

Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes

October 08, 2026

DRAFT

A regular meeting of the Westchester Public Library Board of Trustees was held at the Thomas Branch, located at 200 Indiana Ave. in Chesterton, Indiana on Thursday, October 08, 2026. It was called to order by Justin Martinson, Board President at 7:01 p.m.

Board members present were: Abbe Trent, Michael Livovich, Michele Corazzo, Justin Martinson, Kathryn Cochran, Chirag Patel and Denise Barkow.

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 attended via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Michael Livovich to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2026 regular session. Denise Barkow seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed. Kathryn Cochran abstained as she was not in attendance for the September meeting.

Approval of Minutes - Special Session

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the minutes from the September 24, 2026 special session. Chirag Patel seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed. Michelle Corazzo and Kathryn Cochran abstained as they were not in attendance for the special session.

Financial and Statistical Reports

A motion was made by Michele Corazzo to approve the Financial and Statistical Reports for the month of September. Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Approval of Claims and Warrants

A motion was made by Abbe Trent to approve the Register of Claims and Warrants for the time periods of September 11, 2026 through October 08, 2026 as presented. Denise Barkow 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.

EXTERIOR PROJECTS UPDATE – Exterior projects with Berglund at Thomas, Hageman, and the Baugher Center have been marked “substantially complete.” The Library received a one-year warranty from Berglund on their craftsmanship, and other warranties for hardware and additional components of these projects. Director Chaddock included A&C #11 in the Board documents, in the amount of \$110,986.51. The only remaining item on the list is the installation of the new front doors at the Hageman Branch, due to happen in the next week or so, weather permitting.

OFFICE PROJECTS UPDATE – Director Chaddock happily reported that the Thomas Children’s Department renovation is done and looks great. At the Hageman Branch, new flooring, front office walls, and casework for the new front desk have been installed. Staff are looking forward to gaining much-needed storage and better sightlines of patrons in the branch. Measurements were taken for custom countertops needed for the new casework, which are now being fabricated. The current projected completion date remains the end of October.

STATISTICS – In September, 16,307 people visited the Library, and 43 in-person programs were created with 707 attendees. The library answered 64 reference questions and 119 tech help questions; 536 people utilized library meeting rooms, and there were 243 reservations for individual study rooms. The Library registered 105 new library cards. Included in the Board Meeting documents were graphs showing materials circulation statistics from the past month.

STAFF CHANGES – Joined: N/A

Separated: Ella Callahan, P/T Cleaner/Maintenance, Jason Lowther, P/T Cleaner/Maintenance

Other: N/A

OLD BUSINESS

DUNELAND HISTORY CENTER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE – Director Chaddock reported that the Town had released the civil and engineering permits, allowing Berglund to proceed with below-ground plumbing and electrical work, demolition of the existing concrete, and construction of the new entryway, parking lot, and building foundation. Construction fencing is scheduled to be installed around the property this week. The Brown Mansion has been officially closed to visitors due to the ongoing construction and the storage of artifacts throughout the building, making tours impossible. In addition, only street parking is now available. Staff will continue working at the DHC for the time being, but are prepared to relocate if construction becomes too disruptive. The Library is still awaiting the building permits from the Town, but a recent meeting with the Chesterton Building Department was successful, wherein Berglund addressed the department’s remaining questions.

NEW BUSINESS

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES – Director Chaddock presented a draft of updated Emergency Procedures for all Library locations, specifying that the document was procedural rather than policy-related, and

did not require a Board action. The revisions included updates for grammar, clarity, and job titles, as well as more substantial additions addressing modern threats such as cyberattacks and active shooters. Director Chaddock plans to have staff tour all four Library buildings during the October managers' meeting to review the locations of fire alarm pulls, fire extinguishers, the main boiler switch, and the main power shutoff at Thomas. The Facilities Manager is also preparing a map identifying these locations to be distributed at the meeting. Department Managers will receive printed copies of the Emergency Procedures and Bomb Threat Checklist for their departmental instruction binders and will review the procedures with staff during upcoming individual evaluations. Staff will sign a form confirming that they have read and understood the procedures, which will be placed in their personnel files. This instruction and acknowledgment will become part of the onboarding process for new employees. Director Chaddock noted that the plan was developed with input from the new HR Coordinator; they are also looking ahead to 2027 staff safety training, including CPR and first aid training.

Kathryn Cochran asked whether any drills were planned. Director Chaddock stated that the Library would conduct at the very least a fire drill. Chirag Patel asked about the Library's cybersecurity practices and training. Director Chaddock explained that the Library did not have a formal cybersecurity training program, but said the IT Manager periodically shares advice and best practices. Board members shared their experiences with various types of cybersecurity training, and Director Chaddock stated that she would look into assessing the Library's current cybersecurity status.

CIRCULATION POLICY - ACTION ITEM – A correction to the Circulation Policy regarding the Library of Things Collection was presented to the Board for review. Director Chaddock explained that the version approved by the Board in May 2026 incorrectly stated that patrons could check out one "Thing" at a time with two renewals. The original intent for this policy allowed patrons to check out two "Things" at a time, with one renewal. The correction was highlighted on page 3 of the draft provided in the Board documents. Director Chaddock apologized for the error and requested Board approval of the corrected policy so the Library could proceed with advertising the upcoming collection.

Michael Livovich moved to approve the proposed changes to the Circulation Policy and Kathryn Cochran seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

STAFF HOLIDAY PARTY – ACTION ITEM – Director Chaddock announced that the staff holiday party had been tentatively scheduled, and requested the Board's permission to close all Library locations on Friday, December 4, from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. for staff to gather as a group to celebrate the season and enjoy breakfast together.

Kathryn Cochran moved to approve the closure of the Library as presented for the staff holiday party and Abbe Trent seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

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

A motion was made by Denise Barkow to approve the PLAC report for the quarter. Chirag Patel seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Abbe Trent moved to approve the Librarian's report and Michael Livovich 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.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Thursday, November 12, at 7:00 p.m. at the Thomas Branch, located at 200 W. Indiana Ave, Chesterton.

Michael Livovich made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chirag Patel seconded the motion. Justin Martinson adjourned the meeting at 7:22 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