the Y and the Library's missions, but did note that WPL already offers robust programs and services through its Museum on the premises, and the main Thomas Branch is less than one mile away. She will report more on this next month. Some additional discussion ensued, clarifying that the Museum is located on a separate parcel from the Middle School property, and that the maintenance of the shared driveway may be a point of negotiation with any future owner of the Middle School. The Board reiterated its original intent to purchase the Brown Mansion from the DSC.

Book Complaint

Director Stamm received a complaint via email on September 8 about a book on display in the Children's Department, called "The Meaning of Pride." Director Stamm read the book and responded to the patron's email, sharing the Library's Collection Development Policy, as well as WPL's commitment to offering a diverse array of ideas and information in a balanced collection. Board members complimented Director Stamm on her response to this complaint, and pledged to support the Library against attempts at censorship. Director Stamm thanked the Trustees for their support of the Library's mission.

Memoriams

Since not all Trustees were able to attend last month, the Board chose to wait for input and ideas from everyone before moving forward with decisions for the language for the plaques honoring Drew Rhed and Terry Hiestand. Director Stamm encouraged Board members who were currently present to offer their ideas, with the understanding that there was no rush for this process. Kathryn Cochran suggested "In honor of [name] for dedicated and invaluable service to Westchester Public Library as a Library Board Trustee," with the dates of their Trusteeship listed underneath.

Dune Acres

Lauren DeFauw with McColly Real Estate provided Director Stamm with a proposal to list the Dune Acres property at \$220,000 and offered her services at a discounted fee of 5%. The Board approved Director Stamm to move forward with listing the property. Abbe Trent asked what fund the proceeds for the Sale would go into, and Director Stamm said she believed from former discussions and research that it would go into Unrestricted Gift, and that she would confirm that during the next regular meeting.

New Business

2023 Budget Hearing

The 2023 Westchester Public Library budget is available online <https://budgetnotices.in.gov/> Board President Kathryn Cochran opened the meeting to hear public comment. There were no public comments at this time.

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

Other Business

The special meeting for the 2023 Budget Adoption will be on Thursday, September 22 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center. The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Thursday, October 13 at 7:00

PM at the Baugher Center.

Heather Augustyn moved to adjourn. Will Scharp seconded the motion. Kathryn Cochran adjourned the meeting at 7:59 PM.

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