

Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
October 13, 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, October 13, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

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

Board members absent: Will Scharp

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

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the special meeting for the budget adoption on September 22, 2022 as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Heather Augustyn to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2022 regular meeting as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with Nick Tilden and Michele Corazzo abstaining from voting due to absence, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports as presented. Michele Corazzo 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 September 16, 2022 through October 13, 2022 as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Librarian's Report

Kelsey Stearns, WPL's new Bookkeeper and Administrative Assistant, was introduced to the Board at tonight's meeting.

Service highlights were related from the past month featuring positive feedback and gratitude expressed by patrons regarding their Library experiences.

Director Stamm reported that, starting this month, door count statistics for WPL will look different due to the recent staff discovery that door count totals at the Thomas Branch have been reported incorrectly for years, possibly decades. This error has been corrected, and all branches now have processes in place to report door count statistics accurately. This modification will be addressed in the annual report to the State Library.

In the month of September, 12,651 people visited the Library. Staff created 37 in-person programs with 626 attendees. Staff answered 24 reference questions, 83 tech help questions, and 107 new library cards were registered. 337 people utilized Library meeting rooms. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics were provided.

The Library will host two outdoor movie showings in October, in support of local Halloween events. *Hocus Pocus* will be shown on October 21<sup>st</sup> in Hawthorne Park, immediately following the Porter Parks Department's Boo Bash. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* will be shown on October 28<sup>th</sup> in Thomas

Centennial Park, right after the Duneland Chamber of Commerce's Downtown Trick-or-Treat in Chesterton. The Chesterton-Porter Rotary Club will offer free popcorn at both movie showings.

After much research and negotiating to get the best rates possible, Director Stamm decided to retain ADP to perform criminal background checks for employees and volunteers. Each check will cost \$36, and includes verifying the legitimacy of a person's Social Security Number, scanning criminal databases and sex offender registries across the US, and scanning federal criminal records for white collar crimes such as robberies, bank fraud, money laundering, and more. Director Stamm has found the service easy to use, and results are returned the same day.

All-staff annual evaluations are underway and slated to be completed by early December. Director Stamm reminded Managers that the process is meant to be instructive, constructive, and supportive, setting a positive tone and creating effective goals for all staff.

Accurate Curb Cutting will grind down 5 sidewalk joints in 3 areas at the Baugher Center, where sidewalks have been pushed upward by underlying roots and are posing a trip hazard. The total cost for this service is \$800 and will likely be completed by the end of October. Other areas on WPL premises are also being assessed, which may cause an increase in the total price.

Director Stamm gave an update on the bench refurbishment project. Jimenez Painting and W. Kendall & Sons have produced excellent results. The benches are being refurbished in batches of two at a time, and can be seen in front of the Thomas and Hageman branches when they are returned.

Staff changes for the month include the hiring of part-time cleaner Danielle Thibideau and full-time Bookkeeper/Admin. Asst. Kelsey Stearns. Staff separated this month were part-time clerk Ashley Spencer and part-time cataloging clerk Phyllis Evans, and the passing of part-time cleaner Phil Appelman was also reported.

#### Old Business

#### Thomas HVAC

WPL cut a check to contractor Circle R, in order for them to purchase and securely store materials until they are ready for use in the Thomas HVAC project. This process was approved by the Board at its regular September meeting, due to pandemic supply chain delays and scarcity of materials. The total paid so far from the approved Rainy Day Additional Appropriation is \$110,865.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, Circle R requested to tear down the ceiling tiles and metal framework in the Thomas Mechanical Room, in order to assess if there were any hidden issues that would need to be addressed in advance of the interior work scheduled to begin in January. Director Stamm insisted they implement measures to keep the dust contained as much as possible, which was accomplished by installing heavy plastic sheeting over the Mechanical Room doors and by adding extra filters to the air intake system. A dumpster was placed in the Thomas alleyway, and the work was completed on time.

Contractors discovered, in the course of their general inspections, that many connectivity cables were improperly installed throughout the ceilings in the Thomas Branch. In addition, the cords are basic white cord, rather than fire code-required flexible steel. WPL engaged Ellis Electric to advise on this issue. They said the problem would have to be worked on in pieces as the HVAC project progressed. As such, they could not offer a blanket quote for service; the cabling replacement work will have to be charged based on time and the current cost of materials as each section is encountered.

The AC units are slated to be removed from the Thomas roof on October 17<sup>th</sup>. This will involve the use of a large crane, which will be parked in the Thomas parking lot. The lot will be blocked off and out of use for approximately 8 hours. The AC units are located directly above the unused portion of the public computer lab. This area and a small portion of the staff hallway will also be cordoned off out of an abundance of caution. Contractors have assured Director Stamm that this process will pose extremely low, if any, risk, and it will not interrupt staff or public operations.

Last week, contractors informed Director Stamm that the materials to perform the replacement of the main electrical panel at the Thomas Branch were on-hand. Director Stamm and the Maintenance Manager agreed that it made sense to move forward with this project as soon as possible, so that the panel would be in good working order throughout the entire project. To do this full electrical panel replacement, all four WPL locations must be closed for the day, as the primary server room is hosted at the Thomas Branch and there will be no phones or internet available systemwide. Contractors estimate this work will take 10 hours.

Director Stamm consulted the library's program calendar and determined that Wednesday, November 2 would be the best date for the electrical panel replacement. Before moving forward, Director Stamm requested permission from the Board to allow full-time staff to be paid for this closed day, as working from home for a single day is not tenable due to the nature of their work. Director Stamm specified that she, the Maintenance Manager, and his Assistant manager would all be on site or otherwise available all day while the project is occurring. Part-time staff would be permitted to make up any lost hours from the November 2<sup>nd</sup> closure during the same pay period. Heather Augustyn said that this course of action sounded logical, and suggested Director Stamm also send the closure information to Kevin Nevers so he could report it on the Town of Chesterton Facebook page. The rest of the Board agreed with Director Stamm's recommendation to close November 2<sup>nd</sup> and pay full-time staff for the closure.

### Museum

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, WPL Maintenance staff attempted to paint over the recent water stains on the back stairwell ceiling at the Museum, and found that the drywall paper was so wet that it began to shift upon contact. Upon further examination, this entire area proved to be soaked. The Curator alerted Duneland School Corporation that the recent roof repairs were unsuccessful. DSC contacted Gluth Roofing and requested a priority repair.

Director Stamm and Assistant Director Heather Chaddock met with YMCA Director Dave Kasarda and their consultant Wes Audsley in September to discuss the Y's ideas for DSC's old middle school and adjacent land (if a sale comes to pass), and about possible related partnerships and community offerings. Dave said that it would be highly unlikely that any party other than WPL would want to purchase the Brown Mansion, though it is impossible at this stage to predict the final outcome. With the current plan to keep students on the premises until June 2024, conversations and plans may happen in the interim, but nothing physically will change before students have exited.

In response to Dave and Wes inquiring whether the Library would want to host services in the imagined future Y facility on the middle school grounds, Director Stamm agreed to be part of the idea-generating segment of their venture, and help promote it to a certain degree. However, Director Stamm will remain cognizant of the Library's own mission, the Thomas Branch's close proximity to their potential new location, and WPL's already-robust services and program offerings. Director Stamm does not want to overtax Library staff or create a situation where the Library is competing with itself.

Some discussion ensued among Board members following this report, with Nick Tilden saying that a partnership with the Y sounded intriguing and he thought it could be explored further. Heather Augustyn reiterated the different missions of the YMCA as a Christian organization, and the Library as a governmental unit. Director Stamm said that some amount of cross-promotion and sharing of programs already occurs between the YMCA and the Library, and she is open to future possibilities.

After the meeting with the YMCA, Director Stamm reached out to DSC Superintendent Chip Pettit to request that the lease rate for the Brown Mansion remain at half-price until such a time that WPL is able to purchase the Brown Mansion outright. Chip said that he anticipates being able to move forward with the Brown Mansion sale/transfer once the YMCA conceptual site plan is completed in October-December 2022. He agreed to the half-priced rate until and even beyond the end of the year, if need be, and added that DSC does not in any way see the lease or potential sale of the Brown Mansion as a way for DSC to make money. Director Stamm acknowledged the overall complexity of the situation, noted her belief that all players have the best of intentions, and appreciates working with Chip as this project continues to unfold.

#### 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. After some additional discussion and narrowing down of suggestions, Kathryn Cochran volunteered to send final options to the Board via email the following week.

#### Dune Acres

Following the September regular Board meeting, Director Stamm reached out to let Lauren DeFauw of McColly Real Estate know the Board accepted and appreciated her proposal for listing the Dune Acres property at \$220,000, at a discounted fee of 5%. Regarding the Board's question as to what fund the proceeds for the sale would go into, Director Stamm confirmed that according to IC-36-12-3-5, any proceeds from the sale of gifted property shall be deposited into Unrestricted Gift.

This week, the realtor contacted Director Stamm with questions from a potential buyer, wondering whether the property was on septic and if soil testing had been done. Director Stamm let her know she had limited information about the property, but she did discover a mention of septic in the appraisal paperwork from when the land was gifted, which she sent to the realtor. Director Stamm will continue to report on this project as it progresses.

#### New Business

#### Health Insurance Error

The Library's new Bookkeeper examined WPL's health insurance coverage rates for full-time employee-plus-family and discovered a longstanding error in that premiums were over-deducted from paychecks of full-time employees with family coverage. The full-time employees were also charged for their own coverage, which they shouldn't have been because WPL covers full-time employees at 100%, and they were charged the total monthly family premium each time they received a (bi-weekly) paycheck. In addition, WPL's portion of family coverage was inexplicably miscalculated as covering 85% of the premium, when it should have been covering 70% of the premium.

The new Bookkeeper was able to piece together the mistakes by reviewing numerous old, pencil-written notes that were previously being used to calculate health insurance costs, and by speaking directly with Anthem. Director Stamm reached out to Anton Insurance and is working with them to confirm and double-check numbers, and she requested that they provide a list of all WPL full-time employees who opted for the family coverage, going back at least 10-15 years, so that it can be determined if, or how much, they were overcharged. Director Stamm has notified affected current employees of the issue and let them know that WPL is working to return their money. Director Stamm also reached out to the State Board of Accounts (SBOA) in order to report the error, and to ensure they know that WPL is immediately remedying and documenting it. Director Stamm asked SBOA whether she is permitted to cut repayment checks from the Operating 100 fund line, and is awaiting guidance.

Director Stamm asked WPL's new Bookkeeper to explain in writing the details she found about the mistakes that had been occurring for years, and to attend the October regular Board meeting to discuss and answer questions. In summary, WPL will have to reverse years of overcharging employees who opted for family coverage. Fortunately, there haven't been too many employees opting for family coverage - perhaps because it was so (incorrectly) expensive. At this time, the total amount of health insurance overcharges WPL discovered that it must refund to affected employees is \$30,804.40. Rondi Wightman asked for clarification as to how the new Bookkeeper was certain that an error had occurred, and why Anton Insurance hadn't caught it. Bookkeeper Kelsey Stearns explained that the former Bookkeeper was using the Anthem bills themselves to balance out the fund each month, so Anthem was being paid as it should have been. She further explained that she has created a calculator for herself to double-check the tabulations each month to avoid this issue in the future, and has instituted a system of checks and balances where there was none. Heather Augustyn expressed her gratitude that this error was caught and is being corrected. Director Stamm said that she will seek assistance from Ice Miller or another tax firm to untangle the tax ramifications of this complicated issue, because the deductions had also been taken post-tax, when they should have been taken pre-tax.

Director Stamm informed the Board that the new Bookkeeper is well-versed in current best practices for Human Resources, has been doing such work for ten+ years, and has already identified ways in which WPL can improve its processes. She explained that she let the new Bookkeeper know that WPL offers tuition reimbursement for education that directly correlates with full-time employees' roles at WPL, and the Bookkeeper has expressed interest in possibly obtaining formal certification for Human Resources duties. In light of that, and while this large error is being addressed, Director Stamm is pausing her search for external HR contractors until either early in the new year or until WPL's new Bookkeeper potentially decides to become formally certified in those functions.

#### Volunteer Luncheon

The annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon will return for the first time since the pandemic, on Thursday, November 10. Lunch will be catered by Ivy's Bohemia House and a small gift will be provided to each current WPL volunteer. The cost is estimated to be between \$600-700 and will be paid from Unrestricted Gift.

#### Staff Breakfast

The annual staff holiday breakfast will also return this year after a hiatus due to the pandemic. Breakfast will be catered by Third Coast Spice Café on the morning of Friday, December 9. The anticipated cost is between \$700-800 and will be paid from Unrestricted Gift. A motion was made by Heather Augustyn to

close the Library from 9-11 AM on December 9, in order to allow staff to be paid to attend the Staff Holiday Breakfast. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

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

Public Comment

Paul Petro commented to the Board about refreshments in the Reading Room.

Other Business

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Thursday, November 10 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.

Nick Tilden made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Chaddock, Minutes Recorder for  
Heather Augustyn, Secretary