

Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

December 11, 2025

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Westchester Township History Museum, located at 700 Porter Ave, Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, December 11, 2025. It was called to order by Michele Corazzo, Board President at 7:05 p.m.

Board members present were: Michele Corazzo, Justin Martinson, Abbe Trent, Michael Livovich, and Kathryn Cochran. Will Scharp joined the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Board members absent: Rondi Wightman

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2025 regular session. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. Kathryn Cochran abstained as she was absent from the November meeting. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports for the month of November. 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 November 12, 2025 through December 11, 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.

UPCOMING STAFF RETIREMENTS – Hageman Branch Manager Suzanne Chomel will retire on December 19 and Maintenance Manager Ron Horton will retire on December 30. Director Chaddock has posted the Branch Manager position and received promising applications, and plans to post the Maintenance Manager position by early next week. Efforts are underway to schedule interviews during the holiday season and fill both positions as soon as possible to support Library operations.

STAFF HOLIDAY PARTY - The staff holiday party held on December 5 was well attended and positively received. Staff expressed appreciation for the opportunity to gather, share a meal, and be recognized for years of service. The Library provided a catered breakfast from Third Coast Spice Café at a cost of \$1,512.00, and staff received amaryllis bulbs from Chesterton Feed and Garden at a cost of \$11.04 per person, paid from the Gift Fund. Director Chaddock reintroduced years-of-service recognition with WPL apparel gifts as part of the event and intends to honor volunteers at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheons in a similar fashion, in years to come. Included in the Board documents was a picture of one employee proudly modeling her 20 year gift.

YEAR END EVALUATIONS - All managerial staff submitted their self-evaluations to Director Chaddock, and conducted their own evaluation meetings with their direct reports. Director Chaddock also met with her own direct reports to evaluate their progress on the past year's goals, and establish goals for the coming year. She noted that this process provides an opportunity to express sincere, personalized gratitude to the Library's hardworking staff, and identify areas where additional growth or training may be beneficial.

STATISTICS – In November, 10,927 people visited the Library, and 38 in-person programs were created with 620 attendees. The library answered 109 reference questions and 56 tech help questions; 322 people utilized library meeting rooms, and there were 141 reservations for individual study rooms. The Library registered 63 new library cards. Included in the Board Meeting documents are graphs showing materials circulation statistics from the past month.

STAFF CHANGES – Joined: N/A
Separated: Sarah Brady, P/T Clerk
Other: N/A

OLD BUSINESS

EXTERIOR PROJECTS UPDATE – Exterior brick and masonry repairs are nearing completion at the Thomas Branch and the Baugher Center. Mortar removal is complete, with remaining work limited to select brick replacements and washing of the Thomas Branch façade. Weather conditions have caused intermittent delays. Door and window replacements for all three Library buildings are planned for the spring.

Michele Corazzo asked for clarification regarding the reference to three buildings. Director Chaddock clarified that brick and masonry repairs are limited to the Thomas Branch and Baugher Center, while door and window replacements will occur at both of these facilities, plus the Hageman Branch.

At the recommendation of CSK Architects and Berglund Construction, an additional project was added at the Baugher Center to address deteriorating brick pavers at stairway landings near the kitchen entrance and staff alley door. CSK advised that brick pavers are not suitable for long-term durability due to moisture infiltration concerns, and recommended replacement with cement landings. Berglund confirmed the capacity to complete the work. Director Chaddock approved Change Order #2 in the amount of \$15,945 on December 5, and demolition and reconstruction of the landings is underway.

The Library received the second A & C payment request for this project on December 3, totaling \$447,788.57, to be paid from the Library Improvement Reserve Fund.

MUSEUM RENOVATION UPDATE – The Museum Committee continues to participate in biweekly preconstruction meetings with Moake Park, Berglund, and project engineers to refine renovation plans. It appears that the Design Development phase will be coming to an end in the next few weeks, after which a 12-week period for construction document preparation will begin. Director Chaddock thanked Michele, Abbe, Justin, Rondi, and Serena for their sustained engagement and contributions over the past six months, noting the value of their collective expertise to the project.

The Board was also updated on the Library's discovery workshop with the Grossbauer Group held on November 19, which was reported as successful. Materials from the workshop, including the Project Timeline, have been uploaded to the Board and Museum Committee folders. Phase 2, "Rebrand Development," is scheduled for January and February and will include review of proposed name and logo concepts and a draft of a brand standards guide. Director Chaddock will distribute a meeting invitation once scheduling information is received.

NEW BUSINESS

TECH SALE – ACTION ITEM – Director Chaddock reminded the Board of significant IT upgrades completed this year, including replacement of network switches at all four Library buildings, transition off the Duneland School Corporation fiber network, and replacement of all patron and staff PCs. As a result, the Library has accumulated outdated equipment no longer in use. Director Chaddock requested Board approval for the Friends of the Library to host a Technology Sale featuring items more than 10 years old, priced between \$5 and \$25. The proposed sale would take place on Saturday, January 17, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Bertha Wood Room at the Thomas Branch. A list of items for sale was included in the Board materials.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the sale of the designated items. Justin Martinson seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

2026 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE – ACTION ITEM —The 2026 proposed schedule of Board Meetings was included in the Board documents for review and adoption. The Board will continue meeting on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Thomas Branch, with off-site meetings scheduled at the Hageman Branch in June, and the History Museum in December.

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the 2026 Board Meeting Schedule. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

END-OF-YEAR TRANSFERS – ACTION ITEM – AVC prepared a list of recommended transfers to be made within the Operating Fund, which was included in the Board documents.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the End-of-Year Transfers. Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Justin Martinson to approve the Librarian’s Report. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Serena Ard thanked the Board for the raises, stating she definitely appreciated it. The Board members responded that they were happy to approve them and that they were well deserved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Director Chaddock informed the Board that the Museum Renovation Committee needed to make decisions regarding the type and placement of trees and shrubs at the Museum. Michele Corazzo suggested that the Committee members present their recommendations to the full Board, for everyone’s consideration. A lengthy discussion followed regarding various landscaping options and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Will Scharp joined the meeting during this discussion, at 7:51 p.m.

As no consensus was reached, Director Chaddock suggested tabling the discussion to allow additional time for consideration, noting a preference for a decision to be made prior to the January 6 preconstruction meeting. Potential additional meeting dates were discussed, and Director Chaddock indicated she would coordinate scheduling with interested Board and Committee members.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Thomas branch, located at 200 W. Indiana Ave, Chesterton.

Justin Martinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. Michele Corazzo adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Michele Corazzo, President

Abbe Trent, Secretary

Justin Martinson, Vice-President

Kathryn Cochran, Board Member

Michael Livovich, Treasurer

Rondi Wightman, Board Member

Will Scharp, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,

Carissa Domonkos, Minutes Recorder for Abbe Trent, Secretary