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*Jesse Butz*

Porter County Public Library  
System  
103 Jefferson St.  
Valparaiso, IN

(219) 462-0524

pcpls.org

**BOARD MEETING AGENDA: Wednesday, November 15, 2023**

**NOTICE:** The Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees will meet on November 15, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. for its regularly scheduled meeting.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:** (Kristy)

The public comment session is provided as an opportunity for patrons to address the Board of Trustees on matters related to agenda items.

Painting dedication (Mr. Mark Zimmerman)

**CONSENT AGENDA:** (Kristy)

1. Approval of the Minutes from October 18, 2023 (Paul)
2. Financial Report
  - a. Treasurer's Report (Stu)
  - b. Approval of the Claims Register (Hayley)
3. Approval of Communications (Jesse)
  - a. Friend's Report
  - b. Director's Report
  - c. Patron Comments

**ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:**

1. Library Gardens Update (Jesse)
2. Legal Kiosk Recommendation (Inge)
3. Dolly Parton Imagination Library (Jesse)
4. Westchester Library Reciprocal Agreement (Inge)
5. 2024 Library Closures and Board Meeting Dates (Jesse)
6. PTO Policy Update (Jesse)

Any other items  
Adjournment (Kristy)  
Signature Session

**Future Meetings: (Dates subject to change) 4:00 P.M.**

- December 13, 2023 - Valparaiso Public Library
- January 17, 2024 - Valparaiso Public Library
- February 21, 2023 - Valparaiso Public Library

# Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for Nov 15, 2023

The regular meeting of the library board of trustees was called to order at 4:00 pm at 103 Jefferson St. Valparaiso, IN 46383. Kristy Merritt presided.

Members in attendance included Kristy Merritt, President; Roger Rhodes, Vice President; Paul Knauff, Secretary; Stu Summers, Treasurer; and Julie Giorgi. Kevin Pazour and Olga Granat were absent. Also in attendance: Director Jesse Butz, Library Attorney Clay Patton, and Assistant Directors Inge Kokidko & Hayley Scott (remote). Remote attendance was facilitated via Zoom.

## Public Comment

Mark Zimmerman donated a watercolor painting that he had painted of the library and the Rotary Garden. The painting was dedicated to the memories of Charlotte Rau and Janet Burden, former library employees. Also in attendance were Gloria Zimmerman, Leroy Burden, and Dan Rau.

## Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from Oct 18, 2023

Financial Report

    Treasurer's Report

    Approval of the Claims Register

Approval of Communications

    Friends of the Library Report

    Director's Report

    Patron Comments

**Motion:** Stu Summers moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Julie Giorgi.

**Discussion:** Communications reports were summarized.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with the following roll call vote:

|        |        |         |        |        |        |         |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Rhodes | Knauff | Summers | Pazour | Giorgi | Granat | Merritt |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|

|   |   |   |        |   |        |   |
|---|---|---|--------|---|--------|---|
| Y | Y | Y | absent | Y | absent | Y |
|---|---|---|--------|---|--------|---|

## Library Gardens Update

Updates were given on weather, equipment, and supply delays, the Portage parking lot repair, and Portage Garden completion deadline extension to May.

## Legal Kiosk Recommendation

Library staff recommended discontinuing the legal kiosk program, due to low use of the equipment and the availability of the same legal resources through library computers.

**Motion:** Paul Knauff moved to “adopt the recommendation”. The motion was seconded by Julie Giorgi.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

## Dolly Parton Imagination Library

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library program was summarized, including rules, parameters, processes, funding sources, comparison to other implementations, and clarification of involvement from various partners. It was suggested that library staff send communication to Porter County officials with an update on progress.

**Motion:** Julie Giorgi moved to “approve the MOU as presented”. The motion was seconded by Roger Rhodes.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

## Westchester Library Reciprocal

The characteristics of reciprocal patron activity and reciprocal agreements were summarized. Approval of the updated agreement was recommended.

**Motion:** Roger Rhodes moved to “approve the Westchester reciprocal agreement”. The motion was seconded by Paul Knauff.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

# 2024 Library Closures and Board Meeting Dates

Closing dates and board meeting dates were proposed for 2024.

**Motion:** Paul Knauff moved to “to approve the 2024 library closures and board meeting dates”. The motion was seconded by Julie Giorgi.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

## PTO Policy Update

An update to the PTO policy that would restructure holiday pay as an increase in PTO accrual rate was summarized. This change would not increase our liability but would allow staff greater flexibility in scheduling their time off, particularly around holidays.

**Motion:** Julie Giorgi moved to approve this policy to go into effect in 2024. The motion was seconded by Roger Rhodes.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

## Books for Babies

The Books for Babies fund has been unexpended for a long period of time.

**Motion:** Stu Summers moved to authorize moving money from fund 245 into the community foundation to fund the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, if those funds are currently unexpended. The motion was seconded by Paul Knauff.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

## Brzykcy Estate

The current status of the Brzykcy estate was summarized. Difficulty with communication and the lack of documentation was discussed.

**Motion:** Stu Summers moved to “authorize our attorney to send a letter to these guys seeking compensation and documentation”. The motion was seconded by Paul Knauff.

**Discussion:** Mr. Patton stated that he would keep the crux of the letter in tact, but may tweak some portions with his own spin. It was decided not to copy any other parties at this time.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

# Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Paul Knauff, Secretary

# October 2023

## Overview

- Unfortunately, October continued the challenging trend with our out-of-district transit system. While the State has made improvements, there is still a way to go before we are back up and running. We have offered our contacts and expertise to the state to improve the process and make it as sustainable as possible.
- The transit delays have resulted in another down month in physical circulation. Thankfully our eResources continue to be strong and were up 40% overall. Libby continues to drive the lion's share of our increase, in part by adding over 250 new users each month.
- Make sure to stop by the Valpo branch and check out the new teen and large print areas, enhancing both spaces while increasing space for the collection. Those with mobility issues will be particularly interested in having materials closer to the entrance and near circulation.

## Important Upcoming Dates

- November
  - 1: Friends of the Library Board Meeting
  - 15: Library Board of Trustees Meeting
  - 23: Library Closed
  - 24: Library Late Opening 12:00 PM
- December
  - 6: Friends of the Library Board Meeting
  - 13: Library Board of Trustees Meeting
  - 24: Library Closed
  - 25: Library Closed
  - 31: Library Early Close 5:00 PM

## Personnel

- Ending Employment
  - Jessica Nelson, September 2022 - October 2023
  - Nina Tadic, February 2021 - October 2023
- New Employment
  - Stephanie Visser - Tech Services Clerk
  - Randy DeLeon - Custodian
- Staff Development
  - The Valparaiso management team met with Natalie Kasberger, Valparaiso Police Department's Social Worker. This resulted in a productive discussion about what resources are available in our community. Specifically, the team discussed

options available for individuals experiencing housing insecurity. We are thankful for this community partnership and look forward to future collaborations.

- North County went over winter safety procedures and reminders, updated their emergency phone tree, learned the new MY PC stations, and trained on proper procedures for handling Interlibrary Loans.

### **Finance Notes**

- The budget benchmark for the end of October is that 83% of the budget should be spent. So far, 74.8% has been spent and we're on target to be within our estimated budget.
- The Library earned \$37,112.15 from Trust Indiana in October, making our year-to-date total nearly \$300,000!
  - Included in the total interest earned is the Valpo Garden Donations, which earned \$876.73.
- Hayley has been working on creating a digital dashboard for budgetary purposes that will empower team members to better understand and control their budgets. This custom tool is part of the ongoing strategic conversations our teams have to be outstanding stewards of public tax dollars.

### **Subscription/Contract Renewals**

- Subscriptions
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - None
  - Cancellations
    - None
- Contracts
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - Today's Business Solutions
      - MyPC - \$5,155
      - SimpleScan - \$5,015
  - Cancellations
    - None

### **Buildings & Grounds**

- The Portage parking lot was accidentally torn up on the south section as a result of a miscommunication between the contractor of the library garden project and his subcontractor team. The error has been rectified and will result in no delays or expenses incurred by the library or the City of Portage.

- The South Haven condensing unit and evaporator coil were installed. We are currently waiting for the manufacturer to do the official startup before closing the project.
- We had some relays go out on the rooftop condensing unit as a result of power outages in Portage. This was a freak incident and has been resolved.
- The Town of Hebron had several power outages this month which extended to the Hebron branch. Still, between staff, Jason, and Angela, the branch was able to stay open until the power came back and there were no issues with the building or network.
- The Kouts had some minor issues with the HVAC system including a belt slipping in the air handler. The issues were resolved with little disruption.
- The maintenance team has been working on replacing exterior light bulbs at all branches. The supply of bulbs has been the biggest hindrance to this project, but the stock appears to be normalizing and allowing our team to ensure a bright and safe experience for our patrons.
- The Hebron branch received complementary aeration and fertilization to the lawn following a lack of weeding and mowing over the summer. Since the issue was brought to the attention of the landscaper, they have worked hard to ensure it never happens again and provided these services free of charge.
- The Hebron branch entrance has experienced some continued issues with the front door not being able to lock. Staff were able to secure the door overnight until Jason was able to come out and get it fixed. Jason is working with our contractor to resolve the issue.
- Jason and Aiden installed new, tall shelving units in front of the Valparaiso branch's Circulation desk. These will showcase the Large Print collection! The team has already moved the Large Print nonfiction to its new home with more to follow. This much-needed enhancement gave our fiction department breathing room while bringing materials closer to the door for those with mobility issues.
- Portage received new, lower tables for their computer lab, to be installed soon. The tables will provide a more comfortable and safer environment for our patrons.
- A keypad was installed in the Portage break room, allowing for easier entry for staff who do not hold keys. This installation is part of a larger goal of eliminating the number of keys in our system, ensuring a more secure facility.
- The Rotary Garden has been winterized for the season and we are beginning to decorate for the holiday season.

### **Technology**

- This month we replaced all of our patron computers with the new Windows machines. Most of our patrons have been able to use the new computers with little or no assistance and enjoy the new setup. There have been a few instances of patrons being upset by the change but most of those interactions ended well after a brief tutorial of the new system. We have also seen fewer printing issues since we've made the change to Windows computers.



- Our new incident reporting system has been configured and we are ready to start training staff. We are still on track to roll this out in November.

### **Public Relations and Marketing**

- The total reach for social media and newsletters during August was 65,039.
- Facebook:
  - Our Facebook reach was 9,655.
  - Our account has 6,391 followers.
- Twitter:
  - The System has 567 total followers. We made 4 tweets with 471 impressions this month.
- Instagram:
  - The System has 1,421 Instagram followers.
  - We shared 2 posts on Instagram with 462 impressions.
- YouTube:
  - The System has 142 total subscribers. Our videos had 74 views this month.
- Pinterest:
  - The System has 83 followers. Our Pinterest account's reach was 35 people for the month.
- Newsletters: Our e-blasts were opened approximately 53,125 times this month.
- TikTok: Our TikTok now has 853 subscribers. We had 1127 total views this month.
- Virtual Customer Service: Interacted with 52 patrons.
- Google: 6 new five-star reviews
  - "Great selection is available locally and from other libraries in Indiana in a short order time of usually only a few days. Knowledgeable & Friendly staff."
  - "I needed to make copies, so I heard that I could get them done at the library. So I went to the South Haven Library. When I walked in, I was greeted by a very nice lady. I told her what I needed, and she actually made the copies for me, which was very helpful. I recommend this place if you need copies. They only cost 10 cents per sheet. Not bad. 😊"
- Our South County team did an excellent job reaching out to our community this month. They participated in five different outreach events, interacting with 2276 patrons and sharing everything the library has to offer.
- PCPLS sponsored this year's Downtown Trick or Treat event in Valpo. Our staff stuck it out in the heavy rain and met over 1000 trick-or-treaters and their families, despite the bad weather.
- PCPLS Community Engagement Team partnered with several local organizations and service providers during October:
  - Connected the Valparaiso management team with Valparaiso Police Department's social worker, Natalie Kasberger, and created an opportunity for staff training on community resources.
  - Collaborated with NWI Alzheimer's Association to create a "library stop" during Valparaiso's annual Walk to End Alzheimer's. The event had over 375 registered participants and PCPLS promoted library events, cards, and other resources. We

also loaned our giant Connect Four game for the kid's activity area in Central Park Plaza, which was a big hit!

- Hosted a collaborative “Downtown Litter Cleanup” event at Valparaiso Branch’s Rotary Library Garden with community partners (Porter County Recycling, Valparaiso University, and Mermaid Straw Company). Over 41 participants cleaned up a massive amount of litter (over 1200 pieces of trash!) and had an opportunity to learn more about the positive impact of recycling and earth-friendly products.
- Collaborated with 6 local service providers (Housing Opportunities, HealthLinc, Porter Starke, Porter County Sheriff, Porter County Health Department, Valparaiso Police) to present Valparaiso Branch’s third HOST (Homeless Outreach Services Team) event. Attendance at these events is steadily increasing, and they provided free information and resources to 11 individuals this month.
- Two PCPLS home delivery patrons crafted and donated several boxes of handmade hats, scarves, and mittens. Willow connected with Hilltop Neighborhood House, local HOST events, and Housing Opportunities to get these beautiful cold-weather items into the hands of folks who need them.
- The System Programming Team held the Valparaiso, Kouts, and Portage Fall Festivals and received 1321 in attendance. Patrons participated in carnival games, creating crafts, and exploring sensory activities. Refreshments were provided by local businesses Strack & Van Til and Town & Country Market. Local vendors (Snowie NWI, Travelin’ Tom’s Coffee Truck, and Tocayos Express Mexican Food) came out to sell their delicious treats at the Valparaiso Fall Festival.
- Ashley and Sandra will meet with Dyan in November to discuss Storytime in the Park for 2024. Sandra will lead in choosing the themes moving forward with a helper from North County.
- Sandra attended a STEM counterpart meeting at the Saint John public library with Amy Keleman and Amanda Koeppen from North County, Corinne B. from Valpo, and Dawn Ailes from Kouts.

### **Youth and Teen Services**

- Sandra York and Amy Keleman hosted *Storytime in the Park* at Woodland Park. The theme was all about Leaves using the parachute to make them fly was a fan favorite. Afterward, the kids used fine motor skills by using small toy rakes to rake up the fake leaves. This is an ongoing event in partnership with the Portage Parks Department.
- Tiffani Arnold attended a *Book a Librarian* visit at TJ Middle School, learning about our library digital resource collection.
- The Portage team hosted a *Taylor Swift 1989 release party*, created a pumpkin scavenger hunt, and had fun making music with homeschoolers this month!
- The Hebron Branch had a fantastic turnout for their *Teen Painting* program this month. The youth services staff in Hebron have successfully found fun and engaging programs to reach the local teens.

- It's alive! The Hebron branch had a spooky good time at their *Frankentoy* program. Everyone who participated left with a creepy, cool toy they created themselves.
- The Hebron branch was very happy with their new *Family Game Night* turnout. They are excited to see how this program will grow over the next few months as everyone is a bit more homebound and ready for some fun indoor games.
- *Mother Goose on the Loose* continues to be one of the most popular programs in Kouts, right next to the *Lego Club* program.
- By popular demand, plans are in the works for painting programs for Kouts for kids and teens next month.
- South County started work on a children's labeling project to help patrons find better books in juvenile series or about the same children's story characters, such as the American Girls series or the Curious George books.
- The South Haven community has always enjoyed October events. We had a full house for our after-hours Glow Party.
- Valpo branch team member Emily spearheaded this year's toddler costume party, the Monster Mash Bash! You may see a few staff members dressed up in the System Snaps! Patrons had a blast playing games, eating snacks, and dancing. This program was a huge success, with a total of 209 attendees.
- The Teen area at the Valpo branch is starting to come together. The Young Adult books look great in their new space, and now the team has added board games, a charging station, flyers for teen events, and the Teen Talk Back Board into the area. We are looking into functional but fun furniture pieces that could enhance the space.
- Valpo team members Liz, Steven, and Emily worked together to organize the YS storage spaces (the workroom closet and the Storyroom closet.) It has made a difference and will save time when staff prepare for crafts and programs.

### Adult Services

- The Valpo team has been doing well with the new computer changes in AS. They've been quickly learning about the systems and relaying that well to the patrons. There has been an increase in tech help appointments, drop-ins, and scheduled appointments that the team has managed to balance with their daily tasks well. It's been so busy here some days that we've had anywhere from 4 to 6 staff members in the department helping at once!
- The Portage and South Haven team have done a great job helping patrons learn our new My PC changes. They have been a big help in making the transition easy for our patrons.
- South County was happy to have our adult painting programs in both Hebron and Kouts this month. Patrons attending enjoyed learning how to paint a cool pumpkin scene.
- South County is close to finishing its Music CD genre relabel project. This will allow patrons to find the type of music they are looking for much easier.
- The South County team has done a great job of helping patrons learn the changes to our patron computers. Patrons are finding it a lot easier to use the new computers. Whenever there is some confusion on printing or usage, staff can help patrons quickly and efficiently.

- Ashley Montelongo and Kimberly Mullins presented a Library Visit at the Opportunity Enterprise Respite House as part of our monthly visit on the last Thursday of the Month. Participants enjoyed light refreshments, pumpkin decorating, and browsing Halloween-themed materials from our library collection.

### **Collections**

- Evergreen Holds - Evergreen holds were reopened on November 1. Our statewide courier service is still not up to where it needs to be. We are participating (in an unofficial capacity) in discussions and research to help create solutions and improvements to this service. Our hope is that ultimately we will have a more robust courier service than when this began.
- New Staff - We welcomed new staff member Stephanie Visser to our Collections team. She brings library experience from Tinley Park and an eagerness to learn.
- Rokus - After detailed preparation and testing the Collections team has rolled out 9 Roku devices preloaded with three different streaming services: Hulu, Disney+, and Netflix. There has been an increase in patron purchase requests that are unable to be filled for movies and TV shows because they are available only through streaming services. These devices are a great opportunity to still be able to provide access to those titles when we are unable to purchase a physical item.

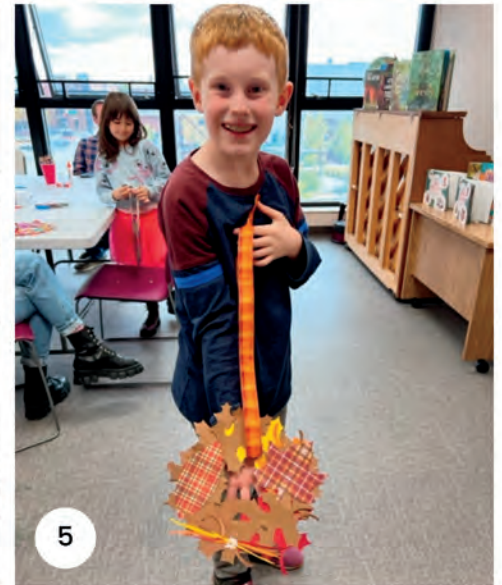
### **Genealogy**

- Kathy continues working on the Miller books and other donated family records, as well as obituaries from several current sources.
- Chris M. is making serious progress on the fire department books, with about ½ done. Chris M. also works on a group of local obituaries that are always in demand with our patrons.
- We continue to provide obituaries, house information, cemetery listings, and advice to patrons when they phone, email, or come into the building. These interactions occur almost every day.
- One particularly interesting request was to find the address for a couple that lived on a Rural Route in 1969. These routes were set up by the post office and could change over time. We were able to find a phone book listing and a newspaper article that gave an address. We were then able to find it on plat maps. The patron was appreciative.
- Our patron who has been working on Dr. Almira Fifield let me know that an Indiana State Historical Marker was approved for her. A Civil War tombstone marker for her is also in the works.
- The DAR meets here most Monday mornings for a work session and seems to really enjoy our space and resources.
- We had about a week without [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) service, unfortunately. Elizabeth was able to get it straightened out and help get access back for our patrons.
- Inge has been investigating having the Indiana State Library microfilm the Times newspaper. This would not require too much effort and could result in substantial savings for us. It may start when our newspaper contract expires.

- We have been researching a replacement for our large scanner. It is necessary for large books and files. The current scanner would require an expensive update, almost the cost of a new, user-friendly scanner.
- We have a new subject for the Chamber of Commerce article—barber and beauty shops. As this is a subject not currently covered in our files, research using newspapers, city directories, and phone books has been started and is proving to be very interesting!



# Valparaiso



1 Valpo's Fall Fest was a success with over 1000 attendees. We heard so many lovely comments from patrons about this magical event.

2 Nikki and Emily led a fun and creative pumpkin painting program!

3 Here you can see some cute seasonal artwork from Allison's October session of Paint & Pour. This month patrons painted a "Friendly Ghost."

4 Kids in costume at Valpo Branch's Monster Mash Bash!

5 Patrons had a blast crafting their own Autumn wreaths at Kellie's program!



# Hebron



- 1 It's time to make a new creature!! We had a lot of fun at Hebron branch's Frankentoy's program.
- 2 The Book Babies program at the Hebron branch is growing by leaps and bounds.
- 3 The Hebron branch started a Family Game Night. Everyone had a fantastic time.
- 4 Our October Cookies and Canvas program was a scream!
- 5 We are so happy to partner this month with the Hebron School Art Department. We got to show off some amazing artwork.



# Kouts



1 Kouts Fall Fast was a blast! The kids really enjoyed our 'cake' walk and won fun prizes with Miss Dawn the pumpkin.

2 Fall Bunco at the Kouts branch was a lot of fun.

3 This month we partnered with the Kouts Fire Department during Fire Safety Month, for their annual coloring contest.

4 It's time to Brush the Blues Away, Kouts' adult painting program. Everyone had a good time learning how to paint a fun fall picture.

5 It's a very batty storytime in Kouts today. We had a lot of fun exploring 'caves' and learning about bats.



# Portage



- 1 Homeschoolers had fun learning about music at our monthly home school library program.
- 2 Patrons of all ages enjoyed a night of music and fun at our Taylor Swift 1989 release party.
- 3 A very happy patron finished 1000 Books Before Kindergarten!
- 4 Staff getting into the Halloween spirit!
- 5 Staff and patrons alike enjoyed a night of Taylor Swift!



# South Haven



1 Community members regularly request to help with displays. This patron created a fun I Spy display, complete with a scavenger list and prize.

2 Miss Anna leading an activity at our Glow Party.

3 Staff went all out with fun decorations for the Glow Party.

4 Staff dressing festive on Halloween!

5 The Glow Party event was a full house!



# in Our Community



- 1 A big thank you to Hebron's First Church for inviting us to their Trunk or Treat. We had a very magical time.
- 2 Home delivery patrons donated homemade hats, scarves and gloves to Hilltop Neighborhood House Preschool and Housing Opportunities via PCPLS.
- 3 Participants enjoy pumpkin decorating at our monthly Opportunity Enterprise Respite House visit.
- 4 Students scope out a selection of books after our visit to Thomas Jefferson Middle School to learn about PCPLS Digital Resources.
- 5 At our Building Blocks PS visit we got to learn a bit more about fire safety during fire prevention month!