

North Central Washington Libraries

February 17, 2022

I. Call to Order

Kathleen Allstot called to order the February meeting of the NCW Libraries Board of Trustees at 1:02 p.m. February 17, 2022. The meeting was held as a Zoom teleconference.

II. Attendees

The following persons attended via Zoom: Board Members Kathleen Allstot, Denise Sorom, Jill Sheley, Nancy Spurgeon, Lisa Karstetter, and Jim Mitchell. Also in attendance were Barbara Walters, Executive Director; Kim Neher, Deputy Director; Mike Githens, Director of Finance; Aaron Floyd, Director of IT; Tim Dillman, Branch Operations Director (Acting); Sharon Mauch, Temporary Executive Assistant, and Nancy Warner from Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS).

III. Consent Agenda

Items included:

- a. February 17, 200 Meeting Agenda
- b. Minutes of the February 3 board meeting
- c. Minutes of the February 3 Executive Session
- d. Payroll & vouchers
 - I. January payroll for \$534,009.64 and Benefits for \$189,722.48
 - II. January Accounts Payable for \$290,059.59
 - III. Staff Reports

Denise moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Kim seconded the motion. The motion passed.

IV. Discussion of Board Meeting Scheduling

Kathleen expressed concern for attendance of Trustees at regular board meetings. Tim noted that in a poll sent to trustees, responses for meeting times were varied. Jill proposed that trustees who work be given preference for meeting times due to scheduling difficulties during off hours. After further discussion the consensus was that meetings remain on Thursdays from 1-3:00 PM.

V. Election of 2022 Board Officers and standing committee members

Kathleen will step down as Chair and said that it has been past practice for the vice chair to move into the role as Chair. Jill asked for more information on the duties of the vice chair. Kathleen said the duties include running meetings when the Chair cannot be present and is serving as an automatic member of Executive Administrators Review Committee.

Kathleen volunteered for the Vice Chair position, with the understanding that she would not automatically serve as Chair in the next calendar year. Jim has been filling in as interim Secretary and is willing to officially assume the role for 2022. Tim stated that there is past precedent for repeat terms of service, so a trustee could serve as an officer for two consecutive years.

Jill made a motion to elect a slate of officers: Nancy Spurgeon, Chairperson; Kathleen Allstot, Vice Chairperson; and Jim Mitchell, Secretary.

Denise seconded and the motion passed.

Denise volunteered to serve on the Finance Committee with Jill. Lisa and Jim volunteered to serve on the Policy Review Committee, and Kathleen and Nancy will serve on the Executive Director Review Committee.

VI. Presentation of the NCW Collection

Nancy Warner was present and introduced the Initiative for Rural Innovation and Stewardship (IRIS). She shared the web site irisncw.org, then focused on the NCW Collections and the collaboration with NCW Libraries through ncwcollections.org. She explained that this is a project that began in 2019. After a brief tour through the website, she talked about the many partnerships with other organizations that have contributed to the development of the collection. The goal is that IRIS will have a broader reach to this and other communities. She also suggested that the NCW collection be made available on the Online Resources page of the NCW Libraries website. They would like to promote the collection by highlighting content through events and displays at the branches in the region.

VII. Executive Director Report

The Policy Review Committee is new and will meet quarterly. Barbara will send policies to Jim and Denise for review.

HR update: Mike Githens gave a summary of the recruitment and interview status of several vacant positions in the branches and Distribution Center, including the Associate Director

positions. The Public Library Association conference is being held in Portland in March. There are 15 staff members attending in person and 10 others who will attend virtually. The American Library Association conference is in June, and several other conferences are on the schedule for 2022. The new HRIS system is scheduled to launch on May 10. Staff training will occur early in April.

Ferry County Board Member update: Confirmation was received by the Ferry County Commissioners for the appointment of Nancy Churchill. Confirmation should happen prior to March meeting.

Leadership Training: The Executive Team met with Nash Consulting for a 2-day retreat covering change management and organizational health. A meeting is scheduled next week with all managers and supervisors to review progress and the 15 Management Skills adopted as an organization. Denise asked about the progress made with Nash Consulting thus far. Barbara said about 50% of the original scope of work has been accomplished. Much good progress has been made but there is much more to do. A new contract will be required with Nash Consulting to complete the process.

VIII. Financial Report

Mike Githens presented a visual report on revenue and expenditures. So far 2022 looks very much the same as 2021, but it is very early in the year. He attended a meeting with the Chelan County Assessor which was focused on property values and forecasting the economic outlook for the area. A sharp rise in property taxes is anticipated which may affect revenue. HR is working hard to fill vacant positions so that the personnel budget is fully utilized. Jill requested that headers be included on each page of the report. Jill also asked if our hiring plan meets the budget. Mike said that underspending will resolve when we are fully staffed. When the 2021 financial report is complete, recommendations will be made to finance committee going forward.

IX. Facilities Improvement Plan Update

Kim announced that Amanda has started as the new Facilities Manager and is proving to be an asset. An Advance Opening Team has been developed to help the Winthrop Library Area Manager with logistics of moving and opening the new location on June 11. The team will meet every other week beginning in March and will work closely with various other work groups to make sure all pieces are in place. Kim also presented an update on the Brewster and Waterville Library building projects. There will be training for staff in how to communicate effectively with community stakeholders for future projects. Kathleen noted that Brewster and Waterville being test sites may be of benefit to future projects. Denise asked for clarification of how verbal and written agreements work. Kim explained that prior to a written contract, building owners must verbally agree to several things: 1) NCW

Libraries has permission to make improvements as tenants; 2) address any major observed deficiencies in the facility assessment; 3) be active participants in the process; 4) occupy the space for 10 years. Kim then asked if there is anything the board would like to see. Denise suggested a visual of where each project is in the process. Quarterly updates will be provided and should be meaningful for both the facilities team as well as the Board.

X. Branch Report

Tim reported that NCW Libraries has partnered with Grant County Health District and Chelan-Douglas Health District to provide Covid-19 test kits to the public. Feedback from the public has been positive and as a result, branches have reported that they have been able to connect with members of the community who normally do not come into the libraries. Northeast Tri-County and Okanogan Health Districts have been a less structured roll-out, but we have been able to assist them in recognizing the value of partnering with local libraries. The health districts have received additional supplies as well, so most of the libraries have transitioned to self-serve tables that supply the test kits as well as KN95 masks. This has been a good opportunity to remind the public of the need for the libraries and its role as a hub for various forms of information in the community.

We recently became aware of the North Central Accountability of Health putting on a work group called Evolving the Behavioral Health System, inviting different organizations that work in behavioral health, i.e. law enforcement, clinics, social and education services, to discuss the current state of behavioral health in Washington State. There are four library staff members who attended the first two Zoom sessions and reported that this will be good opportunity to communicate issues within our community concerning behavioral health and potentially partner with other agencies.

While in-person activities are still not allowed, branch staff has been very creative with ways to engage patrons such as a walking book club, outdoor story time, and various other ways to connect and meet the needs of our patrons. Washington State will be lifting the mask mandate next month which will give the branches more chances to make community connections.

XI. IT Report

Aaron noted that positive trends are continuing as it pertains to IT projects. The new phone system implementation is going very well with the DC, Moses Lake and East Wenatchee are all on the new system. Conversion to the Microsoft platform is nearly complete at the DC, and conversion in the branches will continue in the coming months.

XII. Adjournment

Kathleen expressed how much she enjoyed working with everyone over Zoom and she looks forward to resuming in person meetings soon, and she looks forward to Nancy Spurgeon stepping into the role as Chairperson. Denise thanked Kathleen for her leadership. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.