

Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
March 14, 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, March 14th at 7:01 pm.

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

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2024 regular session. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All 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. Rondi Wightman 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 February, 10,518 people visited the Library; WPL created 38 in-person programs with 718 attendees; WPL answered 72 reference questions and 115 tech help questions; 126 people utilized library meeting rooms; and WPL registered 108 new library cards.

**NILBA DINNER AND TRAINING** - Thank you to WPL trustees who were able to attend the Northwest Indiana Library Board Association's training and networking event with Director

Chaddock at Purdue Northwest. Angela Fox from the Indiana State Library presented an informative session entitled, "The Public Library Trustee: General Overview and Governance and Management," and Jeff Rea, the President of the South Bend Chamber of Commerce, gave a keynote speech about quality of place as the key to economic development.

**INDIVIDUAL MEETING ROOMS** - Director Chaddock came across another library's social media post about their new, phone booth-style individual meeting rooms. They are quite popular in open-concept office settings and on college campuses. Now, they are starting to gain traction in public libraries, as a way to create space for patrons to conduct job interviews, telehealth sessions, or tutoring sessions. They are soundproof and come with their own ventilation and lighting systems. After doing some research on the options and comparing costs, Director Chaddock settled on Pillar booths. They have been successfully integrated into public libraries already, and they are based in Chicago, which will significantly cut down on shipping costs. Director Chaddock has been planning to create individual meeting rooms upstairs in the empty alcove in the Serials Department at Thomas for some time now, and believes utilizing Pillar booths will be an efficient way to accomplish that goal, without permanently altering the structure of the building. Three new booths will be delivered to the Thomas Branch within the next month, and one new booth will be delivered to the Hageman Branch. Pillar's technicians build the booths on site; all staff will have to do is plug them in. Director Chaddock was able to negotiate the final cost down to \$49,000, from the original quote of \$55,980, for a total of 4 individual meeting rooms. Director Chaddock is working on drafting a policy for reserving these rooms, and she is also exploring adding an additional, ADA-accessible booth in the near future.

**TEEN SPACE** - Work continues on preparations to move the Thomas AV Department downstairs, and open the upstairs Teen Space. New AV Department shelving was professionally installed downstairs at a cost of \$12,950. Next, the Large Print collection will move into its new, larger home, and the AV materials will be moved downstairs. Once the AV department has been cleared, Circulation staff will be trained on the various procedures for circulating AV items. In the new Teen space, the old white shelving will be discarded, carpeting will be cleaned, walls will be repainted, decorations will be added, and the YA collection itself will be moved onto its new shelving. Director Chaddock is waiting for a proposal from Demco for some functional, durable furniture for lounging and working in this space. She predicts this will all take 6-8 weeks, and WPL will have a grand opening for the new Teen Space in late spring.

**ANNUAL REPORT** - WPL's Annual Report was turned in to the Indiana State Library, on time and accurately, thanks to the combined efforts of Director Chaddock, WPL's Bookkeeper, and the industrious WPL managers who compiled all of the programming and circulation statistics. In

addition, WPL's Bookkeeper filed and submitted WPL's Annual Financial Report at the end of February.

#### CDs Reinvested

In February and early March, three \$250,000 CDs matured and were reinvested by Horizon Trust & Investment Management at the following rates:

LIRF - Mountain Commerce Bank, 4.80%

RD - Flagstar, 4.80% and Bank of America NA, 4.80%

#### Staff Changes

Joined: Diana Lockridge, P/T Programming Clerk

Separated: Donna Hodgson, P/T Cleaner

Other: N/A

#### Old Business

**MUSEUM PURCHASE** - On Tuesday, March 5, Board President Will Scharp and Director Chaddock attended a meeting with representatives from the Duneland School Corporation, the YMCA, and several contractors affiliated with the Healthy Living Campus project. Director Chaddock presented WPL's vision for the future of the Museum and the potential for an interactive garden space on an adjacent lot. After much discussion, it was ultimately decided to have Berglund present a draft of the Healthy Living Campus as a whole at a future meeting on April 10. Representatives from the Town of Chesterton and the Parks Department will also be present at this meeting. Following the March 5 meeting, Jeff Berglund from Berglund construction emailed Director Chaddock to express interest in working with WPL on the Museum restoration work, and construction of the Carriage House. Director Chaddock invited them to attend the April Board meeting to share more information.

Discussion was had regarding the Town of Chesterton's planning requirements and the YMCA's current plans for the Healthy Living Campus as well as WPL's ideas and plans for the Museum.

**BAUGHER CENTER** - CSK Architects have made site visits to the Baugher Center to finalize their specifications for the roof/HVAC/lighting renovation projects, submitted a proposal for a lump sum fee of \$47,500 for the described design work and Construction Documents, and provided Architectural Services to include a Project Manual that includes Bidding and Contractual Requirements and Specifications, Assistance with the Public Bid Process for the work, all necessary On-Site Observations and Construction Administration for the proposed work. Director Chaddock approved this proposal. These specifications will be advertised in local

papers in the month of March, and the bids will open in April. Once the Board approves to award one of the bids, Director Chaddock will attend the May County Council meeting to request an Additional Appropriation to access WPL's Rainy Day funds to pay for this project. Director Chaddock spoke with WPL's architect, Tom Kuhn, about the possibility of having an open ceiling at the BC instead of a grid ceiling. He said that ultimately it would be more expensive to have an exposed ceiling, so WPL will keep the grid ceiling.

Director Chaddock reached out to Patty Raffin, Rondi's recommendation for a local interior designer to work on the BC. She said that unfortunately, she would not be available to dedicate the time needed to successfully contribute. Director Chaddock also contacted Healing Environments in Valparaiso, but they said they are shifting away from commercial interior design, and focusing on residential designs only. Director Chaddock ultimately found Salted Hue Interiors out of Crown Point. Their commercial portfolio includes a redesign for Ivy Tech's Conference Room and Chancellor's Office, and Bethel Church. She thinks this company will be a good fit for WPL's desire to modernize this space. Rachel Collins, their principal designer, is scheduled to come tour the Baugher Center on April 4th to get the lay of the land, and she will present a proposal for services following this meeting.

#### New Business

**THOMAS BRANCH SECURITY** - Unfortunately, the teen behavior issues at the Thomas Branch have continued to escalate. To give a few examples from the past few months: staff have been called profane insults, patrons have reported bullying of their children while using the library, and this past weekend, a group of teens was spitting over the second floor balcony to the first floor. WPL's managers have been monitoring their typical gathering point each afternoon after school and additionally as needed, but it has gotten to a point where staff are having a hard time completing their own work because they are giving so much time from their schedules to the mitigation of behavioral issues. It is difficult to enact discipline beyond asking them to leave for the day because the teens involved shift constantly; by the time staff learns one person's name, two new ones will appear, and the original person may not return for weeks. Staff are burned out and too busy to continue to fight this issue with no end in sight; one manager has reported losing sleep trying to figure out how to change their behavior. Director Chaddock stated that additional support was needed for this escalating issue. With board permission, Director Chaddock requested to hire a plainclothes, unarmed security officer to offer additional support after school and on the weekends. She said that it would be helpful to have someone entirely dedicated to the security of the building, to free up library staff to assist patrons and perform their regular job duties. In the past, these cycles of teen misbehavior have ebbed and flowed, and staff have been able to handle them. However, this time around it has been a constant issue for months, without any signs of slowing. The completed Teen Space will help keep the teen patrons busy, and give them a comfortable place to hang out, but Director

Chaddock is simultaneously concerned about vandalism of the new space, as well as the new individual meeting rooms. Many library funds have been spent this year to create engaging, useful spaces for patrons to enjoy, and those spaces need to be protected. In addition, there have been articles lately in a daily HR newsletter from SHRM about a potential increase in workplace incivility related to the coming election cycle. This did occur at WPL around the 2020 election with political fervor creating division in the community, so even absent any teen behavior issues, Director Chaddock felt that additional security would still be a good idea to help everyone feel safe in the building, and effectively address unacceptable behavior when it arises. She then stated that she is not happy that it has come to this point, and wishes that she did not find this to be a necessary move. Director Chaddock would much rather use the funds needed to hire security for additional services and amenities for WPL patrons instead. However, all of the services and amenities in the world will be for nothing if they are offered in an unsafe or unwelcoming environment. Director Chaddock floated this idea past WPL managers to get their perspective, and the overall response was one of relief. They feel strongly that the teens should not feel targeted or overly scrutinized, but that the security officer should patrol the entire building. There are a couple of different agencies that offer these types of services locally, so with board permission, Director Chaddock would like to gather information from several of them, and hopefully move forward with hiring someone within the next month.

Discussion was had regarding different, lasting solutions to the ongoing behaviors, including moving furniture out of the most popular loitering areas, speaking with School Resource Officers, and installing better security cameras to aid with identification of any offenders.

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman that the board allow Director Chaddock the opportunity to hire an additional WPL staff member to act as an enforcement officer to allow time to explore a more professional consulting hire if needed. Abbe Trent seconded the motion.

Additional discussion ensued about the decision regarding the job title for this position, differentiating between security and policy advisor. Rondi Wightman rescinded the previous motion.

A motion was made by Rondi Wightman that the board allow Director Chaddock the opportunity to hire someone who she feels most appropriate for the situation. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

**TRUSTEE REAPPOINTMENT** - In March, the Duneland School Corporation Board reappointed Trustee Michele Corazzo for a 4-year term. This will be Michele's fourth and final term; Director Chaddock congratulated Secretary Michele Corazzo and thanked her for her volunteerism.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS -**

A motion was made by Will Scharp to nominate Rondi Wightman for President, Michele Corazzo for Vice President, Justin Martinson for Secretary, and that Abbe Trent remain Treasurer. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

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

Public Comment

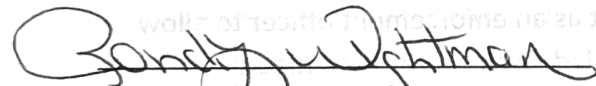
There was no public comment.

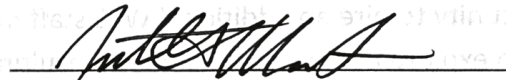
Other Business


There was no other business.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be April 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.


Will Scharp adjourned the meeting at 9:16 PM.


  
Rondi Wightman, President

  
Justin Martinson, Secretary

  
Michele Corazzo, Vice-President

  
Kathryn Cochran, Board Member

  
Abbe Trent, Treasurer

  
Michael Livovich, Board Member

  
Will Scharp, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,

Kelsey Stearns, Minutes Recorder for Michele Corazzo, Secretary