

**President**

*Kristy Merritt*

**Vice President**

*Roger Rhodes*

**Secretary**

*Paul Knauff*

**Treasurer**

*Stu Summers*

**Members**

*Kevin Pazour*

*Julie Giorgi*

*Olga Granat*

**Legal Counsel**

*Clay Patton*

**Library Director**

*Jesse Butz*

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

(219) 462-0524

pcpls.org

**BOARD MEETING AGENDA: Wednesday, May 15, 2024**

**NOTICE:** The Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees will meet on May 15, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. for its regularly scheduled meeting at 2665 Irving St., Portage Indiana, 46368.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:**

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

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. Approval of the Minutes from April 17, 2024
2. Financial Report
  - a. Treasurer's Report
  - b. Approval of the Claims Register
3. Approval of Communications
  - a. Friend's Report
  - b. Director's Report
  - c. Patron Comments

**ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION:**

1. Portage Accident Update
2. Library Garden Update
3. Construction Update
4. RFQ Kouts Library Garden
5. RFQ MSP
6. Garden Tour

Any other items

Adjournment

Signature Session

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

- June 19, 2024 - Valparaiso Public Library
- July 17, 2024 - Valparaiso Public Library
- August 21, 2024 - South Haven Public Library

# Porter County Public Library System

## Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for May 15, 2024

The regular meeting of the library board of trustees was called to order at 4:02 pm at 2665 Irving St, Portage, IN 46368. Kristy Merritt presided.

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

### Public Comment

No public comment was given.

### Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from Apr 17, 2024

Financial Report

- Treasurer's Report

- Approval of the Claims Register

Approval of Communications

- Friends of the Library Report

- Director's Report

- Patron Comments

**Motion:** Olga Granat moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Paul Knauff.

**Discussion:** Communications reports were summarized.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 6 in favor and 0 opposed.

## Portage Accident Update

Communications with insurance companies and contractors were summarized, and construction quotes & options were discussed.

## Library Garden Update

Portage design choices, project punch list, communications with the attorney for the city of Portage, parking lot grinding timeline, Kouts library variance request, South Haven drainage work, story trail, and musical features were summarized. Insurance billing was discussed.

## Construction Update

Paving progress in South Haven, Portage & Hebron was summarized. Quotes to connect Portage sidewalks were discussed, including American Concrete Raising for \$9,800.

**Motion:** Stu Summers moved to “approve the sidewalk bid from American Concrete Raising”. The motion was seconded by Olga Granat.

**Discussion:** Discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 6 in favor and 0 opposed.

## RFQ Kouts Library Garden

Quotes for Kouts Library Garden were summarized. Modern Edge true-line fencing and the regular concrete option from American Concrete Raising were recommended.

**Motion:** Paul Knauff moved to approve the bids for Modern Edge, True-Line Fencing, and American Concrete Raising regular concrete option. The motion was seconded by Roger Rhodes.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 6 in favor and 0 opposed.

## RFQ MSP

Quotes were summarized. Cardinal Point Technologies was recommended as the lowest and most responsive bidder.

**Motion:** Roger Rhodes moved to select Cardinal Point Technologies for our ITMSP. The motion was seconded by Julie Giorgi.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 6 in favor and 0 opposed.

## Garden Tour

The library board agreed to tour the garden after adjournment.

## Adjournment

**Motion:** Julie Giorgi moved to adjourn. Olga Granat seconded the motion.

**Vote:** The motion was carried with 6 in favor and 0 opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:31 pm.

Paul Knauff, Secretary

# April 2024

## Overview

- Construction projects have been in full swing throughout the system as we take advantage of the warmer weather. Though the rain has caused the projects to take slightly longer than we had hoped, we are still making excellent progress.
  - South Haven has new concrete and pavement, giving the space a fresh look.
  - Portage has had the two lots reopened with a dedicated book drop pad installed to help ease congestion and offer our patrons more options.
  - The Kouts and South Haven Library Gardens are both progressing nicely and patrons are getting excited about these new outdoor spaces.
- Patrons were checking out materials at a large rate as both physical and electronic materials were up for the month.
  - Physical books were up 9% while ebooks were up 12%.
  - Audio formats continue to be strong with a 29% increase on the digital side!
- As you read the details of our report this month you will see the theme of growing and strengthening community partnerships throughout. Our team has become an integral part of the local community and by leveraging our partnerships we are able enhance the lives of our residents and spread the joy of the Library like never before.

## Important Upcoming Dates

- June
  - 1: Summer Reading Kickoff Celebration-Portage
  - 5: Friends of the Library Meeting
  - 19: Library Board of Trustees Meeting
- July
  - 3: Friends of the Library Meeting
  - 17: Library Board of Trustees Meeting

## Personnel

- Ending Employment
  - None
- New Employment
  - Tayler Dulik - South County Clerk
  - Selene Billings - Systems Marketing Assistant
- Promotions
  - Cari Postma to LC2
  - Kimberly Davis to LC2
  - Brittany Paxton to full-time

- Interviews
  - Monique and Kellie interviewed candidates for a full-time position at the Valparaiso branch.
- Staff Development
  - Management trained on the new ADA animal procedure to help navigate service animal questions and concerns.

### **Finance Notes**

- The budget benchmark for the end of April is that 30% of the budget should be expended. So far, 25% has been spent and we're on target to be within our estimated budget.
- The Library earned \$38,478.04 from Trust Indiana in April. Included in the total interest earned is the Mills Trust donation, which earned \$2,996.95

### **Subscription/Contract Renewals**

- Subscriptions
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - Wowbrary - \$703.31
  - Cancellations
    - None
- Contracts
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - Communico - \$26,450
    - Commercial Insurance - \$54,572.08
    - InfoExpress - \$7,110
  - Cancellations
    - None

### **Buildings & Grounds**

- Jesse has been working with the insurance companies regarding the uHaul accident in Portage. The process has been slower than we would like, but we are making progress with the insurance companies.
- Jason and Aiden have been working on the installation of storyboard holders at the South Haven Branch. We are able to fit a full set in the space for families to enjoy!
- South Haven gates are now emergency exit compliant with new crashbars.
- The entrance concrete was replaced in South Haven and looks fantastic. The new curbs and ADA ramp make the space look brand new.
- We had some startup issues with condensing units in South Haven. While frustrating, the unit was still under warranty.

- We had to replace a water heater in Portage after a leak was discovered by Sarah G. Sarah did an amazing fix on the spot to let the unit hold until Jason could replace the unit.
- Our mist walk was opened for the season and the Rotary Library Garden is officially open for the season!
- The garage and exterior doors in Valpo are being painted. This simple refresh was certainly needed!
- The South Haven ADA door closer malfunctioned and needed to be replaced. This simple repair is becoming more costly as the mechanisms are not easy to find.
- Jason received roofing quotes for the Kouts branch.
- Jesse and Jason met with Modern Edge on plans for the South Haven Garden. They have plans in place
- Jack and Dawn spoke to the Town of Kouts Board of Zoning Appeals at their meeting this month about obtaining a fence variance for the Library Garden. The library was granted a public hearing to be held on May 28th. Jack will work on getting all the paperwork together and completing all of the necessary requirements before that time.
- The Library's Bioswale was cut back later and shorter than normal this season. This annual maintenance received numerous complaints from our patrons. We have spoken with multiple naturalists and DNR experts who have assured us the space will be just fine and bounce back without trouble. That being said, our vendor has taken steps to ensure this does not happen again, is compensating us, and has a plan to fill out the space should any issues pop up.

### **Technology**

- The IT team has contributed to moving the new website forward by entering meeting room information into the new room reservation system.
- Nathan went to the Merrillville Library to tour their digital preservation lab. He was able to get stats on how frequently it is being utilized as well as some information on how they run the lab.
- Angela conducted a pre-quote meeting to review our RFQ and answer any questions from IT MSP vendors.
- Angela is investigating security to ensure PCPLS is meeting the top twelve safeguards recommended by local cybersecurity experts.
- The IT team has also been testing security keys to use for multi-factor authentication to give staff another hardware option besides personal devices.

### **Public Relations and Marketing**

- The total reach for social media and newsletters during April was 87,754.
- Facebook:
  - Our Facebook reach was 11,481.
  - Our account has 6,835 followers.
- Twitter:

- The System has 577 total followers. We made 4 tweets with 256 impressions this month.
- Instagram:
  - The System has 1,472 Instagram followers.
  - We shared 4 posts on Instagram with 700 impressions.
- YouTube:
  - The System has 145 total subscribers. Our videos had 43 views this month.
- Pinterest:
  - The System has 83 followers. Our Pinterest account's reach was 48 people for the month.
- Newsletters: Our e-blasts were opened approximately 73,249 times this month.
- TikTok: Our TikTok now has 886 subscribers. We had 1977 total views this month.
- Virtual Customer Service: Interacted with 43 patrons.
- Google: 1 new five-star review
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library: 2,777 active children. 199 children have graduated.
- We had three different organizations reach out to schedule presentations, OE, Kiwanis, and Portage Schools.
- In April, we attended 3 outreach events and interacted with an estimated 1,115 people in one weekend:
  - NWI Earth Day Celebration
  - Portage YMCA Healthy Kids Day
  - Valpo Parks Active Kids Day

### **Youth and Teen Services**

- The Meet Me at the Library event was held at the Valparaiso Branch on April 1st. This event was a partnership between Parkview Elementary and an opportunity for English Learner Families to explore what the library has to offer.
- Book Balls and Blocks were held at the Valparaiso and Portage Branch. This partnership with the Porter County Community Foundation is becoming a sought-after program for littles and their guardians!
- Sandra held a Storytime in the Park at Woodland Park and saw an increase in attendance with a promotion from the Newsletter!
- Thomas Jefferson Middle School Booked a Librarian to visit their school after hours for a Lego Club and Game Night where staff promoted PCPLS programs & resources.
- The Vine & Branches Homeschool Co-op used our Book a Librarian resource for three visits at the Valparaiso Branch. Two visits were for preschools/ grade schoolers and one was for Teens. The visits included a tour of the library learning more about the library. The Teen group also got to dive deeper into what it takes to work at a library and tips to help them pursue a path of professional librarianship.
- North County Programmers presented at Kyle, Jones, Crisman, and Aylesworth Elementary for a storytime, promotion of library resources, and upcoming PCPLS programs.
- PCPLS held the Spring VCS Art Show Open House on April 20th which included a scavenger hunt in the garden, a community craft, and refreshments. We received a



donation of 100+ large pizzas from Hungry Howies and donuts from Dunkin' Donuts for the event.

- The Solar Eclipse Events at all branches were a great success, with tasty snacks, cool solar eclipse crafts, and fun games to play. Thank you to StarNet for donating 2,000 pairs of Solar glasses available by reservation and handed out during the events.
- The Portage branch hosted Portage Elementary School's art show. We displayed roughly 150 pieces of artwork of students from 6 elementary schools. Over 300 community members attended the art show. It was a fun and busy night!
- South Haven held Sensory Hours every Monday in April. This was a Porter Township Autism Action Coalition partnership initiative.
- The Kouts branch hosted its first Paws To Read program with Caleb the comfort dog this month. The turnout was phenomenal and the Kouts staff are excited to have locked-in dates for the rest of the year.
- The Kouts branch held another amazing art show in partnership with the Kouts Elementary School. This month, both the Kindergarten and 1st grade classes showed off their art skills in the style of artist Jean Michel Basquiat from the books Life Doesn't Frighten Me and Radiant Child.
- South County had a Book A Librarian at the Porter Lakes Preschool this month. After hearing several very convincing stories, the kids had a blast deciding if dragons or unicorns were cooler.
- The Alice In Wonderland Steam Challenge program at the Hebron branch was fantabulous. Everyone had a fun time with the various challenges, such as: trying to build a house of cards, making their own pocket watch, and playing flamingo golf.
- The Cookies & Canvas: Banksy in the Rain kids program and Paint & Pour: Thrift Vinyl Painting programs at the Hebron branch were a hit. Everyone had a great time flexing their artistic skills and can't wait for next month.
- Allison at the Valpo branch has started coordinating activities in the YS department and making improvements to the space. She has been working with staff to create a system for managing and cleaning in-house toys in the department. She has also rearranged furniture to triple the size of the craft table!
- Allison at the Valpo branch has started assisting with Children's programming. She reported that "watching how diligently Emily, Corine, and Liz plan and execute their programs in general, is awe-inspiring, but specifically their storytimes bring another level of enjoyment to the community. The kids were engaged the entire time whether that be through materials we read, the hand drum being used, or the parachute! Emily is fantastic with the kids and it really shows how they interact with her during the program."
- Allison is making impressive progress on Summer Reading displays, inspired by this year's theme, Adventure Begins at Your Library. She received an astounding response after asking the team to contribute to a staff-centric display as well! She created a wilderness explorer (boy/girl scout) badge template in Canva and invited staff members at Valpo to create their very own merit badges to decorate sashes for the pillars across the branch. We've got a lot of fun and unique merit badges that will be on display!

- Sandra completed 6 “grab and go,” themed storytime kits that are now available for programmer's request and use for programs. The kits include a how-to guide, book selections, songs, and activities.

### **Adult Services**

- The CD relabeling project at the Valparaiso branch is nearing its end. All of the CDs have been relabeled, and the only thing left to do is organize the items on the shelf. Instead of sorting CDs under the blanket genre of “Vocal,” we will shelve them according to the following genres: Rap/Hip Hop, Rock, and Pop. This change will allow for more intuitive browsing for our patrons.
- Courtney at the Valpo branch has created an efficient system for requesting and scheduling tech help and notary appointments in response to the increasing patron demand for both services. Thanks to her efforts, the process has run much more smoothly.
- The Valpo team is excited to see their Book Club evolving! The branch currently offers two meetings per month, one in the morning and one in the evening. The evening session is typically quite small, but we saw an increase in participation this month.
- The Portage and South Haven book clubs hosted author Jodi Newby in their discussions this month. They discussed the book *She Used to Be* and had a wonderful meet and greet with the author in person! A big thank you to staff members Amy Keleman and Rachel Siska for planning a fun experience for our book club readers.
- The Porter County AARP had another successful tax season with 715 tax returns completed in just 9 weeks.
- The book clubs at both of the South County branches have picked up a few new patrons this past month. Hebron will be trying out a later time for the program to accommodate several more patrons who would like to join.
- The South County branches were able to partner with the Indiana Department of Health this month to make available the COVID booster, Flu Vaccination, and COVID testing.

### **Collections**

- On April 24th, Elizabeth Hager and Inge Kokidko virtually attended the Evergreen International Conference 2024. Elizabeth attended several sessions as an attendee and both Elizabeth and Inge were co-presenters on a panel titled "Help Your Patrons Discover More with Evergreen and Aspen". They discussed using Aspen as a member of an Evergreen library.
- The collections team placed a new order of Vox books - picture books that come with an integrated audiobook reader that allow children to read along with the audio. These books are very popular as a modern replacement for CD-audiobooks and are easier for younger children to operate without help from a parent.
- The collections team completed a review of materials long in transit from the service disruption to InfoExpress last year. All outstanding items have been resolved.

### **Genealogy**

- Our April workshop on becoming a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution was very well attended, with 21 attendees. Diane Schweitzer, the local regent, did an excellent job of the presentation. Several attendees came upstairs and had a brief tour of the department afterward.
- The team helped a patron research a person who died while incarcerated at the Michigan City Prison. As the person only had a younger brother still living, we found a newspaper article that said a Valpo undertaker delivered the body to a medical school. This was a typical method of removal for prisoners.
- Several inquiries were put in regarding home histories in April. Patrons are always looking for photographs of houses, businesses, schools, and venues. Some are well documented, but sadly most are not well covered. We try to collect what is available. It is surprising what sometimes shows up in random sources such as yearbooks, city directories, or newspaper advertisements.
- A new staff member in South County is likely taking on the Chamber article monthly assignment. She had previously worked at POCO Muse and was a history major. Information is being collected now for the next edition. It is a fun opportunity and great publicity for the department.
- Kathy L. went to South Haven two mornings and used their scanner for historical board minutes. The state is requiring the digitization of all board minutes from our founding.
- Chris M. continues to work on fire department books. The more recent years have shown an increase in fire activity and responses.



# Hebron



- 1 Family Game Night is awesome! Everyone gets to try out new games and play them together.
- 2 Let's get messy! At storytime we learned all about worms and how helpful they are to our gardens.
- 3 The Solar Eclipse event was very exciting and everyone had a lot of fun experiencing this phenomenon together.
- 4 These three patrons observed the eclipse as they took a break from playing and munching on snacks.
- 5 Not quite croquette, but we still think the Red Queen would approve. These girls enjoyed the Alice in Wonderland STEM Challenge.



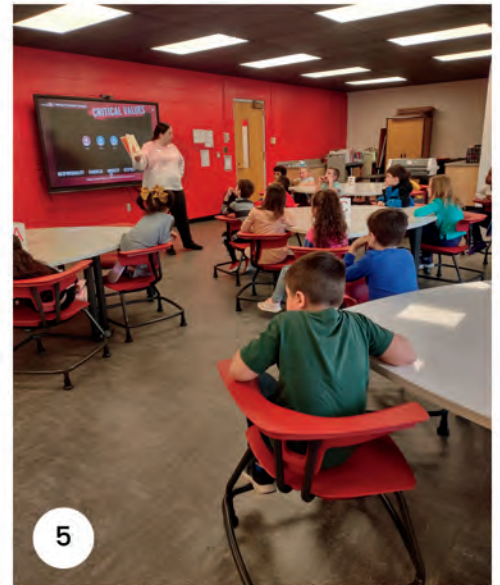
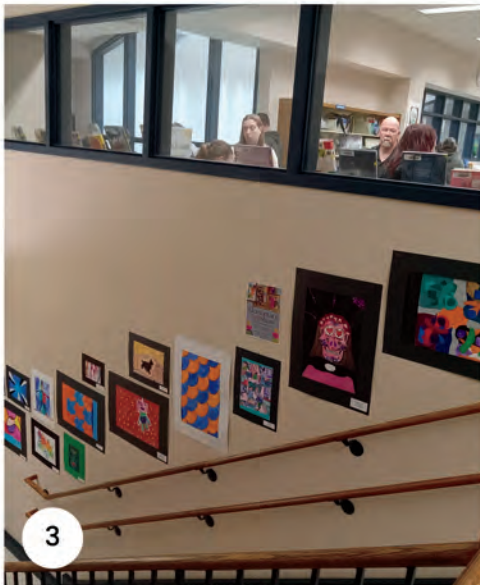
# Kouts



- 1 Every patron who stopped by the branch for the Solar Eclipse was very excited to get a pair of eclipse glasses and see the event for themselves.
- 2 The Kouts branch held another amazing art show this month, partnering with the Kouts Elementary School.
- 3 Like in the story, *My Garden* by Kevin Henkes, storytime attendees let their imaginations soar while meeting some new nature friends.
- 4 Some very serious Lego building happens at the Kouts Lego Club.
- 5 We celebrated National Wear Your Jammies to Work Day at Storytime. Everyone's favorite part was playing with the stuffies.



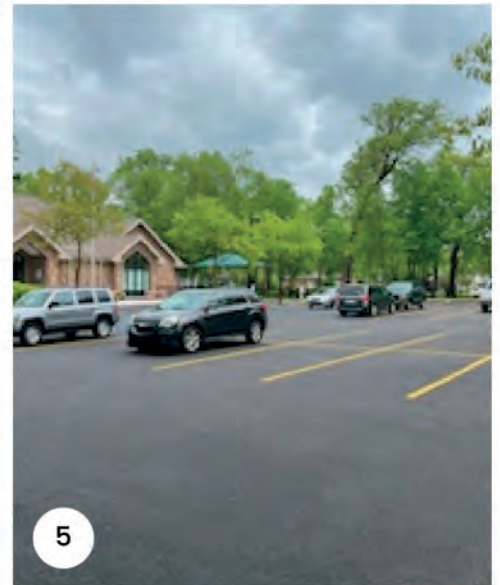
# Portage



- 1 Portage book club hosted author Jodi Newby in person!
- 2 Portage community enjoyed the solar eclipse event at their local branch.
- 3 The Portage Elementary School Art Show is always a fun event!
- 4 Community members enjoyed Peter Rabbit themed crafts and snacks.
- 5 Amy Keleman reading to students at a local school visit.



# South Haven



- 1 Patrons of all ages continue discovering new talents at our STEAM events.
- 2 Everyone enjoyed the eclipse event at the branches!
- 3 Patrons made beautiful book totes at this month's sewing event!
- 4 South Haven's parking lot BEFORE repaving.
- 5 South Haven's parking lot AFTER repaving. A much needed improvement!



# Valparaiso



- 1 The whole branch is so bright and colorful with student artwork on display for the VCS Art Show!
- 2 Caregivers, kids, and early childhood development specialists played together when Books Balls Blocks returned to Valpo.
- 3 Kids at Preschool Story Corner having a blast playing with the parachute!
- 4 Paint and Pour at the Valparaiso branch is a patron favorite!
- 5 Staff and patrons viewing the Solar Eclipse together!



# in Our Community



- 1 The Community Engagement Team coordinated Eclipse Viewing Parties at every branch.
- 2 Homeschool teens from Vine & Branch getting a tour of the circulation department.
- 3 We had so much fun at all of our outreach events this month. This little girl won a Summer Fun Bundle at Portage YMCA's Healthy Kids Day.
- 4 DAR presented a well-attended genealogy workshop at our Valpo branch.
- 5 Great turnout for Storytime in the Park! The theme was outer space to promote the upcoming Solar Eclipse.