

Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
November 9, 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, November 9th at 7:00 pm.

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

Board members absent were: Rondi Wightman

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock, Library Assistant Director Jessica Bartz, and Library Bookkeeper Kelsey Stearns

This meeting was called to order by Board President Will Scharp at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2023 regular session. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. Will Scharp abstained due to absence. Abbe Trent, Michele Corazzo, Kathryn Cochran, Michael Livovich, and Justin Martinson voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

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

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Justin Martinson to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of October 13 through November 11, 2023 as presented. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Librarian's Report

WPL's new Assistant Director Jessica Bartz was introduced. Jessica began with WPL as the Children's Department Manager in 2018 and was promoted to Branch Manager in 2021. In her role as Branch Manager, Jessica has refined and improved existing procedures and has taken on a major leadership role in the coordination of, and communication about, all of the many moving parts related to the HVAC renovation project at Thomas. She will be present during

Board Meetings primarily as an observer and support to the Director, and may occasionally participate as projects emerge.

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

In October, 13,205 people visited the Library; WPL created 38 in-person programs with 727 attendees; WPL answered 37 reference questions and 78 tech help questions; 377 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 100 new library cards.

WPL staff and Friends of the Library volunteers were busy this month hosting two successful sales to benefit the Library. The Friends Tech Sale was held on October 7, and netted a total of \$787.00, while simultaneously clearing out the old technology taking up space in the Computer Lab. The Friends hosted their Fall Book Sale November 3-5. This sale brought in \$3,478.65. The Friends of the Library once again donated \$5,000 to the WPL Gift Fund following their sale. Director Chaddock expressed that WPL is endlessly grateful for the hard work and generosity of its Friends group.

#### Staff Changes

Joined: Cathryn Wagner, Sub Clerk

Separated: Emma Alexander, P/T Clerk; Christina Cook, P/T Cataloger; Linus Majcherczky, P/T Cleaner; Julietta Raby, P/T Clerk

Other: N/A

#### Old Business

Thomas HVAC

This month the WPL Thomas crew worked together to shift the Reference Desk over to the Main Circulation Desk, move the remaining entirety of the Young Adult (YA) collection upstairs, and shift a selection of 7,000 adult books over to the empty YA shelves, in order to re-open the Phase 3 area and close off Phase 4 for renovation. Phase 4 is the smallest of the work areas, and all of the major mechanical work has been completed at this point. Demolition of the existing ductwork in Phase 4 was completed in just one day. Gariup has removed the large red storage unit which has been stationed in the staff parking lot since January. At an update meeting on Monday, Site Supervisor John Bodisch estimated that the final turnover date would be December 29. The Library received three A&C's for payment from Circle R Mechanical this month. They came in at \$116,591.90, \$64,360.67, and \$118,233.76, respectively.

Following the turnover to Phase 4, Jimenez Painters came in for a week to put a fresh coat of paint on all of the ceiling soffits in the first floor Phase 3 area, the front entryway, as well as the

entire Children's Department and its office spaces. This was a massive undertaking, as it involved completely emptying the full bookshelves on the walls in the picture book room and the non-fiction section to allow those walls to be painted. WPL staff have received many compliments on how fresh everything looks, and have enjoyed how much these rich colors play off of WPL's collection of South Shore Line posters. The most recent invoice from Jimenez Painters came to \$13,500 for labor and all materials.

#### Museum Purchase

Board President Will Scharp and Director Chaddock met with Duneland School Corporation Superintendent Chip Pettit, DSC Attorney Chuck Parkinson, DSC Board Member Kirk Redman, and WPL Attorney Lisa Baron on November 1. The titlework for the Brown Mansion from Fidelity has been completed, and Abonmarche is working on getting a survey scheduled. Next steps for the WPL Board will be to discuss some concrete desires and plans for the additional parcel to the west of the Brown Mansion. DSC Board member Kirk Redman gave the impression during the meeting that the DSC Board would want to see a proposal or mock-up of what WPL would plan to do with the additional property to edify the community. Director Chaddock agreed with Will Scharp's assessment that the Museum purchase will likely not happen for at least another several months, despite everyone's best intentions. Additional discussion ensued with Board members sharing their initial ideas for the Museum plot, including a storage building for the Museum collection. Director Chaddock said that she would gather ideas from WPL staff and bring them to the next Board meeting, and the Trustees planned to bring their ideas to the December 14th meeting as well.

#### Employee Health Insurance

Following a meeting with Paul Sciarra and Jim Anton from Anton Insurance on November 1st, in which they laid out different options for 2024 healthcare plans for full-time staff, Director Chaddock recommended that the Library adopt the same Anthem plan as last year, which comes at an increase of 6.3%, about average for the current market. Director Chaddock did not recommend moving forward with the proposed idea of changing WPL policy to grandfather in any current employees utilizing the fully-funded HSA family plan, while requiring any future new hires to receive single HSA coverage only. Director Chaddock stated that while she recognizes and appreciates that this is a generous benefit for Library employees, she thinks that to cut off the family HSA coverage in this way would be unfairly punitive to any future employees with dependents and only one source of income. Director Chaddock agreed that the disbursement schedule to employee HSA accounts needed to change, and recommended that WPL move to quarterly disbursements, in order to balance fiscal responsibility with the intent not to create too drastic of a shift for employees who have grown used to receiving the full HSA disbursement in January.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the described Anthem health plan for 2024, and to shift HSA disbursements from annual to quarterly disbursements. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

### New Business

#### Staff Holiday Party

Staff was polled to find out their preferred time of day for a holiday party, and the results were that most staff preferred to maintain the traditional Friday morning gathering. Director Chaddock would like to close all Library locations on Friday, December 8 from 9 AM – 11 AM, in order to host a staff holiday party at the Baugher Center.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the closure of all WPL branches on December 8, 2023 from 9 AM - 11 AM for a staff holiday party. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

#### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library works with local non-profits to mail a high-quality picture book directly to the homes of children ages 0-5 each month, at no cost to the families. The Foundation covers overhead costs and negotiates wholesale pricing for the books, while local community partners fundraise to cover the cost of mailing and decided-upon wholesale book prices.

On May 4, 2023, Governor Holcomb signed legislation into law that would provide funding to split the costs of Imagination Library participation for all Hoosiers. This funding is available by county; thus, counties with more than one library system, such as Porter County, must work together in order to receive this funding, which is distributed through the Indiana State Library. Even with this generous legislation, local library directors have been left to figure out how to fund the remaining half of the program, and how to ensure its future. Director Chaddock met with Porter County Library Director Jesse Butz and Dr. Mary Jane Eisenhauer, Executive Director of First Things First Porter County. First Things First is a 501c3 funded by the Porter County Community Foundation (PCCF), and the Imagination Library falls in line with their goals to improve educational opportunities for Porter County's youngest residents. Following this meeting, Bill Higbie, President and CEO of the Porter County Community Foundation, vowed to grant \$42,000 to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Porter County. This initial commitment will fund the first two years of Porter County's participation, based on U.S. Census information and an estimate provided by the Imagination Library.

The PCCF will be in charge of the initial set-up, and they will work with local post offices to get the mailing arrangements worked out. The Libraries will then host events to promote registration in this program, as well as develop a designated spot for patrons to register on each respective library website. According to Dolly's Foundation, the most successful libraries begin fundraising right away. The Porter County Community Foundation plans to create a QR code that goes directly to a fund for the Imagination Library, which the library systems could then share and promote. The Library Friends' groups could also potentially add a fundraiser each year to benefit the Imagination Library. Director Butz and Director Chaddock would like to extend the invitation to other local educational foundations to participate and donate as well.

#### Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement

PCPLS Director Jesse Butz approached Director Chaddock to establish a reciprocal borrowing agreement between WPL and PCPLS in order to remove the need for frontline clerks to call and check if a patron has a card "in good standing" with their home library when they are signing up for a library card, if they are not a resident of that Library system. Director Butz has already established similar, successful agreements with Lake County and Crown Point, so he shared a similar resolution with WPL. This would save a considerable amount of time for the frontline staff at both locations, and make it easier to host library card sign-up tables during outreach in each community. After consulting WPL's Circulation Managers and Branch Managers, the consensus was that this would be a positive change. WPL will still have resident and non-resident cards, and WPL e-resources will still be for residents only; this change would mostly just remove a barrier for clerical staff and the patrons waiting to check out books.

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to allow Director Chaddock to enact a reciprocal borrowing agreement with the Porter County Public Library System. Michele Corazzo seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

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

#### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### Other Business

Michele Corazzo stated that the new benches outside of the Hageman Branch look unbalanced with the older benches on the opposite side of the building. The benches are two different styles and colors, and the new benches go with the architecture of the Hageman Branch more. She suggested moving the older benches to a different location, or shifting them to look more

balanced. Director Chaddock replied that the benches are extremely heavy and labor intensive for Maintenance staff to move, so this would not be an immediate priority, but she would consider it for the future.

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

Will Scharp adjourned the meeting at 7:59 PM.

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Will Scharp, President

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Michele Corazzo, Secretary

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Rondi Wightman, Vice-President

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Kathryn Cochran, Board Member

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Abbe Trent, Treasurer

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Michael Livovich, Board Member

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Justin Martinson, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for  
Michele Corazzo, Secretary