

Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

February 13, 2025

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Thomas branch located at 200 W. Indiana Ave, Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, February 13th, 2025. It was called to order by Rondi Wightman, Board President at 7:01 p.m.

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

Board members absent: Michael Livovich

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock and Library Assistant Director Jessica Bartz. Library Attorney Lisa Baron was absent due to a conflicting engagement.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the minutes from the January 9th, 2025 regular session. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes - Board of Finance

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the minutes from the January 9th, 2025 Board of Finance session. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the minutes from the reconvening of the January 9th, 2025 regular session. Michele Corazzo seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Special Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the January 22nd, 2025 special meeting with Moake Park architects. 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 January 10th, 2025 through February 12th, 2025. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Michele Corazzo asked for some clarification regarding “the money market and

investment sweep.” “In our investment policy, we are not to invest more than a certain number of 250,000 units or more than 25% at any one time.” Michele also wanted to know what amounts have been invested, where they are invested, and interest amounts. Director Chaddock stated she didn’t know these answers offhand, but would certainly find out and get a more detailed breakdown to present for future Board meetings.

Approval of Claims and Warrants - January

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the modified Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of January 1st, 2025 through January 31st, 2025, 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 Kathryn Cochran to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time period of February 1st, 2025 through February 13th, 2025, as presented. Justin Martinson 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.

BOTTLE FILLERS - New drinking fountains with bottle fillers and filtered water have been installed at the Thomas and Hageman Branches, as well as the Baugher Center. The Museum will receive a new fountain during its future renovation. These upgrades are expected to be especially beneficial during busy community events and have already been well received by staff. The total project cost was \$6,926.

BAUGHER CENTER OPEN HOUSE – The Baugher Center Open House was a success, with approximately 50 attendees despite icy weather. Guests toured the renovated large meeting room and connected with WPL Trustees, staff, and Duneland Photography Club artists, whose work is now displayed in the space. Catering and service were provided by Lia’s Bella Cucina at a cost of \$1,570.80, taken from the Gift Fund.

MEETING ROOM PLACARDS – New acrylic signs have been installed near the entrances of WPL meeting rooms, featuring biographies and photos of notable Dunelanders for whom the rooms are named: Phil Baugher, Edwin Glawe, Emily Peterson, and Bertha Wood. The History Museum Curator provided the biographies, and the Graphics and PR Manager designed the placards. This addition aligns with WPL’s commitment to local history and addresses frequent patron inquiries. PDFs of the signs were included in the Board Documents.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATES – Following 2024’s focus on shelving updates, 2025 will prioritize technology improvements. New Children's AWE (Early Literacy Station) computers have been

installed at Thomas and Hageman to replace outdated units, enhancing early literacy learning. Five new machines, including two bilingual (English/Spanish) units, were purchased for \$16,752.

Additional upgrades are planned per the Technology Plan, including replacing staff and patron computers, which are now well over five years old. Quotes are currently being solicited for these replacements.

WPL is also working with Pulse Technology to acquire a smart board for the Thomas Branch to facilitate hybrid meetings and improve presentation capabilities. This mobile unit will enhance virtual Board meetings and accommodate frequent patron requests for wireless presentation options.

YMCA COLLABORATION – WPL has partnered with the Duneland YMCA and Front Porch Music to support their new guitar and ukulele lesson offerings. Library patrons can borrow from WPL’s collection of 11 ukuleles, allowing them to try an instrument at no cost before committing to lessons.

To further support this initiative, WPL will provide six ukuleles for the YMCA/Front Porch’s free “Strum Along” community event on February 27th. This collaboration strengthens community ties, promotes WPL’s collection, and may increase library traffic.

Additionally, WPL is exploring the possibility of adding guitars to its circulating collection, given the popularity of the ukuleles. Research is underway regarding costs and storage solutions, with a Circulation Policy recommendation expected at a future Board meeting.

PATRON BEHAVIOR – Nothing of note.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES – Director Chadock attended ILF’s Statehouse Day on February 3. Attendees were encouraged to advocate for continued state funding of at least 50% for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

Following this, Senate Bill 1 was heard in the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee on February 4. The ILF Board has published a statement opposing the bill (included in Board documents) and has joined a coalition of public entities advocating against it. The coalition, organized by AIM (Accelerate Indiana Municipalities), includes various municipal and public service organizations.

SB 1 presents significant concerns for WPL and public services across Indiana. The Library Director will continue attending ILF advocacy meetings and providing updates as the situation develops.

STATISTICS – In January, 13,778 people visited the Library; staff created 49 in-person programs with 661 attendees, and 3 live virtual programs with 15 attendees. WPL staff answered 43 reference questions and 129 tech help questions; 291 people utilized library

meeting rooms, and there were 192 reservations for individual study rooms; 97 new library cards were registered.

Included in the Board Meeting documents are graphs showing materials circulation statistics from the past month.

Staff Changes –

Joined: N/A

Separated: N/A

Other: Cathy Wagner promoted from Substitute Clerk to P/T Cataloger

OLD BUSINESS

WPL PURCHASING POLICY – Director Chaddock reported that due to various ongoing projects and responsibilities over the past month, there had not been sufficient time to develop an updated Purchasing Policy. The revised policy, which will incorporate elements of Chesterton’s recent Responsible Bidding Contracts Ordinance, is expected to be presented at next month’s meeting.

BAUGHER CENTER RENOVATION – Director Chaddock reported that the final invoice for the Baugher Center renovation, funded through a LIRF Additional Appropriation, has been received. Banter Flooring completed installation of carpeting and cove base in the staff stairwell, marking the project’s conclusion. Due to unforeseen challenges, including difficulties removing the old carpet and additional leveling work required to repair underlying damage, an extra \$3,750.24 is owed for additional supplies and labor.

MUSEUM RENOVATION – Director Chaddock reviewed the requirements for committee formation as outlined in Article X of the WPL Trustee Bylaws and summarized the recommendations from Jeff Schroeder of Moake Park, who suggested a committee of 4-6 members.

Initially, Museum Curator Serena Ard and Director Chaddock were confirmed as members, with several others expressing interest. Following inquiries, Nick Tilden and Mike Livovich declined participation, while Justin Martinson confirmed his interest. Will Scharp was given the opportunity to join but respectfully declined, noting the committee already had sufficient members.

President Wightman proceeded with the appointment of the Museum Renovation Committee Members, naming Heather Chaddock, Serena Ard, Abbe Trent, Michele Corazzo, Justin Martinson, and herself. Kathryn Cochran moved to approve the Committee appointments, and Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Chaddock notified the WPL Board that the Porter County Library System Board had voted to repeal the Memorandum of Understanding between itself and several neighboring library systems, due to abuse of PCPLS's fine-free policy by non-residents. President Wightman inquired why, other than fees or unreturned materials, would someone's card not be in good standing. Director Chaddock stated it was mostly due to large amounts of unreturned physical materials. The process for WPL staff to check the status of non-resident patrons' library cards was discussed.

Justin Martinson asked when the Memorandum was originally passed, and it was determined to have been in 2023.

Abbe Trent inquired about recent legislative changes and whether any updates to SB1 had occurred since the previous day. Director Chaddock noted that new tax breaks had been added for seniors and veterans. Assistant Director Bartz referenced an article that Director Chaddock had shared earlier in the afternoon, stating that organizations and representatives appeared eager to continue discussions and work toward solutions.

Director Chaddock reported that there would likely be severely restricted budget growth permitted for public entities over the next several years. Will Scharp expressed concern over the proposed caps, noting a lack of practical considerations in the legislative changes. Kathryn Cochran added that libraries may become increasingly necessary for some individuals, as one proposed bill would grant tax cuts on utilities for corporations, while resulting in a 15% increase in utility costs for homeowners.

Michele Corazzo inquired about an email she sent to Director Chaddock regarding the font used for library signage. After a brief discussion, members confirmed the correct fonts were being used as previously agreed upon. Director Chaddock clarified that the meeting room plaques include a secondary font, distinct from the WPL logo but part of the approved press/promotional packet. She also stated that she confirmed this with Graphics Manager Jeannine Larimer.

NOTE: At end of the Librarian's Report, if any staff changes were reported, the Board must make a motion to approve the Librarian's Report.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the Librarian's Report. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Jennifer Klug inquired about the addition of the second version of the Chesterton Tribune to the library's microfilm collection. She expressed appreciation upon confirming that it would be included.

She also noted that some staff members were unfamiliar with how to connect the microfilm

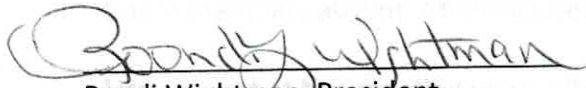
reader to the printer. Director Chaddock stated that she would ensure the issue was addressed.

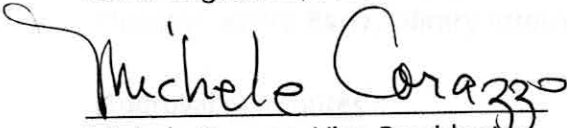
OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Thursday, March 13th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Thomas Branch, located at 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesteron.

Justin Martinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.


Rondi Wightman, President


Michele Corazzo, Vice-President


Abbe Trent, Treasurer

Will Scharp, Board Member


Justin Martinson, Secretary


Kathryn Cochran, Board Member


Michael Livovich, Board Member

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