

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 8, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Pamela Duncan called to order the regular meeting of the Pierce County Rural Library District Board of Trustees at 3:32 pm. Board members present were Pamela Duncan, Neesha Patel, Abby Sloan, Pat Jenkins, and Ryan Wheaton. The meeting was conducted in person, with the option of virtual attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments were received from Oscar Grey.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of December 11, 2024, Regular Meeting
2. Approval of December Payroll, Benefits, and Vouchers
3. Change Order for Sumner Architect to Include Additional Services

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

CLOSED SESSION

At 3:38 pm, Trustees recess to Closed Session, per RCW 42.30.110, to discuss collective bargaining matters. The session ended at 3:53 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Ratification of 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement – Executive Director Gretchen Caserotti commended the labor team on behalf of the AFSCME Local 3787 and the management team on behalf of the Library for a successful bargaining campaign, noting they embodied professionalism and dedication to the process.

Members of the bargaining team were Clorissa Ashley, Katie Baker, Connie Behe, Dana Brownfield, Steve Carmody, Cheree Green, Edward Allan, Sofia Mabee, Jill Merritt, Amanda Rodriguez, Tamara Saarinen and Setu Tauvela.

Trustees expressed their gratitude and appreciation for their collaborative efforts. Local 3787 President Eddie Allen extended his thanks to the management team for their supportive interactions and partnership.

Trustee Wheaton moved to ratify the 2025-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement between Pierce County Rural Library District and Washington State Council of County and City Employees, Local 3787. Trustee Sloan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

New Board Reports Discussion – Executive Director Caserotti noted efforts have been underway to improve internal communications as well as those shared with the Board. She proposed a

new structure for board meetings which includes staff presentations from department heads as part of the board development segment of the meetings. Certain routine reports would come to the Board quarterly. Finance reports will be updated as well.

2021-2023: Three Year Audit Update – Finance Director Mary Stimson reported on the Library's recent 3-year audit. Executive Director Caserotti commended Ms. Stimson and her staff for completing the process on an expedited timeline, and with staff shortages in her department. She noted the Library takes feedback and criticism seriously and respects the findings and recommendations from the Washington State Auditor's Office.

Finance Director Mary Stimson reported that the Library received an unmodified opinion, which is a clean audit of the financial reports and general ledgers, indicating the Library's accounting aligns with the County and the BARS manual reporting. The finding was solely reflective of the representation and the review process for the schedules provided to the State Auditor. The items were corrected and now align with the financial statements. The Library is in the final stages of the 3-year accountability audit. The next financial audit will be in October 2025.

Trustees expressed appreciation for the transparency and bringing the information to the Board's attention.

Approve 2025 Foundation Agreement and Addendums – Foundation Director Dean Carrell provided an overview of the agreement, noting the Foundation exceeded its fundraising goal of \$500,000.

Executive Director Gretchen Caserotti and the Trustees thanked the Foundation for their efforts and accomplishments in 2024.

Trustee Sloan moved to Authorize Executive Director Caserotti to sign the Foundation Agreement as presented. Trustee Patel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Trustee Sloan moved to Authorize Executive Director Caserotti to sign Addendum #1 as presented. Trustee Patel seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Trustee Sloan moved to Authorize Executive Director Caserotti to sign Addendum #2 as presented. Trustee Wheaton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Executive Director Report – Executive Director Caserotti expressed appreciation to staff and supervisors who worked during the holiday season to ensure the Library's customers were provided for. She noted in early 2025, her focus will be on the upcoming legislative session, the strategic plan implementation and phase two of capital planning.

Executive Director Caserotti plans to attend Library Legislative Day on February 5, 2025, and would be sharing the schedule with the Board. She clarified that she does not perform or conduct lobbying activities. She added that the Library has not historically adopted legislative

priorities as other local government agencies do, but she monitors legislative agendas from local cities and counties and other government agencies. She added that the Association of Washington Cities 2025 legislative agenda has areas of alignment with the Library's interests; namely property tax reform and public records law improvements. She recently submitted comments on behalf of the Library to Attorney General on proposed rules changes to the Model Rules on the Public Records Act.

November 2024 Financial Report – Finance Director Mary Stimson reported the Library has received 99% of its revenue. Transfers from the General Fund to the Capital Fund have been completed, which will help with capital funding cash flow.

Public Services Report and Metrics Dashboard – Executive Director Caserotti reported ongoing progress in restoring library usage to pre-pandemic levels. She highlighted the Ready for Books program and expressed gratitude to the Foundation for providing books for children.

Unfinished Business

Policy Review:

Discussion on Board Bylaws Update – Executive Director Gretchen Caserotti presented the proposed policy updates, highlighting that while the Library is not mandated to have Board bylaws, maintaining them is considered a best practice that helps establish a strong foundation for the governing body.

Public Records Policy Revision – *Trustee Jenkins moved for approval of the Public Records policy. Trustee Sloan seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

Works of Art in Library Facilities Policy Revision – *Trustee Duncan moved for approval of the Works of Art in Library Facilities policy. Trustee Sloan seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

Access to Library Services for Persons with Disabilities Policy Revision – *Trustee Duncan moved for approval of the Access to Library Services for Persons with Disabilities policy. Trustee Wheaton seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

Sumner Library Project Update – Executive Director Caserotti shared a slide deck and provided an update of the goals, timeline, funding and budgetary impacts for the project.

The City has requested that the easement to 153rd Street serve as the main entrance to ensure pedestrian safety. However, the city is still negotiating with property owners, delaying progress. Design work remains on hold until this process is finalized. If the easement is not secured, significant design revisions will be necessary. The Library may also be responsible for easement maintenance.

The Conditional Use Permit and SEPA applications have been submitted. In December, the hearing examiner required a mid-block crosswalk on Main Street, which neither the City nor the Library supports. Efforts to resolve this issue are ongoing, causing further delays.

The 17,000 sq. ft. building will include a public meeting room, program room, teen room, sensory room, study rooms, and flexible open space. A community space partnership is under discussion. Interior design discussions continue, focusing on furniture, fixtures, and a local historical element. New renderings emphasize transparency, natural light, and openness. Public engagement has been extensive through events, workshops, and outreach. A final community open house is scheduled for January 22, 2025.

Soil testing revealed instability, requiring six months of preloading and aggregate piers, adding \$1.5 million and extending the timeline. Site costs have doubled, prompting architects to separate site work from construction to maintain progress. Design changes reduced the full project cost from \$28 million to 22.5 million. The Department of Ecology issued a preliminary no further action letter on water monitoring, with final confirmation pending.

Executive Director Gretchen Caserotti reviewed the estimated budget stands at \$22.5 million, reflecting construction and site work costs of \$11.4 million and \$4.2 million, respectively, with additional expenses for security systems, architecture, engineering, and consulting. Soft costs are being carefully reviewed to avoid duplication, with a target reduction from 44% to 35% of construction costs. Sales tax and city fees are estimated at \$1.5 million.

Funding sources include the anticipated \$15 million bond sale, a \$3 million fundraising goal by the Foundation, a \$1.95 million state grant, and potential Library contributions from annual budgets or reserve funds. The final project cost will become clearer during the bidding phase. The project timeline is being adjusted based on new information, with key milestones expected in February, including decisions on the Conditional Use Permit, crosswalk, and easements. Once these are resolved, Johnson Architects will finalize the construction schedule. While a groundbreaking date remains uncertain, the goal is to begin this year.

Board members expressed appreciation for the fiscally responsible management of the project. Facilities Project Manager Christina Neville-Neil Christina was commended for her outstanding work as project manager, keeping communications productive and ensuring smooth coordination with government entities and permitting authorities. Her efforts have been instrumental in keeping the project on track despite challenges.

OFFICERS REPORTS

Q1 2025 Marketing and Communications Focus: Job and Business Services – Discussion ensued on the collection of data to measure the success of library programs aimed at assisting job seekers. It was noted that while feedback is often received through customer comments, there is no formalized system to track long-term outcomes. The Library is exploring ways to incorporate measurement and data analysis into the new strategic plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Library is a partner in a project led by the Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center, which has been awarded \$500,000 in ARPA funding for digital literacy and digital equity programs.

The Board was informed about the upcoming month-long celebration of Black voices and experiences across Library branches. A variety of programs for children and adults will be available, including virtual events.

Executive Director Caserotti expressed appreciation for Staff Experience Director Cheree Green, Deputy Director Behe, and the labor team for their efforts in the contract negotiations process.

Executive Director Caserotti thanked the Board for their commitment, support, and engagement over the past year, acknowledging their dedication to fulfilling the Library's mission and obligations to staff and the community was appreciated.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 pm on motion by Trustee Wheaton, seconded by Trustee Jenkins.

Gretchen Caserotti
Gretchen Caserotti (Feb 24, 2025 11:19 PST)
Gretchen Caserotti, Secretary

Pamela E. Duncan
Pamela E. Duncan (Mar 6, 2025 11:28 PST)
Pamela Duncan, Chair