

Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees
Special Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2025

A special meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Baugher Center, located at 100 W. Indiana Ave, Chesterton, Indiana on Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025. It was called to order by Rondi Wightman, Board President at 6:00 p.m.

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

Board members absent: Will Scharp

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock, Library Assistant Director Jessica Bartz, Museum Curator Serena Ard, and Jeff Schroeder, president of Moake Park Group.

Museum Renovation

The Board met with Moake Park Group President, Mr. Jeff Schroeder, to review preliminary plans for the renovation and expansion of the Brown Mansion, home to the Westchester Township History Museum.

Project Overview

Mr. Schroeder stated that measurements had been taken, and the renovation team includes Abonmarche, Structural Engineering Services, LLC, and Millies Engineering Group. He presented preliminary concept plans, emphasizing that they will seek Board input before proceeding further.

A virtual walkthrough of the Museum provided a visual representation of the building's interior and exterior.

Construction Management & Pre-Construction Process

A Construction Manager (CM) must be hired through a public bidding process. Mr. Schroeder estimated a three-week timeline for proposals. The pre-construction phase will take about six months to complete drawings, blueprints, and budgeting.

Library representation is crucial, with at least five meetings expected during the schematic design and design development phases.

Bidding & Contractor Selection

Michael Livovich asked about contractors acting as CMs. Mr. Schroeder explained contractors can do a percentage of work, but not all of it. He also emphasized the lowest bid isn't always the best.

Michelle Corazzo inquired about refunds if costs are lower than estimated. Mr. Schroeder

clarified that all bid funds belong to the Library, making refunds unnecessary.

Michael Livovich asked if the total project cost would be unknown until after pre-construction. Mr. Schroeder confirmed this, stating that the CM fee and total cost would be determined then.

It was agreed the CM interview process will be limited to six candidates.

Historic Renovation Considerations

Rondi Wightman asked whether CMs and contractors require historical renovation experience. Mr. Schroeder confirmed this would be a requirement and agreed to verify any necessary certifications.

Kathryn Cochran raised concerns about barn specifications. Mr. Schroeder stated engineers would assess preservation needs, while Museum Curator Serena Ard highlighted lighting, ventilation, and glass specifications for artifact protection.

Project Timeline & Logistics

Construction could start in the fall, but weather and scheduling may impact the timeline. Mr. Schroeder estimated the project would take 8–12 months, with a full year being more realistic.

Material procurement should not be an issue, but electrical and rooftop units may present challenges.

Committee Formation

Mr. Schroeder stated the library needs to be represented in all decision making and Director Chaddock stated the library will form a committee specifically for the renovation project and that per the Board bylaws, the Director and at least one Board member shall be members of all committees. Director Chaddock asked Mr. Schroeder and Museum Curator Serena Ard to join and they agreed. The Board then discussed the remaining committee composition.

Mr. Schroeder recommended 4–6 members with strong critical thinking skills rather than simply industry expertise and stated that the bidding committee didn't have to be the same as the design committee, but it is helpful for continuity.

Michele Corazzo, Justin Martinson, Abbe Trent, and Michael Livovich expressed interest, with Martinson needing to confirm availability. President Wightman suggested local attorney Nick Tilden could be invited to be a member. Kathryn Cochran declined due to other commitments.

The final committee selection will be discussed further at the next board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

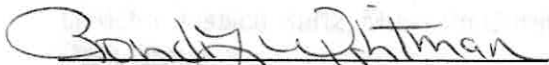
There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

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

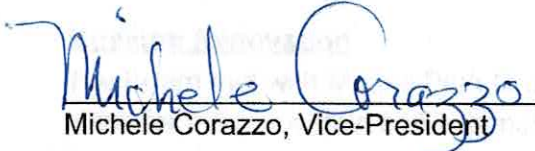
Kathryn Cochran made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michele Corazzo seconded the motion. President Rondi Wightman adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.



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