

North Central Washington Libraries  
Board Minutes

February 18, 2021

**I. Call to Order:**

Kathleen Allstot called to order the February meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees at 1:01 PM February 18, 2021. The meeting was held as a Zoom teleconference.

**II. Attendees:**

The following persons attended via Zoom: Board Members Kathleen Allstot, Katherine Meade, and Denise Sorom, Lisa Karstetter, Nancy Spurgeon, and Jill Sheley. Barbara Walters, Executive Director; Kim Neher, Deputy Director; Mike Githens, Director of Finance; Tracy Hazen, Director of HR; Aaron Floyd, Director of IT; Tim Dillman, Executive Assistant.

**III. Consent Agenda:**

Kathleen asked if there were questions or corrections for any items in the Consent Agenda which included the:

- a. February Meeting Agenda
- b. Minutes of the January 21 regular board meeting
- c. Payroll & Vouchers
  - i. January Payroll for \$377,418.56 and Benefits for \$154,350.41
  - ii. January Accounts Payable for \$624,825.04
  - iii. Staff Reports
  - iv. Contract for UKG Human Resources Information System

**Denise Sorom moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

**Nancy Spurgeon seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**IV. Strategic Plan Update**

Kim walked the board through a presentation updating them on the progress of the 3-year strategic plan started in 2019. The presentation showed 6 goals have been completed, 6 more are underway and on track to be completed in 2021, and 7 goals are scheduled to start in 2021 or need more time to be completed.

Kim mentioned that Goals 8, 14, and 22 had been envisioned as a team approach to communication improvements. Library leadership is recommending the hire of a Communication Lead position who would accomplish these goals through a comprehensive internal and external communications plan.

Kim asked the board to consider marking Goal 16 as completed as all internal departments are now required to have a public partnership plan. Kathleen asked for clarification on what an internal department is. Kim clarified that the STEM, Adult, Children, and Teen services departments would be considered public-facing internal departments. The board agreed that Goal 16 could be considered accomplished with the partnership plans now expected of those

departments.

Kim explained to the board that Goal 19, which deals with providing a mechanism for teaching staff Spanish, has been reevaluated. While the library has Rosetta Stone available for Spanish instruction, there is not an efficient or methodical way that the program can be utilized across the organization. The leadership believes it makes more sense to focus efforts on recruiting and retaining Spanish speaking staff.

Kim also proposed modification to Goal 25 to change it to a volunteer engagement plan rather than a volunteer appreciation plan.

Denise thanked Kim for the update and stated she is impressed by how much has been done. She asked about the Communications Lead. Would this be at the executive level? Kim said the highest level this position would potentially be is an associate director. The position would report to Kim and oversee the graphics and marketing staff. Jill asked for more information about how this position would further the strategic plan. Kim said that this person would oversee making sure NCW libraries is telling the story of what is being done in libraries, would publish the annual report, train staff on how to be out in communities communicating the work of the library.

Denise commented that the library has lacked any dashboard of metrics where communication efforts are mapped toward how PR is driving change and goal accomplishment and it would be important for a communications lead to develop that. Jill added that she is in favor of the role provided there is a really strong link to how this position helps accomplish strategic goals.

Kathleen asked if there is a timeline in mind for hiring this position. Barbara answered that leadership is hoping for some direction from the board on next steps for the strategic plan before planning for the hiring of this position.

Kathleen asked Kim to speak a bit on the facilities lead position. Kim communicated that this role would be a liaison to the cities on building and maintenance issues and would give more direction on how the district could accomplish goals for facility upgrades, interior design projects, and comparable issues. Kim mentioned that recent building projects and communication with cities about the FCA exposed the district's current lack of expertise and industry experience in these areas. Barbara reminded board members that both positions (communications and facilities leads) were approved as part of the 2021 budget cycle.

Jill asked Kim and Barbara to speak to a process question- How will the large amount of money that is currently in the Strategic Initiatives Fund be used? Kim said that next month she and Barbara will give some input into that question. At this point it was necessary to determine if the Strategic Plan would wrap up at the end of 2021 or if the board would approve an additional year.

Jill asked the board if it would make sense to wait on the modifications to the Strategic Plan until the board had heard the details of the Margaret Sullivan proposal. Denise voiced that the work with Margaret Sullivan Studio mostly affects facilities and likely would not change the scope of what Kim had presented.

**Nancy Spurgeon moved to extend the Strategic Plan one more year to be completed in 2022.**

**Katherine Meade seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **V. Executive Director Report**

Barbara thanked the board for the vote to extend the Strategic Plan by a year. Barbara introduced Aaron Payne as the new Director of IT. Aaron gave a brief introduction of himself. Barbara walked the board through her Executive Report which included information on the new agreement with the City of George, a COVID-19 Update, and WLA Legislative Week. Katherine asked if libraries are considered essential businesses, would that mean buildings could be fully back to normal operations sooner. Barbara commented that SB5115 is more about getting library staff vaccinated earlier.

## **VI. Financials-Mike Githens**

Mike presented the January 2021 statement. Mike continued to stress the need to spend as close to the levied amount of tax dollars as possible. Mike notified the board that there will need to be a budget amendment resolution approved by the board later in the year.

On the January revenue, Mike stated that it was predictable, with only 1.8% of total anticipated 2021 revenue received.

On the expenses Mike pointed out that the statement now shows the percentage of total budget being spent. Mike said that 7.84% of budget being spent on wages looks tight, but January saw 3 employee departures which meant vacation payouts and 1 severance expenditure.

Kathleen asked what part of wages is due to the COLA. Mike said it shows up a little but not much. The employee benefits section is now broken into more detail. Unemployment is paid quarterly so it comes as a larger lump amount when it hits the budget.

Benefits are \$32,000 more in January 2021 than in Jan 2020.

On Line 59- Library Materials- Expenses are trending better than they did last year.

Mike mentioned that Lines 211, 212, and 213 are new line items. These represent non-consumables purchased for branches. Essentially that is small equipment purchased for branches. Kathleen asked if the district can piggyback on state contracts for these types of purchases. Mike answered yes, whenever possible.

Mike pointed out that the expenditure on Line 240 represents final payment for elevator repairs at Wenatchee Public Library.

Mike reviewed the fund balances as of 12/31/20. The total for all library funds is \$18,979,076.12. Mike reminded the board of the Reserve Fund Balance Policy which dictates how the board will maintain and conduct transfers of funds at the end of a fiscal year. \$1,656,310.54 will be transferred to account 645 (Capital Fund). This will bring the Capital Fund balance up to \$2,570,981.

There is \$10,452,010.60 in the Strategic Initiative Fund. Mike stressed that library leadership and the board must have a plan in place this year for how that money will be spent. Mike reiterated that the district must not sit on those funds too much longer without a plan for spending the money. Denise added that leadership and the board should also have a plan for the

PR and Communication of why and how the money gets spent so that it sets realistic ongoing expectations.

## **VII. Branch Report-Bill**

Bill spoke about the new George Library Location. The new location is adjacent to 30% of the housing in George. The new location will open to the public on March 2.

In Brewster, the city is painting and installing new flooring. The branch is closed to the public while this work is being done. Bill anticipates moving furniture back in next week or the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Bill mentioned that Clare Morrison, Bilingual Outreach Specialist, was hired as the new librarian in Peshastin. Sharon Reddick retired at the end of January. Alicia O'dell and Melissa Little were hired to fill the new Area Manager positions.

Bill finished his report by stating that there has been healthy foot traffic in the branches since reopening.

## **VIII. HR Report- Tracy**

Tracy elaborated on the items mentioned in the HR report provided to the board. Now that the board has approved the contract with UKG, the implementation of the new HRIS System will begin. The implementation process will take at least 4 months. Denise commented that the price point on the HRIS seems very reasonable.

## **IX. Announcements**

Barbara mentioned that the negotiations on the Building Use and Maintenance Agreement with the City of Moses Lake are still ongoing at this point.

The March meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees is scheduled for March 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm. The meeting will be held via Zoom Teleconference.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Kathleen Allstot, Board Chair

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Katherine Meade, Board Secretary

