

North Central Washington Libraries

January 19, 2023

I. **Call to Order**

Denise Sorom, acting chairperson in Nancy Spurgeon's absence, called to order the January meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees at 1:00 p.m. January 19, 2023. The meeting was held in person at the NCW Libraries Board Room with an option to attend virtually.

II. **Attendees**

Attending virtually were Board members Jill Sheley and Lisa Karstetter, and those Board members attending in person included Denise Sorom, Kathleen Allstot, Jim Mitchell and Nancy Churchill. Nancy Spurgeon was absent. Also in attendance were Barbara Walters, Executive Director; Kim Neher, Deputy Director; Alicia Gomori, Associate Director of Community Libraries; Summer Hayes, Associate Director of Programs and Resources; Sheila Callihan, Director of Human Resources; Mike Githens, Interim Director of Finance (virtual); and Sharon Mauch, Executive Assistant. Aaron Floyd, Director of IT, was absent.

III. **Public Comment**

Public comment was heard from a community citizen with concerns about WiFi and its potential to cause health problems.

IV. **Consent Agenda Items**

- a. January 19, 2023 Meeting Agenda
- b. Minutes of the January 19, 2023, board meeting
- c. Payroll & vouchers
 - i. December payroll for \$628,865.58 and Benefits for \$207,631.71
 - ii. December Accounts Payable for \$852,575.74
 - iii. Staff Reports

Kathleen moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. **Election of 2023 Board Officers**

Nancy Spurgeon will step down as Chair. Past practice has been for the vice chair to move into the role as Chair, however Kathleen as 2022 vice chair stated that she is not in a position to take on the responsibility was Chair for 2023. Nancy Churchill volunteered to step into the role of Chairperson for 2023.

Jim Mitchell served as Secretary for the 2022 term and agreed to step into the role of Vice-chair to replace Kathleen.

Jill agreed to accept the role of Secretary to replace Jim.

Kathleen moved to accept the new appointments. Jim seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Financial Report – Mike

Mike first gave a brief description of the financial documents presented each month to the board for approval and signature. The first of these is the Accounts Payable Approval document with the check register which is prepared by the Accounting Technician, and the second is the Payroll and Benefits Approval document which is prepared by the Payroll and Benefits Manager. These go through a process to ensure accuracy and are finally reviewed by Mike before presenting to the board for approval.

Mike followed with a detailed financial report for December, 2022. Which was not finalized at the time this was prepared because the county has not yet closed its books for the month of December. The revenue report shows about 95% of budget in property tax revenue collected which is good. Any property taxes that remain uncollected are still owed to us and will come in as delinquent taxes. The overall revenue bottom line comes in at just over 95%.

Concerning December expenses, Mike reminded the board of the budget amendment whereby some money was taken out of Salaries and Wages to spend in other parts of the budget. We will never run at 100% in this category due to the continuing hiring and vacancies always being in flux.

The Administration budget is underspent due to money that was moved into that category for training and remained unspent. In addition, there was money allotted for an audit which did not happen in 2022 due to the state's low staffing levels. We can expect an audit in 2023 for two fiscal years.

The Public Service budget is up due to increased use of libraries and spending at a higher level as a result. There was a significant increase in liability insurance as well. Bottom line spending is just under 95%.

The Training budget remains underspent. Facilities end budget is at 91.4%.

Total spending is under budget at just over 85%.

Mike thanked the board for their support with the amendments this past year to better spend the budget. Once the county prepares the annual financial report it will be presented to the board for review. This will include all of the funds for our annual report. The annual report is due in May, but he will try to get it done sooner in case the auditors are available before then.

VII. Executive Director Report – Barbara

Sheila – reported first on the status of vacant positions. There are a couple of candidates moving through the process for the open librarian positions in Okanogan and Brewster. We are also hoping to fill the open IT position in the next couple of weeks. The candidate

chosen for the Republic branch librarian took a job elsewhere. Recruiting continues for the Finance Director position.

Denise inquired about Betsey Stahler's retirement. When her replacement is hired, the hope is to have an overlap so that the new person can be trained properly.

Barbara –

The Board Retreat date has been set for May 11 from 9 am – 4 pm at the Community Foundation in Wenatchee. There will be an abbreviated version of the May board meeting at the end of the day so that no one will have to commit to an extra day that month. Because the financial report will not be completed by then, there will be a 2-month catch up on the financial report at the June board meeting. The board can decide on any after hours get together following the retreat and Barbara will help make arrangements.

Nancy C asked if it allowed for board members to meet. Denise said it is okay as long as no business matters are discussed.

Jill asked about the possibility of hotel accommodations.

Barbara said that Sharon will make hotel reservations for the night before and/or the night after the retreat for those who need it. Mike confirmed that there is a budget expense allotted for that.

Following up on the TIF: Barbara stated that the Public Libraries of Washington (PLA) has a lobbyist. The next step will be to draft a letter to our state representatives to state the issue and make a proposal that libraries will be exempt.

Kathleen added that we should talk to the county commissioners as well since the representatives will reach out to them for more information.

Barbara said that the PLA lobbyist is willing to look over the email to make sure all points are covered. Nancy C suggested talking to the county assessors as well.

The WLA Conference will be held in Wenatchee on March 30 - April 1. Let Sharon know by February 1 if you are interested in attending.

Barbara also gave an update on the Friends MOU. It was part of our last audit to work on this. We would like to tie this into working with the cities on the Reimagining Spaces project. We hoped that it would be one MOU that would be generic enough to cover all branches, but some have differences such as meeting spaces that are managed by the library as in Quincy for example, and others have meeting spaces that are managed by the city as in Winthrop. Therefore some amendments may be necessary to the MOU to accommodate all locations.

Jill asked if any branches or Friends groups have signed the MOU yet.

Barbara replied that Pateros has a brand new Friends group that has signed it.

Jill asked if it needs to be completed before the next audit.

Barbara answered that it does not need to be completed but that we do need to show progress. The urgency is to make the MOU clear for both sides clear so that we quit running into problems with the Friends groups. We want to establish good relationships with them, emphasizing collaboration so that we can move forward in a positive way. Meeting with the Friends groups in person will be very beneficial in that regard.

Kathleen noted that updated contacts with the cities are important as well.

Barbara stated that we are researching that and will have a draft ready for the board to review at the retreat in May. There is no timeline, but some of the changes have gone to legal for review.

VIII. Reimagining Spaces Report – Kim

Kim presented two service orders for the board to approve. These were previously approved but we are ready to execute to keep the board updated on our progress.

Service Order #002 concerns allowances which includes streamlined start-up expenses and some overhead, sight visits, and reimbursables. In addition, this includes continuing education and training for staff and staff tours of other library systems.

Service Order #003 concerns asbuilts for five (5) locations.

The finalized MOU for each building owner was also presented with language added pertaining to early termination, allowing for reimbursement in the event this occurs.

Denise wondered if our marketing team could possibly find ways to showcase our different locations and demonstrate how funds are being spent to improve them. She suggested that the Friends groups or other community members be enlisted to write an opinion piece on some of our local libraries to inform the public of this endeavor to improve our libraries.

Kathleen made a motion to approve Service Order #002 – Allowances

Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Nancy C made a motion to approve Service Order #003 – Asbuilts

Kathleen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Community Libraries Report – Alicia

Alicia highlighted few of the things included in her report. The City of Oroville created an ordinance that allows the library one handicapped parked spot and one 15-minute drop off zone next to the book drop, making the library mor accessible to patrons.

The Soap Lake branch coordinated an activity with the local assisted living facility as part of the town's Winterfest to provide handwritten holiday cards to residents of that facility. Patrons and community members were invited to visit the library to decorate and sign holiday cards in an effort to give the residents some joy during the holiday season.

The Peshastin location will host the Chelan/Douglas County mobile food truck in the library parking lot during closed time to distribute goods to those who need them.

X. Programming and Resources Report – Summer/Mary Lou Guerrero

Summer introduced Mary Lou Guerrero, Mail Order Library Manager, who joined the meeting to share with the board about our mail order services. This program benefits those who face challenges to accessing library services such as the homebound, the disabled, those who live in rural or isolated communities, incarcerated populations (where allowed), and patrons who home-school their children in rural areas. Those who cannot physically visit the library for a variety of reasons can still obtain and enjoy library materials.

We also offer a Regional Contact Center that was established during the pandemic as a way to centralize communication with patrons. It has since been made permanent. Staff answer calls and emails from patrons for topics such as account management, information requests, troubleshooting for online resources, etc.

Mary Lou answered questions and shared her appreciation for the many services the library provides for the community.

XI. Executive Session

Nancy C made a motion to move into Executive Session for 10 minutes until 2:20. Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Return to Open Session

The Board returned to open session at 2:20 p.m.

XIII. Approval of COLA for Executive Director

The Board was asked to approve a 3% cost of living allowance (COLA) for the Executive Director for 2023.

Jim moved to approved a 3% COLA. Kathleen seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

XIV. Adjournment

Prior to adjournment, Jill asked how much of a demand there is for mail order services. Barbara explained that it is a service that has remained steady since it began. It provides a way for those who are unable to physically visit the library due to various limitations to still obtain library materials.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.



Nancy D. Churchill (Feb 24, 2023 13:49 PST)

Nancy Churchill, Chairperson



Jill Sheley (Feb 27, 2023 14:34 PST)

Jill Sheley, Secretary