



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pamela Duncan called to order the regular meeting of the Pierce County Rural Library District Board of Trustees at 3:31 pm. Board members present were Pamela Duncan, Abby Sloan, Pat Jenkins and Ryan Wheaton. Neesha Patel was excused. The meeting was conducted in person, with the option of virtual attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Trustees were encouraged by Chair Duncan to read the book “Expect More” recommended by Executive Director Gretchen Caserotti.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of August 14, 2024, Regular Meeting
2. Approval of Minutes of August 20, 2024, Special Meeting
3. Approval of August Payroll, Benefits, and Vouchers

Trustee Jenkins moved for approval of the consent agenda as presented. Trustee Sloan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Executive Director Report – Chair Duncan congratulated the Library on the Summer Reading Program’s 10,000 book giveaway. Executive Director Caserotti noted the program was reworked this year and that a summary with final statistics will be available next month.

Fundraising Performance Report – Foundation Director Dean Carrell noted the opportunity to use social media to share about the 6th Annual Trivia Bee on October 26, 2024.

July 2024 Financial Report – Finance Director Mary Stimson reported the Library is currently conducting cash flow exercises to align revenue with cash flow for the April and October periods. Expenditures are at approximately 54%. There was discussion on the level of detail in the monthly financial reports and how to streamline them to meet requirements while providing the information the Board considers necessary. There was a consensus on the importance of maintaining transparency, along with a desire for streamlined reports that emphasize essential data for decision-making. Further conversation is needed to determine the level of detail required, potentially shifting to quarterly or semi-annual reports for less critical information. Director Stimson will develop a proposal for the Board’s consideration.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Interim and Downtown Lakewood Libraries Update – Executive Director Caserotti reported the new interim Library will open its doors on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at 10:00 am. The ribbon ceremony was conducted this afternoon. She expressed her gratitude to staff for making this possible in such a short period of time since receiving the Certificate of Occupancy.

Policy Review:

Borrowing Privileges – Discussion – Deputy Director Behe reported three different policies were incorporated into this new revised policy. Additionally, the Library will present a discussion for a future Board meeting regarding the potential reinstatement of non-resident cards, which would allow individuals outside the service area to purchase a card if they don't have reciprocal borrowing or are not residents. A circulation-specific workgroup will prepare guidelines around the policy.

Public Computer, Wi-Fi, and Internet Use Policy – Second Reading –

Trustee Sloan moved to approve the Public Computer, Wi-Fi, and Internet Use Policy as presented. Trustee Wheaton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Strategic Plan Draft – Executive Director Caserotti expressed her appreciation for Deputy Director Behe and the members of the core planning team who were instrumental in giving their feedback. The team was engaged, open and participatory throughout the process.–Members include: Katie Baker, Service Desk and System Support Supervisor; Alison Eckes, Customer Experience Director of Programs and Services; Mary Getchell, Marketing and Communications Director; Chris Hamilton, Facilities Coordinator; Barbara Hilderbrand, Senior Collection Manager Librarian; Kari Van Baalen, Librarian; Tim Sage, Regional Services Manager; Darien Torbert, Customer Experience Specialist; and Mejin Turner, Supervising Librarian.

Deputy Director Behe presented a draft of the plan, highlighting that EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) values are integrated throughout, emphasizing human-centered, hands-on learning and experience-based approaches to better serve customers. The plan also aims to expand community resource navigation by enhancing staff training, enabling them to connect community members with available resources and support effectively.

The new strategic plan shifts from the previous framework of three pillars—learning, enjoyment, and community—to four well-defined, actionable goals. These goals retain the core concepts of the original pillars but are designed to be more specific and attainable within a set timeframe. The Library is also transitioning from broad initiatives to age-specific program management, prioritizing a more tailored and human-centered approach. The new plan honors the legacy of past work by building on the Library's established trust and reputation within the community, enhancing partnerships, and addressing access issues, while maintaining essential resources, like books and programs, and ensuring staff readiness for ongoing training and development. The

implementation will be a continuous process, with regular assessments allowing for adjustments as needed to support this evolution.

A survey will be sent to Trustees to capture feedback on the draft plan. The Library's goal is to adopt the plan by the end of this year.

Trustees expressed their appreciation for the staff's impressive body of work and for incorporating EDI throughout the entire effort, emphasizing the importance of clarity to ensure that both the community and staff understand the goals.

Levy Sustainability Fund (LSF) Discussion – Business and Compliance Director Cliff Jo provided a list of viable options for the LSF based upon input during the study session held on August 20, 2024. The three options are: Use the LSF to cover the full shortfall to balance the budget, approximately \$2 million; Use no LSF funds and enact \$2 million in reductions to balance the budget; or Use something materially in-between \$0 and \$2 million of the LSF after enacting some reductions.

Discussion ensued. It was noted that all three options presented are acceptable. Trustees discussed a middle-ground for the LSF, leaning towards the third option of utilizing between \$0 and \$2 million to address the budget shortfall. This approach aims to balance fiscal responsibility while minimizing any cuts to services, allowing for a more manageable solution that still considers the importance of maintaining reserves for future needs and potential interest earnings. Director Stimson stated that the estimated budget, based on current assumptions, will be reviewed, and any significant changes will be presented in October and November. The discussion about the LSF can also continue during that time. Executive Director Caserotti noted that maintaining larger reserves allows for increased interest earnings, especially considering the potential for lower rates in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Budget Development – Director Stimson noted this was an unbalanced budget, and that this year's process was prepared more proactively. A balanced budget will be presented in October. Director Stimson reviewed key components of the 2025 budget and highlighted cost control actions already in effect. Personnel and healthcare costs account for largest expenditures in the General Fund, followed by increases to maintenance and operations and material budget costs due to increases in both internet and insurance rates. Reflected was a planned \$1 million cash flow adjustment, with efforts to reduce this number by the next month through better alignment of larger expenses.

There was discussion about the Library using strategic thinking around purchasing new technology such as a new Learning Management System (LMS) and a capital asset tracking program.

The Capital Fund for 2025 will not use Fund Reserves, preserving the remaining \$2 million, with funding coming from other sources such as the Sumner Library Capital Facility Area and General Fund Transfers.

Director Stimson reviewed recent cost reduction and efficiency initiatives, such as leveraging partnerships and vendor contracts to secure best pricing, and expanding purchasing capabilities for branch staff. Additionally, in the coming months, Leadership Team will be trained on conducting ROI analysis, enabling them to understand and justify high-cost purchase requests by showcasing long-term impact on sustainability.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Library will be assessing general fund transfer needs and their impact on the budget. For 2025, building improvements are focused on Sumner Library, though the current allocation is not the total cost. Additional new requests and technology updates are included. The upcoming capital comprehensive plan and facilities condition assessment will help guide decisions for 2026.

Trustee Jenkins was excused at 5:15 pm.

Executive Director Caserotti noted the opportunity to chart the Library's future and set its destiny using the resources currently available. The many unknowns and variables ahead place the Board in a position of making a decision amid significant uncertainty. While recognizing this is a short-term decision, she acknowledged its lasting long-term implications.

The discussion continued about the Library's historically conservative approach to budget planning, particularly in managing the LSF. The suggestion was to strike a balance, using some LSF funds only after thorough planning and potential reductions. Director Jo noted as the Library is nearing the bond sale, which could be sold as soon as December 18 for \$15 million, the S&P is reviewing the Library's financials. As reserves decrease, confidence may wane. While \$17.5 billion is allocated for sustainability, this funding also enhances our overall financial standing, allowing the Library to pursue opportunities like bond sales and improved ratings.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 5:30 pm Trustee Sloan moved to recess to Executive Session, per RCW 42.30.110, to discuss a periodic personnel evaluation for approximately 20 minutes. Trustee Wheaton seconded the motion. Motion carried. The session ended at 5:52 pm.

NEW BUSINESS (CONT.)

2025 Executive Director Salary Agreement –

Trustee Sloan moved to authorize a representative of the Board to negotiate a salary agreement with the Executive Director for fiscal year 2025. Trustee Wheaton seconded the motion. Motion passed.

OFFICERS REPORTS

Staff Engagement Survey Results – Trustees commended the Library for an 81% response rate.

ANNOUNCEMENTS


The Poetry in the Park program will be held at Fort Steilacoom Park on September 16, 2024 at 10:30 am. The Library’s new partnership with Tacoma Community House to welcome new citizens during Welcoming Week will take place at the University Place Library from September 13-22, 2024.


CLOSED SESSION

At 5:45 pm, Trustees recessed to Closed Session, per RCW 42.30.110, to discuss collective bargaining matters. The session ended at 6:03 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm on motion by Trustee Wheaton, seconded by Trustee Sloan.

Signed by:

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Gretchen Caserotti, Secretary

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Pamela Duncan, Chair