

Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

January 09, 2025

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Baugher Center located at 100 W. Indiana Ave, Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, January 9th, 2025. It was called to order by Rondi Wightman, Board President at 7:00 p.m.

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

Board members absent: N/A

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock, Library Assistant Director Jessica Bartz, and Library Attorney Lisa Baron attended virtually via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the minutes from the December 12th, 2024 regular session. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports for December 2024 as presented. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports for January 1, 2025 through January 9, 2025. 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 December 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, 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 Will Scharp to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of January 1, 2025 through January 9, 2025, as presented. Abbe Trent 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 addition, a special thank you card was presented to the Board from Hageman Branch Manager, Suzanne Chomel, detailing her deep gratitude for the recent salary increase.

PATRON INCIDENTS – On January 3rd, 2025, the Thomas Branch Manager responded to a report of a running timer (as well as some various other items) left unattended on a table in the Quiet Reading Room. Following the Library Code of Conduct Policy, the items were removed and discarded in the alley dumpster. The patron later returned to retrieve his items, which he recovered from the dumpster after being informed of their disposal.

On January 7th, 2025, the Thomas Branch Manager assisted the Burns Harbor Police in locating a 14-year-old runaway who had been traced to the library. The boy was found asleep in a study carrel and was identified by his mother after police intervention. The officers expressed gratitude for the library's cooperation.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES – At the request of Board Treasurer Abbe Trent, Director Chaddock included the Indiana Library Federation's (ILF) 2025 Legislative Priorities document in this month's Board folder. The ILF's key areas of focus for 2025 are Literacy, Protection of the Freedom to Read, and Funding and Support. Director Chaddock attended the first biweekly ILF Legislative Update Zoom meeting on January 8, and relayed additional information from that meeting.

She shared that quite a few bills are in committee already, but this early on in the session it is hard to say which ones will gain traction and which will not. It is thought that tax reform in some capacity is very likely. There was some concern about a push to remove the ability to levy LIT taxes from smaller government entities like libraries. Also, a similar bill to the one seen two years ago was presented regarding materials harmful to children.

STATISTICS – In December, 11,682 people visited the Library; staff created 22 in-person programs with 273 attendees; staff answered 33 reference questions and 99 tech help questions; 165 people utilized library meeting rooms, and there were 128 reservations for individual study rooms; 64 new library cards were registered. Graphs showing materials circulation statistics from the past month were included in the Board documents.

Director Chaddock also highlighted the year end circulation statistics, stating that 2024 saw the library's highest-ever check-out rate for e-materials, with 59,069 check-outs, and the highest check-out rate for physical materials since before the COVID-19 pandemic, with 106,373 items checked out. Director Chaddock attributed the library's consistent growth in these categories over recent years to expanded building amenities that attract patrons, and the staff's dedication to personally recommending items for check-out during patrons' visits.

Staff Changes

Joined: Logan Vincent, P/T Cleaner, Debra Grant, P/T Clerk

Separated: Brad Brickner, P/T Clerk, Anastasia Doeing, P/T Cataloger

Other: N/A

Old Business

BAUGHER CENTER RENOVATION – The Baugher Center renovation is nearly complete. Director Chaddock and Assistant Director Jessica Bartz attended a final close-out meeting with Larson Danielson on January 8, along with the Final Punch List Inspection by CSK Architects. The remaining tasks include installing wall vents, completing final commissioning of the rooftop units, and receiving warranty documents. Window washing has been scheduled to address construction dust, and the WPL Maintenance Department completed a deep clean of the kitchen and bathrooms, ensuring they are ready for public use.

Director Chaddock commended the significant contributions of WPL staff, who cleared out unused spaces, optimized work areas, and enhanced the building's functionality and aesthetics, creating a welcoming environment for the community.

An open house event will take place on Saturday, February 8, from 6–8 PM, featuring complimentary appetizers from Lia's Bella Cucina and a cash bar. Invitations will be sent soon.

SBOA AUDIT - On December 20, the Library Board and Director Chaddock received the official 2019–2023 Westchester Public Library report following its audit by the State Board of Accounts. The report is also available at www.in.gov/sboa. A Corrective Action Plan, prepared by AVC and included in this month's Board folder, has been submitted to address the findings. The actions outlined in the plan are scheduled for completion by March 31, 2025.

New Business

PLAC – ACTION ITEM — Signature for quarterly Public Library Access Card (PLAC) statement.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the signing of the PLAC statement. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

RESPONSIBLE BIDDING CONTRACT RULES – Director Chaddock reported on her inquiry to Chesterton Town Council President Jim Ton, regarding the recently passed, "Responsible Bidding Practices and Submission Requirements." Clerk-Treasurer Courtney Udvare provided a copy of one applicable ordinance, which was added to the Board folder, along with WPL's Small Purchase Policy, and a State Board of Accounts slideshow on bidding requirements. Director Chaddock offered to work with Attorney Lisa Baron to incorporate applicable elements from the new ordinance into WPL's policy for review next month.

Abbe Trent highlighted the complexity of the town's bidding contract rules and raised concerns about contractors' compliance. Director Chaddock noted most contractors already follow these beneficial practices. Abbe Trent and Will Scharp emphasized the importance of financial and

safety vetting for contractors to minimize future issues.

Kathryn Cochran suggested consulting ILF for advice on library-specific contract practices. Director Chaddock agreed to review ILF's sample policies. Michael Livovich inquired if the town was responding to specific new laws and regulations. Abbe Trent stated they were not, instead that they were simply bringing the town up to speed on other communities and entities. Abbe Trent also added that some council members aimed to address more pro-union concerns and ensure proper employment practices among contractors.

INTERNAL CONTROLS CERTIFICATION – ACTION ITEM - Director Chaddock stated the Indiana State Board of Accounts (SBOA) mandates that public library Boards must annually certify that all Library employees have watched the Internal Controls video created by the State and signed the Library's Internal Controls signature page. She further stated we are and have been in compliance with this requirement, but that the SBOA requires that the Board must annually, formally state that this occurs (under the daily activities of the Library Director).

Director Chaddock noted that some modifications will be made to the Library Internal Controls as a result of the recent audit and will be in place prior to the March 31st deadline for Corrective Actions.

A motion was made by Will Scharp to approve the Internal Controls Certification. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

RAINY DAY TRANSFER – ACTION ITEM – Director Chaddock recommended transferring the full allowable 10% of the 2024 total budget (\$4,366,878.00) into the Rainy Day Fund, amounting to \$436,687.80. This recommendation follows significant expenditures from the fund in the past year for repairs to the Baugher Center roof. The Dec. 31st Operating Fund balance was noted as \$3,912,619.88, ensuring sufficient funds were available for the transfer.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the Rainy Day Transfer as presented. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Librarian's Report. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

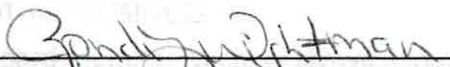
There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

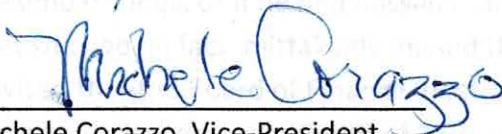
There was no other business.

A special Board meeting with Moake Park Group will be held on January 22nd, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Baugher Center, located at 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton. The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Thursday, February 13th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Thomas Branch, located at 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Abbe Trent made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

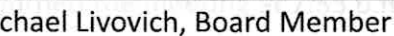

Rondi Wightman, President


Justin Martinson, Secretary


Michele Corazzo, Vice-President


Kathryn Cochran, Board Member


Abbe Trent, Treasurer


Michael Livovich, Board Member


Will Scharp, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,
Carissa Domonkos, Minutes Recorder for Justin Martinson, Secretary

Reconvene as Board of Finance

This meeting was called to order by Board President Rondi Wightman at 7:28 PM.

INVESTMENT SUMMARY – Director Chaddock stated that Horizon Trust Investment Management provided a 2024 investment summary for the Board’s review. Discrepancies between the Investment Summary ending balance and the Bank Balances Report were noted as being due to daily money market fluctuations and pending accrued interest. Director Chaddock offered to address any questions or forward them to Horizon Bank representatives for clarification.

REVIEW AND READOPT INVESTMENT POLICY - ACTION ITEM

Following an inquiry from Board Vice President Michele Corazzo, Director Chaddock made a small modification to the WPL Investment Policy, clarifying under Terms of Investments that the principal doesn’t return to the library bank account before going back to be reinvested; rather, only the interest is transferred to the library’s bank account.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to adopt the updated investment policy as presented. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion was passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

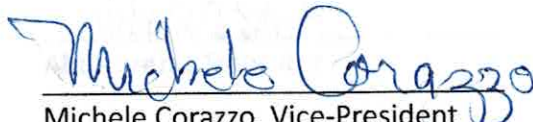
OTHER BUSINESS

Board member Michael Livovich inquired if the Board needed to make a separate motion to encumber funds, or if he had missed it during the regular meeting. Director Chaddock stated that she had, in fact, mistakenly missed that step. She consulted Attorney Lisa Baron, who advised that the Board of Finance meeting should be adjourned, and the Board should then reconvene as the regular Board of Trustees to correct the oversight.

Kathryn Cochran made a motion to adjourn the Board of Finance meeting. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. President Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

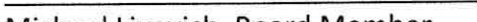

Rondi Wightman, President


Justin Martinson, Secretary


Michele Corazzo, Vice-President


Kathryn Cochran, Board Member


Abbe Trent, Treasurer


Michael Livovich, Board Member


Will Scharp, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,

Carissa Domonkos, Minutes Recorder for Justin Martinson, Secretary

Regular Board Meeting Reconvened

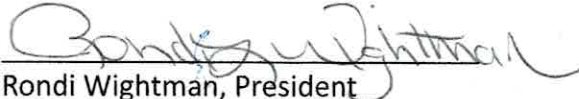
President Wightman asked for a motion to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board. Michael Livovich moved to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Michael Livovich moved to authorize the encumbrance of the Rainy Day Funds in the amount of \$156,324.20. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

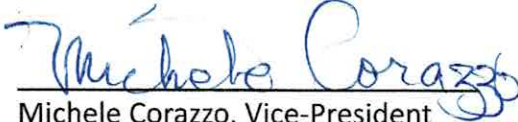
Michael Livovich moved to approve the resolution to encumber operating funds from 2024 to

2025 in the amount of \$21,120.75. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Kathryn Cochran moved to adjourn the reconvened Board meeting. Will Scharp seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed. President Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.


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,

Carissa Domonkos, Minutes Recorder for Justin Martinson, Secretary