WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
September 29, 2026 – Approved October 27, 2026

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Andrea Bober at 6:05 p.m.

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

Board Members present: Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Ralph Esposito, Wes Iwanski, Maureen LeBlanc, David Mener, Patricia Phelan, Diane Tabakman, Barbara Tepper, Hudson Trader, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Nishat Hydari, Alice Joselow, Karen Kelley, Susan Morduch

Also present from WLS: Wilson Arana, Robert Caluori, Terry Kirchner, Kate Meyer, Allison Midgley, Lindsay Stratton

Guests in attendance: Dana Hysell, Director, The Field Library, Jonathan Davis, Mount Vernon Public Library, Tamara Stewart, Library Advocate, Susan Melio, Library Advocate

MINUTES

The minutes of the June 30, 2026, Board Meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Tabakman and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. [Mr. Iwanski was not present for the vote.] The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Caluori presented the financial reports for June, July and August 2026. The financial reports for June, July and August 2026 were approved on a motion by Ms. LeBlanc and seconded by Ms. Tepper. The financial reports were accepted unanimously.

ACTION ITEM

State Aid for Public Library Construction $44 Million Program FY2026 2027: A total of $44 Million was approved for the Public Library Construction Aid Program in the FY2026-2027 State Budget. For Westchester Library System, the allocation of aid available is based on population and totals $2,077,297.

Dana Hysell, Director of The Field Library and Chair of The Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Public Library Construction Aid Committee stated that a total of 9 applications were received for this grant cycle, down from 16 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 State Aid for Public Library Construction $44 Million Program FY2026 2027 was approved on a motion by Ms. Zevin and seconded by Mr. Cartolano. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Ms. LeBlanc noted that budget meetings are continuing, and the last Budget meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Nominating: Dr. Kirchner indicated there are two candidates to replace District 1 [Croton, Montrose, Yorktown] currently held by Karen Zevin and District 6 [Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Greenburgh, Hastings] currently held by Susan Morduch who have each completed two consecutive terms and are not eligible for reappointment.

Governance: The committee will meet in early November 2026 to discuss Policy 7: Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest, the Whistleblower Policy and Right of Use Asset Capitalization Budget Policy and report back to the Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- Dr. Kirchner noted that 13 libraries have approved the WLS Free Direct Access Plan. There are a total of 20 libraries needed for approval.

- Dr. Kirchner announced that the new WLS lease with the current property owners has been signed, noting that the new lease significantly lowers rent starting in July 2027 and WLS will receive a construction allowance for improvements to the office and meeting rooms. The landlord will also be renovating the restrooms.

- Lauren Moore, Assistant Commissioner for Libraries and State Librarian, has asked for a status update on Mount Vernon Public Library's document submission, funding discrepancies, financial controls, governance issues, FOIL compliance, and meeting schedules.

  Library Document Submission and Financial Discrepancies:
  Mount Vernon Public Library submitted requested documents as required. WLS review identified financial inconsistencies raising questions about reporting accuracy. Disparities include unaccounted external disbursements and questionable expense categorizations. These issues suggest concerns about the library's internal controls and financial reliability.

  Governance and Financial Oversight:
  The library has not hired an independent treasurer; an interim treasurer is in place. Board meetings have been infrequent, with only one held in 2026, and the reorganization process was unusual. Trustee participation has been limited, affecting committee appointments and governance structure.

  FOIL and Transparency Compliance:
  The library has not fully complied with FOIL requests but has shown some progress. A FOIL

policy was adopted in June 2026, though there was confusion about the designated Records Asset Officer role. Ongoing FOIL-related communications indicate incomplete or delayed transparency measures.

Meeting Schedule and Board Activities:
The library's board has held only one regular meeting since June 2026, with the reorganization meeting occurring earlier than usual. Past reorganization meetings typically happened in July, with deviations noted this year, impacting trustee involvement.

The Regents may meet in early October or November to discuss these ongoing issues.

- The hoopla system-wide access service model is neither functional nor financially sustainable. WLS does not plan to provide hoopla system-wide access as of January 1, 2027. Libraries interested in providing hoopla content to their local cardholders will continue to have the ability to participate in their cost-per-circulation (CPC) model.

- Dr. Kirchner reminded board members of the upcoming Attorney Education Session: *We are Ready - Confirming Your Library Complies with the New Minimum Standards for Policies* on October 15 (virtual), and the Battle of the Books on October 24th. He invited the Board to celebrate Pat Brigham at a luncheon on 11/19. She has been selected as a Woman of Influence winner from 914 Inc.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tamara Stewart, Library Advocate, thanked Dr. Kirchner for all his help and for being a tireless advocate of the Mount Vernon Public Library. The Mount Vernon community is paying attention and wants the library to succeed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectively submitted,

Diane H. Tabakman

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Secretary