

Board of Trustees
Minutes
September 12, 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, September 12th, and called to order by Rondi Wightman, Board President at 7:00 pm.

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

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 Kathryn Cochran to approve the minutes from the August 8, 2024 regular session. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the August 29, 2024 executive session. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. Rondi Wightman and Abbe Trent abstained due to absence. Michele, Kathryn, Will, Justin, and Michael 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 Abbe Trent to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of August 9, 2024 through September 12, 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 August, 14,118 people visited the Library; WPL created 16 in-person programs with 167 attendees; WPL answered 35 reference questions and 150 tech help questions; 106 people

utilized library meeting rooms; WPL saw 81 check-outs of the Pillar booths; and WPL registered 116 new library cards.

NEW MATERIAL TYPE: BLU-RAY - Library staff worked together to bring a new material type to library shelves: Blu-Ray discs. Companies have moved to producing new releases on Blu-Ray only, rather than offering both Blu-Ray and DVD. WPL did not want to miss out on capturing new titles for patrons, and through many logistical discussions between departments, WPL is now able to deliver the new collection. Blu-Rays are interfield with DVDs and shelved by title.

BAUGHER CENTER RENOVATION AND PLUMBING REPAIR - Construction officially began on the Baugher Center. Before work can begin on the roof, an electrical connection near the service center roof needs repair and was scheduled. The repair is noted on Change Order #1, at a cost of \$1,055.00. The first certificate for payment was received as an amount of \$9,772.30. As of the first progress meeting for the project on Tuesday morning, the estimated completion date is December 3, 2024. Updates on the timeline will be provided by Director Chaddock as they are received.

A separate, unrelated issue needing immediate remedy cropped up with the plumbing at the Baugher Center. The plumbing has repeatedly backed up during frequent use, causing a hazard and nuisance for both patrons and staff. On September 10, Trapmasters Plumbing came to excavate and replace what they discovered to be 10 feet of rotten cast-iron pipe running down the center of the lower level of the Baugher Center. This repair came at a cost of \$6,000 paid for from the Operating Fund and was completed in one day.

Staff Changes

Joined: Jammie Scott, P/T Cleaner

Separated: Jeffery Green, P/T Museum Assistant; Whitney Leonard, P/T Cleaner

Other: N/A

Old Business

MUSEUM PURCHASE/RESOLUTION – This item has returned to the agenda again this month at Duneland School Corporation’s request to include a “right of first refusal” clause in the purchase agreement should WPL seek to sell the Brown Mansion at any point in the future. The Agreement for Sale has been amended to include this stipulation. WPL attorney Lisa Baron and Duneland School Corporation attorney Chuck Parkinson drafted a pair of joint resolutions for the respective Boards to facilitate WPL’s purchase of the Brown Mansion for a nominal fee of \$1. They have also included the real estate purchase and sale agreement and the expanded legal description of the property.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to move forward with the purchase of the Brown Mansion as described. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

MUSEUM RENOVATION - Following Board discussion at the August regular meeting, Director Chaddock forwarded emails to all WPL trustees from Jeff Berglund from Berglund Construction, and Jeff Schroeder from Moake Park Group Architecture Interiors Planning. Director Chaddock also shared a summary explaining the different contract possibilities for the contract bidding process.

After considering all of this information, Director Chaddock stated that she is convinced that posting a public Request for Proposals to interview prospective Construction Managers as Constructors would be the appropriate approach for this particular project. This process would include conducting hour-long interviews with any interested construction firms. Each firm would need to provide specific experiential examples quantifying their abilities to meet the needs of a project of this scale and historic importance.

Director Chaddock added her opinion that Moake Park would be the best choice to serve as architect for this project. They have proven to be responsive and professional in her interactions with them, completing the “proving out” draft of the site plan for the Museum on a single plot, and through observations of their contributions to the Healthy Living Campus meetings that she attended with Trustee Will Scharp. Karen Stahl from Moake Park shared with Director Chaddock that they have also done projects for public libraries, including the current renovation of the Makerspace for the Allen County Public Library system. Director Chaddock is familiar with that being one of the first, and biggest, Makerspaces in the state, and was impressed that Moake Park has been entrusted with updating such an innovative, high-profile public facility.

Director Chaddock stated that she believes the very first thing needed to decide upon, and vote on, is if the board wants to move forward with an expansion to the Museum. Director Chaddock believes the restoration of the Brown Mansion, and moving the parking lot and exit/entrance from Porter Avenue, are non-negotiable. Now that WPL owns the building, the safety of people and historic resources inside should be top priority. The decision lies in choosing to spend an additional \$2.5 million from the Library Improvement Reserve Fund on a 5,600 square foot addition to the Museum, in order to more efficiently house staff offices, artifact storage, and research and program spaces for the public. Once there is a clear direction, the project can move forward.

Kathryn Cochran stated that she believes it is important to build the additional space to better protect the artifacts currently in the Museum. She also stated that it is important to have space for exhibits or other activities that might be a burden on the mansion itself, and that the addition will be very useful in ways that cannot be seen currently. Conversation regarding the full budget and method of project delivery took place, with board members stating various

Questions and concerns about the project cost, timeline, and processes to move forward.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran that the WPL Board move forward with utilizing the CMc method of project delivery in order to carry out the renovation plans of the Brown Mansion, including moving forward with issuing a Request for Proposals for Construction Manager as Constructor. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Michael Livovich that the board empower Director Chaddock to hire Moake Park as the architect to work along with the CMc project delivery method for the Brown Mansion project. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

2025 BUDGET HEARING - The 2025 Westchester Public Library budget is available online <https://budgetnotices.in.gov/>. Board President Rondi Wightman opened the meeting up for public comment regarding the 2025 budget. There was no public comment.

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.

A special meeting for the 2025 Budget Adoption will be held on September 26, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center. The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be October 10, 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Baugher Center.

Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 7:55 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