

Board of Trustees
Minutes
June 8, 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, June 8th at 7:00 pm.

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

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock, Library Bookkeeper Kelsey Stearns, and, via Zoom, Library Attorney Lisa Baron.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Will Scharp at 7:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2023 regular session minutes, adding the word “may” to the Narcan discussion. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. Abbe Trent, Kathryn Cochran, Michele Corazzo, and Michael Livovich voted in favor; Rondi Wightman and Will Scharp abstained due to absence. The motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo 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 May 12, 2023 through June 8, 2023 as presented. Rondi Wightman 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 May, 15,548 people visited the Library; WPL created 14 in-person programs with 442 attendees; WPL answered 57 reference questions and 92 tech help questions; 328 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 78 new library cards.

WPL’s Summer Reading Program began with a special Kick-Off event on May 25th. There were a total of 273 attendees for the event. Everyone in attendance got to sign up for summer reading,

WPL's Summer Reading Program began with a special Kick-Off event on May 25th. There were a total of 273 attendees for the event. Everyone in attendance got to sign up for summer reading, participate in WPL's Books Around the Block scavenger hunt, which involved finding book covers posted in the windows of local businesses near the Baugher Center, receive buttons and glitter tattoos, eat popcorn, and watch the documentary *Summer of Soul* on the big screen. The Library's Summer Reading Program will run from May 25th - July 17th this year.

WPL's annual outdoor concert series, "Summer Tunes," began last week with the Valparaiso Community/University Concert Band in Chesterton Park. The weather was beautiful, and there were 149 people in attendance. With the switch from Thomas Park to Chesterton Park for the Chesterton concerts this year, Director Chaddock ordered a custom feather banner to help attendees find the events and advertise that they are hosted by WPL, at a cost of \$383.86.

On May 17th, the Museum Curator informed Director Chaddock that her staff had found a bat lying on the ground in the exhibit area of the Museum in the middle of the day. She closed the area off to patrons and staff, and staff worked in their offices for the day. WPL's Maintenance Manager immediately began to work on contacting pest removal agencies, knowing that WPL would need to secure a company certified in safe bat removal, as bats are a protected species in Indiana. In the meantime, on that same day, the bat died. This led WPL staff to believe that it was probably a sick bat to begin with, since it was acting erratically and flying around during the day. Either way, a pest control company will still be hired to examine the building for any other bats, and locate and address the location where the bat entered. WPL is also hoping to finally put caps on top of the chimneys to seal off another potential entry point for pests. The terms of the lease agreement with the School Corporation state that pest removal is the Library's responsibility.

After almost 6 months of searching, WPL has found a new van to purchase for the WPL Maintenance crew, in order for them to perform their daily mail runs, shifting bins of materials and supplies from one WPL location to another. The new van is a 2023 Ford Transit E250, and it was purchased from Bosak Ford in Burns Harbor. The cost was \$48,000 after a trade-in credit for the old van, as well as a previous customer discount. WPL's Maintenance Manager is currently comparing prices to add the WPL logo to the sides of the van.

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

Queensborough Natl Bank , 4.85%

Morgan Stanley Bank, 4.9%

Staff Changes

Joined: Amber Sheely, Technical Services Manager; Sandra Martin, P/T page; Keegan Palonis, P/T clerk; Donna Hodgson, P/T cleaner

Separated: Danielle Thibideaux, P/T cleaner

Other: N/A

Old Business

Thomas HVAC

Work continues on Phase 2 of the Thomas Branch lighting and HVAC systems renovation. WPL received asbestos abatement from Amereco again on May 17 and May 24 to remove asbestos found in the drywall and in the old doors to the mechanical room, as well as near the roof drains. An A&C for payment from Circle R Mechanical was received by the Library on May 18 in the amount of \$214,018.65, for continued work on this project. On May 31, the closing manager at Thomas called Director Chaddock to tell her that, due to the rain, the ceiling was leaking in three separate areas in the Phase 2 work zone. Director Chaddock called the field superintendent from Circle R Mechanical to see if someone could be sent to help. He gave instructions to mitigate any potential damage to the drywall and found someone to come out that night to address the issue.

Health Insurance Error

WPL sent reimbursement checks to all of the current and former WPL employees affected by the health insurance withholding error on Wednesday, May 17th. Overall, these checks were received with gratitude and understanding. One former employee called for clarification that the check itself wasn't a mistake, and once it was explained that WPL was actually correcting a past mistake, she said, "Well, good on you for being honest and making it right." So far, three employees have expressed that they plan to submit their federal taxes for additional reimbursement. For others, the amount paid out was small enough that they decided not to go through the additional hassle of providing back tax returns.

Several of the people affected had questions about how to report the amount received on their taxes for 2023. Board Treasurer Abbe Trent also expressed concern that the high amounts of a few of the checks may bump their recipients into a higher tax bracket. Director Chaddock asked Lane Gensburg about this possibility, and he explained that most of the total amount is not eligible to be taxed, and thus does not need to be reported on next year's returns as income, so this is not ultimately a concern. Director Chaddock asked him to draft a follow-up letter explaining exactly how each person can calculate what portion of the reimbursement check they will owe taxes on; these letters have since been distributed. The Library will provide a 1099-MISC form for this smaller amount for each affected employee in January.

Trustee Update

On May 26, Director Chaddock received an email from the Duneland School Corporation informing her that there will be a recommendation at the June 12 regular DSC board meeting to appoint Justin Martinson to fill the vacancy on the WPL Board. WPL is looking forward to having Justin join next month's meeting as the newest trustee.

New Business

Teen Space and Individual Meeting Rooms

Director Chaddock stated that all of the shifting of offices and entire departments within the Thomas Branch to allow for the HVAC renovation has generated some realizations about how WPL is currently using its space, and some new ideas about possibilities for the future.

In revisiting WPL's five-year strategic plan, the first strategic priority is to "expand and modify our space." There are multiple objectives and potential outcomes listed within this strategic priority, such as, "Create small group study spaces with access to collaborative tools and technology," "create a dedicated teen space," and "teen program attendance will increase annually." Director Chaddock believes WPL can meet these particular objectives, and several others within the plan, without a major renovation to the Thomas Branch.

Director Chaddock proposed to move the AV department downstairs to the first floor, and move the Young Adult collection upstairs, to where the AV collection currently lives. With some new shelving to replace the old white DVD shelving, the materials could fit in that space, and allow the former "juvenile materials room" in the AV Department to become a teen hang-out space. This area would be for teens only, hosted and monitored by the appropriate YA library staff. There could be couches, retro arcade games like PacMan, locked cabinets with an Xbox and Nintendo Switches able to be played on-site, computers, booth seating, and a long table with rotating craft supplies for teens to sit and create.

Director Chaddock shared that she is also motivated by the current lack of appropriate teen hang out space at the Thomas Branch, and the frustrations this lack has wrought for patrons and staff alike. Offering a space where it is appropriate for teens to stay, socialize, and be themselves could result in less mischief-making in other areas of the Library, and hopefully greater attendance at the teen programs WPL offers. Director Chaddock is aware of concerns about the trouble unmonitored teens could potentially get themselves into, and so clear sight lines and appropriate staffing levels during all open hours of the teen space will be prioritized. The specifics of what particular elements will go into this space could be voted on by local teens, and collaboration with entities like the Chesterton Art Center and CHS to showcase local art created by teens as decor for the space would be welcomed.

As she has considered moving WPL's AV Department downstairs permanently, Director Chaddock has been assured by the patron response to moving the music and DVDs downstairs during this current renovation phase; much of the feedback has either been: "They're much

easier to get to down here” from AV Department regulars, or “Oh, I always forget you guys have this stuff available for check-out” from first-floor only regulars. Making this collection more easily accessible for elderly patrons and patrons with young families, both of which are heavy users of these materials, feels appropriate.

Additionally, Director Chaddock would like to redefine some of the space in the computer lab and the Serials department. In recent years, WPL has found that the Library does not need the same volume of computers for public use that it has in previous years. The public computers WPL offers continue to see use every day, but not at the high rates they did when home computers and internet were less common. Half of the former public computer area is currently storing renovation supplies for contractors; WPL has not once missed this space, or been unable to meet the demand for public computer use.

Instead, this alcove could be the site of several individual small meeting rooms with the installation of two walls inside the alcove to divide the space, and glass doors on each room to allow for easy monitoring. Small meeting rooms have been on the patron wish list for WPL for a long time, to be used for study sessions, business meetings, Zoom calls, and more. If possible, the rooms would be made sound-proof for privacy during telehealth meetings.

Director Chaddock’s initial inkling about funding the projects, without seeking any quotes yet, is that much, if not all, of the costs of these improvements could be covered by the profits gained from the recent sale of the Dune Acres property, which was donated to the Library by Walter Placko. The full amount of \$188,785.00 was deposited into the Library’s Gift Fund. These funds are not subject to Additional Appropriation requests, and as such, could be pulled from as needed to purchase items for the teen space and the new small meeting rooms, such as new shelving, furniture, and gaming equipment. Walter Placko’s gift to WPL was incredibly altruistic, and Director Chaddock believes a dedicated teen space, and individual meeting rooms to facilitate patron needs, would be a worthy use of his generous gift, and a gift back to the community. WPL could also consider naming one of the spaces after him, if his estate likes that idea.

Each board member voiced their support of this idea. Michele Corazzo stated that she finds it reassuring that the WPL has “someone with a vision” for the Library’s future like Director Chaddock. Rondi Wightman echoed this. Abbe Trent looked forward to a “cozy and inviting space for teens.” Will Scharp stated that he loves the idea of naming the space after Walter Placko, should his estate agree to this. Mike Livovich volunteered to facilitate conversations about the space with local teens when the project is at that stage.

Auto-Renewal of Materials

The Circulation Manager recently brought to Director Chaddock’s attention that the integrated library system, Polaris, is capable of auto-renewing patrons’ checked-out materials. She asked if WPL could turn this function on, and explained that it would benefit patrons by saving them

money in late fines, as well as their time spent calling or stopping in to renew items. It's a relatively easy setting to change, and it would be a benefit to patrons and staff alike. Director Chaddock plans to have staff work to make this change on July 1st, at which point the public will be notified. This does not represent a change in WPL's Circulation Policy, but it will be a change in procedure. Any items that are not renewable (like new books) or on hold for other patrons would not receive an auto-renew. Patrons will receive the same notifications they always do when their items are auto-renewed.

Inventory List

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the inventory list as presented with the addition of the new vehicle and removal of the old vehicle. Abbe Trent seconded this motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

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

Public Comment

Jennifer Klug from Porter made a public comment regarding the availability of Narcan at the Library. She believes it is a good idea to have it available for situations in which people on-site overdose. She stated that it is also a good idea to have library staff trained on how to administer Narcan, as well as how to properly handle situations when drugs have been used on the Library's premises. She asked if any sort of discussion or decision had been made regarding the Library having Narcan on-site. Michael Livovich stated that there has been discussion and that the Board is considering it and taking it very seriously, but a decision has not yet been made. Rondi Wightman asked Lisa Baron about Good Samaritan laws with regard to administering Narcan. Lisa Baron stated that there was a memo circulated about Aaron's Law, and further clarification within that memo about the unlikely scenarios in which these laws would not apply, but that there are protections in place for those who try to administer a life-saving substance like Narcan.

There was no other public comment.

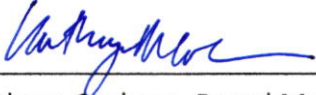
Other Business

Director Chaddock made mention that complaints about the Library's Pride displays will be put on the agenda for July, as Pride month had just begun. She also stated that a father and son thanked WPL for having the Pride display and making it easy for them to find Pride books.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be July 13, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.

Will Scharp adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

Will Scharp, President




Kathryn Cochran, Board Member



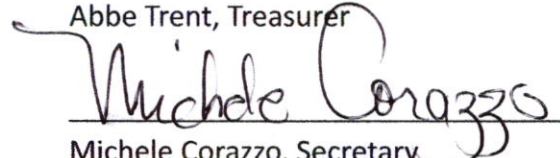
Rondi Wightman, Vice-President

Michael Livovich, Board Member



Abbe Trent, Treasurer

Justin Martinson, Board Member



Michele Corazzo, Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for
Michele Corazzo, Secretary