

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

Board members present were: Will Scharp, Rondi Wightman, Abbe Trent, Michele Corazzo, Kathryn Cochran, Justin Martinson, 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 Justin Martinson to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2024 regular session and Board of Finance sessions. Michele Corazzo 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. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of January 12, 2024 through February 8, 2024 as presented. Kathryn Cochran 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 January, 10,387 people visited the Library; WPL created 40 in-person programs with 676 attendees; WPL answered 45 reference questions and 107 tech help questions; 177 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 133 new library cards.

**PROJECTS** - There were a few smaller building projects in progress this month. At the Hageman Branch, Patio Pros were contracted to add a small section of pavers to both sides of the front

facade of the building. Right now, the concrete patio is flush with the front of the building, with mud and landscaping immediately adjacent. When patrons need to drop off materials into the dropbox located on the left side of the building, they have to step into that muddy patch. Similarly, if someone wanted to access the NaloxBox installed on the right side of the building, they would also have to stand in the mud to do so. Adding pavers will improve the curb appeal of the front of the building, and help keep everyone's shoes clean when they visit the Hageman Branch. This project will be completed for a total cost of \$3,500.00. After the winter months, Director Chaddock also plans to take Board Secretary Michele Corazzo's suggestion to remove the brown and black, angular benches on the left side of the Hageman Branch, and put one of the two memorial benches on either side of the Hageman front door, since they better complement the style of the building.

In the meantime, staff are busily rearranging furniture and offices to prepare space for the new Teen Department at the Thomas Branch. A dumpster was rented for 2 weeks to discard all of the old white DVD shelves from the first floor, and staff were simultaneously moving any additional unneeded furniture over to the Baugher Center for the next Friends of the Library Sale. The new shelving units are on order and should arrive in about 6 weeks.

Director Chaddock and WPL's Maintenance Manager are also working on gathering proposals for the installation of a glass wall and door in the new teen space, to make sure that the young people are monitored and safe while they are playing video games or just hanging out in the smaller room within the new department.

In addition, Babilla Roofing will patch up the Baugher Center roof at a cost not to exceed \$2,569.00 for materials, labor, and equipment. They will walk the entire roof and repair any holes found. Director Chaddock was initially resistant to doing another temporary patch when the entire roof needs to be replaced. However, there was another round of leaks with the rainy weather lately, and in order to protect this building as best as possible until the roof can be replaced, it's ultimately prudent to do this repair.

**FIRST THINGS FIRST PORTER COUNTY** - On January 24th, Mary Jane Eisenhauer, Hadassah Moore, and Laura Green from First Things First Porter County came to the Thomas Branch to meet with WPL's Children's and Managerial staff, and determine new opportunities to partner, with the goal of improving early literacy in Porter County. One exciting development from this meeting is that First Things First is generously gifting two parent/baby study carrels to WPL. These have been on WPL's wish list as a service to offer caregivers who need to use a library computer while keeping their little one safe and engaged, but they are quite expensive, starting at \$10,000 a piece. Each carrel comes with three play panels with gears to turn, flaps to lift, and

other manipulatives to keep baby entertained. WPL is grateful to First Things First for this extraordinary gift. WPL is also looking forward to hosting future sessions of Books, Blocks, and Balls, which is a drop-in storytime program hosted by library staff and First Things First, with a representative from Help Me Grow Porter County intermingling with the families. This person is able to connect caregivers with resources for things like developmental screening, financial assistance, prenatal care, and more. The Library plans to host this program during one of the busy European Market Saturdays this summer, when there are a lot of non-typical visitors in the Library, taking a break from the heat in the Children's Department.

**MONETARY DONATIONS** - WPL was the grateful recipient of several unexpected monetary donations this month. A woman called the front desk to find out how to donate to the Friends of the Library. She said when she asked her daughter-in-law what she wanted for her birthday, she told her to donate \$100 to her favorite library. In addition, the Sons of Norway donated \$50 to the Library in gratitude for their group's longtime use of Library meeting rooms, and the McKee family also donated \$50 in honor of their daughter Ava, who loves to check out books and games to play, and attend programs. Director Chaddock stated, "It is absolutely our pleasure to serve the community," and thanked these generous individuals and groups for thinking of WPL.

**STATEHOUSE DAY** - Despite all good intentions, the weather prevented Director Chaddock from driving to Indianapolis on January 23rd for Library Statehouse Day, due to icy road conditions here and further south. She emailed Senator Rodney Pol to express her regrets, and thank him for the legislative support of bringing Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Indiana. In response, he wrote, "Thank you for the heads-up and I hope you and your family are safe. I was happy to support the Dolly Parton Imagination Library bill and am proud of the incredible library systems we have in Porter and Laporte Counties. Please let me know if I can assist with anything in the future."

**CWI/NEO** - Administration of the Adult Learning Center here in Chesterton has been transferred to a new organization. Director Chaddock was informed that the former sponsors, CWI, were moving to a different area and transitioning their current sites and students in Northwest Indiana to Neighbors' Educational Opportunities, or NEO. They operate a number of local adult education and testing sites, as well as New Vistas High School in Portage. Their primary concern throughout this shift has been the support of current students, with as little disruption to their education as possible. Happily, the same Adult Education Instructor who worked here in Chesterton from CWI, Daniela Mancusi-Shreve, has accepted a position with NEO and will continue to work with students at the Baugher Center. Overall, both groups' transparency and communication during this shift has been appreciated. Director Chaddock is currently working

with NEO to get the decal on the Baugher Center window updated with their contact information.

#### US Treasury Note Reinvested

A US Treasury Note of \$250,000 matured in February from the LIRF Fund. It was reinvested as a US Treasury Note at a rate of 4.29% in the LIRF Fund.

#### Staff Changes

Joined: N/A

Separated: Nancy Wulff, P/T clerk

Other: N/A

#### Old Business

**MUSEUM PURCHASE** - There has been no movement on this project in the past month that concerned WPL, except that the Healthy Living Campus Partners meetings are starting up again. Director Chaddock plans to attend their next meeting at the Middle School on February 13th.

#### New Business

**RESOLUTION TO ENCUMBER FUNDS** - In January, WPL received an additional A&C for payment on the Thomas Branch HVAC renovation project. A&C #19 was in the amount of \$62,452.69. WPL's Bookkeeper checked with the State Board of Accounts to ensure that the Library was still able to use the Additional Appropriation funds for this project, despite the fact that it is now a year after the Appropriation funds were approved. SBOA confirmed that the Library is permitted to pay invoices with the originally requested Appropriation funds for the approved projects until they are complete, but the funds must be encumbered if it goes over into a new budget year. WPL's Bookkeeper contacted Circle R Mechanical to see if this would be the final bill, and indeed, there was still an additional invoice working its way through their system. The Circle R Bookkeeper reported that the total amount still outstanding for the Thomas HVAC project is \$139,032.44. This is still within the total amount requested for the project.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to encumber the Rainy Day funds in the amount of \$139,032.44 due to Circle R Mechanical for previously planned work. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

**BAUGHER CENTER** - The majority of WPL meetings and programs have been moved out of the Baugher Center for the time being, to remove the liability of another leak happening during a library program or an outside group's meeting. Most meetings are now happening in the Bertha Wood Room at the Thomas Branch. At the BC, the WPL Maintenance Manager has determined

that the grid ceiling is in need of replacement, as well as the lighting. The grid is oddly configured with rectangular tiles instead of squares, and replacement tiles no longer exist. Additionally, sourcing the fluorescent tube lighting currently in place has become increasingly difficult. WPL received Gariup's quote for the grid replacement alone for one floor of the Baugher Center, and it was \$90,000. The lighting replacement quote for the same floor was \$20,000. That amount alone would exceed WPL's entire Building Repairs Appropriation for the year. The grid and lighting replacement will need to be included with the new roof as part of an Additional Appropriation request from the Library's reserve funds.

Tom Kuhn from CSK Architects gave his initial impressions of the Baugher Center roof and related needs in a preliminary meeting with WPL's Maintenance Manager and Director Chaddock. Tom went up on the roof while Gabilla Roofing was working on roof repair, and he noticed that the building's HVAC units are very old, and the curbs around them are no longer up to code. He also noted that the duct work is similar to the decaying, no-longer-compliant ductwork WPL had in the Thomas Branch. This makes sense as the bank was originally built around the same time as the Thomas Branch. Appropriately, Tom also recommended that WPL perform asbestos testing and abatement in the space. It is worth noting that all of these things were on the Needs Assessment that Tom completed for the WPL system within the last few years. Tuckpointing and new windows were also recommended, but those are less pressing and can be taken care of down the road. In the meantime, Tom is still working on providing specs for the roof replacement to put out for bid, but he has the blueprints now to include the new grid ceiling, lighting, and HVAC. Given the additional scope necessary for this project, Tom has now updated the proposed timeline to advertise for the bids in March, for approval at the WPL Board's April meeting. It will also need to go to the county council for their approval at their meeting at the end of April.

There is some cause for optimism with this project. The new roofing material that Tom suggested comes with a 30-year no-cost warranty, and he has seen them go beyond 45 years. Ultimately, this is still a less complicated endeavor than the Thomas Branch HVAC and lighting renovation. Director Chaddock will continue to provide updates as they are received.

In the meantime, while the building is under construction and not currently booked for meetings, Director Chaddock suggested hiring an interior designer to update the space. The building retains much of the original design choices from its days as a bank branch in the 80s, including carpeted wall treatments and a non-cohesive mishmash of artwork. Director Chaddock felt comfortable making design choices at the Thomas Branch, but believes a fresh, professional eye at the BC would be helpful. WPL could benefit from suggestions for sturdy, easier to rearrange chairs and tables, as well as a modern color scheme and artwork, or perhaps

a new wall treatment. Director Chaddock also mentioned holding awareness that there will soon be a new option available for local organizations to book their meetings, and would like to update the Baugher Center before that debuts in order to maintain its appeal for current, and future, outside group meetings.

**INVESTMENT POLICY AMENDMENT** - Director Chaddock has been made aware of a small change that could ultimately save time without sacrificing any security, and recommended that the Board makes this change. WPL's Bookkeeper and Director Chaddock had their annual meeting with Horizon Bank to review WPL's investment portfolio on January 30, and they were also able to meet Marty Hickey, Senior Trust Officer at Horizon Personal Investments, in person. She took over the administration of the Library's accounts back in May. The way the current policy reads, when an investment matures, Horizon must cut two separate checks for both the interest earned, and the full \$250,000 initial principal. They transfer these checks to the Library's account, then they send a copy to WPL's Bookkeeper. The Bookkeeper receipts both checks into WPL's accounts, and then immediately has to cut a new check to Horizon Trust Management, and hand deliver it to the Chesterton Branch, in order for it to be reinvested to capture the best available rates. This elaborate sequence requires Director Chaddock, WPL's Bookkeeper, WPL's Assistant Treasurer, Marty, and Marty's assistant Lisa to be available and in the office at the exact same time (while the Chesterton Horizon branch is open) to orchestrate and approve this process.

At the meeting, Marty advised that, in her experience, this was an unusual and time consuming process for both WPL and Horizon, and she encouraged WPL to look into whether it was something required for library investments, as she has worked with other public entities and had not seen this before. WPL's Bookkeeper researched the current SBOA bulletins and resources, and found that while WPL's investment policy closely mirrors the recommendations of SBOA, their updated recommendation allows for automatic reinvestment of the principal. WPL's current policy likely followed an earlier recommendation, but had not been updated when SBOA updated theirs.

The current recommendations from the Indiana State Board of Accounts state "a certificate of deposit may be renewed for an additional term if authorized by the board, without the original certificate of deposit being paid by the depository and a warrant being issued for the purchase of a new certificate of deposit." An update of WPL's investment policy to reflect this new recommendation from SBOA will greatly reduce the legwork involved in reinvesting matured investments.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to adopt the modification to the Investment Policy as stated in the supporting documents. Abbe Trent seconded this motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

**TEEN SURVEY RESULTS** - Finally, Director Chaddock was excited to share the results of WPL's teen space survey. She thanked Trustees Justin Martinson and Mike Livovich for helping to get the word out at CHS, as well as Kevin Nevers for posting it on the Town of Chesterton Facebook page. WPL received 398 responses from local youths ages 10-18, which was a healthy response rate, and offered some clear directions for the path forward in designing this space. Staff was warned that some of the responses would likely be pranks, but by and large, the feedback was genuine and appreciative. Some of the most popular responses regarding what teens want to see in the space were comfy seating, music playing, and more electrical outlets/charging stations. The top 3 responses regarding what activities teens would use in the space were air hockey, board games, and a craft table. The top 3 book genres/types teens want to check out from the library are graphic novels and manga, romance, and nonfiction. Most respondents spoke positively of the Library, and expressed that they will be happy to have a space of their own.

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 asked that the Library consider funding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library after the two years are completed by the Porter County Community Foundation. Director Chaddock relayed that the cost per year is estimated at \$40,000 and that the entire sum is not something the Library would be able to take on. There was short discussion among the Board about a few other fundraising ideas.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be February 8, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.


Will Scharp adjourned the meeting at 7:56 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