

Board of Trustees
Minutes
April 13, 2023

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 13th at 7:00 pm.

Board members present were: Michael Livovich, Rosanne Tolin, Abbe Trent, Kathryn Cochran, and Rondi Wightman.

Board members absent were: Will Scharp and Michele Corazzo.

Also present at this meeting were: Interim Library Director Heather Chaddock, Library Counsel Lisa Baron, and Library Bookkeeper Kelsey Stearns.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Rondi Wightman at 7:03 pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2023 regular meeting as presented. Rosanne seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Mike Livovich to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of March 10, 2023 through April 13, 2023 as presented. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Librarian's Report

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

In March, 12,933 people visited the Library; WPL created 32 in-person programs with 622 attendees and one live virtual program with 29 attendees; WPL answered 34 reference questions and 113 tech help questions; 353 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 92 new library cards.

This past February, after 29 years with WPL, the Technical Services Manager shared plans to retire in March. The position is highly specialized and requires deep knowledge of cataloging rules, so finding a replacement was not an easy task. After conducting two rounds of interviews, WPL made an offer to a well-qualified candidate. The candidate accepted the offer and will begin with WPL starting May 1st.

Interim Director Chaddock expressed gratitude to everyone who sent a letter to the House Education Committee on the Library's behalf in regards to proposed legislation which could expose Indiana teachers and librarians to felony charges for collecting "materials harmful to minors."

On March 23, one of the heat exchangers in the boiler at the Thomas Branch was leaking, necessitating the replacement of all of the heat exchangers, in order to keep the boiler in good repair to continue working

within the plans of the HVAC renovation. The total costs are estimated to be roughly \$20,000 to be paid from the Library's operating fund.

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

Charles Schwab Bank SSB, TX 5.05%

Morgan Stanley Bank National Association, UT 5.00%

Staff Changes:

Joined: Laura DeLeon, Museum Registrar

Separated: Nathan Napier, P/T clerk, Rosedee Deol, page, Ryan Pleckham, Museum researcher, Mary Henry, P/T clerk, Julie Bohannon, Technical Services Manager

Other: Kathy Ruble, moved from P/T clerk to sub clerk

Old Business Thomas HVAC

This week, the crews from Circle R Mechanical and Continental Electric have been working to clean up the Phase 1 construction area of the Thomas Branch and preparing to move into Phase 2, which includes the Admin offices, the AV Department, the second floor public restrooms, the staff stairwell, and the staff break room. This next phase ushers in a new set of logistical issues to work out, such as moving in the temporary shelving units that were ordered to house a capsule collection of the most-popular DVDs and video games, for patrons to browse in the AV Department's temporary location on the first floor. Several professional staff will need to move into different offices. WPL will need to prepare a temporary staff break room and a temporary kitchen.

One challenge has been the development of a temporary fire evacuation plan, for use in the event that a fire occurs which blocks the main stairway during the construction process on the back staff stairway. Chesterton Fire Chief Rudy Jiminez gave specific requirements for the evacuation plan, and Interim Director Chaddock worked with WPL's Maintenance Manager to create an easy-to-understand plan to distribute to all staff. All staff must be educated on the plan in order for WPL to be permitted to close one of the two stairways in the building for renovation.

Two Change Orders were submitted to cover the costs of rerouting various electrical conduits and boxes which are in conflict with the new ductwork and for a steel grid to be installed in the bathrooms in Phase 2. This grid must be in place for the lighting and HVAC plans to be carried out in the bathrooms as they are throughout the rest of the building. The bathrooms were renovated within the last 10 years, and the ceilings were changed at that time so they do not match the other ceiling surfaces in the building.

The new ceilings and lighting of the Phase 1 final results look clean, bright, and modern. Staff have been pleased to see extraneous power cords which were a trip hazard are gone, and the new switch plates with power-saving lights that automatically adjust based on motion-sensors have been popular. The standing, bi-weekly update meetings held with Interim Director Chaddock, WPL's architect, projects manager, and contractors have been well-run and informative.

Museum

On April 3, 2023, Interim Director Chaddock and Board Treasurer Abbe Trent attended the Duneland School Corporation Board meeting where it was publicly announced that the DSC intends to sell the

Brown Mansion to WPL, independent of its Memorandum of Understanding with the Duneland YMCA to sell CMS and its surrounding property.

Health Insurance Error

WPL's Bookkeeper spent the last month tracking down 10 years' worth of monthly insurance statements for each full-time WPL employee. From those invoices, she was able to pinpoint the moment in which the error initially occurred and calculated the dollar amount owed for each affected employee. These totals have been submitted to Lane Gensburg for his input as to calculating the reimbursement for the tax withholding for each person, as tax rates fluctuate each year.

Attorney Lisa Baron included a Memo for the board, outlining her research and ultimate recommendation regarding the inclusion of a liability waiver, or "Covenant Not to Sue," with the checks for each affected employee. She does "not recommend conditioning the receipt of payment on the execution of a release or similar document. From an optics standpoint, it send the wrong message, as if the Library has something to hide." She added that incorporating some "softer" language may lead to enforceability issues should someone challenge it later down the road. Attorney Baron concluded "from a litigation standpoint, based upon the efforts undertaken by the Library to address and correct the errors, in the event that someone brings a claim I would anticipate that any such claim would be defensible."

At this point, both the Library Attorney and Tax Attorney hired to help WPL sort out the issue have given it a great deal of thought and ultimately come to the same conclusion: that a waiver is unnecessary and sends the wrong message, especially given the fact that the mistake was the fault of WPL, and WPL is voluntarily correcting it.

Employee HSA Disbursement

As new Trustees have been added to the board, Interim Director Chaddock reintroduced this tabled topic from the previous meeting. On March 1, Rondi Wightman, Kathryn Cochran, Abbe Trent, WPL's Bookkeeper, and Interim Director Chaddock all met with Paul Sciarra and Jim Anton of Anton Insurance to discuss options and potential liabilities involved with WPL's long-time practice of making a single, annual disbursement to each eligible employee's Health Savings Account. This practice was questioned by then-Board Treasurer Rondi Wightman after the January regular meeting, and discussed by the Board as a whole during Other Business at the February regular meeting, at which time Rondi recommended that Anton Insurance be brought in to consult with the group. At the March 1 meeting, Paul Sciarra acknowledged that the Library's full funding of staff Health Savings Accounts was generous by industry standards. Interim Director Chaddock agreed, and shared that this is something WPL promotes heavily when advertising open full-time positions, and it is greatly appreciated by Library staff. Paul said that some entities do an annual single disbursement, while others will do bi-annual, or even quarterly disbursements. In considering WPL's health care package as a whole, Paul said that 2024 plans will come out mid-October, and WPL may want to consider the cost benefits of moving to a traditional plan versus an HSA high-deductible plan.

Interim Director Chaddock opened the floor for discussion on this topic, noting that the Board may also wait and see what options for medical insurance plans are available when the numbers come out in October, and make a decision then. The Board ultimately decided to table this discussion until new plans are presented in October.

New Business

PLAC Quarterly Statement

A motion was made to continue the Library's involvement in the Public Library Access Card program by Kathryn Cochran. Mike Livovich seconded this motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Inventory List

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the inventory list as presented. Abbe Trent seconded this motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the Librarian's Report as presented. Rosanne Tolin seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

Other Business

Abbe Trent was approached by a library patron regarding the holding and use of Narcan in the Library. She asked to clarify the Board's original stance on the matter in concern for the safety of employees. Abbe would like to add this as a topic for discussion at the May regular board meeting.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be May 11, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.

Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for
Michele Corazzo, Secretary