



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2024 – 6:00 PM Regular Meeting
Woodland Community Library
411 Lakeshore Drive
Woodland, WA
Community Room
Hybrid/In-Person

Kristy Morgan, *Chair*, Clark County At-Large
Olga Hodges, *Vice Chair*, Klickitat County
Marie Coffey, *Secretary*, Clark County At-Large
Mary Ann Duncan-Cole, Skamania County
Mary Williams, City of Vancouver
Vacant Seat, City of Vancouver
Vacant Seat, Clark County At-Large

Present Board: Olga Hodges (virtual), Marie Coffey, Mary Ann Duncan-Cole, Mary Williams

Absent: Kristy Morgan

Present Staff: Jennifer Giltrop, Executive Director; Alicia Gomori, Deputy Director; Justin Keeler, Outreach and Community Partnerships Director; Jennifer Hauan, Branch Manager; Catrina Galicz, Finance Director; Andrea Scherer, Human Resources Director; Miranda Holtmann, Executive Assistant, Dave Josephson, Facilities and Fleet Director, Julian Mendez, Communications and Marketing Director.

Remote Access: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3852820936> • Meeting ID: 385 282 0936 • Passcode: 070150 • Phone Access 206-337-9723

Fort Vancouver Regional Library Business Meeting Minutes

AGENDA:

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – Acting Chair Marie Coffey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Coffey announced that with the Chair out and the Vice-Chair attending remotely, Secretary Marie Coffey would be the Acting Chair of the meeting.
- 2. AGENDA APPROVAL** – At 6:00 p.m. Acting Chair Coffey noted that the Executive Session on the agenda is not needed at this time and offered that amendment to the agenda as presented. Mary Ann Duncan-Cole made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mary Williams seconded. Motion approved with 4 out of 4 votes.
- 3. CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS** – there were no announcements.
- 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – At 6:01 p.m. public comments began with the following speakers:
Katherine Gardner of Vancouver made a public comment about FVRL standing with marginalized communities.
Jude Jacobs of Vancouver made a public comment about equity and diversity.
Emily Losness of Vancouver made a public comment about equity and diversity.
Randy Schmidt of Clark County made a public comment about drag queen story hour.
Margo Logan of Portland made a public comment about a book suggestion.
Gary Wilson of Clark County made a public comment about a book donation and protecting children.
Quill Onstead of Portland made a public comment about drag queen story hour.
Sharon Watt of Woodland made a public comment about the Woodland Friends of the Library and the new Woodland Library.
Ann Bauer of Vancouver made a public comment about her love of libraries.
Evan Axon of Vancouver made a public comment about the role of libraries in our community.

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5. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**— At 6:22 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which included the minutes of the October 21, 2024 meeting and October Claims. Mary Ann Duncan-Cole seconded. Motion approved with 4 out of 4 votes.

6. REPORTS

- 6.1. **ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT** – At 6: 22 p.m. Jennifer Giltrop introduced the board to Julian Mendez, the new Director of Communications and Marketing. The floor was given to Mendez who provided information on their background. At 6:24 p.m. Alicia Gomori provided highlights of the programs and outreach work of the district from the Organizational Report for October 2024 which included;
- Battle Ground Community Library hosted a presentation by Humanities of Washington presenting “And it Has Pockets! The Battle for Women’s Clothing Equity.”
 - Cascade Park Community Library shared a story of a family moving to Vancouver who utilized the library for hours while waiting for the keys to their new home. The whole family got their library cards while they were there.
 - La Center Community Library’s Nailed It program inspired by the baking competition show, was a great success.
 - Vancouver Community Library’s friends group held Art 4 Art fundraiser that raised over \$4,000.
 - The Vancouver Community Library’s author talk was featured on KATU promoting the event.
 - Washougal Community Library held an author talk with local author “the Blind Woodsman.”
 - The Outreach and Community Partnership department is providing tours of the Vancouver Library, presenting on library resources and getting Clack College English as a Second Language (ESL) students into the library and aware of the resources available to them.
 - Giltrop reported that October was an excellent month for new library card holders, much of which could be attributed to the opening of the new Woodland Library. Over 2,800 cards were issued in October, 474 over the increase from the same period last year.
 - 30% of the population served has a library card. Started 2024 at 26%. The goal is to be at 32% by December 31st.
 - Digital check outs continue to grow. Digital collections represent 58% of first-time checkout and 40% of total circulation.
 - The Skamania bookmobile had a 46% increase in checkouts year over year in October.
 - The Foundation’s report included a reminder about the upcoming Giving Tuesday on December 3.
- 6.2. **BRANCH REPORT: WOODLAND COMMUNITY LIBRARY** – At 6:33 p.m. Jennifer Huan provided a report on library updates and activities of the Woodland Community Library and the Yale Valley Library District. It has been a year of transition for the Woodland Community Library. Construction on the new library began in October or 2023. Huan thanked the board for all their work in review and approvals to make the project a reality.
- **Community connections:** Woodland Community Library is very active in the community promoting library services and resources for example, Planter’s Day, the annual Woodland Festival, Hot Summer Nights at the Park, and a fishing derby.
 - **Programing:** The Museum of Curious Things had 150 participants, topped by the popular Reptile Man. Master Gardner series and Hammer Dulcimer presentation were very successful.
 - **Friends of the Library and Fundraising:** The Woodland Friends group is a dedicated and passionate group of library supporters, who were very active in this time of transition. The annual fundraiser, Love Your Library, held in April raised approximately \$40,000 to add to the building fund.
 - **New Woodland Community Library:** FVRL was awarded the Vancouver Business Journal’s Community Catalyst Award and Top Project in the public sector category for 2024. The grand opening on October

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12 was a huge success. 675 items were checked out on that day alone. There have been 206 new library accounts opened since the building opened.

- **Yale Valley Library District:** Yale Valley has been open three years. It is staffed 15 hours a week and allows card access 7 days a week. The Yale Valley Library District Board of Trustees has a seat vacancy, with a second seat to open when a term ends in the summer. Since opening about 3 years ago, the library has steadily grown with nearly 300 new cards issued and 850 patron visits in the month of October. The library provides internet, printing and study space to the community it serves.

6.3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS – At 6:46 p.m. Catrina Galicz provided the financial statement of highlights for the month ending September 2024.

September Statement of Cash: The cash balance at the beginning of year was just over \$19 million and as of the end of September is \$13.7 million, a decrease of \$5.3 million. This is all expected. Operational reserves are \$73,000 shy of meeting the 90-day reserve target. This is expected due to the cadence of property taxes coming in, so October numbers will cast a very different picture. This illustrates the importance of necessity of that 60–90-day reserve target in the policy due to the fluctuation in cash flow. The \$4 million in reserves for the Woodland Library have been fully spent as an organization.

September Statement of Revenue: All reoccurring operating revenues are meeting or exceeding expectation year to date based on timing and other influences. Property taxes are showing 60% through September. Investment interest continues to do better than expectations. Also incoming is revenue for the Woodland project as the district billed the foundation for the donations to go toward the project. These revenues related to the project will be expected to come in through the end of the year.

September Statement of Expenses: All operating expenses year to date are meeting or exceeding expectations. Most are under budget. The year-to-date percent of personnel is 66% of expected budget. Supplies and library books and materials are at 64% of budget though the expectation is to close that gap by year end. The 9% gap under budget in personnel is due to several key positions that were unfilled for most of the year.

RECEIVE AND FILE SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – At 6:51 p.m. Mary Ann Duncan-Cole made a motion to approve receiving and filing the September financial statements. Mary Williams seconded. Motion approved with 4 out of 4 votes.

7. BUSINESS

7.1. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

2025 Budget (2nd Reading) – At 6:52 p.m. Jennifer Giltrop and Catrina Galicz presented on the second reading of the 2025 budget. The draft 2025 budget remains largely unchanged with the exception that the year-to-date numbers were updated to include September actuals. The use of reserves has been increased by just under \$1.9 million to cover expenses added to the expenditure budget. Those additions in expenditures account for; adjustments to benefits and a rate increase for L&I, paid family medical leave, and other rate increases based on new information. Library books and materials budget raised by \$100,000. Professional services number increased to adjust amount estimated for state Auditor’s Office audit based on this year’s auditing costs, a compensation study and facilities and strategic planning efforts accounted for in the 2025 budget. An increase of \$500,000 budgeted in intergovernmental services are elections costs. This is an estimate of expenses to put forward a levy lid lift on the ballot. Finally, there was an increase in capital outlay amongst buildings owned and non-owned for needed refresh efforts. All of this increased the budget by \$846,000, increasing the need for use of operating reserves in 2025.

Looking at the 2025 Reserves budget, due to the aforementioned vacancies of key positions that resulted savings in the 2024 personnel budget, along with not being able to move forward with a facilities and strategic plan in 2024 and the associated savings, a cash fund balance can be anticipated to roll over. So, the budget now

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reflects an increase of cash expected at the end of the year and rolling it over accordingly. What was expected going into the year was \$15 million according to the last draft. Now the expectation in the beginning of 2025 is to have \$17 million. So, the addition of this cash, the increase of expenses, and the additional use of reserves results in a net positive impact at the end of 2025 by \$642,000. The \$4 million for the Washougal project and \$7.9 in the operational fund it is noteworthy to point out that at the end of 2025 no projects remain that have balances, meaning there are no dollars for capital repairs and maintenance after 2025.

Going into 2026, the forecast remains that the district will not be able to meet the 90-day operating expense reserve and 2026 has no capital planned, only operational costs. Projecting further going into 2027 the forecast remains that the district will not meet the 60- or 90-day test. By 2030, at current projected revenue, the district will be at least \$40 million short to meet the same level of service (meaning same hours, staffing and expenses as seen today). Without a levy lid lift, the district will be in a position that by 2026 it will have to cut back hours, staff and there is already no room for capital and maintenance in the budget.

The budget will be on the agenda in December for a public hearing before the board votes on the budget. Changes to this draft budget are not expected but minimal updates might be made.

2025 Property Tax Levy – Public Hearing – At 7:03 p.m. Acting Chair Coffey opened a Public Hearing for the 2025 Property Tax Levy. The floor was given to Galicz to provide context about 2025 property tax levy before public comment. Annually the district is required to tell the counties that it would like to increase by the full 1%. The board signs a resolution certifying the request of the full 1% allowed. This goes to Clark County which produces a millage rate which is set at the same rate throughout all the counties. Following Galicz's explanation, at 7:05 p.m. Coffey opened the public comment portion of the public hearing. Public comment would be set for no more than 30 minutes and individuals were allowed 2 minutes to speak. Public hearing comments were made by the following:

Ann Bauer of Vancouver made a public comment in support of the levy.

Acting Chair Coffey asked for any trustee comments. Mary Williams thanked Galicz and Giltrop for their work and the focus on these issues since the September retreat. Mary Ann Duncan-Cole expressed her appreciation for all the work that went into this month's board packet.

At 7:08 p.m. Acting Chair Coffey closed the public comment portion of the 2025 Property Tax Levy and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-10 adopting the 2025 Property Tax Levy. Mary Williams made a motion to approve adopting the 2025 Property Tax Levy. Mary Ann Duncan-Cole seconded. Motion approved with 4 out of 4 votes.

8. **Levy Lid Lift**– At 7:09 p.m. Acting Chair Coffey gave the floor to Giltrop to discuss the levy lid lift. FVRL hasn't done a levy lid lift since 2011, 14 years ago. As the 2025 budget 2nd reading illustrated, the district is at the point where expenses are outpacing revenues and to continue to offer the same level of service, or to improve services, the district will need to ask the voters to lift the district back to a full levy amount. A library district can statutorily collect 50 cents per thousand dollars of taxable assessed value. In 2024 the district is at 27 cents per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value. In order to keep the operating fund balance above the 60 to 90 days target by 2026, the district will have to increase the levy collected or will have to reduce services. In the coming weeks and months financial modeling will be produced that will outline what the district will do if the levy is passed and what the district will have to do if a levy lid lift doesn't pass or isn't pursued. Since the main cost of operating libraries is having the staff to open them, reducing staff and reducing hours will be the likely outcome

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in the case that a levy lid lift does not happen. The levy lid lift will require community outreach to explain how property taxes and levy lid lifts work in Washington state. As the district engages in the strategic planning and facilities assessment process, administration will learn where libraries and additional services are needed. The district will celebrate 75 years of service in 2025. Messaging to the community the importance of the service libraries provide to the community will be crucial to ensuring that the next 75 years. This next year will provide a great opportunity to engage with community while at the same time helping educate everyone on where the library is financially and the need for this levy lid lift.

The next steps will be a discussion at the December meeting with the recommendation regarding both the date to be on the ballot and the resolution that is required to be sent to the each of the county auditors to place the levy lid lift on the ballot. The board will also need to identify individuals who will serve on pro and con committees to prepare statements for the voter's pamphlet. Based on the board's decision, staff will dig into developing a detailed financial plan and service impacts related to the levy lid lift, as well as a communications plan to begin outreach to the 4,200 square mile district. This year has been focused on internal transitions of the library. New staff at the administrative level are ready to get to work on this planning and outreach in 2025 to meet the needs for the future of this diverse community the district serves.

9. **2025 FVRL board meeting schedule** – At 7:20 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve the 2025 FVRL Board Meeting Schedule. Mary Ann Duncan-Cole seconded. Motion approved with 4 out of 4 votes. Giltrop noted that the lack of a retreat was intentional because with strategic planning and a levy lid lift there would likely be several work session meetings will be scheduled as needed.
10. **Board comments** – at 7:22 p.m. Acting Chair Coffey made a comment to thank the staff, particularly Sherry Braga, as well as Justin Keeler and Jennifer Giltrop, for their service to volunteers at the volunteer appreciation event the previous Saturday. Olga Hodges thanked Marie for chairing the meeting and commended her for a job well done.
11. **Setting for next regular meeting:** Monday, December 16 at 6:00 p.m. at the Vancouver Community Library. It will be a hybrid (in-person/online) meeting.
12. **ADJOURNMENT** – At 7:23 p.m. Motion to adjourn moved by Mary Ann Duncan-Cole and seconded by Mary Williams.