

Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

April 09, 2026

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, April 09, 2026. It was called to order by Justin Martinson, Board President at 7:00 p.m.

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

Board members absent: N/A

Also present at this meeting were: Library Director Heather Chaddock and Library Assistant Director Jessica Bartz. Library Attorney Lisa Baron and Board Vice President Abbe Trent attended virtually via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the minutes from the March 12, 2026 regular session. 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 the month of March. Kathryn Cochran 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 March 13, 2026 through April 09, 2026 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.

WELCOME CHIRAG PATEL, NEW WPL BOARD MEMBER – With the departure of Board Member Will Scharp last month, the Westchester Township Trustee was tasked with appointing a new Trustee to the Board. Chirag Patel was selected and was in attendance for his first meeting. Director Chaddock invited Chirag to share a brief introduction which he did, sharing some personal details and saying he was glad to be here and of service. The other Board members introduced themselves and welcomed Chirag.

NEW FURNITURE - Director Chaddock worked with the Hageman Branch Manager and Thomas Children's Department Manager to determine their needs for new public-use tables and placed an order for 13 new tables, at a total cost of \$21,166.37. The contract was included in the Board folder for the month. The tables will be fabricated to the Library's specifications and are expected to be delivered and installed by the end of April or early May.

CDS REINVESTED – In March, three \$250,000 CDs matured from LIRF; the income amounts were transferred to WPL's operating fund, while the capital was retained in the LIRF fund to use for the upcoming Museum project.

In addition, two Rainy Day CDs matured and were reinvested in Medallion Bank Utah at 3.75%, and Bank of America at 3.95%.

STATISTICS – In March, 16,362 people visited the Library, and 34 in-person programs were created with 497 attendees. The library answered 61 reference questions and 88 tech help questions; 382 people utilized library meeting rooms, and there were 258 reservations for individual study rooms. The Library registered 106 new library cards. Included in the Board Meeting documents are graphs showing materials circulation statistics from the past month.

STAFF CHANGES – Joined: Pamela Okosun, P/T Program Clerk,
Separated: Megan Ozdyck, P/T Program Clerk
Other: Stephanie Cingrani, transferred from P/T Cleaner to P/T Cataloger

OLD BUSINESS

MUSEUM RENOVATION UPDATE – Director Chaddock and Jeff Shroeder from Moake Park represented the Library at the Museum's public hearing before the Chesterton Board of Zoning Appeals on March 26. All requested variances were approved. The only member of the public in attendance in response to the Museum plans was former WPL Board member Jeannette Bapst, who spoke in favor of the new History Center plans. Ms. Bapst, who currently serves on the board for the Flora Richardson Foundation, expressed support for a climate-controlled environment to house the Flora Richardson archives, which are currently stored in the Brown Mansion.

The Museum Committee met on March 31 to review the first round of proposed logos from the Grossbauer Group for the Duneland History Center. Thoughtful feedback from the Committee was communicated to Sarah Bane and Adam Ispas, who are preparing revisions for future consideration. On April 1, Chris Savoia, Senior Estimator from Berglund Construction, conducted a site visit at the Brown Mansion with contractors, leading a walkthrough and responding to questions as they prepared bids for restoration work, including roof replacement and plaster repair. Director Chaddock expects to

receive a total proposal from Berglund Construction on April 24, including final cost estimates for the Brown Mansion restoration and construction of the Barn to house the Duneland History Center. Due to the project timeline, Director Chaddock reported that a special Board meeting would need to be scheduled for the week following receipt of the proposal. She asked the Board for their availability between Monday, April 27 and Wednesday, April 29 to pass a resolution to proceed with construction plans. This will allow for submission of the Additional Appropriation request to the Porter County Council prior to May 1. The Board discussed availability for scheduling this meeting and settled on Tuesday, April 28 at 4:30 p.m at the Thomas Branch.

Referring back to the reading of the month's statistics, Michele Corazzo asked if the study room usage has been growing and Director Chaddock stated it has since installation and is now consistently around 200 uses each month. Assistant Director Bartz shared that the study room at the Hageman Branch is always in use.

EXTERIOR PROJECTS UPDATE – Berglund Construction resumed the window replacement project at the Thomas Branch, Hageman Branch, and the Baugher Center. Work began at the Hageman Branch, where all windows were replaced over the course of approximately one week. Crews are currently replacing the front and rear doors, after which they will address areas of wood rot on the siding and apply a fresh coat of paint to the building exterior. Application and Certificate for Payment #5 for this project, in the amount of \$147,048.55, was included in the Board documents.

Crews have since moved on to the Baugher Center to continue window replacement. Despite scheduling challenges related to meetings in the large meeting room and variable spring weather, work has continued as planned and staff remain professional. According to the site supervisor, the project is anticipated to be completed by May 1. Director Chaddock stated she feels this estimate is a bit optimistic given the recent weather conditions and the outlook ahead.

AWARD FOR OFFICE PROJECTS – ACTION ITEM – Following the update provided last month regarding the renovation of the Hageman front desk, creation of a more functional Branch Manager's office, and minor improvements needed in the Thomas Children's Department office, CSK Architects solicited bids for both projects, with a due date of April 7. Director Chaddock presented CSK's recommendation for the Board's consideration, asking that they award the proposals in accordance with that recommendation if they so choose. The lowest bids for both projects came from Hasse, at \$102,889 and \$41,420, respectively. Director Chaddock shared the recommendation letters from CSK Architects to award both bids to Hasse; they are prepared to begin work immediately, once their offers are accepted.

An asbestos abatement quote from Amereco was included in the Board documents. The work is estimated to take approximately one day per office and will be scheduled and paid for outside of the project proposals. The contractor is able to perform the work before or after public hours to minimize disruption to patrons and staff.

Director Chaddock also included a resolution for a minor transfer to fund these projects, reallocating several amounts within the "Other Services" fund to line 3.61, Building Repairs and Service.

This transfer is expected to accommodate the project while maintaining a cushion for incidental costs.

Michael Livovich requested a brief summary of the projects. Director Chaddock outlined the need for a Hageman manager's office and new front desk, as well as a reconfiguration of the Children's Department manager's office to make it a more spacious and efficient workspace.

Abbe Trent inquired about Hasse Construction and whether CSK had prior experience with the company, as the Library had not previously used them or received bids from them. Director Chaddock stated that CSK did recommend their work, noting that Hasse Construction is more selective in the projects for which they submit bids and that CSK was pleased to see their bid as they have had positive experiences with them in the past.

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to award Hasse Construction the two bids. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the minor transfer. Rondi Wightman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

PLAC REPORT – ACTION ITEM – The quarterly report on PLAC cards sold from WPL was presented to the Board. Director Chaddock explained PLAC cards to Trustee Patel and shared that no PLAC cards were sold this quarter.

A motion was made by Kathryn Cochran to approve the PLAC report for the quarter. Michael Livovich seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OTHER BUSINESS

DEPARTURE OF TRUSTEE RONDI WIGHTMAN FROM WPL BOARD – Director Chaddock reported a change to the Porter County Commissioners' WPL Board appointment, with Denise Barkow, a Westchester Township resident, appointed to fill the seat. Director Chaddock stated she will reach out to Ms. Barkow to arrange an introductory meeting and assist with onboarding.

Director Chaddock also took a moment to recognize Trustee Rondi Wightman for her twelve years of dedicated service to the Board. During her tenure, Trustee Wightman served under four Library Directors and held leadership roles as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Director Chaddock further expressed appreciation for Trustee Wightman's emphasis on building and sustaining relationships, both within the Board and throughout the community, as well as her contributions to the Museum Committee over the past year. Director Chaddock thanked Trustee Wightman for her longstanding volunteerism and stewardship of Library resources and noted she will be warmly welcomed at future Library events, including the Museum ribbon cutting.

Trustee Wightman stated that her time on the Board has been a wonderful experience and that she is sorry to see it come to an end. She noted that she has witnessed significant change and growth over the years and plans to stay in touch and attend the ribbon cutting.


The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Thursday, May 14, 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. Chirag Patel seconded the motion. Justin Martinson adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.


Justin Martinson, President


Abbe Trent, Vice President


Kathryn Cochran, Secretary


Michael Livovich, Treasurer


Michele Corazzo, Board Member


Chirag Patel, Board Member


Denise Barkow, Board Member

Respectfully submitted,

Carissa Domonkos, Minutes Recorder for Kathryn Cochran, Secretary