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**Call to Meeting**  
**February 25, 2025**

The next Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System (WLS) is **Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.** PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will take place at the WLS Headquarters, 570 Taxter Rd, Ste 400, Elmsford, NY 10523.

***Regular Meeting Agenda***

**Minutes:** January 28, 2025

**Finances**

**President's Report**

**WLS Committee Reports**

**Executive Director's Report**

**PLDA Report** – Erik Carlson, Director, Dobbs Ferry Public Library

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Regular Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

**WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
**Trustee Meeting**  
**January 28, 2025 – Approval Pending**

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

The Annual Organizational Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Susan Morduch, President, at 6:02 p.m. and held in-person at the WLS Headquarters in Elmsford. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Patricia Phelan, Barbara Tepper, Diane Tabakman, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Anthony Amiano

Also present from WLS: Terry Kirchner, Rob Caluori, Patricia Brigham, Wilson Arana, Allison Midgley, Kate Meyer

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Erik Carlson, Director, Dobbs Ferry Public Library

**ACTION ITEM**

***Election of WLS Officers:*** Ms. Morduch introduced Karen Kelley, Chair of the WLS Nominating & Board Development Committee, who introduced the following slate of executive officers for 2025:

**President** – Nishat Hydari

**Vice President** – Anthony Amiano

**Secretary** – Diane Tabakman

The term of office of all elected officers shall be one year and no member of the Board may serve as President for more than two consecutive years. Article III of the WLS Bylaws contains the Duties of Officers. The office of Treasurer has been appointed, and Maureen LeBlanc has agreed to serve as Treasurer. The Board approved the slate of executive officers for 2025 on a motion by Wes Iwanski and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion passed unanimously.

Additionally, The Oath of Office required by New York State for public library system trustees was administered to the reelected trustees Wes Iwanski, Patricia Phelan and Diane Tabakman.

There being no further business, the organizational meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Mills-Worthey and seconded by Ms. Kelley. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Nishat Hydari at 6:07p.m.

The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Julie Mills-Worthey, Susan Morduch, Patricia Phelan, Barbara Tepper, Diane Tabakman, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Anthony Amiano

## **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Meeting and Regular Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2024, were approved on a motion by Mr. Iwanski and seconded by Ms. Tepper. The motion passed unanimously.

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Mr. Caluori presented the payment registers for November and December 2024. Mr. Caluori presented the financial statements highlighting significant positive and negative variances for the December and the year-end reports. This included a discussion of the large computer purchase, its deployment status and the impact on the Balance Sheet and Income Statement. He also discussed temporarily restricted assets noting that WLS was able to close many of the older open categories of assets and minimize what is carried over into the new year. The financial reports for November and December 2024 passed on a vote of 13-0-1, with Mr. Cartolano abstaining.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Ms. Hydari thanked Ms. Morduch for her hard work as WLS Board President for the past year and thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as Board president. Ms. Hydari noted that there were 2 items for the Board to complete: Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy and the Board Committee sign-up sheet.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Audit/Finance Committee:*** Mr. Caluori reported that the auditors are receiving information as requested and will be on site the week of February 19, 2025.

***Nominating & Board Education:*** Ms. Kelley, Chair, noted there are two upcoming Trustee Handbook Book Clubs: April 30, 2025, 5:00 PM-6:30 PM – Trustee Handbook Book Club – Board Development: Recruitment, Orientation, Education and Evaluation, and July 15, 2025, 5:00 PM-6:30 PM – Trustee Handbook Book Club: Recruiting & Retaining Quality Staff. All are encouraged to attend.

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

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

- WLS is working in conjunction with the Ramapo Catskill and Mid-Hudson Library Systems to provide transportation up to Albany for Library Advocacy Day on February 5th, 2025. Dr. Kirchner stressed the importance of reaching out to local legislators to advocate for funding.
- Dr. Kirchner noted that Federal Executive Orders that are issued will be only as effective as their implementation, which is unknown. He noted that larger libraries with immigrant communities are having a hard time getting patrons to show up for programs. Neighbors Link is a good first resource for immigration questions. A Neighbors Link workshop on February 11th entitled An Immigration Update for Library Staff and Trustees, will be held online, Tuesday, February 11, 2025, from 1:00 PM-2:00 PM. This webinar will help library staff and trustees better understand what migrant families are facing with the new federal administration and how libraries can help answer questions that may arise by staff or the public. This includes information on working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policies and officers, policies and procedures related to expedited removal, library and community safety plans and local community resources to use and share.
- Mount Vernon Public Library’s 2023 Annual Report is almost complete, and their goal is to complete the 2024 Annual Report on time.
- There are vacancies at the following libraries: Mamaroneck Public Library (Director), Purchase Free Library (Director), along with a retirement announcement from Mount Pleasant Public Library.
- Dr. Kirchner thanked the Board of Trustees and the Staff of WLS for all their hard work in 2024.

**PLDA LIASON’S REPORT**

Erik Carlson, PLDA Vice President and WLS Board Liaison, introduced himself and provided the PLDA Liaison’s Report covering the January PLDA Meeting.

- PLDA is looking into a combined Finance / E-Content committee.
- PLDA as a collective body did not endorse system wide participating in the Patron Point Verify platform that would allow for online library card renewal. WLS IT staff are exploring options for moving forward with the Patron Point Verify and other modules on a group purchasing approach for libraries that would like to utilize these options.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:09 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Tabakman and seconded by Ms. Zevin that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Diane H. Tabakman  
Secretary

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# WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WITH NOTES – JANUARY 2025

### REPORT NOTES

All of the figures in the accompanying notes are approximated to the nearest \$100 or 1%. The figures in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest dollar and percentages are presented to two decimal places.

This month's report includes the following financial statements:

- Balance Sheet
- Statement of Revenues and Expenditures with Comparison to Budget

Please note that while this report contains financial statements for the month-end of January 2025, work continues to close the books for the year. This work includes any corrections and updates resulting from work with our auditors. All of this activity will be recorded as of December 31 and the year-end figures may change while the work to close the books for the year and the audit continues.

### PAYMENTS OVER \$50,000

The WLS Purchasing Policy (Policy #13) requires that purchases exceeding \$50,000 without prior budget approval be formally reported to the Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. To meet and exceed the policy directive, all payments over \$50,000 in the months of January 2025 are listed below:

- Amount: \$263,250 (As three separate payments of \$101,250, \$81,000, and \$81,000)
  - Vendor: Dell
  - Purpose: 2024 Computer Purchase
- Amount: \$83,918
  - Vendor: Crown Castle Fiber
  - Purpose: Internet at Member Libraries for January through March 2025
- Amount: \$78,266
  - Vendor: NYS Employees Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP)
  - Purpose: Employee health insurance for February 2025
- Amount: \$54,995
  - Vendor: Midwest Tape (Hoopla)
  - Purpose: December 2024 Patron Pay-Per-Use Digital Content

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## BALANCE SHEET – JANUARY 2025

The Balance Sheet shows comparative figures for the period from month-ending (ME) December 2024 through ME January 2025. The key changes are asset increases in *Accounts Receivable* and *Prepaid Expenses*, which were offset by liability increases in *Deferred Revenue* resulting in a 1% decrease in *Net Assets*. Details are discussed below.

### ASSETS:

This section indicates the organization's liquidity by showing what assets WLS holds in cash and what assets will be available in cash in the near future. The net result for the period is an overall decrease in assets driven primarily by an anticipated reduction in *Operating Cash*.

*Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents* (This shows the cash in WLS's operating and payroll bank accounts and petty cash): WLS's operating cash decreased by \$21,600. With \$1,121,800 in receipts, activity included \$736,400 from member libraries for IT services and group purchases, \$335,800 from Westchester County for the fourth quarter of 2024 and \$29,900 from New York State for the final 10% 2024-25 of Local Services Support Aid and the final 10% 2024-25 Local Library Support Aid which gets forwarded to member libraries. Notable expenditures aside from rent, payroll and benefits, Internet, and delivery to libraries included \$194,200 to member libraries in special legislative pass-through aid, \$263,200 to Dell for the purchase of computers and monitors, \$55,000 to Midwest Tape (Hoopla) for pay-per-use digital content for patrons in December 2024, and \$45,500 to Tutor.com for the 2025 subscription renewal.

*Accounts Receivable* (These are monies due to WLS from member libraries and outside organizations): This line rose sharply by \$601,300 driven by the recording of \$1,343,400 in receivable revenue against the receipt of \$742,100 in payments on invoices. Almost all of the activity is related to invoices for member library technology fees and digital content.

*Prepaid Expenses* (Services paid for that have not yet been consumed): This line increased by \$321,500 driven by the addition of \$551,400 in prepaid expenses against the recognition of \$229,900 of expenses incurred. Expenses in this category include electronic content subscription, insurance paid in advance, and maintenance agreements for hardware and software. The majority of the additional prepaid expenses in the month were electronic content subscriptions for 2025.

### LIABILITIES:

This section shows WLS's near-term obligations. The net result for the period is an overall reduction in liabilities primarily driven by the recognition of *Deferred Revenue*. Details are discussed below:

*Deferred Revenue* (Funds received which have not yet been earned): This figure increased sharply by \$1,103,896, the result of deferring revenues from 6-month and 3-month invoices to member libraries for IT services, group purchases for digital content, and movie licensing.

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# STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

## COMPARISON TO BUDGET WITH PREVIOUS YEARS TO DATE –

### JANUARY 2025

#### SUMMARY:

Revenues were \$12,300 less than expenses before depreciation for January but represent a positive variance from the budget which had called for a \$47,300 deficit.

#### REVENUES:

Total revenue fell \$10,100 short of the budget for January driven primarily by *Other Revenues with Restrictions*, which is discussed in detail below.

*State Revenues without Restrictions* and *State Revenues with Restrictions* – These lines are flat against the budget. This is based on WLS's procedure to recognize NYS revenues in-line with the budget until New York State releases official aid figures which will not be known until after NYS passes and figures are released by the Division of Library Development later in the spring.

*Other Revenues with Restrictions* ended the month \$10,100 short of the budget due to shortfalls in two areas: (1) there was no revenue recorded for the LIU Palmer School program, however, revenues and expenses for this program will be incurred beginning in February; (2) With \$800 in revenues from restricted contributions, the line fell short of its grants and fundraising goal by \$5,000.

#### EXPENSES:

Expenses before depreciation came in under budget by \$45,000 but were \$12,300 more than revenue for the month. Lines with significant variances and/or noteworthy activity are discussed below:

*Fringe Benefits* is underspent by \$12,900 for the month. This was primarily driven by 2025 health insurance premiums being essentially flat against 2024 rates despite a 15% increase being accounted for in the budget. WLS should expect a significant surplus in this line for the year provided NYS does not adjust premium rates mid-year.

*Library Materials* expenses were more than the budget by \$18,900 for January. This was driven by two key factors: (1) A one-time expense of \$5,500 for the 2025 Tumblebooks subscription. Procedurally, WLS only amortizes subscriptions with a cost of \$6,000 or more monthly; (2) Greater than anticipated patron activity in pay-per-use materials from Hoopla and Kanopy. A majority of the overage in this area is related to Hoopla activity, which continues to increase. While increased activity is a good problem to have, WLS is working with the vendor to identify potential cost savings. The finance committee will be discussing Library Materials expenses in more detail at a future meeting.

**Westchester Library System**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As of January 31, 2025**

	Month Ending 01/31/2025	Month Ending 12/31/2024	Month Ending 01/31/2025		Year Ending 12/31/2024
	Actual	Actual	Period difference	Period variance	Actual
<b>Assets</b>					
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,864,278	1,885,918	(21,640)	(1.14) %	1,885,918
Reserve Cash & Cash Equivalents	2,972,778	2,968,992	3,786	0.12 %	2,968,992
Unconditional Promises to Give	362,027	365,676	(3,649)	(0.99) %	365,676
Accounts Receivable	699,872	98,558	601,314	610.10 %	98,558
Prepaid Expenses	1,050,037	728,543	321,494	44.12 %	728,543
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>6,948,992</b>	<b>6,047,687</b>	<b>901,305</b>	<b>14.90 %</b>	<b>6,047,687</b>
<b>Long-Term Assets</b>					
Property & Equipment	562,290	574,690	(12,400)	(2.15) %	574,690
Right Of Use Asset	677,961	677,961	0	0.00 %	677,961
<b>Total Long-Term Assets</b>	<b>1,240,251</b>	<b>1,252,651</b>	<b>(12,400)</b>	<b>(0.98) %</b>	<b>1,252,651</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>8,189,243</b>	<b>7,300,338</b>	<b>888,905</b>	<b>12.17 %</b>	<b>7,300,338</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
<b>Short-Term Liabilities</b>					
Accounts Payable	635,942	826,258	(190,316)	(23.03) %	826,258
Deferred Revenue	1,104,480	584	1,103,896	189,023.28 %	584
Short-Term Right of Use	309,841	309,841	0	0.00 %	309,841
<b>Total Short-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>2,050,263</b>	<b>1,136,683</b>	<b>913,580</b>	<b>80.37 %</b>	<b>1,136,683</b>
<b>Long-Term Liabilities</b>					
Long-Term Right of Use	506,113	506,113	0	0.00 %	506,113
Post-Retirement Benefits Payable	3,563,008	3,563,008	0	0.00 %	3,563,008
<b>Total-Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>4,069,121</b>	<b>4,069,121</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00 %</b>	<b>4,069,121</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>6,119,384</b>	<b>5,205,804</b>	<b>913,580</b>	<b>17.54 %</b>	<b>5,205,804</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>					
Net Assets, Beg Bal	2,094,534	1,631,193	463,341	28.40 %	1,809,666
Change in Net Assets	(24,675)	463,341	(488,016)	(105.32) %	284,868
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>2,069,859</b>	<b>2,094,534</b>	<b>(24,675)</b>	<b>(1.17) %</b>	<b>2,094,534</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>8,189,243</b>	<b>7,300,338</b>	<b>888,905</b>	<b>12.17 %</b>	<b>7,300,338</b>
<b>Net Asset Detail</b>					
Working Capital	4,898,730	4,911,004	(12,275)	(0.24) %	4,911,004
Long-Term Net Assets	(2,828,870)	(2,816,469)	(12,400)	(0.44) %	(2,816,469)
<b>Total Net Asset Detail</b>	<b>2,069,860</b>	<b>2,094,535</b>	<b>(24,675)</b>	<b>(1.17) %</b>	<b>2,094,535</b>



Westchester Library System  
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures  
Comparison to Budget with Previous Years To Date  
As of January 31, 2025

	Month Ending 01/31/2025			Year To Date 01/31/2023	Year To Date 01/31/2024	Year To Date 01/31/2025			Year Ending 12/31/2025
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Total Budget
<b>Revenue</b>									
State Revenues without Restrictions	185,491	185,507	(16)	174,610	175,008	185,491	185,507	(16)	2,226,090
County Revenues without Restrictions	111,928	114,164	(2,236)	105,875	111,920	111,928	114,164	(2,236)	1,369,960
Federal Revenues without Restrictions	11,666	11,666	0	13,750	10,830	11,666	11,666	0	140,000
Member Technology Fees	231,466	232,084	(618)	224,018	225,687	231,466	232,084	(618)	2,785,000
Fund Raising & Contributions	108	0	108	0	0	108	0	108	0
Interest	8,172	5,416	2,756	6,454	8,502	8,172	5,416	2,756	65,000
Other Revenues without Restrictions	1,346	1,375	(29)	588	2,944	1,346	1,375	(29)	16,500
State Revenues with Restrictions	52,942	52,930	13	50,255	50,415	52,942	52,930	13	635,150
Other Revenues with Restrictions	2,696	12,816	(10,121)	7,145	1,621	2,696	12,816	(10,121)	153,800
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>605,815</b>	<b>615,958</b>	<b>(10,143)</b>	<b>582,695</b>	<b>586,927</b>	<b>605,815</b>	<b>615,958</b>	<b>(10,143)</b>	<b>7,391,500</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>									
Salaries	200,903	202,741	1,838	185,006	189,004	200,903	202,741	1,838	2,432,900
Fringe Benefits	107,995	120,885	12,890	100,567	108,139	107,995	120,885	12,890	1,450,600
Professional Fees	1,349	4,333	2,984	833	5,248	1,349	4,333	2,984	52,000
Equipment	1,288	13,333	12,045	1,341	849	1,288	13,333	12,045	160,000
Library Materials	113,676	94,775	(18,901)	66,904	95,012	113,676	94,775	(18,901)	1,137,300
Rent and Utilities	31,790	34,825	3,036	27,726	31,021	31,790	34,825	3,036	417,900
Repairs and Maintenance	49,366	51,725	2,358	60,468	62,125	49,366	51,725	2,358	620,700
Supplies	4,854	3,334	(1,520)	305	326	4,854	3,334	(1,520)	40,000
Telephone and Internet	36,675	37,966	1,291	43,681	39,515	36,675	37,966	1,291	455,600
Printing and Postage	2,974	5,434	2,460	2,261	2,751	2,974	5,434	2,460	65,200
Bibliographic Fees	7,734	7,658	(76)	6,862	7,383	7,734	7,658	(76)	91,900
Professional Development	600	9,467	8,867	77	1,216	600	9,467	8,867	113,600
Travel	470	5,483	5,013	2	1,835	470	5,483	5,013	65,800
Memberships	1,611	2,333	722	12,771	2,243	1,611	2,333	722	28,000
Contractual Services	18,032	22,367	4,335	16,454	17,136	18,032	22,367	4,335	268,400
Delivery Service	33,894	40,417	6,523	38,779	37,410	33,894	40,417	6,523	485,000
Insurance	3,262	3,333	71	3,479	3,941	3,262	3,333	71	40,000
Miscellaneous	1,617	2,833	1,217	783	490	1,617	2,833	1,217	34,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>618,090</b>	<b>663,242</b>	<b>45,153</b>	<b>568,299</b>	<b>605,644</b>	<b>618,090</b>	<b>663,242</b>	<b>45,153</b>	<b>7,958,900</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue Before Depreciation</b>	<b>(12,275)</b>	<b>(47,284)</b>	<b>35,010</b>	<b>14,396</b>	<b>(18,717)</b>	<b>(12,275)</b>	<b>(47,284)</b>	<b>35,010</b>	<b>(567,400)</b>
<b>Non-Cash Activity</b>									
Depreciation	12,400	12,084	(317)	14,493	15,258	12,400	12,084	(317)	145,000
<b>Total Non-Cash Activity</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>12,084</b>	<b>(317)</b>	<b>14,493</b>	<b>15,258</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>12,084</b>	<b>(317)</b>	<b>145,000</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue</b>	<b>(24,675)</b>	<b>(59,368)</b>	<b>34,693</b>	<b>(97)</b>	<b>(33,975)</b>	<b>(24,675)</b>	<b>(59,368)</b>	<b>34,693</b>	<b>(712,400)</b>

## WLS Executive Director Report February 25, 2025

### WLS Strategic Initiatives



**Promoting equity and access**



**Expand Community/Member Library/Partner Engagement**



**Update and Improve Our Infrastructure**

### Library Advocacy Day in Albany, NY – Wednesday, February 5, 2025

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul released her proposed 2025 Executive Budget on Tuesday, January 21, 2025. Overall, the funding proposals related to libraries put us in a better position than in past years, but there is still a strong need for ongoing advocacy to support libraries.

Governor Hochul's proposed funding included:

- State Aid for Libraries (Operating Aid): \$104.6M (a \$750,000 increase from last year's enacted allocation of \$103.8M)
- State Aid for Library Construction (Public Library Construction Aid): \$34M (this is \$10M less than last year's enacted allocation of \$44M)
- NOVELny: \$3M (flat funding from last year's enacted allocation of \$3M)

Library Advocacy Day was on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>. WLS partnered with the Ramapo-Catskill Library System (RCLS) and the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) to coordinate chartered buses to transport library advocates up to Albany for Library Advocacy Day. Over 30 individuals from the member libraries and WLS were in attendance this year. A special shout out

and thank you to WLS Trustees Rob Cartolano (District 9: Bronxville, Eastchester, Pelham, Tuckahoe) and Diane Tabakman (District 11: White Plains) for joining us this year.

The New York Library Association (NYLA) had several budgetary and policy/legislative initiatives for this year's Library Advocacy Day:

### **Budgetary Initiatives**

NYS Library Operating Aid: \$176.8 million

NYS Library Construction Aid: \$175M

Library Materials Aid: \$11.33/pupil

NOVELny: \$3.1M

### **Policy/Legislative Initiatives**

Freedom to Read Act: [S.6350-B](#) / [A.6873-B](#)

Protection in Public Libraries: [S.7677-A](#) / [A.7843-B](#)

eBooks Licensing Reform: [S.6868-A](#) / [A.10544](#)

Media Literacy in New York State: not a sponsored bill currently

In our conversations with legislators and their staff, we also prioritized the importance of updating and enhancing civil service procedures and processes to help libraries attract, develop, and retain employees; and the ability for school registration process to automatically include library card signup for students.

More information about the NYLA budgetary and policy/legislative initiatives can be found on the NYLA website at <https://www.nyla.org/2025-legislative-initiatives>.



## **Career Coaching Services (CCS)**

### **Seminar - *Managing Your Career in Changing Times***

These virtual and in-person seminars provide participants with relevant information around self-assessment and employer hiring practices. The seminars meet weekly for ninety-minute sessions over six consecutive weeks during the Winter, Spring, and Fall. Two Seminars are being offered this winter:

Tuesdays, January 14, 2025 – February 18, 2025 – Virtual – Evening

Tuesdays, February 25, 2025 – April 1, 2025 – In-person – Morning

The virtual evening seminar's scheduled time proved popular, and it was at group capacity. The participants were enthusiastic and focused. This virtual format was preferable based on their personal schedules. Although virtual, the group dynamics were positive, and they made networking connections among themselves and planned to continue to meet periodically to support each other.

Since last Fall's in-person seminar was so successful, a winter seminar will be held at the John C. Hart Library. Registration is highly active, and we anticipate having a full group.

Providing the virtual and in-person options for the community offers individuals the choice for the best format that will suit their situations.

### **Individual Advisement and Career Coaching**

Individual Advisement and Career Coaching service provides patrons who find themselves in between seminar schedules or have specific career needs which can be personally addressed with a professional Career Coach. Activity has been remarkably busy with clients working through their individual obstacles and proactively pursuing their desired job search options.

### **Community Engagement**

Member libraries continue to be supportive of our programming and services. They appreciate our website resources and career programming that is offered in-person and virtually. We are currently working with several libraries to plan in-person workshop events for 2025.

CCS is currently working with the Yonkers Public Library - Riverfront on a Culinary Career Pathways Apprentice Program through a grant from the United Way of Westchester and Putnam's Pepsi x Mary J. Blige Strength of a Woman Community Fund. The grant will help support young women ages 16-24 with a paid apprenticeship with a local Yonkers restaurant, access to a career coach, workshops on entrepreneurship and business plan development, and certification in food safety and handling.

The Yonkers Public Library is partnering with a local restaurant, Off the Hook, providing 5 women with paid 35 hours of training in a professional commercial kitchen to learn about food preparation, menu creation, hospitality management, and safety and food service health standards. Concurrently, the apprentices will have access to a CCS career coach who will help the apprentices develop a resume, assist in job search, and conduct mock interviews.

Interviews and selection were conducted in January and early February. The apprentices have begun their restaurant training and will start their career development classes in early March.



### **Cataloging Services**

Director of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray has cataloged most of the Greenburgh Public Library's Spoken Arts Collection, CD audiobooks which were originally issued on vinyl discs by New Rochelle's Spoken Arts during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and then digitized at Yale University during the mid-2000s. This collection contains a broad range of literature, often read by the authors, as well as theatrical performances and a bit of music. All items have required original cataloging since (to our knowledge) no other copies in CD format exist; also, Yale reorganized a

lot of the material when they digitized it, taking various thematically related titles which were originally released individually and combining them into one title, for example.

WLS is currently formulating a strategy to handle library materials which have questionable origin, in terms of copyright and licensing. Legal advice has been obtained, and Mr. Wray and Manager of Cataloging Services Melissa Glazer are working with Executive Director Terry Kirchner on a plan which will be communicated to the member libraries.

Dr. Kirchner was recently notified about a large donation to the National Maritime Historical Society in Peekskill. The society's collection of approximately 4,200 books was cataloged by WLS Cataloging Services in 2022, with a handful of additional books occasionally added since. Once the staff at Hendrick Hudson Free Library finishes inspecting the new donation and sets aside titles which have already been cataloged by WLS, the catalogers will begin work to catalog the rest of the collection. The Hendrick Hudson Free Library has been a partner in this project from the beginning, "hosting" the collection and making it available to all member libraries in the shared catalog.

WLS Cataloging Services cataloged titles in world languages including Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, and Telugu. Ms. Glazer performs most of this work, which requires special skill and much meticulous "detective work," particularly in the case of non-Roman alphabets. The remaining few were cataloged by Part-time Cataloger Steven Pisani and Mr. Wray.



## Development

In December 2024, WLS received \$5,000 from Apple Bank in support of Outreach Services, in addition to a growing number of unsolicited annual contributions from individuals. WLS also received from Con Edison a \$7,500 grant to support the Reconnect with Tech program.

In addition to researching potential grant opportunities, WLS has several pending grant proposals supporting a variety of WLS priorities including outreach services. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) invited WLS to submit a full proposal under the National Leadership Grants for Libraries Community Centered Implementation Grant FY25 category to support the training of volunteer digital navigators. The proposed project will engage the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), a nationally recognized leader in digital navigator training, to train a committed cohort of volunteer digital navigators and assign them to "office hours" in local libraries and/or community centers. IMLS funds for FY25 were appropriated in 2024. Grants are highly competitive, and the awardee announcements are expected in July 2025.

Director of Development Patricia Brigham is currently assisting The Field Library Board of Trustees' fundraising committee with developing a fundraising strategy and direct mail campaign. Committee members previously attended WLS's virtual 2024 Lunch and Learn workshops on Annual Appeals and Direct Mail conducted by Ms. Brigham. Lunch and Learn workshops for 2025 are in the planning stage and will be announced shortly. Additional

information on library fundraising and upcoming workshops is available online at <https://wslibraryfundraising.org/>.



## Information Technology (IT)

The new WLS app is now available on both phone platforms (iOS and Android), which has been a significant accomplishment for the IT department. ILS Discovery Specialist Allison Pryor has done an excellent job of communicating updates about the app to the libraries and assisting with any support issues. As we move forward over the next few months, we will continue to evaluate and improve the app to ensure the best user experience for all patrons.

Another major focus over the past few weeks has been network security and the ongoing network rebuilds at the libraries. Stronger security measures are being implemented to further safeguard patron data and the system. As the ever-evolving landscape of cybersecurity continues to change, WLS IT is constantly evaluating the products we use to protect our environment.

Additionally, it is important to note that last year, WLS IT applied to the Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program but was recently informed that we were not selected. This would have been a great opportunity to enhance our security services with additional funding, but our systemwide E-rate discount rate did not meet the participation threshold. The E-rate discount rate is based on factors such as student eligibility for the Free & Reduced Lunch program and level of poverty. WLS will continue to explore ways to improve security in a cost-effective manner to protect both libraries and patrons.



## Small Business and Workforce Development

Westchester Library System (WLS) Small Business and Workforce Development is implementing two new resources to promote small business growth and skilled trades workforce development. These offerings support economic development (including underserved communities), and they are located on the WLS website and are available to the member libraries.

[Small Business Resources @ Library](#) is a new WLS website that provides small businesses access to start-up and growth resources available in Westchester County and beyond. The website connects patrons to resources that will guide them through start-up and growth phases. It will provide users with access to marketing research databases along with the numerous local government and business associations that support small business development. The website also

provides information on talent pathways into the workforce including emerging and in-demand career professions. This website can be accessed at <https://wlssmallbusinessresources.org/start-a-small-business/>.

**BlueCareer** (an EBSCO Learning product) is a digital skilled trades career exploration platform designed to assist in building a talent pipeline into the skilled trades. BlueCareer provides patrons with skilled trades information on more than 100 skilled trades jobs across 15 industries. The digital career assessment, exploration, and planning tool allows individuals to identify job and skill requirements, view videos on a day-in-the-life of a skilled trades professional, review learning and training resources, and develop a career plan. The tool is user-friendly and applicable for new entrants into the workforce and for individuals exploring career change. BlueCareer users can link to a skilled trades job placement platform called BlueRecruit. This product can be accessed at <https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/jobs-careers/bluecareer/>.

Our recent community outreach activities included a visit by SCORE Westchester (a Small Business Administration affiliated small business mentoring service) to the WLS office. WLS Executive Director Terry Kirchner and SCORE chapter leaders discussed ways both organizations could continue to collaborate and partner to support small businesses' growth. One outcome is that WLS will host a SCORE Westchester Chapter meeting in April which will provide an opportunity to increase SCORE mentor awareness of the library resources that support small businesses. In addition, the meeting with the northern Westchester Chamber of Commerce was productive. The Chamber plans to share the new WLS small business website with its members and use it in generating small business topics to enhance its membership learning initiative.



## **Strategic Data Analysis and Member Library Support**

Manager of Strategic Data Analysis and Member Library Support Allison Midgley is working through the review process and answering questions from the libraries to assure that as many libraries as possible will meet the March 1<sup>st</sup> submission deadline. A third of the member libraries have completed their New York State 2024 Annual Reports.

Ms. Midgley and Bijan Kimiagar of AEQUA Strategies have drafted metrics and standards that WLS and member libraries will be able to use to evaluate whether they are approaching, meeting, or exceeding state minimum standards. They are reviewing the first version of a data dashboard that uses over 20 years of State Annual Report data and local demographics data as its core. They are holding several one-on-one and three small group discussions with key partners at WLS and member libraries to gather input about which data to prioritize to meet the needs of WLS and member libraries.

Ms. Midgley is working with Communications and Marketing Coordinator Megan Brown to increase awareness of two digital resources that WLS added to its shared resources in 2024. *The Shelf* rebranded itself as *Estante Infinitio* at the end of 2024, requiring updates to information and marketing across WLS. Ms. Midgley is reminding the libraries that *medici.tv* has content with



public performance rights that they can use for programming at the library. The medici.tv resource is an arts and culture platform offering library patrons home access to recorded and streaming live events.



## Trustee Handbook Book Club / Trustee Education Opportunities

This year's Trustee Handbook Book Club sessions have been announced. These sessions, as well as previously recorded sessions, count towards the required 2-hours/year of trustee education.

January 22, 2025, 5:00 PM-6:30 PM – Trustee Handbook Book Club: Advocacy  
(Recording is available)

April 30, 2025, 5:00 PM-6:30 PM – Trustee Handbook Book Club – Board  
Development: Recruitment, Orientation, Education and Evaluation

July 15, 2025, 5:00 PM-6:30 PM – Trustee Handbook Book Club: Recruiting &  
Retaining Quality Staff

November 18, 2025, 5:00 PM-6:30 PM – Trustee Handbook Book Club – Next Level  
Trusteeship: Building an Effective and Impactful Board Culture

To register for and to learn more information about each of the 2025 sessions, go to the Trustee Handbook Book Club website at <https://midhudson.org/trusteebookclub/>. Archived recordings of earlier sessions are available on the Trustee Handbook Book Club Archive at <https://midhudson.org/trustee-handbook-book-club-archive/>.



Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L. Kirchner, PhD.  
Executive Director