

Board of Trustees
Minutes
May 11, 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, May 11th at 7:00 pm.

Board members present were: Michael Livovich, Abbe Trent, Kathryn Cochran, and Michele Corazzo.

Board members absent were: Will Scharp and Rondi Wightman.

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

This meeting was called to order by Board Secretary Michele Corazzo at 7:00 pm.

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to nominate Kathryn Cochran as Chairperson Pro Tem. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Executive Session Minutes

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2023 executive session as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2023 regular session minutes with employee names added to the staff changes in the Librarian's Report. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. Abbe Trent, Kathryn Cochran, and Michael Livovich voted in favor; Michele Corazzo abstained due to absence. The motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

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

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Mike Livovitch to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of April 14, 2023 through May 11, 2023 as presented. Abbe Trent 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 April, 12,450 people visited the Library; WPL created 41 in-person programs with 883 attendees; WPL answered 70 reference questions and 97 tech help questions; 164 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 73 new library cards.

The Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale was another great success for WPL volunteers and for the Library. The total income from this sale was \$4,827.75. As has been their custom, the Friends presented WPL with a check for \$5,000 following their Sale, which was deposited into the Unrestricted Gift Fund. Interim Director Chaddock thanked the Friends for all of their time and effort spent making this a positive experience for shoppers, and for helping deliver proceeds that fund Library programs for the public, staff events, summer reading prizes, and more.

On Monday, April 17, Delta Theta Tau presented WPL with a check for \$100.00 to support programming efforts. Their continued generosity and community activism is appreciated.

National Library Week was observed April 23-29. To recognize staff for Library Workers Day, Interim Director Chaddock represented WPL staff members with a small gift bag containing a fidget toy and some chocolates. The total cost for these gifts was \$616.90, which came from the Unrestricted Gift Fund.

Interim Director Chaddock, the Hageman Branch Manager, and the Children's Librarian attended the ILF District 1 Regional Conference on April 14. This was the first return to this series of regional conferences held around the state each year since the pandemic. The group had the opportunity to tour the newly renovated Saint Joseph County Public Library in South Bend, and learn from a variety of sessions.

Governor Holcomb signed HB 1447 into law on Monday, May 8, 2023. Under House Bill 1447, school districts and charter schools are required to publicly post their library catalogs and establish a procedure to allow parents and community members to file challenges to books they believe to be inappropriate. The bill also bars public school employees from citing a book's educational value as a legal defense against charges of distributing material that is harmful to minors. The public library "scope of work" defense was retained; this new legislation, though disheartening overall, does not affect public libraries other than the removal of the "educational" defense.

ILF President Christopher Proctor offered the following statement: “The Indiana Library Federation supports the policy in HEA 1447 that required the establishment of publicly available policies that create transparency for the community and for parents. At the same time, we maintain that eroding the defenses from prosecution in state law will have an extremely chilling effect on librarians’ efforts to make diverse, age-appropriate materials available to students without government interference.” WPL does have a publicly available Request for Reconsideration process posted to the WPL website, as part of its existing Collection Development Policy.

Michael Livovich asked if Interim Director Chaddock anticipates any changes in how WPL operates with the public due to the new law. Interim Director Chaddock stated that she does not anticipate any issues, as WPL already has a publicly available catalog and challenge process in place.

Staff Changes: Joined: Julietta Raby, P/T Clerk; Maria Weber, P/T Clerk; Meghan Rogers, sub clerk
Separated: Kyle Mason, P/T Clerk

Other: N/A

Old Business

Thomas HVAC

WPL is now officially into Phase 2 of the Thomas Branch HVAC and lighting renovation project. Some professional staff and the entire AV Department have been shifted to temporary locations, with attending discomforts and frustrations. Everyone remains flexible, but the disruption to their workflow is not without effect. There was some miscommunication with a new contractor who was removing duct work in the public bathrooms upstairs, and left them covered in dirt and dust, so they had to be closed to the public for the remainder of the day until they could be cleaned up again. These intermittent issues are time-consuming for Interim Director Chaddock and other staff to discover, communicate to one another, address with the contractors, and help patrons navigate. However, the crew from Circle R Mechanical has shown several times over that they are looking out for the Library’s best interests in their quality of work and budget consciousness. One of their workers recommended that WPL swap out the regular ceiling tiles for vinyl, cleanable ceiling tiles for all ceilings in the bathrooms, at no additional cost to the Library. This swap will make the restrooms much easier to clean and keep sanitary for everyone. In another example, a contractor had to remove an old light fixture high up in the staff hallway, and patch and repaint over the hole. The new paint was a slightly different shade than the old, faded paint on the rest of the wall, hardly noticeable, but he elected to paint the entire wall to erase that slight blemish. WPL staff are now looking ahead to plans for Phase 3, which will involve moving the Children’s Department in 6-8 weeks.

Health Insurance Error

Interim Director Chaddock has asked tax attorney Lane Gensburg to take a final pass at each of the documents WPL plans to send to the current and former employees affected by the health insurance bookkeeping error. If there are no significant updates or changes, it is Interim Director Chaddock's intent to issue the checks, and all associated documentation, by the end of May. The total amount to be paid out by the Library to correct this error will be \$50,263.77, to be paid from the Library's Operating Fund.

New Business

Trustee Update

Last month, Interim Director Chaddock was alerted to the fact that newly appointed WPL Trustee Rosanne Tolin is not a resident of Westchester Township. Rosanne does live in Chesterton, but it is a common misperception among locals that all Chestertonians reside in the same township. This was an oversight by the appointing body for her seat, and no reflection on Rosanne or her abilities. WPL is grateful for her willingness to serve the community as a Library Board member, and regrets this unfortunate error. At the May 1st Duneland School Corporation Board meeting, the Board rescinded Rosanne's appointment (per Indiana State Code) and they are determining next steps to appoint a new Trustee for WPL who lives within the district.

Narcan

At last month's meeting during Other Business, Board Treasurer Abbe Trent raised the question of supplying Narcan, a medicine that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose, at WPL locations to have on hand in case of an emergency. This was spurred by a local community member approaching Abbe to express their desire for WPL to have it available. Interim Director Chaddock reached out to other local library directors to gain their perspectives on this complicated issue, and shared their responses with the Board, as well as some articles on the topic, and an overview of Aaron's Law provided by Library Attorney Lisa Baron. After taking all of these resources into consideration, Interim Director Chaddock's recommendation was for Abbe to return to the initial concerned patron with the suggestion that they look into Naloxboxes. These are typically hosted by a local drug or health task force, and they are available to the public if needed, any time of the day or night, with no staff intervention necessary. Michael Livovich and Abbe Trent both agreed that public entities may have a moral responsibility to the community to have Narcan available, but they were opposed to anything that would place additional responsibility or risk on Library staff. Abbe will reach out to the concerned patron to express WPL's potential interest in hosting a Naloxbox, but will not suggest placing responsibility for locating and supplying the box and medication on WPL trustees or staff.

Inventory List

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the inventory list as presented with the removal of the safe in the administration office. Abbe Trent seconded this motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Non-Resident Fees

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the continuation of non-resident fees at \$175. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Executive Director

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to hire Heather Chaddock as the Executive Director of Westchester Public Library at a pay rate of \$78,000 per year. Michele Corazzo seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Michael Livovich for the board to create a stand-alone benefit for Heather Chaddock as Executive Director of Westchester Public Library, which consists of five additional personal days in addition to any sick or personal days listed in the Salary Schedule. These additional personal days will not rollover year to year, or be paid out in the event that she leaves the position of Executive Director. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

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

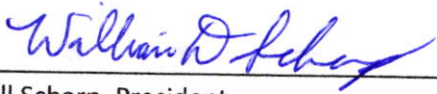
Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.


Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be June 8, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center. Michele Corazzo adjourned the meeting at 8:05 PM.



Will Scharp, President



Kathryn Cochran, Board Member



Rondi Wightman, Vice President



Michael Livovich, Board Member



Abbe Trent, Treasurer



Michele Corazzo, Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for
Michele Corazzo, Secretary