

Board of Trustees
Minutes
August 10, 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, August 10th at 7:00 pm.

Board members present were: Kathryn Cochran, Abbe Trent, Michele Corazzo, Justin Martinson, Will Scharp, and Michael Livovich

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 Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2023 regular session. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion.

Michael Livovich requested that clarification regarding the payment and installation of the Naloxboxes be added to the July meeting minutes.

An amended motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2023 regular session with the additional changes. Justin Martinson 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. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of July 14, 2023 through August 10, 2023 as presented. Michele Corazzo 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.

Summer Reading had 526 children, 191 tweens and teens, and 247 adults participate in the program, compared to 2022, which saw 570 children, 196 tweens and teen, and 275 adults. This signifies a 7% drop in registration on average. WPL did see gains in the total numbers of program finishers in the youth divisions, and event registrations remained strong throughout the summer, leading staff to still feel the typical busy-ness of the season through actively engaged patrons all summer long.

Director Chaddock met with Anton Insurance to review the Library's renewal for Property & Casualty Coverage. The auto coverage premium increased about \$300, likely due in part to the purchase of a new van in 2023. The overall increase was \$1,931.25 from 2023's premium of \$36,112 to 2024's premium of \$38,043.25.

Pest problems persist at the Museum. Staff found unidentified droppings in the basement and were unsure if they were from a mouse or a bat. Guardian had just been out to the Museum a few months prior to seal up entry points for bats on the roof, so WPL's Maintenance Manager checked the invoice for any type of warranty or guarantee after service. He confirmed that WPL is guaranteed to be pest-free for a year. Guardian has agreed to return and remove the pest, free of charge to WPL.

Four Seasons was the only local company found that would be able to provide a quote to install chimney caps on the Museum. This was a planned project before the pandemic hit, and it is still very much needed to further secure the building against bats. They are scheduled to visit on August 14th to take measurements, and they should be able to fabricate and install them shortly after that. They are aware that they will be working on a historic building on the National Register, and that the caps must have a low profile. The School Corporation has been notified about this project.

In July, 15,073 people visited the Library; WPL created 31 in-person programs with 661 attendees; WPL answered 41 reference questions and 98 tech help questions; 201 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 94 new library cards.

DVD circulation stats have been increasing month to month. In July, numbers were back up to where they were pre-Phase 2, even with a truncated collection downstairs at the Thomas Branch. Director Chaddock believes this bodes well for the future move for the AV department.

Staff Changes

Joined: Maria Weber, P/T Clerk; Kim Cassler, P/T Clerk, Amber Froehlke, P/T Cleaner

Separated: Amber Froehlke, P/T Cleaner

Other: N/A

Old Business

Thomas HVAC

At the height of a brutal heat wave on July 28th, WPL was made aware that one of the two brand-new rooftop AC units at the Thomas Branch was not working to cool down the first floor of the building. It turned out to be a technology problem. Essentially, the computer in the malfunctioning unit was not recognizing the IP address of the system the Library will use to control it. The field supervisor for the WPL HVAC project had to get technicians from both of these separate entities to communicate and figure this problem out, which they eventually did, but it took several days. WPL was able to use the one remaining rooftop unit to route cool air from the second floor down to the first floor, but that only worked when temps remained below the 90s. Wednesday through Friday were the hottest days, and staff working downstairs were encouraged to take breaks upstairs as needed, and help themselves to cold bottled water. Thankfully, outdoor temps were milder through the weekend and into the next week, and the problem was ultimately resolved on August 4th.

Included in the Board documents is A&C #13, which came to \$96,511.63. Additionally, two change orders came through this month, totaling \$9,433.83 for installation of additional LED lights on the lower level of the building, the same as the ones that were added on the upper level.

Director Chaddock is proud of the way that staff have worked together to accomplish moving both the Children's and the Young Adult Departments upstairs for Phase 3. Director Chaddock observed staff going out of their way to help one another and express gratitude, independent of any prompting from her. It was a massive undertaking, which required many planning meetings and many hands to help carry books, toys, games, shelving units, and decorations upstairs to make these temporary places as welcoming for young patrons as possible. Photos were included of these spaces in the Board documents.

WPL received the first invoice from Jimenez painters for their work painting the reading room, staff lounge, staff kitchen, Serials Department, and the former Friends sorting room and its shelves. All told, their time and materials for this project so far cost \$8,500. WPL has been pleased with the quality of their work, and they have been adept at minimizing interruptions to staff and services while they work. They will continue to stop in 1-2 days a week to paint completed areas upstairs; next up are the Admin Offices. Staff have commented that it helps motivate them to get through to the end of this renovation, seeing how nice the completed areas look. Director Chaddock is taking the color scheme of the building back to the 1970s to work with the "bones" of the building, which originated in 1972. WPL's vintage Southshore posters go well with this color scheme, and Director Chaddock is looking forward to adding

some additional design elements to help the building feel like it has a cohesive tone, and create a colorful, appealing destination for the community to stop in and stay awhile.

As previously stated, one of the benefits of this season of moving and upheaval for the HVAC renovation at the Thomas Branch is that each department has been forced to move and touch just about everything they “own.” Staff have been able to discard a lot of unneeded clutter that had been out of sight, out of mind, and have made room for new ideas for future services. For example, more room to store library records in an efficient, secure way is needed. Director Chaddock plans to add a room divider to separate the space between the Director’s office and the former Board room, and add heavy duty shelves to the area behind the divider, to create one organized area where all records can live in a locked room. This will also help facilitate the project to put all of WPL’s old Board minutes on microfilm, which SBOA decreed must occur within the next five years.

The former Friends of the Library Sorting Room is currently housing the Young Adult Department, and when the Young Adult Department moves to the AV area, Director Chaddock hopes to turn this space into the future WPL Board Room. The old Friends Room has enough space for a 16 seat table. There is also enough space in the room for any members of the public who choose to attend to sit comfortably. This set-up would also be more friendly for occasional virtual attendance, and it would support WPL’s 11-person monthly Managers’ meetings. Moving both of these meetings out of the Baugher Center would free up those time slots for additional community reservations, or Library programs in that location.

Narcan

With assistance from Samantha Aguilar from the HUB Coalition of Porter County, Director Chaddock has submitted applications to install Nalox Boxes at all four WPL locations. WPL has not received official notice that all four applications will be fulfilled, but she expects to hear back soon. Samantha is working on finding trainers to offer a training session for WPL staff, as well as one for the public. Director Chaddock would like to open the Thomas and Hageman branches at 10:00 AM on either Monday, September 18 or Monday, September 25, depending on the trainer’s availability, to facilitate staff Narcan training. The training itself is only half an hour, and will take place from 9-9:30 AM. For any staff who are unable to attend on a Monday morning, or any interested members of the public, Director Chaddock plans to offer a second training at 6:30 PM on either September 12 or September 20.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve a late opening of 10:00 AM on September 18 or 25, dependent on the trainer's availability, for Narcan training. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Museum Purchase

Director Chaddock requested a proposal from Abonmarche to have a survey done on the plot the Museum sits on, as well as an acre on each side (not including the Porter Avenue side). The quoted fee for the boundary survey was \$2,500.00, with an additional fee of \$1,200.00 per legal description prepared. They estimated that it would take six weeks for completion. Director Chaddock asked YMCA CEO Dave Kasarda if he would want to coordinate to have the rest of the property surveyed on the same day. The YMCA's requirements are more detailed than WPL's, but they are planning to have the property surveyed on the same day.

Director Chaddock opened discussion about giving permission for the YMCA to use the WPL logo as part of the current branding for the Healthy Living Campus project. Given that this does not represent a legal or financial tie, Director Chaddock believes it would be "neighborly" to allow them to call WPL a partner, but understands there are some relevant reservations among the group. Abbe Trent asked that Lisa Baron give some clarification on any legal ramifications on allowing the YMCA to use the WPL logo on any promotional materials for the Healthy Living Campus. Lisa Baron stated that she is aligned with the advice that was given by the Indiana State Library attorney, explaining that it is up to the Board. Allowing the YMCA to utilize WPL's logo as a partner on promotional materials does not legally tie the Library to anything, and can be assessed on a case by case basis. It is more or less a question of whether or not WPL wants to be publicly associated with the project. Michael Livovich stated that he likes the idea and that there has been positive feedback about the project. He noted that many other entities are listed as partners. Will Scharp noted that the risk seems low and the Library could ask that the YMCA remove their logo at any point. Kathryn Cochran brought up that the currently listed partners are seemingly all companies that have financial stakes in the project, and that the Library is not a partner in that sense, but a neighbor. Rondi Wightman stated that she believes the word "partner" is strong and expressed a desire for a different word to indicate WPL's true involvement. Abbe Trent asked if Director Chaddock knew the benefit of having the Library included as a partner on their marketing materials. Director Chaddock stated that she assumed the benefit is for public perception. Justin Martinson added that he believes the request for WPL's logo is just for advertising and feels inevitable as the Museum is in the same area as the Healthy Living Campus. He also noted that the project's website differentiates between logoed partners and collocated partners, which the Library is, by virtue of being located in the same space.

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman to table the conversation until the next regular session. The motion was seconded by Abbe Trent. Mike Livovich and Justin Martinson both stated that they are supportive of adding WPL's logo to the YMCA's marketing for the project. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business Draft Budget

Director Chaddock has drafted the 2024 budget for board review. The MLGQ (Max Levy Growth Quotient) was announced at 4.00%, which allowed a budget for increases in WPL's popular services like ebooks and e-audio, and an added budget line for landscaping. Director Chaddock believes it would be better contracted out to a larger company with more available manpower to tackle this and other outdoor maintenance projects. Director Chaddock has allocated \$24,000 toward landscaping for all four locations for next year. Several additional changes were made in light of inflation and upcoming capital and other projects. Director Chaddock drafted the cost-of-living increase for staff salaries at either 3% or 4%, and asked that the Board to consider and support this due to the continued toll inflation has taken on regular costs of living. In addition, WPL staff have shown unwavering grit, loyalty, and professionalism over the last year, which was a year of big changes for everyone. Between a new Director and a yearlong renovation project in the workplace of the majority of our staff members, Director Chaddock feared that the Library might experience some retention issues, but this did not materialize. Instead, WPL staff demonstrated a high level of professionalism, while continuing to offer hospitality and great service to patrons. The difference between a 3% vs a 4% raise would be \$15,856.70. Either option could be supported by the operating budget for next year. The national inflation rate is predicted to be 3% in 2024, and it was 4.26% in 2023. A 4% increase would help WPL stay competitive with pay rates from other local entities. WPL also did the work to compare pay rates for part-time staff at other local libraries last year, and ultimately voted to do an across-the-board adjustment to be more in keeping with those averages. Director Chaddock would like to maintain the edge the Library has established in this sense as well.

Rondi Wightman stated that she believes it will be difficult to make a decision on this until a decision can be made about insurance HSAs. Director Chaddock clarified that the increase in Employer Health Contributions was to add a buffer in 2024 based on 2023's usage and to account for any changes to health insurance plans.

Michael Livovich stated that he is comfortable with giving employees the 3% raise. Abbe Trent stated that communities are still seeing more costs rising, and she is in favor of giving the 4%. She also noted that the expectation is that inflation will go down to 2% in future years. Will Scharp and Justin Martinson stated that they are also in favor of the 4%. Kathryn Cochran stated

that she believes in order to keep good people, they should be paid as well as is available under the circumstances and with a 4% MLGQ, she supports a 4% salary increase.

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the proposed 2024 budget including a 4% salary increase. The motion was seconded by Abbe Trent. Abbe Trent, Kathryn Cochran, Michael Livovich, Michele Corazzo, Justin Martinson, and Will Scharp voted in favor. Rondi Wightman abstained. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the Librarian's Report. This motion was seconded by Michele Corazzo. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Other Business

There was no other business.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be September 14, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.

Will Scharp adjourned the meeting at 8:37 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