

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
June 27, 2023 – Approved September 26, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Francis Okelo at 6:00 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board members present: Anthony Amiano, Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Maureen LeBlanc, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Francis Okelo, Edris Scherer, Diane Tabakman,

Board Members absent: Alice Joselow Karen Kelley, Joseph Puglia, Karen Zevin

Also present from WLS were: Rob Caluori, Pat Brigham, Wilson Arana, Kate Meyer, Allison Midgley

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Yvonne Cech, Director, John C. Hart Memorial Library

MINUTES

The minutes of the May 30, 2023, meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Mills-Worthy and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial report through May 2023 was presented by Mr. Caluori. Mr. Caluori noted that on the Income Statement, spending for May came under budget although it reflects an overspending in library materials especially Hoopla and Kanopy. WLS is in receipt of two insurance policy dividend checks totaling \$2,000. Mr. Caluori also noted that the Audit reports are now final, and anyone who wishes to have a printed final copy to please let him know. The Board accepted the financial report on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion passed unanimously.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Board of Trustees sends their collective condolences to Karen Zevin for her profound loss.

Mr. Okelo also noted that all Board members should have their conflict-of-interest papers filed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee: Ms. LeBlanc reported that the committee is making a small change to the purchasing policy and will send its recommendations to the Governance Committee.

Governance Committee: Ms. Morduch reported that the committee expects the employee handbook to be finalized in June 2023.

Budget Committee: Ms. Scherer reported that the Budget Committee will send out a note at the end of August with potential dates to convene.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

A copy of the Executive Director’s Report was mailed in advance of the meeting.

In Dr. Kirchner’s absence, Mr. Caluori discussed the Strategic Plan handout and answered questions from Board Members.

An additional report was presented to the Board by Pat Brigham, Director of Development. Ms. Brigham discussed the mission, vision, and goals for Development for 2023.

- The mission of the WLS Development Department is to support WLS strategic goals.
- The vision is to build strong financial support through diversified funding sources and strategic community partners that enhance WLS Outreach Services and promote WLS’ capacity to meet Westchester’s emerging library services and literacy needs.
- The goals are to identify WLS funding needs and priorities, both short term and long-term; to strengthen strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, non-profits, County services and others to connect services and resources provided by WLS and the member libraries; to build awareness of services and resources provided by WLS, and to assist member libraries in building their capacity to fundraise.

PLDA LIASON’S REPORT

Ms. Cech reported on the June 2023 PLDA meeting where the following was discussed:

- Construction Grants are due August 25, 2023. There will be training soon.
- The e-content committee noted that White Plains Public Library requested that e-content material no longer be shared with the member libraries. PLDA voted on a 6-month trial basis to evaluate the impact on the other libraries.
- The Civil Service Committee met with Senator Shelley Mayer regarding the New York State Civil Service process, hoping to improve the functionality of it.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:20 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Iwanski and seconded by Ms. Morduch that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Andrea Zuckerman Bober

Andrea Zuckerman Bober
Secretary

WLS Development Mission, Vision, Goals - 2023

Mission: The mission of the WLS Development Department is to support WLS strategic goals.

To this end Development efforts are focused on securing funds to support Outreach Services, initiatives that promote equity and access and building key partnerships to advance these efforts. The Department plays an integral role in the stewardship of strategic community partnerships, especially in those communities that serve the underserved and unserved. Further, Development provides fundraising assistance and support to member libraries when requested. Development promotes WLS services, programs and the member libraries as valuable assets with qualitative and quantitative impact.

Vision: To build strong financial support through diversified funding sources and strategic community partners that enhance WLS Outreach Services and promote WLS' capacity to meet Westchester's emerging library services and literacy needs.

Goals:

To identify WLS funding needs and priorities, both short term and long-term:

- Work closely during the budget process with Outreach staff and Finance to prioritize program needs not met with federal/state/county funding and with check-ins as needed throughout the year.

To strengthen strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, non-profits, County services and others to connect services and resources provided by WLS and the member libraries.

- Leverage strategic partnerships to support WLS equity and access initiatives and goals of Outreach Services
- Participate in local, state-wide and national equity and access conversations with interest in further developing public and private support for WLS

To build awareness of services and resources provided by WLS

- Increase donor communication/ engagement
- Increase public awareness of WLS as a philanthropic "investment" in Westchester's future and the future of libraries as a community asset
- Create public awareness of program impact through a series of social media stories, blogs, etc.
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To assist member libraries in building their capacity to fundraise

- Offer consultation and advice when requested
- Offer related workshops/ training related to general fundraising



westchester
LIBRARY SYSTEM

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Update on Strategic Initiatives

JUNE 27, 2023

3 key strategic initiatives

- Promote equity & access
- Expand community / member library / partner engagement
- Update & improve our infrastructure

Promote equity & access

Statement: Hold equity and access as core values and advance those values within WLS and through our partnerships

Promote equity & access – action items

- Provide equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and trauma-informed professional development opportunities for WLS and member library staff and trustees.
- Review existing WLS policies and procedures, programs, and services, to identify and remove biases to help attract and retain staff and trustees reflective of the diverse populations in Westchester.
- Ensure a welcoming and supportive work environment for staff.
- Advocate for and provide leadership and partnership on digital equity and literacy for all residents of Westchester County.



Promote equity & access – action items

Provide equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and trauma-informed professional development opportunities for WLS and member library staff and trustees.

WLS sponsored empathy-based workshops and workshops focused on serving patrons experiencing homelessness

Westchester Breathes (Breath-Body-Mind) and Westchester Resilience Coalition learning opportunities available to all public libraries

Ongoing promotion of EDI & trauma-informed workshops from local and national resources such as:

- WebJunction
- NPW (Nonprofit Westchester)
- Library 2.0
- METRO (Metropolitan Library Resource Council)
- PULISDO (Public Library System Directors Organization)



Promote equity & access – action items

Review existing WLS policies and procedures, programs, and services, to identify and remove biases to help attract and retention staff and trustees reflective of the diverse populations in Westchester. Ensure a welcoming and supportive work environment for staff.

WLS Staff Onboarding Working Group (ongoing)

Updating WLS Employee Manual (to be shared with WLS Governance Committee in July)

Financial Policy updates (ongoing)



Promote equity & access – action items

Advocate for and provide leadership and partnership on digital equity and literacy for all residents of Westchester County.

Active participation in National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) and NYS's ConnectALL digital inclusion efforts

Founding agency of the Westchester Digital Inclusion Coalition

WLS Outreach:

- Staff trained as digital navigators
- Reconnect with Tech (a digital skills training program)
- HSE (High School Equivalency) Connect!
- Vision Labs
- Chromebook Lending Program (ended March 2023)



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Expand community / member library / partner engagement

Statement: Be actively engaged with communities throughout Westchester, especially the unserved and underserved.

Expand community / member library / partner engagement – action items

- Help create awareness of and connections to services and resources provided by WLS, the member libraries, and partners such as local nonprofits and County government.
- Use Census and other data sources to identify community needs and shifts in demographics to develop and sustain relevant programs and services.
- As an organization (trustees, staff, and volunteers), communicate and embody the mission and vision statements.

Expand community / member library / partner engagement – action items

Help create awareness of and connections to services and resources provided by WLS, the member libraries, and partners such as local nonprofits and County government.

- Provide quarterly updates to Westchester County's executive and legislative bodies
- Connect with NYS legislators at least twice per year to provide updates on key funding issues and service activities
- Ongoing and growing social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Creating a communications coordinator role within the existing staff roster – transition to occur in July 2023
- Expand discoverability through the Evergreen online catalog
 - Cataloging staff provides records for new titles (in all languages), objects and resources to support public access
 - Aspen Discovery provides easier access to all items – digital & physical – in the Evergreen online catalog, as well as library event calendars and websites



Expand community / member library / partner engagement – action items

Help create awareness of and connections to services and resources provided by WLS, the member libraries, and partners such as local nonprofits and County government.

WLS Career Coaching & Outreach:

- Service review presentations for organizations and community groups such as Westchester County Department of Social Services, Port Chester/Rye Council for Community Services, Community Resource Center, VolunteerNY, At Home on the Sound, and The Old Guard
- Promote school/public library partnerships to expand library card registration and resource awareness
- Work with community partners to develop, promote and distribute information about reentry services: Westchester Connections Guide, Welcome Back Brochure, Reconnect with Tech
- Provide service review sessions for member library staff: overview of outreach services, career coaching and job search resources, sessions and workshops
- Developed and promoted Outreach Publications Catalog to increase use of promotional materials by member libraries and community partners
- *In development – RAP Sheet Education program, Student Advocacy 101 Answers*



Expand community / member library / partner engagement – action items

Use Census and other data sources to identify community needs and shifts in demographics to develop and sustain relevant programs and services.

Integrating an expanding range of information resources into our planning and funding conversations. These include resources such as:

- Institute on Disabilities' Annual Disability Statistics Compendium
- NPW's Salary Survey
- NYS's Digital Equity Portal
- United Way's ALICE reports
- Westchester Children's Association's Community Snapshots
- Westchester Community Foundation's Westchester Index



Expand community / member library / partner engagement – action items

Use Census and other data sources to identify community needs and shifts in demographics to develop and sustain relevant programs and services.

Ongoing vendor engagement to encourage enhancements of material and service options to better support our current and anticipated demographics

WLS Outreach:

- Develop programs to support ongoing engagement of the growing populations of seniors and individuals with disabilities, with a focus on homebound delivery services and Vision Labs
- Increase outreach to Spanish speaking communities. Examples include:
 - Expanded food pantry partnerships
 - Promotion of our college guidance services for first generation students
 - Translation of key content from Senior Law Day collaborative

Expand community / member library / partner engagement – action items

As an organization (trustees, staff, and volunteers), communicate and embody the mission and vision statements.

- Monthly board reports are shared with public library directors and board presidents
- Ongoing efforts to create and consistently brand WLS promotional materials for distribution to public libraries, interested organizations, and the public.
- PatronPoint – WLS customer management system (CMS) rollout to begin in July 2023 to coordinate awareness messaging activities
- County-wide awareness campaigns using billboards, bus stop ads, and recurring ads in Spanish language newspapers to foster awareness of digital equity services (Need to get connected?) and FirstFind.org resources focused on individuals not yet engaged with their local library.



Update & improve our infrastructure

Statement: Continuously update and improve the WLS operational and technological infrastructure.

Update & improve our infrastructure – action items

- Update and expand the business continuity plans for WLS to incorporate short-term and long-term operations and sustainability of all aspects of the organization.
- Consistently review and update the administrative, community engagement, and technology services provided to the member libraries and the communities served.
- Maintain and support an agile environment that proactively increases awareness of and responds to trends, external factors and social issues that impact public libraries.



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Update & improve our infrastructure – action items

Update and expand the business continuity plans for WLS to incorporate short-term and long-term operations and sustainability of all aspects of the organization.

- Mobile phones & laptops for all WLS employees to allow for hybrid work environment
- Upgrade of IT network & cybersecurity (protocols & training)
- Upgrade of core systems to a cloud-based solution
 - Financial management
 - Interlibrary loan (ILL)
 - Remote app-based access to office phone
- Succession planning within departments

Update & improve our infrastructure – action items

Maintain and support an agile environment that proactively increases awareness of and responds to trends, external factors and social issues that impact public libraries.

- Supporting WLS staff participation in professional development & other learning opportunities such as:
 - American Library Association (ALA), New York Library Association (NYLA) & Public Library Association (PLA) conferences
 - Evergreen International Conference
 - International Public Library Fundraising Conference
- Sponsoring leadership growth for WLS and public library staff
 - LIU Palmer School of Library and Information Science - Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration
 - Nonprofit Westchester's (NPW) Emerging Leaders Program
 - VolunteerNY's Leadership Westchester



Update & improve our infrastructure – action items

Consistently review and update the administrative, community engagement, and technology services provided to the member libraries and the communities served.

- Ongoing review and updating of the IT service level agreements (SLA) and IT Helpdesk tickets
- Monthly "check-in" sessions with public library staff
 - Adult services
 - Youth services – children, teens & young adult
 - Public Library Directors Association (PLDA)
 - PLDA Technology Committee
 - PLDA Roundtables (newly formed)
- Site visits by WLS staff

