



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2024 – 6:00 PM Regular Meeting
Vancouver Community Library, Columbia Room
901 C Street, Vancouver, WA
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
Irina Kakorina, Clark County At-Large
Megan Dugan, City of Vancouver (*trustee appointee*)

Present Board: Kristy Morgan, Olga Hodges (virtual), Marie Coffey, Mary Ann Duncan-Cole (virtual), Mary Williams, Irina Kakorina, Megan Dugan (non-voting member)

Absent:

Present Staff: Jennifer Giltrop, Executive Director; Alicia Gomori, Deputy Director; Molly Blalock, Branch Manager; Catrina Galicz, Finance Director; Andrea Scherer, Human Resources Director; Miranda Holtmann, Executive Assistant, Julian Mendez, Communications and Marketing Director, Lynne Caldwell, Collection and Technology Director/Public Records Officer

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** – Chair Kristy Morgan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. At the opening of the meeting Mary Ann Duncan Cole had not yet joined the call.
- 2. AGENDA APPROVAL** – At 6:00 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Marie Coffey seconded. Motion approved with 5 out of 6 votes.
- 3. CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS** – The chair welcomed the two newly appointed trustees participating in the meeting. In position #1, representing Clark County at Large, Irina Kakorina. Her appointment to the board has been confirmed by all counties in the district and is an official member of the board. In position #2 representing the City of Vancouver trustee-appointee Megan Dugan. Dugan has served on the FVRL board of trustees previously and is filling a partial term. She will be participating as a non-voting trustee-appointee while her joint confirmation from all district counties is pending.
- 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – At 6:02 p.m. public comments began with the following speakers:
 - Tiffany Heine of Vancouver/Clark County made a public comment about drag queen story hour.
 - Quill Onstead of Portland made a public comment about drag queen story hour.
 - Randy Schmidt of Clark County made a public comment about drag queen story hour.
 - Gary Wilson of Clark County made a public comment about children’s programs and a Christmas book donation.
 - Autumn Warner of Vancouver/Clark County made a public comment about support of the library and librarians.
 - Sue Clancy of Clark County/Vancouver made a public comment in praise of libraries.
 - Charles Forshew of Vancouver made a public comment about storyhour and homeless refuge.
 - Greg Long of Vancouver made a public comment about drag queen story hour.

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5. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**— At 6:21 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which included the minutes of the November 18, 2024 meeting and November claims. Marie Coffey seconded. Motion approved with 5 out of 6 votes.

6. REPORTS

6.1. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS – At 6:22 p.m. Catrina Galicz provided the financial statement of highlights for the month ending October 2024.

October Statement of Cash: Galicz presented the cash balance at the beginning of the year and the cash balance as of October 31, 2024 showing an increase 1.5 million. Galicz pointed out that the district receives property tax revenues in April and again in October. This means that the district has received the vast majority of revenues through the year and this report does not consider November or December. The expectation, which is on trend, is to spend down cash by December 31st. The Woodland Projects reserves have been fully expended.

October Statement of Revenue: Overall, revenues are meeting or exceeding expectations based on timing and other known factors. Regarding timing, the way that the property taxes come into Clark County from the other counties there's often a one-month delay of some funds. So there will be small property tax revenue reflected in the November financial report additionally with the Yale Valley Library District contract revenues. Significant revenues under miscellaneous are associated with the Woodland project as the district is reimbursed through the foundation, Friends, and grants related to the project.

October Statement of Expenses: Personnel expenditures in October are at 73% of budget where the target at this point of the year would be 83%. This is due to vacancies, hence an expected variance. The supplies budget and library books and materials budget are also under trend with that gap expected to close by the end of the year. Other services and charges are right on track at 83% through the end of October. In the capital outlay budget Galicz explained how the outstanding budget use percentage lines of 8% and 27% in Other Woodland Reimbursements and Yale is related to the delay in payment in public works due to legal requirements holding up processes between vendors and the state agencies.

RECEIVE AND FILE SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – At 6:28 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve receiving and filing the October financial statements. Irina Kakorina seconded. Motion approved with 5 out of 6 votes.

6.2. BRANCH REPORT: VANVOUCER COMMUNITY LIBRARY – At 6:29 p.m. Molly Blalock presented a report for the Vancouver Community Library. Blalock opened with general information and statistics about the branch before highlighting the following;

- **Staff:** Blalock thanked the staff for their work and customer service.
- **Partnerships:** Blalock highlighted partnerships with AARP (tax assistance), SHARE (summer meals), Clark College (speaker series) and Goodwill (ESL courses).
- **Displays:** Blalock shared some of the branch displays and a slide on the Grey Space Gallery.
- **Programs and Outreach:** Blalock highlighted Sensory Storytime, Read to Dogs, Thursday Thing for Teens, Juvenile Detention Center visits, Early Childhood and Assistance Program, Dia de los Ninos, Juneteenth, Hispanic Heritage Resource Fair, Board Game Day, sewing classes, and Adventures in Art.
- **Safety and Security:** The branch is focusing on safety and security with a multifaceted approach. The district has hired a new Safety and Security Manager who serves the whole district but is

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stationed at Vancouver Community Library. The branch is also doing trainings for staff and formalizing safety and security procedures.

- **Friends of the Library and Art4Art:** Blalock thanked the Friends of the Vancouver library for their ongoing support. She highlighted the Art4Art fundraising event and the community participation and creativity that it both inspired and celebrated.

6.3. **ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT** – At 6:43 p.m. Alicia Gomori presented highlights of the November 2024 Organizational Report which included.

- **Cascade Park Community Library** shared a story about a young patron who felt her identity reflected in the book read for preschool storytime about Día de los Muertos. The branch also hosted the East Vancouver Business Association meeting, presenting the library's business resources.
- **Goldendale Community Library** staff participated in a community resource fair at the local senior center hosted by WorkSource among others.
- **Ridgefield Community Library** held a Super Smash Brothers tournament.
- **Three Creeks Community Library** hosted their second annual “If you give a first grader a library card” and partnered with Skyview Highschool robotics team to hold a wild robot party.
- **Vancouver Mall Library** participated in a mall-organized event to bring in businesses and entrepreneurs to the mall where staff engaged with over 60 participants.
- **White Salmon Community Library** staff were excited to host the volunteer reception for the gorge Libraries.
- **Woodland Community Library** hosted residents of the Woodland Care Center for their very first visit to the new library. The residents appreciative of a new space that's very ADA-accessible and were thrilled by how easy it was to move in the new building.
- **Vancouver Community Library** continues to support literacy at the Juvenile Detention Center and the Juvenile Justice Center's holiday book fair.

Jennifer Giltrop highlighted the Foundation's section of the report marking the retirement of Foundation Executive Director, Rick Smithurd. Giltrop thanked Smithurd for his dedicated 23 years to the Foundation and the library community.

6.4 **FVRL 75th Anniversary**—At 6:49 p.m. Julian Mendez, Director of Communications and Marketing, presented on the upcoming 75th FVRL Anniversary plan. Mendez started with a brief history of libraries in America and the Pacific Northwest building to the creation of Fort Vancouver Regional Library in 1950 that will be celebrated. Mendez posed the question to underscore the celebration “Why do people love libraries?”

- Libraries create lasting value in every community.
- Libraries foster economic growth: Every dollar invested in public libraries generates an average of \$5 in value for the community that they're in.
- Libraries and the programs they create drive measurable gains in literacy and education.
- Libraries strengthen community connections.
- Libraries thrive and people still love them because they adapt to the needs of their communities.

FVRL has a proud tradition of serving the district's communities. Mendez then outlined the history of FVRL from its World War II roots as a bookmobile, to the formation of a multi-county library district. Serving in Clark County, Klickitat, Skamania, and parts of Cowlitz, the district offers print and digital

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resources, programming, games, partnerships offering tax help, experience offerings to local museums and attractions. All in an effort to not only support the community but also link communities together and build connection. FVRL's 75th Anniversary will spread a message to show our communities that the true definition of a library is a vibrant hub of learning, creativity, and connection and that libraries are not just relevant, they are essential.

The strategy for communicating this message;

- Strategic Storytelling: share compelling patron stories, key milestones and community contributions, historical and community narratives, collaborate with schools, historical societies, and local organizations highlighting the contributions of women's groups and grassroots movements and efforts that help shape FVRL's story.
- Elevated campaigns: dynamic digital campaigns featuring engaging trivia, print touchpoints including the news and events booklet evolving into a more narrative-driven format with a patron-centric lens, optimize our personalized messaging across various platforms to meet and tailor to the patron's needs and their interests.
- Immersive programming: branch-specific celebrations, anniversary passport program that will encourage patron to explore branches.
- Actionable insights: use data to measure what resonates most, tracking these events and getting feedback to really understand impact in real time.

Mendez closed their presentation by focusing on the future. Celebrating 75 years isn't just about looking back, it is about building a strong future together. Libraries transform lives. Mendez invited the board, and all who are listening or attending the meeting, to join in making this a celebration event to remember.

Giltrop added a remark on the 75th logo used in the presentation that will be seen across FVRL site and materials in the new year. Giltrop also thanked Mendez for their work in championing the FVRL story and this project.

7. BUSINESS

7.1. FACILITIES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

2025 Budget – Public Hearing – At 7:01 p.m. Chair Morgan opened a Public Hearing for the 2025 Budget. The floor was given to Galicz to provide context about 2025 Budget before public comment.

For the 2025 Budget the board saw a draft in October. The board saw a slightly revised draft again in November. Presented for public hearing is the final draft offered for adoption this evening. This draft is significantly similar with one slight adjustment that flows through the budget worth noting. The district received updated numbers for property taxes and were able to certify the millage rate. This calculation increased property taxes by just over \$353,000, an amount which flows through the financials—with revenues increasing by \$353,000 and use of reserves decreasing by that same amount. There are no changes to expenditures and no changes to the expected beginning cash balance. The ending cash balance will have an increase driven by the increase in property tax revenues and how that plays into interest revenues impacting the end balance.

This also has an impact on the five-year forecast. Although it has a positive impact on the deficit in 2025, FVRL is still forecasting that the district will not meet operating reserve requirements of 90-days of reserves in 2026.

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At 7:05 p.m. Morgan 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. No one provided public comment.

Morgan asked for any trustee comments. Trustees offered no comments or questions.

Mary Ann Duncan Cole joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

At 7:06 p.m. Chair Morgan closed the public comment portion of the 2025 Budget and asked for a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-11 adopting the 2025 Budget. Mary Williams made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-11 adopting the 2025 Budget. Marie Coffey seconded. Motion approved with 5 out of 6 votes.

7.2 POLICY AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE – At 7:08 p.m. Vice Chair Olga Hodges reported that the Policy and Nominating Committee met on December 5, 2024 to produce a slate of officers to bring forward to the board. This Policy and Nominating Committee recommends the following; as chair trustee Kristy Morgan, as vice-chair trustee-appointee Megan Dugan, who will be official by the January board meeting, and as secretary trustee Marie Coffey.

Mary Williams made a motion to approve the 2025 officers of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library as presented. Marie Coffey seconded. Motion approved with 5 out of 6 votes.

8. Levy Lid Lift– At 7:10 p.m. Chair Morgan gave the floor to Giltrop to present the Levy Lid Lift before engaging in discussion.

Giltrop opened with a reminder about how all FVRL taxpayers pay the same levy rate across all three counties plus the city of Woodland as a inner-county rural library district in the RWC 27.12. Giltrop provided a refresher of information about property taxes in the state of Washington, the establishment of Initiative 747 in 2001 which established the 1% levy limit and the intent that to grow your budget beyond that 1%, the voters would need to vote on that increased tax. In 2010, prior to the levy lid lift, the district was at .38 cents per thousand of taxable-assessed value. In 2011, voters lifted up to the full limit in the law, which is 50 cents per thousand and that remained at 50 cents for several years. Looking at 2025, FVRL is at 0.2686 per thousand. It has been 14 years without going back to the voters. That's quite a long time in between levy lid lifts. What that says is the district has been very responsible, good stewards of the public dollars. Giltrop shared a visual of revenue and expenses trends over that timeframe, showing expenses trending up outpacing the 1% revenue increase while reserves start to get used down.

Giltrop shared a table of proposed levy lid lift rates. At the current (2025) rate the 2026 estimated revenue is \$30,534,666 but expenses sit at \$38,259,703 for the same level of service offered today. That's a \$7.7 million deficit. FVRL doesn't have the reserves to sustain that kind of annual deficit for long and continue the same level of service. The table presented other rates from .37 per thousand—the least amount FVRL could ask for to maintain 60 to 90-day reserve fund balance—to .50—the highest statutory limit that can be asked of voters. The table outlined what each rate's revenue could fund and how long before FVRL would have to return to voters for another levy lid lift. The full lift to .50 is estimated to last 12 years before the need to return to the voters. Included in that number is funding for the Washougal Library as well as one additional library (where there is need). Even if those building project funds (20 million placeholder in the budget) were to be removed,

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it neither increases or reduces substantially the period of years before FVRL has to ask for another lift. At .42 per thousand, the funds for the two libraries are available but it reduces the amount of time before FVRL has to return to voters down to six years. The .37 per thousand has no new buildings or capital outlay for current facilities, so it is not really feasible and the district would also have to return to voters in five years for another lift. Giltrop presented a table that showed the estimated annual cost for tax payers at each levy rate.

Giltrop shared a slide on election dates and a slide on election costs. When looking at the amount of time before going back to voters, it is important to consider the associated cost of getting on the ballot in all the counties FVRL serves. \$500,000 is what was put in the 2025 budget for the cost of the levy lid lift as well as communication and marketing costs to get the information out to voters.

Giltrop shared a draft timeline of what the levy lid lift efforts will look like. Internally the district will work on service plan development and a soft launch of the public information campaign January through March. At the April board meeting the service plan will be put forward to the board. The public information campaign will be in effect April through August leading up to the August 5 election. Following the election, administration will move forward with the 2026 budget development. Giltrop then opened the floor for questions and discussion from the board.

The board discussed the difference between asking for the .42 rate or the .50. Morgan noted that though there is an instinct to go for a moderate number over the maximum, from the voters' perspective if the district were to come back and ask again in six years' time the voter might feel more tax-fatigued and frustrated comparatively than by the ask for the .50 lid lift. Giltrop added that at a cost of half a million each time the district has to come back to voters, this is a consideration as well.

Mary Ann Duncan Cole noted the importance of noting the public's temperature on taxes moving forward and the importance of communicating these points that Giltrop has been making as to why the need for the increase.

Morgan added that it is important to take that temperature, though if the board waits on lifting the levy, the district is facing a reduction of services as early as 2026. Giltrop added that if the district were to wait or if the levy lid lift were to fail, it would have to try again at some point because the only other alternative is to continue to reduce services until the lift were to pass.

Morgan clarified that "reduction in services" equates to layoffs, reduced hours, fewer new materials in the budget. Giltrop confirmed. Duncan Cole asked if her understanding about staff wages were accurate. Giltrop responded that FVRL will conduct a salary survey this year and will continue to try to address salaries. Salaries and benefits are a huge part of the budget, and it is the staff that bring the library to life. It is the staff that create community connections, that plan programs, that open our doors and welcome all. This will be an ongoing pressure point to continue to have marketable salaries to both attract and retain staff

Mary Williams noted that benefits for staff are also very expensive and asked Giltrop to detail for the board the reality of what the increases in healthcare can look like for libraries. Giltrop noted that when looking at healthcare it's imperative to negotiate for all employees in all geographic locations, including in the Gorge. Kaiser has been the provider for many years but this year they came to the library with a 14% increase. That percentage was able to be negotiated down without sacrificing service to employees, but that gives an idea of how the expenses grossly outpace the 1% increase in the revenue. Because salaries are not as high as corporate

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salaries, the district aims to offer good benefits including public pension but as those costs rise it is an ongoing balancing act. This argues in favor of the .50 because as the real-world cost continue to outpace the 1% revenue increase, in order to save money in the long term it makes more sense to aim for what will cover costs for the longest period before returning to voters to ask again.

- 9. Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1g) Personnel and RCW 42.30.410 (4b) Collective Bargaining** – At 7:58 p.m. Chair Morgan announced that the board of trustees would exit the room to go into executive session, to return at 8:40 p.m.

The Chair called the meeting back to order at 8:42 p.m.

- 10. Resolution 2024-12 AFSCME CBA Amendment** – At 8:42 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-12 AFSCME CBA Amendment. Marie Coffey seconded. Motion approved with 6 out of 6 votes.
- 11. Resolution 2024-13 Director’s Review & Compensation** At 8:44 p.m. Mary Williams made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-13 Director’s Review and Compensation. Marie Coffey seconded. Motion approved with 6 out of 6 votes.
- 12. Board comments** – at 8:44 p.m. Chair Morgan thanked Jennifer Giltrop for all her hard work this past year and wished her a happy one year anniversary at FVRL. The chair also thanked Molly Blalock for hosting the meeting as well as the Friends of the Vancouver Community Library for hosting the board for an appreciation dinner. Marie Coffey seconded the appreciation for Giltrop. Olga Hodges commented on the good work done in the past year and the work ahead. Mary Ann Duncan Cole made a comment about the great work done by the Friends of the Libraries. Irina Kakorina thanked the board and staff for the warm welcome.
- 13. Setting for next regular meeting:** Tuesday, January 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the Cascade Park Community Library. It will be a hybrid (in-person/online) meeting.
- 14. ADJOURNMENT** – At 8:47 p.m. the chair adjourned the meeting.