

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
February 28, 2023 – Approved March 28, 2023

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Karen Zevin at 6:02 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, Susan Morduch, Joseph Puglia, Edris Scherer, Diane Tabakman, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Julie Mills-Worthy, Francis Okelo

Also present from WLS were: Terry Kirchner, Rob Caluori, Wilson Arana, Kate Meyer, Elena Falcone, Allison Midgley, Allison Pryor, Dana Hysell

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

Karen Kelley, Chair of the Nominating & Board Education Committee, introduced Alice Joselow, who has agreed to fill the vacancy for District II [Briarcliff Manor, Ossining, Tarrytown]. The Board approved the appointment of Ms. Joselow on a motion by Karen Kelley and seconded by Wes Iwanski. The motion passed unanimously.

The Oath of Office required by New York State for public library system trustees was administered to the new-elected trustee Ms. Joselow.

MINUTES

The minutes of the January 31, 2023, were approved with revisions to correct typographical errors on a motion by Mr. Puglia and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Caluori noted that the audit is nearly complete and is expected to be presented to the Board for approval at the April Board Meeting. He also noted he has been exploring replacing the current financial management system with a cloud-based version by Sage called Intacct. Ms. Scherer, WLS Board Treasurer, noted that Mr. Caluori has also discussed this option with the Chair of the Finance Committee, Ms. LeBlanc. Mr. Caluori also reviewed the January 2023 financial report making note of key variances. The financial reports were accepted on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

As part of the President’s report, Ms. Zevin introduced Dana Hysell, Outreach Services Specialist, who was responsible for WLS and the member libraries participation in Advocacy Day, which was held on February 23, 2023. Ms. Hysell stated that the virtual meeting was well attended and focused on support of NYLA’s initiative of municipal ballot reduction, and modernization of Civil Service practices. Ms. Hysell concluded that all legislators in attendance were supportive and thankful. Ms. Zevin reminded the Board that advocacy doesn’t end with Advocacy Day, and that everyone has a responsibility to advocate for libraries. Ms. Zevin also reminded the Board that with Open Meetings Law committee meetings are public and must be posted within 2 weeks of each meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating & Board Education: Ms. Kelley, Chair, reported that the committee is currently searching a candidate to fill the vacancy for District V [Armonk, Bedford Village, Mount Pleasant, Pound Ridge]. She had a brief discussion with the committee regarding Board education training which may be required for library board staff, as well as sexual harassment training.

Audit Committee: Mr. Iwanski reported that the auditors are in the final stages of the 2022 audit, and the committee will be meeting with the auditors to receive the report and will be bringing a recommendation to the Board at a future meeting.

Governance Committee: Ms. Morduch reported that the committee will send a link to review the policies and bi-laws, and that Dr. Kirchner is working on the employee handbook. All policies are located on the WLS website.

Budget Committee: Ms. Scherer reported that the Budget Committee’s next meeting will be in September 2023.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

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

Dr. Kirchner introduced WLS staff in attendance of the Board Meeting. As part of the Executive Director’s report, Wilson Arana, Manager of IT, was introduced to speak.

Mr. Arana gave an overview of the IT Services Menu. The overview highlighted the important role of IT staff to support and maintain the services provided. He acknowledged Lindsay Stratton, Systems Librarian, for ILS Maintenance Service, Michael Petrocelli, Systems Administrator, for his work with the Network Managed Services and Wireless Support, and Jean-Paul Francois, Jr. Systems Administrator, for their work in maintaining the authorized devices on the WLS Network. He also acknowledged the training staff, Allison Midgley and Allison Pryor, for the training they provide to the library staff.

Dr. Kirchner stated that he received an email from Greg Wirszyla, PLDA President which included a document of their organization’s priorities for 2023. After further discussion, it was decided that Dr. Kirchner will meet with the PLDA Executive Committee to discuss the document further.

PLDA LIASON’S REPORT

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

- PLDA has established a Wellness Committee.
- PLDA had a discussion regarding professional development opportunities and if they can be available through either Central Library Funds or through WLS, they are developing roundtables to discuss this further.
- Greenburgh Public Library has installed remote lockers through Bibliomation and are currently piloting the program.

Ms. Cech thanked Jennifer Brown, PLDA Past-President, for stepping in for last month’s Board Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:08 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Morduch and seconded by Ms. Kelley that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Andrea Zuckerman Bober

Andrea Zuckerman Bober
Secretary

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WLS Discussion Points

<p>Evergreen</p> <p>With the end of the contract for Evergreen fast approaching, PLDA members would like to see PLDA and WLS start working together to conduct an aggressive and open-minded approach to investigating various ILS systems that will accommodate customized front-end solutions and data exchanges with other digital library services.</p> <p>Additionally, if Evergreen is to be retained as our system, directors feel the member libraries should be allowed direct access to Evergreen without going through WLS as is the norm with other library systems.</p>	<p>At the January 19, 2023, PLDA meeting, WLS IT asked PLDA for library directors who would volunteer to discuss the state of the ILS. Five library staff members (not directors) were nominated by their library directors to serve as PLDA representatives for this activity.</p> <p>At the February 16, 2023, PLDA meeting, this group's recommendation to remain with Evergreen was presented and approved. WLS is under contract with Bywater to host Aspen Discovery, a front-end solution that will provide a better patron experience when using the online catalog, including integration of digital content into the discovery and retrieval process. The addition of the Aspen Discovery layer was discussed with PLDA prior to its approval by the WLS Board.</p> <p>To date PLDA has not provided any recommendations for major ILS enhancements or improvements.</p> <p>Currently, libraries can access the ILS directly from their own/WLS network using a VPN. Remote access to the ILS is not available due to security concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining a secure network connection is a strong first line of defense against cyberattacks.• Not all public library systems maintain appropriate levels of security protection for their ILS. Just because their approach is “more convenient” for library staff does not mean that it is “more secure” for the public’s data.
<p>VDI/Evergreen</p> <p>Ongoing VDI issues still need to be resolved and the recent upgrade did little to correct the many problems experienced by Directors.</p>	<p>WLS IT is in the process of updating and changing selected functions of the VDI environment to enhance stability, security, and functionality.</p>

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<p>PLDA members had no say in the decision to implement this product and would now like WLS to give serious consideration to pursuing other alternatives to VDI.</p>	<p>WLS IT is in the early stages of looking at alternative options for enhancing VDI and providing more functionality security when remotely connecting to service platforms and tools.</p>
<p>Statistics</p> <p>The majority of concerns PLDA members have with ILS/IT are directed toward statistical reporting. Directors would like to see consistency and uniformity in statistical reporting and a more organized, comprehensive, and dependable delivery of all WLS stats. Several responses to the survey mentioned the importance of statistics being reported in a timely manner.</p> <p>Directors would also like to see more detailed reporting of digital statistics (Overdrive was used as an example) and more consistency in receiving those statistics. It was noted that Hoopla statistics have not been updated since June 2022. Library directors rely on monthly statistics when reporting to their individual library boards. Members are aware of the challenges faced in compiling these statistics but cannot overstate the role accurate and timely statistics play in the relationship between directors, library boards, and the constituents of each Westchester community.</p>	<p>The library data dashboard is an ongoing project to provide a timelier and more consistent platform for information. Unfortunately, most vendors still do not provide API access for reporting and/or do not provide enough information to identify by library usage.</p> <p>Staff intervention is still part of the process for most aspects of statistical reporting. PLDA decisions also impact WLS’s ability to receive complete statistical reports from vendors. The PLDA decision to require that each member library could curate the Hoopla collections for their community “broke” the statistical reporting module that had been in place, but each member library now had immediate access to their library’s statistics on the Hoopla dashboard. WLS was able to work with Hoopla to build a new statistical reporting module that provided aggregated monthly usage statistics for each library on the library data dashboard.</p> <p>As noted in PLDA meetings in the past, many vendors struggle in their efforts to provide meaningful usage data to WLS and the individual libraries.</p>
<p>Additional areas of Interest:</p> <p>WLS providing the ability to work remotely</p>	<p>Currently, VDI provides the best available system for secure access to the environment. We are looking at alternative options as well.</p>
<p>Additional areas of interest:</p> <p>Ongoing modernization of WLS equipment</p>	<p>All libraries participating in WLS IT services have new network equipment, computer and VDI equipment. These upgrades took place in 2021/2022.</p>
<p>Additional areas of interest:</p>	<p>Under the current service model, WLS IT needs to be able to properly provide individual instances</p>

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<p>Return of Microsoft Office</p>	<p>of office licensing to both staff and patrons. While the desire is to provide Microsoft Office, WLS needs to work within the new legal and cost obligations that have been put in place by Microsoft. In the future, there will most likely be a per location scenario that needs to be established at each participating library to address the licensing requirements of Microsoft Office.</p>
<p>Additional areas of interest: Adequate advance notice of WLS staff performing maintenance at member libraries</p>	<p>WLS IT staff should never go to a library unannounced and without a purpose. If you have experienced otherwise, please let Wilson know.</p> <p>Most staff visits are the result of a work order request.</p> <p>If any maintenance is needed WLS IT staff will contact the director or requesting library employee.</p> <p>WLS IT staff perform most maintenance work remotely and a site visit is not needed.</p> <p>If this comment refers to maintenance work that is done during off hours, WLS provides notice to libraries if a disruption is expected to occur over an extended period.</p>
<p>Additional areas of interest: More efficient system of adding records to the catalog</p>	<p>More clarity around this issue would be helpful.</p> <p>Is this a concern about the quality of the vendor MARC records that are received or another issue?</p>
<p>Additional areas of interest: Development of technical infrastructure to support the preservation of digitized content</p>	<p>WLS hosted a digital content management system that was available to all member libraries from 2010-2019, but no member libraries utilized the service, and it was discontinued. WLS IT staff participate in a monthly meeting with the PLDA Technology Committee to discuss technology needs and concerns. WLS has not been made aware of this most recent desire for a WLS hosted digital content management system.</p>
<p>Professional development</p>	<p>Library directors, staff members, trustees, and volunteers have access to a broad range of</p>

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<p>PLDA members are requesting more effective professional development for directors, library staff, and library trustees.</p> <p>Additionally, WLS is asked to investigate the possibility of negotiating with ALA, NYLA, PLA, and other organizations for group pricing on additional professional development options.</p>	<p>professional development and training resources through WLS memberships in Nonprofit Westchester (NPW) and the Metropolitan Library Resources Council (METRO).</p> <p>In addition, vetted professional resources such as WebJunction, the New York State Library and Long Island Library Resource Council (LILRC) webinars, and the Trustee Handbook Book Club, as well as in-house resources such as LinkedIn Learning, offer professional development, networking, and training opportunities.</p> <p>The topics of group pricing and potential system-wide training have been discussed by the PLDA Central Library Committee and are still under review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further clarity on the term “professional development options” would prove helpful. Is the focus on helping libraries obtain organizational memberships and/or the ability to participate in a specific seminar/workshop series? • Firm commitments by library directors and staff to attend scheduled professional development seminars/workshops is essential. • If organizational membership is a desired option, we can explore creating an annual opt-in contract for the group purchase, with the understanding that NYLA, PLA and ALA might have a minimum number of participants that are required for the reduced pricing option.
<p><i>Mental Health Support for Library Staff</i></p> <p>The events of the last few years have taken a toll on the mental health of most, if not all, of library staff, county-wide. WLS can take the lead by</p>	<p>At the system level we have been successful in promoting Mental Health First Aid programming (For brevity, this response will only address our activities since 2018). When this program was first launched in Westchester County (adult and</p>

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providing wellness programs, support groups, and best practices for healthy work environments for the member libraries. Having these resources available to the member libraries will allow a "return to normal" for library services across the County.

youth versions), WLS sponsored (absorbed the cost) for several waves of attendees. Subsequent enrollment has been low, and the program has shifted to a hybrid model. WLS is exploring options to make this program available again if there are enough participants able to attend the training.

Prior to and during the pandemic, WLS Outreach has shared many opportunities with library staff to learn more about and to engage in programs that support mental health and wellness. The 2018-2023 Resilience/Westchester Breaths program was a direct response to growing awareness and concern about the experience of trauma. Education and service has been provided to the public and to member libraries staff, including:

- Promotion of Mental Health First Aid 2018-2022 - cost for program materials and certification covered by WLS.
- Launch of Resilience (film) screenings at WLS with library staff.
- Launch of Westchester Resilience Coalition at WLS.
- 12-hour Breath Body Mind (BBM) training workshop made accessible to library staff at no cost in 2019. (Despite strong interest expressed, only 5 individuals from the member libraries attended this multi-agency 100-person event).
- 36-hour Breath Body Mind (BBM) teacher training sponsored by WLS (2020, 2023) with the aim of capacity building for member libraries and community agencies. (Despite strong interest expressed, just 3 library staff participated in this event).
- Empathy Driven Problem Solving (Niche Academy) self-paced series made available to all member library staff 2019-2022; launched centrally with supporting cross-library discussion opportunities.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Hope Services market through and to member libraries (free crisis counseling and referrals). • Burnout Seminar (Niche Academy) made available in 2022 at member library request.
<p>Additional topics proposed:</p> <p>Training in de-escalation techniques</p>	<p>The Empathy Driven Problem Solving (Niche Academy) self-paced series made available to all member library staff 2019-2022 included sessions on this topic. WLS can explore offering yet another round of this series (or a similar workshop) if there is enough interest.</p>
<p>Additional topics proposed:</p> <p>Defense of Intellectual Freedom</p>	<p>ALA has strong programming on this topic. If there is sufficient demand, this would be a good topic to discuss with the PLDA Central Library Committee.</p>
<p>Additional topics proposed:</p> <p>Libraries and 1st Amendment Audits</p>	<p>ALA has strong programming on this topic. PLDA has had discussions on this topic.</p>
<p>Additional topics proposed:</p> <p>Practical topics for trustee training suggested by PLDA members</p>	<p>If there are topics outside of the issues addressed by the Trustee Handbook Book Club, it would be helpful to hear what those topics are.</p>
<p>Additional topics proposed:</p> <p>Civil Service Exam strategies</p>	<p>NYLA addresses civil service at the state level. Locally there are five different civil service offices, each with different approaches to their applications and exams. WLS, together with the Westchester Library Association, has held general overviews of civil service, but we cannot provide expertise on this topic.</p>
<p>Additional topics proposed:</p> <p>Revitalizing Friends of the Library groups</p>	<p>When asked WLS staff have worked with libraries individually to work on this issue. WLS has also offered workshops focused on Friends and Foundations and fundraising.</p>

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<p><i>Additional topics proposed:</i></p> <p>Public Relations and Response Strategies for Libraries</p>	<p>WLS offered communication strategy classes in the past, but few libraries were in attendance. If there is sufficient demand, this would be a good topic to discuss with the PLDA Central Library Committee.</p>
<p><i>Additional topics proposed:</i></p> <p>First Aid Training for Library Staff</p>	<p>Libraries should reach out to their local emergency services provider for this training. This helps to ensure a clearer line of communication between the library and the EMS provider in case of an emergency.</p>
<p><i>Additional topics proposed:</i></p> <p>Training/mentoring for new Directors</p>	<p>The WLS executive director sends a welcome message to new directors and invites them to visit WLS to learn more about our services and encourages them to ask questions. In the past, PLDA took the lead on welcoming new directors and assigned a mentor to each new director. If that will not be the practice going forward, then WLS will look at ways to expand our training and mentoring of new directors and assistant directors.</p>
<p><i>Additional topics proposed:</i></p> <p>More in-person meetings at WLS or member libraries to share ideas & practices</p>	<p>WLS has and continues to offer its conference room and training room spaces to host PLDA and other meetings/workshops for library directors, staff, and volunteers. PLDA has indicated that for now, most meetings will occur on Zoom. WLS does offer onsite events, but few library directors, staff or trustees have attended the onsite events and have frequently requested if an online or hybrid option were available.</p>
<p><i>Additional topics proposed:</i></p> <p>Introductions to WLS staff members with information on staff roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>The WLS Executive Director shared an updated staff directory with PLDA prior to the February 16, 2023, meeting. This directory included more information concerning the core activities of each department and provides the preferred departmental emails.</p>

<p>Outreach & Programming</p> <p>PLDA members would like WLS to focus more resources and increase efforts to support member libraries in their outreach efforts. We support system-generated outreach that does not conflict with or duplicate member library's programming and successfully serves populations that may not currently be adequately served by member libraries in Westchester County.</p> <p>PLDA encourages collaboration between WLS and member libraries particularly when outreach is taking place in the member library's community.</p>	<p>Outreach programs provided by WLS typically support those seeking to navigate a complex service need while introducing them to library resources. We act in areas that are a challenge for member libraries to fully serve due to the depth of knowledge and the time required to respond. Every client interaction seeks to connect the community members with local library services; including the provision of temporary library cards to create an immediate opportunity for service use.</p> <p>Examples from current programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HSE Connect! - Adults seeking a high school equivalency diploma have complicated schedules; those who cannot attend a regularly scheduled class (which we help them find) are supported by our online study program (GED Academy & TABE Academy - available in English and Spanish). Our coaches assist adult students in understanding their learning options (use of past Regents, opportunity for NEDP, explaining how past GED and TASC scores can be used, assessing starting points, determining whether to pursue the exam in English or Spanish, working with an IEP diploma), navigating the software, providing encouragement, and connecting them to resources that can support their learning (childcare, transportation support, job search, etc.). Each adult comes to this goal with unique needs and experiences; our expertise in this area helps to connect them to appropriate resources county-wide, including local libraries.• ESOL Referral - Like high school equivalency, scheduling is a challenge. Our primary role is to direct individuals to local programs, including classes and/or conversation groups at local libraries. Many of those seeking to improve their language skills are also seeking an HSE. As
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	<p>appropriate we connect these students to available resources (Essential Ed GED Academy and TABE Academy, Learning Upgrade, free online resources, and local libraries).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job Search Coaching / Job Search Toolkit - Many of the outreach target audiences struggle with employment. Our step-by-step guidance, the Job Search Toolkit, is now in its 3rd edition. Its placement on FirstFind allows us to make this information customizable and connect it to free one-to-one coaching. The content has been the basis for several PD events and is a valued offer among our partners.• College Guidance - This service, launched in partnership with a local library, is a direct response to the unmet needs of first-gen, Spanish speaking families seeking to understand the evolving complexities of college preparation, application, and financing. Content has been developed and placed on FirstFind.org (English and Spanish) by our bi-lingual, NCAN certified college coach (who doubles as an HSE coach). English and Spanish language presentations are available at local libraries - supplementing broad-based library programming on college essays and entrance exams.• Senior Law Day Collaborative - Legal and financial concerns of older adults are both complicated and can be costly to address. Our co-sponsorship and leadership in the SLD Collaborative help to assure that free, unbiased, authoritative programming is available to member libraries. More than forty programs are available for member libraries to host; in addition to extensive online programming launched during the pandemic, local education and consultation events have been arranged
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	<p>at several library locations. WLS uses this as an opportunity to promote county-wide and local library services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicare Information Collaborative - WLS collaborates with the Department of Senior Programs and Services to support two in-person locations for Medicare guidance, a telephone helpline, and free, unbiased, educational programming on Medicare delivered at local libraries (Demystifying Medicare). Like elder law topics, this service steps into a space where both complexity and fee-based services are a norm. • Vision Labs: Reading for a Lifetime - This program emerged from our active work serving seniors. In this service area, adults experiencing vision loss are typically unaware of resources they can tap - from libraries or any agency. Grant funding allowed us to create educational materials and a traveling exhibit for libraries. At least two PD events have taken place with more planned - allowing us to understand service agencies and library resources (from large print collections to accessibility functions on internet devices, magnifiers to TBBL) • Reentry Services - Those returning from incarceration do not typically perceive the public library as a support service relevant to their needs. Through outreach to probation, parole, and directly to inmates at state and county facilities, WLS provides library cards and a review of available services. For these community members, having a knowing contact is important; we follow-up via our Connections website to answer questions and provide referrals to reentry serving organizations. • Harwood Training - Libraries Transform Communities - The efforts to integrate Harwood Institute’s approach to
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	<p>outreach - specifically aimed at libraries - is proven and systematic. Guidelines for implementing the Harwood Institute’s approach are delivered in a "toolkit" format with ample roadmaps for action - both external and internal.</p> <p>Unfortunately, there have been few within the WLS community that have attempted to implement the approach. Our work since 2013 has been to integrate it where we can for WLS Outreach programs and partners.</p>
<p><i>Specific requests concerning WLS outreach services to member libraries include:</i></p> <p>Providing guidance and financial support for Battle of the Books</p>	<p>The WLS Executive Director and other WLS staff have been and continue to work with the Battle of the Books Board to provide guidance and funding for this initiative.</p>
<p><i>Specific requests concerning WLS outreach services to member libraries include:</i></p> <p>Making available an up-to-date catalog of programmers, speakers, and experts in various fields that are relatable to the various communities</p>	<p>WLS Outreach staff are available to provide guidance if a library would like to host an outreach-based program or event.</p> <p>WLS Outreach staff facilitate a monthly open Adult Services meeting; discussion of programming opportunities and needs is recurring in these sessions.</p>
<p><i>Specific requests concerning WLS outreach services to member libraries include:</i></p> <p>Hiring a full-time, qualified and experienced consultant whose sole responsibility is to offer training and to collaborate with youth service librarians and staff in member libraries.</p>	<p>WLS supports youth services outreach activities for children, teens, and young adults.</p> <p>WLS Outreach staff facilitate a monthly open Youth Services meeting (a combined teen/children's meeting by majority request); the cross-library exchange is viewed by the participants as important and helpful.</p>
<p><i>Last but not least...General areas of Interest to member libraries:</i></p> <p>Group pricing for products, services, and equipment where applicable</p>	<p>WLS provides group pricing for a wide range of products, services, and equipment already. Let the WLS Executive Director know if you have suggestions for other types of items to pursue as group purchases.</p>

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<p><i>Last but not least...General areas of Interest to member libraries:</i></p> <p>Yearly updates to the salary survey</p>	<p>WLS used to compile this data, but the participation rate was too low to make the document useful. Because there still was some interest in having this information available, PLDA created a self-report salary survey that is accessible to member libraries.</p>
<p><i>Last but not least...General areas of Interest to member libraries:</i></p> <p>Decisive leadership during emergency situations</p>	<p>If this is a request for a workshop on crisis management, this would be a good topic to bring forward to the PLDA Central Library Committee for further discussion.</p>