WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM
Trustee Meeting
October 27, 2026 – Approval Pending

REGULAR MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Nishat Hydari at 6:06 p.m.

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

Board Members present: Robert Cartolano, Ralph Esposito, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Alice Joselow, Maureen LeBlanc, Patricia Phelan, Diane Tabakman, Barbara Tepper, Karen Zevin

Board Members absent: Andrea Bober, Karen Kelley, David Mener, Susan Morduch, Hudson Trader

Also present from WLS: Wilson Arana, Patricia Brigham, Robert Caluori, Kate Meyer

Guests in attendance: Alyssa Jacobs, Candidate for District 6 [Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Greenburgh, Hastings, Irvington]; Grace Riario, Executive Director, Ramapo Catskill Library System; Frank Gentile, IT Manager, Ramapo Catskill Library System

MINUTES

The minutes of the September 29, 2026, Board Meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Tepper and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion passed unanimously. [Mr. Iwanski and Ms. Phelan were not present for the vote.]

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Caluori presented the financial reports for September 2026. Payment registers for June 2026 through September 2026 were also distributed. The financial reports for September 2026 were approved on a motion by Mr. Cartolano and seconded by Ms. Tepper. The financial reports were accepted unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

WLS 2027 Operating Budget: The Budget & Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees met three times through September and October to review a number of options in order to arrive at a budget proposal for the 2027 fiscal year. Each of the committee's meetings focused on the following:

- September 15, 2026: Budget process and overview, Information Technology department, Career Coaching Services department.
- September 29, 2026: Delivery department, Outreach department, Cataloging department.

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- October 13, 2026: Administration department, 2027 Capital Expenditure budget.

In addition to the work of the Committee, input was also sought from the WLS managers and staff.

The budget presentation package included an Executive Summary which outlined the significant assumptions of the proposed budget. The most significant items were New York State unrestricted aid held flat with the 2026 budget, Westchester County aid 8.0% below the 2026 budget, and Member Library Technology Fees 10.8% below the 2026 budget, driven by the end of the $300,000 member library contribution for group e-content purchases. To offset these reductions, the budget calls for Library Materials 53.6% below the 2026 budget and a reduction of 2.0 FTE in staff headcount. The budget also includes a 3.5% increase in staff pay rates.

The budget was presented at this meeting as an information item for discussion and will be brought to the WLS Board for approval at their November 17, 2026, meeting.

2027 Capital Expenditure Budget – 570 Taxter Road Renovation: With WLS remaining at 570 Taxter Road, the landlord will provide a $300,000 tenant improvement allowance toward the renovation of the WLS 4th floor offices and meeting rooms. The renovation converts former office space into a new conference room, creates a new recording studio and mail room, upgrades the pantry, brings new power and data to the lecture and training rooms, relocates the IT department, and replaces paint, carpet and flooring in selected areas. The audio/visual equipment in the meeting rooms, which has failed or is reaching the end of manufacturer support, will also be replaced.

Management has prepared a 2027 capital expenditure budget of $477,300. The tenant improvement allowance covers $300,000 of construction, architectural design and permit costs; the remaining $177,300, for audio/visual equipment, security system upgrades, a replacement paper guillotine, IT workstations and kitchen appliances, would be funded by reserves. These purchases will be competitively quoted in line with the WLS Purchasing Policy (Policy #13).

The Board requested additional information comparing the savings from the new office lease against the investment in the renovation. Mr. Caluori will prepare this information and include it in the packet for the next meeting.

The budget was presented at this meeting as an information item for discussion and will be brought to the WLS Board for approval at their November 17, 2026, meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Hydari thanked Mr. Caluori for the budget presentation and asked Board members to send any questions on the budget to Mr. Caluori in advance of the next meeting. She also welcomed Alyssa Jacobs, candidate for the District 6 [Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Greenburgh, Hastings, Irvington] seat.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance: Ms. LeBlanc reported on the committee's three budget meetings held on September 15, September 29 and October 13, 2026, and noted that the Board will vote on the 2027 budget at the November 17, 2026, meeting.

Nominating: Ms. Hydari reported on behalf of Ms. Kelley, Chair of the Nominating and Board Education Committee, noting that Alyssa Jacobs is the candidate for District 6 [Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Greenburgh, Hastings, Irvington]. Dr. Kirchner is working on candidate recruitment for District 1 [Croton, Montrose, Yorktown] and will update the Board at the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A copy of the Executive Director's Report was emailed in advance of the meeting. Mr. Caluori presented the report on behalf of Dr. Kirchner, who was presenting at the IFLA MetLib conference with Nate Hill of the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO).

- The Battle of the Books was held on October 24, 2026, at Ossining Middle School. Hendrick Hudson Free Library won the Grades 4–7 division and Harrison Public Library won the Grades 6–12 division. Feedback was very positive, with the event described as the smoothest one yet; approximately 300 people attended, including kids, parents, volunteers and coaches. Board Members Alice Joselow and Barbara Tepper also attended the event. Mr. Caluori thanked WLS staff members Allison Pryor, who led the event, Allison Midgley and Janet Donat for their work.
- The Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) has presented its slate of officers for 2027: President, Christina Linder, Director, Greenburgh Public Library, and Vice President, Chris Shoemaker, Director, Rye Free Reading Room.
- Mr. Caluori shared several member library updates:
    - Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library will celebrate its 150th anniversary with a gala on November 14, 2026, at Harrison Meadows Country Club.
    - Larchmont Public Library celebrated its 100th anniversary with an open house on Sunday, October 25, 2026.
    - Yonkers Public Library is marking the 100th anniversary of its Crestwood branch, which is reopening following renovation.
    - New Rochelle Public Library and its Friends group have ended their relationship. Both groups have asked Dr. Kirchner to serve as a mediator in rebuilding a working relationship.
- The New York State Board of Regents did not take action regarding Mount Vernon Public Library at its October 5–6, 2026, meetings. The agenda for the Regents' November 9–10, 2026, meetings has not yet been released. Dr. Kirchner has received eight resumes from individuals interested in serving on the Mount Vernon Public Library Board of Trustees should there be vacancies. Dr. Kirchner will coordinate next steps with the

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Division of Library Development (DLD) and report back to the Board at the November 17, 2026, meeting.

- Eighteen member library boards have approved the WLS Free Direct Access Plan. Approval by 20 member library boards is required before the WLS Board can approve the Plan and WLS can submit it to New York State. Dr. Kirchner will provide an update at the November 17, 2026, meeting and, if enough member libraries have approved the Plan, will bring it to the Board as an action item.
- Library Advocacy Day will be held on February 3, 2027. WLS is working with Ramapo Catskill Library System to coordinate buses again this year.
- As part of a statewide advocacy effort, nine WLS member libraries have sent letters to the Governor.
- Manager of Strategic Data Analysis and Member Library Support Allison Midgley is coordinating group pricing for Mango Languages and Medici.tv. and OverDrive content sharing among member libraries.

Commented [TK1]: I think this should be Allison Midgley.

ADJOURNMENT

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:49 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Tabakman and seconded by Ms. Tepper that passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane H. Tabakman
Secretary

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