

Board of Trustees
Minutes
May 9, 2024

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Baugher Center, 100 W. Indiana Avenue, Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, May 9th, and called to order by Rondi Wightman, Board President at 7:00pm.

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

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.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2024 regular session. Kathryn Cochran 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. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Will Scharp to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of April 12, 2024 through May 9, 2024 as presented. Michael Livovich 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, 13,743 people visited the Library; WPL created 49 in-person programs with 914 attendees; WPL answered 78 reference questions and 90 tech help questions; 151 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 118 new library cards.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOK SALE - WPL staff and Friends of the Library volunteers hosted another successful book sale to benefit WPL. The Spring Sale, running April 19-21, brought in \$4,114.26. Following the Sale, the Friends of the Library once again donated \$5,000 to the WPL

Gift Fund from their book, magazine, and membership proceeds. WPL is grateful for their hard work and generosity.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE - On Friday, May 3, Director Chaddock attended the Indiana Library Federation District 1 Conference with three fellow WPL colleagues. The conference was held at the St. Joseph County Public Library again this year, and featured several useful sessions, including de-escalation techniques for public service personnel, presented by Mental Health of America, and a Purdue Extension keynote speech about recognizing implicit bias in ourselves and our organizations.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON - WPL staff had a great time mingling with, and celebrating, WPL's wonderful volunteers. This year, while the Baugher Center is awaiting renovation, staff opted to host the luncheon off-site at Gelsosomo's in Chesterton. A total of \$520.24 was spent on the event itself, from the Gift Fund. In addition, Director Chaddock purchased library card socks as a gift for all volunteers. The socks were given to WPL staff as well in April, in recognition of Library Workers' Day. All told, a total of \$1,524 was spent to provide these gifts for all WPL volunteers and staff.

TEEN SPACE - After much arranging and rearranging, the Audio-Visual Department move to the lower level of the Thomas Branch is complete. Director Chaddock was impressed by the teamwork and tenacity shown by Library staff to get the job done. In the next few weeks, the carpets will be cleaned and the walls painted. Kleckner Interior Systems out of Burns Harbor did an excellent job opening up and repairing the drywall in the former Juvenile room in AV. Soon, Trout Glass and Mirror will install two custom sliding glass doors in that space. Unfortunately, long shipping times from the furniture vendor, Demco, have pushed the desired grand opening back a few weeks. Their invoice, for a total of \$42,119.92, includes comfy chairs to lounge and read in, a booth for doing homework or chatting, several study tables and chairs, and a modular couch system for additional seating. Also on the way: an air hockey table, a collection of popular board games, and an arcade machine which can host up to four players at once. WPL still intends to have a "soft opening" of the department in time for the beginning of Summer Reading at the end of May. The collection itself and Teen Space staff will be in their new homes, and the new paint and décor will be on display for patrons to explore and enjoy. However, much of the furniture for the Space will not arrive until late June. After some discussion, the YA Department Manager proposed a "soft opening" as the path forward because the beginning of Summer Reading is when that collection sees the most circulation all year, and those materials should certainly be browsable for that important occasion. Once the furniture arrives and is installed, WPL will host a more formal "grand opening" event.

CDs Reinvested

In April, two \$250,000 US Treasury Bonds and one \$275,000 US Treasury Bond matured from LIRF and were reinvested by Horizon Trust & Investment Management as US Treasury Bonds at a rate of 4.5%. In addition, one \$250,000 US Treasury Bond matured from Rainy Day, and it was also reinvested by Horizon as a US Treasury Bond at 4.5%.

Staff Changes

Joined: Elizabeth Chesak, P/T Clerk, Brad Brickner, P/T Clerk
Separated: Brittany Paxton, P/T Clerk, Sandy Young, P/T Clerk
Other: N/A

Old Business

PATRON BEHAVIOR UPDATE – Fortunately, there was nothing major to report this month. There have been some mild corrections made to teen behavior over the last month, but nothing staff have been unable to handle.

HEALTHY LIVING CAMPUS SITE UPDATE - Trustee Will Scharp and Director Chaddock attended another WPL/DSC/YMCA meeting on Tuesday, May 7 to review a revised site plan for the Healthy Living Campus. Will Scharp reported that the access road from Porter Avenue had been shifted, and there were additional changes to what had formerly been discussed with WPL regarding the additional plot of land to the east, as well as the easement where the current Brown Mansion parking is located. Additionally, Director Chaddock reported that Chris Savoia from Berglund Construction had joined her and the Museum Curator on Wednesday, May 8 for a preliminary tour of the Brown Mansion. Chris told Director Chaddock that he would be able to put together a menu of renovation options for the Brown Mansion property, and that he would be able to present these to the Board at their June or July meeting.

After further discussion regarding the May 7 WPL/DSC/YMCA meeting, it was agreed that WPL would continue to gather information regarding the feasibility of WPL's desired renovations within the most recently proposed site plan. Lisa Baron will contact DSC's attorney to request an updated 2024 lease agreement, as Director Chaddock continues to work toward the Brown Mansion purchase.

BAUGHER CENTER RENOVATION - As was shared last month, Rachel Collins from Salted Hue Interiors in Crown Point has toured the Baugher Center with Assistant Director Bartz and Director Chaddock. Since the initial meeting, Director Chaddock communicated to Rachel the many different needs this room has to accommodate, and the wishes for an updated, professional space for the community to continue to gather in for the future. Director Chaddock requested comfortable, easy to move, stackable chairs with a high weight limit for universal

accessibility, and sturdy, attractive, and easy to move tables. Rachel provided a design board created by Salted Hue Interiors, as well as a detailed quote. For a complete overhaul of the design, décor, and furniture in the Baugher Center large meeting room, as well as the staff and public spaces on the lower level, Salted Hue quoted a \$8,250 design fee, and \$32,600 to purchase all of the new furniture and artwork, for a total of \$54,650. Jimenez Painting also walked through the Baugher Center and provided a quote to paint every room, and remove the textured wall covering in a couple of the spaces. Jimenez's total for the painting project would be \$34,400. All together, the total transfer recommended to be made from the Library Improvement Reserve Fund, or LIRF, would be \$89,050. With approval, Director Chaddock will move forward with a request to add this Additional Appropriation request to the agenda for the Porter County Council meeting at the end of June.

A motion was made by Will Scharp to move forward with the request for an Additional Appropriation. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

FEDERAL COMPENSATION THRESHOLD DEADLINE - The U.S. Department of Labor issued a final ruling on increased payment thresholds for salaried employees, with upcoming deadlines on July 1, 2024 and January 1, 2025. Due to the nature of WPL's full-time staff's varying schedules (often including nights and weekends) and their varying levels of executive job responsibilities, Director Chaddock has consulted with attorney Lisa Baron to help determine what effect this will have on the salary schedule here at WPL. Updates will be provided as they come in.

FUND TRANSFER - Following the Board's recommendation at our March meeting, Director Chaddock has been working with WPL's IT Manager to get a proposal from Bucher Tech to update the Thomas Branch's security cameras. Their quote includes new servers and hard drives necessary to host updated cameras, with more expansive coverage, at the Thomas Branch, Hageman Branch, and the Baugher Center. They also listed the cost of the two camera models they recommend (one for indoor and one for outdoor use). Several managerial staff walked the Thomas Branch and identified blind spots to help determine the total quantities for the additional cameras, which were added on to the quote. WPL does not currently have exterior cameras at the Thomas Branch, but they are needed to monitor events in the parking lots and the entrances. WPL managerial staff would also like to improve indoor coverage, given the issues with patron behavior experienced over the past year, as well as the building and equipment improvements made that need protection. The total cost to purchase the infrastructure and equipment to improve security camera coverage at the Thomas Branch would be \$12,934.84, to come from the Furniture and Equipment budget line. As was noted at

the last meeting, the entire budget for this line has already been spent for this year with all of the new shelving that needed to be purchased to replace the old, white video store shelving units, which were in disrepair. Director Chaddock recommended that the Board approve a transfer of funds within the Capital Outlays classification. Per the SBOA website, the Board can transfer funds within a major budget classification, as long as the transfer doesn't require more money than is contained within that classification. This must be done at a public meeting, and the Board must determine it is necessary to make this transfer. Director Chaddock examined the status of the other line items within the Capital Outlays classification, and honed in on the Thomas Adult Audio Books budget. After assisting with the weeding of this collection as staff prepared to move it to the lower level of the building, Director Chaddock became aware that circulation is down in this collection. There are several reasons for this: CD players are becoming harder and harder to find, and the popularity of audiobooks patrons can play from their mobile phones via the Libby and Hoopla apps is ever increasing. Director Chaddock also examined the total percentages spent from the Thomas Audiobook budget going back a few years. In 2022, the budget was set at \$35,000, and \$15,362.78 was expended, or 43.9%. In 2023, \$42,000 was budgeted and \$17,958.91 was expended, or 42.8%. WPL has budgeted \$42,000 for this fund again this year, but so far, only \$3,353.32, or 8%, of the budget has been expended. There are a couple of additional explanations for the especially low expenditure rate this year. One, this collection is maintained by the Outreach Librarian, and that position remained open for several months, so the spending rate was affected by that. Also, one of the "Big Five" publishers, Hachette, unexpectedly announced earlier this year that they were ceasing production on physical audiobooks. Hachette is home to major authors such as James Patterson and Elin Hildebrand, so that was also responsible for a dip in the total number of audiobooks we have been able to purchase. Director Chaddock does not believe it will be likely, or even possible, for the total of \$42,000 from this budget line to be spent on audiobooks this year. She recommended transferring \$24,000 from this budget to the Furniture and Equipment budget, to facilitate the purchase of improved security camera coverage at the Thomas Branch. This will still leave \$18,000 in the Thomas Adult Audiobook budget, which should be more than enough to purchase needed materials through the end of 2024. Transferring \$24,000 to the Furniture and Equipment line will cover the camera quote of \$12,934.84, correct the current negative balance of -\$4,360.27 in the Furniture line, and leave \$6,704.89 remaining in that line for any incidentals that may arise for the remainder of this year. Alternatively, Director Chaddock explained that WPL could delay the security camera project until the new budget is created, approved, and active in January 2025. Director Chaddock did not recommend this, however, as the need for better camera coverage has been made clear, and will only increase as foot traffic in the Thomas Branch continues to climb with the opening of the new Teen Space, and the new individual meeting rooms, this summer. WPL will still maintain and add to

physical audiobooks as long as there is a need for them, which still persists among selected patrons, especially homebound and visually impaired residents.

A motion was made by Justin Martinson to transfer \$24,000 to the Furniture & Equipment appropriation to facilitate the purchase of improved security cameras at the Thomas Branch. Will Scharp 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.

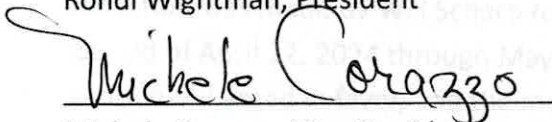
Other Business

There was no other business.


The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be June 13, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Hageman Branch.

Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Rondi Wightman, President

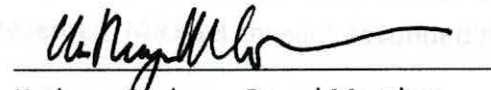


Michele Corazzo, Vice-President

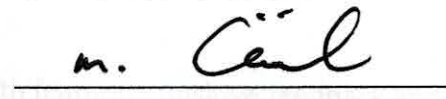


Abbe Trent, Treasurer

Justin Martinson, Secretary



Kathryn Cochran, Board Member



Michael Livovich, Board Member

Will Scharp, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,
Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for Justin Martinson, Secretary