

Board of Trustees
Minutes
December 14, 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, December 14th at 7:00 pm.

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

Board members absent were: Rondi Wightman, Will Scharp

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock, Library Assistant Director Jessica Bartz, Library Bookkeeper Kelsey Stearns, and Library Attorney Lisa Baron (via Zoom)

Selection of Board President Pro Tem

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to select Michele Corazzo as President Pro Tem. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

This meeting was called to order by Board President Pro Tem Michele Corazzo at 7:06 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Director Chaddock proposed an amendment to the November minutes to add the promotion of Jessica Bartz to Assistant Director under the Staff Changes section of the minutes.

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2023 regular session with the proposed amendments. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor and 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 Michael Livovich to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of November 10 through November 14, 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 November, 12,292 people visited the Library; WPL created 41 in-person programs with 819 attendees and 1 live virtual program with 24 attendees; WPL answered 39 reference questions and 93 tech help questions; 108 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 101 new library cards.

In November, one \$250,000 LIRF CD matured. It was reinvested by Horizon Trust & Investment Management in North American SB at 4.80%.

In addition, one of the \$1,000,000 Rainy Day US Treasury Bonds matured. Director Chaddock elected to divide that into four \$250,000 CDs for reinvestment, at the following rates:

Optum Bank 4.80%

First Foundation Bank 4.75%

Hyperian Bank 4.75%

American Bank of Freedom 4.70%

Director Chaddock announced that WPL will be adding a new educational program series in 2024, the Library Speakers Consortium. Typically, only the largest and best-funded library systems can regularly afford the speaking fees of top authors. The Library Speakers Consortium (LSC) seeks to change that dynamic by pooling the resources of hundreds of library systems to dramatically expand access to these programs for all patrons. LSC will produce 2-3 author talks each month that are open to patrons of all partner libraries. Each talk will be a live, one-hour interview with a bestselling author and a professional moderator. The events will be completely virtual so people can watch the talks wherever it is convenient for them. Books and authors selected will cover a wide range of fiction and nonfiction genres including historical fiction, contemporary fiction, romance, poetry, business, personal growth, social justice, history, art, culture, and more. LSC is highly committed to offering a diverse mix of perspectives and will ensure that half or more speakers will be women and/or people of color.

This new subscription has an annual cost of \$3,500, to be paid from WPL's Electronic Resources fund. Director Chaddock believes it will be popular with book discussion groups at WPL, as well as with readers who don't always have time, flexibility, or mobility to attend Library events in person. This is intended to augment, and not replace, WPL's current, high quality in-person program offerings from staff.

WPL's first holiday party since 2019 was a hit. Many staff members expressed their gratitude for the return of this event, and the opportunity to socialize and enjoy a meal together. Staff enjoyed a catered breakfast from Third Coast Spice Café at a cost of \$1,009. In addition, staff

were each gifted a pair of tech gloves in a branded WPL pouch, at a cost of \$3.26 per person. Director Chaddock expressed gratitude to the Board, on behalf of WPL's staff, for allowing this time to relax and build up positive morale after a big year.

After consulting with the management team, Director Chaddock decided to postpone the Volunteer Luncheon this year, and offer a more substantial gift to each volunteer instead, with the final cost being similar to what the cost of the luncheon would have been. WPL volunteers were each given red plaid picnic blankets, customized with the WPL logo, at a cost of \$13.04 per blanket. WPL included a sincere thank you note with each blanket, and these were well received by the volunteer crew. The total cost for the blankets was \$782.18, paid for from the Gift Fund. Each volunteer received a pair of the tech gloves as well. In the course of the luncheon planning discussion, one staff member put forth that National Volunteer Week is actually in April, and that month would probably be a more convenient time for staff and attendees alike to attend an appreciation luncheon, so that is the plan for 2024, and going forward.

As the HVAC renovation has been winding down, WPL staff have been able to begin measuring and sourcing new shelving for the Thomas Branch. The ultimate goal is to replace all of the old, white particle board shelving units, which were purchased from a closing video rental store, and are showing their age. Many of these units have already had to be discarded because the shelves have collapsed over time. Staff are seeking new shelving that will suit current needs, and be mobile and modifiable as WPL's collection will undoubtedly shift again in the future. A fellow local library director was offering up six lightly used AV shelving units for \$4,000; these units are still available to be purchased new for about \$2,500 each. Director Chaddock showed them to WPL's AV selector, who agreed that they would be a good fit for the Library, though they would not hold enough capacity for the entire CD collection. Director Chaddock successfully negotiated the AV shelves down to \$2,500 for the lot, and the WPL Maintenance crew rented a van and picked them up from the Elkhart Public Library this month. Director Chaddock found a local vendor from which to purchase new, matching shelves for the rest of the CD collection, and those are currently on order. For six additional new shelves, the total cost was \$18,095. The entire AV collection will soon be moved downstairs to make way for the new teen room on the second floor. Shelves were chosen from Demco to put into the new teen room to accommodate the YA book collection. This new shelving is on casters and will maximize space in this room, allowing for additional seating options and a hang-out area for patrons in the department. These shelves are also on order; the total was \$43,438.14 for 24 shelving units. As WPL moves forward with creating a teen space, staff have begun seeking input from the future users of this space, via a survey available to all local 10-18 year olds. Director Chaddock stated that she is happy to share that this new department space will have a new manager, as well. Director Chaddock has promoted WPL's Young Adult Librarian, Sionna Hamilton, to Young Adult

Department Manager. This new area will require its own clerical staff, and a manager to help them serve this unique population, as well as maintain the department and respond to issues as they arise. Sionna has more than proven that she is up for the challenge. She has worked for WPL since January 2020, and she has greatly improved the depth and diversity of the YA collection since that time. She has also built many successful YA programs, including the popular “Culture Club” series, which explores different countries around the world. Management will be a new challenge for Sionna, but fellow managerial staff are here to support her, and have already begun sharing different training opportunities with her to get her up to speed on best practices.

The Town of Chesterton stopped by the Brown Mansion on December 8 for an impromptu building inspection. The Mansion passed the inspection.

Staff Changes

Joined: Anya Barbarossa, P/T Cleaner; Local Clark, P/T Cleaner; Will Grapenthein, P/T Cataloger; Cathryn Wagner, P/T Clerk; Nancy Wulff, P/T Clerk

Other: Sionna Hamilton, promoted from Young Adult Librarian to Young Adult Department Manager; Kimberly Wiseman, promoted from Reference Manager to Thomas Branch Manager

Old Business

Thomas HVAC

The Town of Chesterton came in to inspect the Phase 4 renovation of the Thomas Branch before ceiling panels could be installed, and WPL passed with flying colors. The ceiling tiles were then installed; all contractors are currently removing their tools and supplies from the Thomas Branch, and cleaning up all remaining protective flooring and plastic sheeting. The site manager relayed that the project will likely be entirely complete by the end of this week. Circle R Mechanical submitted CP #19 in the amount of \$7,017.13, when it was discovered that there were two heaters in the front vestibule, and both would require extensive rewiring to bring them up to code, and to repair some damaged conduit. Site manager John Bodisch met with the Library’s Maintenance Manager, and both agreed that having two heating units in the front vestibule was not necessary, and WPL could simply rewire one unit, resulting in a much lower cost and impact on the existing structure. They recommended that Director Chaddock *not* accept this change order, and ask for a single unit to be repaired instead. This unit runs over the left side door, which operates automatically with the handicapped sensor, so it is open for a longer period, and more frequently, than the door on the right side. Director Chaddock agreed with this recommendation, and Circle R furnished CP #20 at a cost of \$1,353.24, which was accepted. CP #17 was still outstanding from some additional electrical conduit rerouting that had to be done in Phase 3, at a cost of \$5,784.02. These two CPs were combined into the final

Change Order bill, CO #8, which totaled \$7,137.26. Director Chaddock relayed that the total cost of all Change Orders WPL has had to pay due to unforeseen circumstances was \$70,510.46. WPL's project manager Tom Kuhn had recommended that the Library request an additional 15% of the total estimated cost of the project to cover any unforeseen changes, and that was good advice.

Jimenez Painters will return at the end of this week to paint the remaining untouched walls in the Thomas Branch, including the back staff stairwell and hallway, and the adult fiction section. They will touch up the paint on the outdoor drop box as well, since that has been chipped and in need of repair for some time.

Back in early summer 2023, one of the contractors working on the ceiling upstairs in the AV Department sent WPL's Maintenance Manager a picture he had captured on his cell phone. It showed a considerable gap between one of the windows and the exterior of the building. It was as if the window had separated from the building itself along the top edge, and no one ever would have about known it, or been able to see it, if the ceilings hadn't been opened up for this HVAC and lighting renovation project. Maintenance staff looked for a contractor who could repair this gap, and check on the rest of the windows in the building. It took several months to find a contractor with the equipment to do this task, and Trout Glass finally quoted \$3,640.00 in August. After several follow-ups, Trout was finally on site on Monday, December 11 to inspect and replace all of the caulking around the perimeter of each window as needed. In completing their inspection, they noted that the weather stripping on some of the windows also needed to be replaced, and did this work at no additional cost to the Library. This job is finally complete, meaning that WPL's significant investment in energy efficiency at the Thomas Branch over the last year will not be undermined by leaky, drafty windows.

Museum Purchase

Director Chaddock had received the completed Museum survey from Abonmarche, and distributed printed copies to the Board members present at the meeting. At last month's Board meeting, President Will Scharp suggested that the Board consider what layout and important things they would want to see if they were to design a garden/outdoor meeting space/storage building on the plot of land adjacent to the Brown Mansion. Several Board members submitted drawings or wish lists and practical considerations to take into account. These considerations and ideas were shared and discussed. The group ultimately agreed to continue this conversation at the January Board meeting, to gain input from the Board members absent at the current meeting, as well as from the Museum Curator, whom the Board requested to attend the next meeting. Director Chaddock agreed to move the location of the January Board meeting to the Westchester Township History Museum to better facilitate this continuing discussion.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Director Chaddock distributed the MOU between Westchester Public Library, Porter County Public Library System, and the Porter County Community Foundation. It had already been signed by the other named entities. Attorney Lisa Baron reviewed it before it was brought to the WPL Board, and she agreed that all looks well, as long as the responsibilities outlined were what all involved parties had initially discussed. Director Chaddock shared via email this month that word spread quickly about the availability of this program in Porter County, with local parents' Facebook groups sharing and resharing the announcement posts. This has led to many local children being signed up before the program was really "ready to go," with staff being properly trained, and all necessary foundational work completed by the Community Foundation. WPL, PCPLS, and PCCF are making strides on laying the groundwork currently, and Director Chaddock plans to announce this program to our local Westchester Township community by the end of this month.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to accept the MOU as presented. Justin Martison seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

2024 Board Meeting Schedule

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to accept the schedule as presented with the location amendments made during the meeting. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Resolution to Encumber Operating Funds

The additional shelving units for the AV collection, as well as new shelving for the future Teen Room, have been ordered, but they will not ship until early 2024. Therefore, WPL is encumbering the total cost of \$61,533.14 from the 2023 Operating fund line 4.20 Furniture & Equipment.

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to encumber the funds as presented. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

End-of-Year Transfers

WPL's Bookkeeper has prepared end-of-year billings and reconciliations for the December 14th regular meeting. Any amendments to the Minor Transfers will be presented at the January 11th regular meeting. Continuing the practice kept for the past several years, the Bookkeeper did not prepare a transfer into LIRF, since WPL's reserve amounts are robust.

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

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

Public Comment

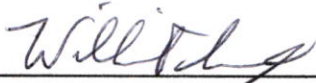
There was no public comment.

Other Business

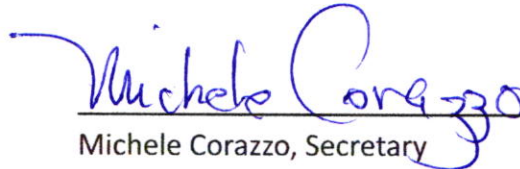
There was no other business.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be January 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Westchester Township History Museum.

Michele Corazzo adjourned the meeting at 8:29 PM.



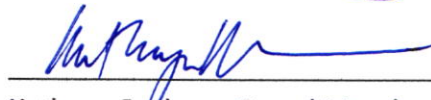
Will Scharp, President



Michele Corazzo, Secretary



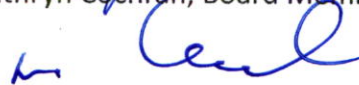
Rondi Wightman, Vice-President



Kathryn Cochran, Board Member



Abbe Trent, Treasurer



Michael Livovich, Board Member



Justin Martinson, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for
Michele Corazzo, Secretary