

WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
September 30, 2025 – Approval Pending

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Nishat Hydari at 6:07 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board members present: Anthony Amiano, Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Karen Kelley, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Susan Morduch, Diane Tabakman, Barbara Tepper, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Wes Iwanski, Alice Joselow, Julie Mills-Worthey, Patricia Phelan

Also present from WLS: Terry Kirchner, Wilson Arana, Rob Caluori, Pat Brigham, Allison Midgley

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

Guests: Jonathan Davis, Mt. Vernon, Bijan Kimiagar, Aequa Solutions, Hudson Trader, Mt. Vernon

MINUTES

The minutes of the June 24, 2025, Board Meeting were approved as submitted on a motion by Mr. Amiano and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Caluori presented the financial reports noting significant balances and activity. He spoke to the increase in cash-on-hand due to payments from Westchester County, New York State and the member libraries over the period of June through August. He also reviewed the schedule of Temporarily Restricted Net Assets and end of year projections for revenues and expenses. The Board accepted the financial report for August on a motion by Ms. LeBlanc and seconded by Ms. Bober. The motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Banking Services RFP: The Banking Services RFP was publicly posted to the WLS website on July 14, 2025. Any qualified institution was welcome to submit a proposal. In addition, nine institutions were invited to submit proposals, including WLS's current bank.

The deadline for bidders to submit proposals was September 4, 2025; six proposals were received. Management is currently reviewing the submitted proposals and will be engaged with bidders through October 10 for clarifications and questions.

Management intends to review results of the RFP with the Board Treasurer and bring a recommendation forward on selecting a banking institution as an action item at the October 28, 2025 meeting.

Delivery Services RFP: The Delivery Services RFP was publicly posted to the WLS website on August 26, 2025. Any qualified vendor is welcome to submit a proposal. In addition, two vendors, including the incumbent vendor, were invited to submit proposals.

The deadline for bidders to submit proposals is October 16, 2025. Management will review the submitted proposals and is expected to select a vendor by November 1.

The purchase of these services is included in the current year's approved budget and the following year's proposed budget, therefore separate approval will not be required to move forward with awarding a contract for these services. However, management will keep the Board informed throughout the process in future information items.

ACTION ITEMS

State Aid for Public Library Construction \$44 Million Program FY2025-2026: A total of \$44 Million was approved for the Public Library Construction Aid Program in the FY2025-2026 State Budget. For Westchester Library System, the allocation of aid available is based on population and totals \$2,072,494.

A total of 16 applications were received for this grant cycle, up from 10 applications last year. All the applications were found to meet the criteria established for the Public Library Construction Aid as required by New York State Commissioner's Regulations [Section 90.12], which include more effective library service; more efficient utilization of the library building; improved access to and use of building services; and provision of library services in communities which are geographically isolated or economically disadvantaged. The Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Public Library Construction Aid Committee reviewed the applications based on the nature of the projects and aid previously received.

The Board approved the State Aid for Public Library Construction on a motion by Ms. Kelley and seconded by Ms. Tepper. The motion was approved unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Hydari thanked Dr. Kirchner and Mr. Caluori for the work being done to prepare the proposed budget for FY2026 and reminded the Board that there is one more meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee on October 6, 2025 where the budget will be reviewed in detail before it is presented to the Board at the October 28, 2025 regular meeting.

Board members were reminded that as part of the Executive Director's annual evaluation process, Ms. Hydari will be sending an online link to a survey that each board member is asked to complete.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee: Ms. LeBlanc, Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, reported that the two of three Budget meetings have been held on September 16, 2025 and September 30, 2025 just before this meeting. To date, the committee has reviewed an overview of the budget as well as department level details of the IT, Admin and Delivery department budgets. She noted that there is one more meeting planned for October 6th and encouraged all to attend.

Nominating Committee: Ms. Kelley, Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee will be scheduling interviews in October with two candidates for the WLS District 13 (Mount Vernon) position that is currently held by Julie Mills-Worthey. Ms. Worthey is completing her second consecutive term which ends on December 31, 2025, and she is not eligible to renew for a third consecutive term due to term limits.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

Dr. Kirchner introduced Ms. Midgley and Mr. Kimiagar who presented the work done to date on the development of the SCALE (Strategic Community Analytics for Library Evaluation) data dashboard. They noted that the dashboard underwent testing by WLS and library staff during demonstrations and training sessions in June, July and August. Workshops will continue throughout the fall to widen the user base. They also presented plans for the next phases of the project, which will seek to expand the data and user base in this tool, which focuses on annualized data about WLS, the member libraries and the public served. They noted that plans are also underway to begin development of a new tool which will focus on the monthly transactional and performance data that empower decision making at member libraries and feed into the NYS annual report, which then feeds into the SCALE dashboard.

Dr. Kirchner provided an update on funding at the federal, state and local levels, which is expected to be slightly reduced from the current year's levels. He anticipates that 2026 will be an important planning and preparation year for deeper budget cuts that are expected to occur in 2027.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has ended e-rate reimbursement eligibility for library hotspots as of September 30, 2025. The reimbursement eligibility for library hotspots originated in response to digital access challenges that were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr. Kirchner noted that several member libraries had shared recent accomplishments or ongoing activities. These included the Harrison Public Library receiving their designation as a Certified Sustainable Library; Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library's director, Robin Lettieri was retiring after 44 years of service; the Friends of the Mount Kisco Public Library raised over \$5,000 in their recent book sale; and the Town of Bedford libraries (Bedford Free, Bedford Hills, and Katonah Village) are actively preparing for their first 414 public budget vote that will take place on November 4, 2025.

PLDA LIASON'S REPORT

Mr. Carlson announced that he would not be the representative next year as the PLDA Nominating Committee is actively recruiting nominations for next year's executive committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:23 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Tepper and seconded by Ms. Bober that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Diane H. Tabakman
Secretary