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**Library Director**

*Jesse Butz*

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

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**BOARD MEETING AGENDA: Wednesday, January 15, 2025**

**NOTICE:** The Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees will meet on **January 15, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.** for its regularly scheduled meeting at the Valparaiso Public Library, 103 Jefferson Street, Valparaiso, IN 46383. Board of Finance Meeting to follow

**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 December 18, 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 Roofing Project
2. Technology and Internet Use Policy Draft
3. Account Policy Draft
4. Encumbrance Resolution
5. Rainy Day Transfer Resolution
6. End-of-Year Fund Transfer Resolution

Any other items

Adjournment

Board of Finance Meeting to Follow

Signature Session

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

- February 19, 2025 - Valparaiso Public Library
- March 19, 2025 - Valparaiso Public Library
- April 16, 2025 - Valparaiso Public Library

# Porter County Public Library System

## Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes for Jan 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the library board of trustees was called to order at 4:03 pm at 103 Jefferson St. Valparaiso, IN 46383. Olga Granat presided.

Members in attendance included Olga Granat, President; Kevin Pazour, Vice President; Paul Knauff, Secretary; Julie Giorgi (remote), Treasurer; Kristy Merritt, Roger Rhodes, Stu Summers (remote). No board members were absent. Also in attendance: Director Jesse Butz, Library Attorney Clay Patton, and Assistant Director Inge Kokidko (remote) & Finance Manager Hayley Scott. Remote attendance was facilitated via Google Meet.

## Public Comment

No public comment was given.

## Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes from Dec 18, 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:** Kristy Merritt moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Paul Knauff seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Communications reports were summarized. Service animals and the potential for prosecution for vandalism were also discussed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	abstain	Y	Y	abstain	Y

## Portage Roofing Project

Two options were summarized: Reynobond aluminum composite metal with a 30-year warranty for \$482,000, or PAC-CLAD metal with 35-year finish guarantee, 25-year water-tightness guarantee for \$318,000. Color options were also summarized. PAC-CLAD in musket gray was recommended.

**Motion:** Kevin Pazour moved as recommended. Kristy Merritt seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** It was suggested to check with the manufacturer about popularity of colors and likelihood of replacement availability.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Technology and Internet Use Policy Draft

A policy draft was recommended for approval.

**Motion:** Paul Knauff moved as recommended. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Policy scope was discussed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Account Policy Draft

An account policy draft was recommended for approval.

**Motion:** Kristy Merritt moved as recommended. Kevin Pazour seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** Account blocks were discussed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Encumbrance Resolution

Bills from the end of 2024 were summarized, and approval to encumber associated funds was requested.

**Motion:** Paul Knauff moved to “approve the encumbrance resolution”. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Rainy Day Transfer Resolution

It was recommended to transfer \$701,000 to the Rainy Day Fund.

**Motion:** Roger Rhodes moved to “approve the Rainy Day transfer resolution”. Kevin Pazour seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## End-of-Year Fund Transfer Resolution

Approval was requested for the end of year fund transfer resolution.

**Motion:** Kristy Merritt moved as requested. Paul Knauff seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Resolution to Close Funds

Approval was requested to close the following funds and transfer balances to the operating fund: Books for Babies fund, with a balance of \$6.00, and the Library Improvement Reserve Fund with a balance of \$0.16, the Genealogy Grant Fund and the state library's ARPA grant fund.

**Motion:** Kevin Pazour moved to as requested. Paul Knauff seconded the motion.

**Discussion:** No discussion followed.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## Adjournment

**Motion:** Kristy Merritt moved to adjourn. Roger Rhodes seconded the motion.

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

Pazour	Knauff	Giorgi	Merritt	Rhodes	Summers	Granat
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 pm.

Paul Knauff, Secretary, Porter County Public Library System Board of Trustees

# **December 2024 Director's Report**

## **Overview**

December was exciting as we hosted our Winter WonderFest celebration in Portage! We had over 400 patrons take part in a celebration that featured games, crafts, and treats. We also had music performed by the Willowcreek Middle School Choir and an amazing new art installation from local artist Rocco Schiralli in the Portage Library Garden. All that took part had a lot of fun—special thanks to our Friends of the Library for sponsoring and volunteering to make this the best open house our Portage Branch has ever had.

## **Important Upcoming Dates**

- January
  - 1: Library Closed
  - 15: Library Board of Trustees Meeting
- February
  - 5: Friends of the Library Meeting
  - 19: Board of Trustees Meeting

## **Personnel**

- Ending Employment
  - None
- New Employment
  - Andrea Baiers - LA - Programming
  - Cheyanne Chapman - LC G1 - South County
- Promotions
  - None
- Interviews
  - None

## **Finance Notes**

- The benchmark for the end of December is that 100% of the budget should be expended. The 2024 total expenditures came in at 9.4% under budget and the remaining unappropriated funds will be transferred to the Rainy Day fund.
- The Library earned \$32,969.67 from Trust Indiana in December. Included in that total, \$2,750.66 was earned from the Mills Trust.
- Our annual December tax draw was received and in line with estimates.

## **Subscription/Contract Renewals**

- Subscriptions
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - None

- Cancellations
    - None
- Contracts
  - New
    - None
  - Renewals
    - None
  - Cancellations
    - None

### **Buildings & Grounds**

- Jason and Aiden haven't let the cold weather keep them from making progress as they install instruments at the Portage Library Garden.
- Jason began installing the new Edison lights that replaced the planned canopy behind the Portage stage.
- Valpo had anti-freeze added to the system to ensure we will have no ruptures during the colder months.
- Staff at the Valparaiso Branch are working to clean and organize old storage areas in the basement to make more efficient use of the space.
- The ignition control box for the boiler in Kouts was replaced.

### **Technology**

- We have engaged AdTec to help us start the process of using category 2 e-rate funding to replace some of our aging networking equipment.
- Angela and Inge are starting to investigate metrics for use in strategic planning.
- Nathan was able to work with Marketing on materials for our first technology training course. He also started working on getting notary appointment scheduling set up on our website for our Valparaiso Branch. We're hoping to expand this to all branches in the future.
- We made some changes to our internal ticketing system to help our collections team resolve issues more efficiently as well as adding some frequently asked questions to our public helpdesk to help patrons get answers to common questions.

### **Community Engagement**

- PCPLS continues to explore a partnership with the Americorps Senior Companion Volunteer Coordinator, Kay Hosmer and hosted volunteer information tables at our Hebron and South Haven branches during the month of December. We're hopeful this partnership will continue to grow and expand to help with PCPLS home deliveries.
- The Winter Flurries Reading Challenge kicked off this month and received 271 registrations. Alongside the reading challenge, we are excited to provide weekly raffles, made possible by the generous support of the Friends of the Library.
- The Portage Winter WonderFest was a great success, attracting 416 attendees. Among them, 103 individuals participated in the Community Craft, while 122 cast their votes in

the Gingerbread Contest. We partnered with Spare Room Studios, Mark Schafer, and Willow Creek Middle School Choir. We also had a very generous donation from Family Express of 25 cases of water, 15 dozen cookies, and 15 bags of donut holes for the event.

- The library maintenance van was draped in bright Christmas lights for its appearance in the Kouts Christmas Parade.
- PCPLS was invited to run a Storytime station for the PTO Breakfast with Santa event this month at Hebron Elementary School. We used this time to promote the Winter Flurries Reading Challenge to families as well as highlight all of our amazing programs and events.

### **Social Media Engagement**

- The total reach for social media and newsletters during December was 93,686.
- Facebook:
  - 7,135 followers with a reach of 15,957.
- Twitter:
  - 571 total followers.
- Instagram:
  - 1,572 followers; 18 posts and a total of 2,508 impressions.
- YouTube:
  - 159 total subscribers; PCPLS videos had 433 views this month.
- Pinterest:
  - 85 followers with a reach of 30.
- Newsletters: Our e-blasts were opened approximately 73,830 times.
- TikTok: Our TikTok now has 998 subscribers with 928 total views this month.
- PCPLS' Virtual Customer Service Team interacted with 24 patrons.
- Google: 4 new five-star reviews
  - "Staff is always very helpful. I love the kids area that has toys like trains, action figures, and blocks. They also have educational tablets for free to checkout. Lastly, the fact that DVDS are also free to checkout is a winner in my book. Overall, a great library. :)"

### **Youth and Teen Services**

- All branches were excited to have Santa come for a visit this month. The kids were mesmerized by his many amazing stories and everyone was thrilled to get their picture taken with him.
- The Valparaiso Branch is expanding its Storytime offerings starting in January, so our programming team members spent time collaborating and planning for the new year. The team will be adding a bimonthly Storytime for toddlers, from ages 2-3. We are really excited to meet this community need and to fill this gap in our program offerings.
- Liz at the Valpo Branch organized a Holiday Drive-In Movie Night for kids, where they crafted and decorated cardboard "cars" to enjoy snacks while watching a holiday film.



This event combined creativity with social interaction, creating a memorable experience for attending families.

- A festive spirit filled the Valpo Branch as our team, led by Liz, decorated for the holidays. They created interactive displays in Youth Services for kids and decorated more areas than usual, including transforming the storyroom into an igloo entryway.
- Emily Piper freshened up the YA Room in South Haven, backshifting the collection and adding fun yellow bookends.
- New organizational storage cubbies were ordered and set up in the Portage YS Toy Area, creating a more organized and appealing play space.
- Kate L. and Kayla L. held a fantastic Storytime at the Hebron Hawks Preschool again this month. We hope that this is just the start of a strong and lasting partnership.
- The Kouts Branch hosted the Kouts Elementary School 4th Grade Art Show this month. The kids created their very own pirate treasure maps, inspired by the book "Happy Holidays, Pirates" written by Tatiana Koval and illustrated by Inna Chernyak.
- The Kouts Branch hosted its popular STEAM: Noon Year's Eve program, delighting parents and kids alike. Children enjoyed fun experiments, such as building towers for ball drops and mixing baking soda and vinegar to create celebratory explosions.
- The Hebron Branch had very good turnouts to their youth art programs this month.
  - Teens had fun learning how to make several different types of holiday ornaments.
  - The younger kids enjoyed learning all about the artist Chagall and his stained glass windows. They even got to make one of their own!

### **Adult Services**

- The Valparaiso Branch received two cafe tables and six stools for the Fiction Area. This furniture is situated along a wall with windows, so patrons can enjoy a lovely view of Michigan Avenue when they sit there.
- Jesse, Monique, and Kellie discussed updated merchandising guidelines and focused on how we can use face-outs to make our collections look more inviting, as well as how to use displays thoughtfully and with intention. The team has been working hard this month to put these guidelines into practice.
- Courtney and Dawn held a Book Tasting at the December meeting of the Valpo Book Club. Courtney had taken patron suggestions for several months leading up to the December meeting and used those suggestions to create a menu containing the book titles, cover illustrations, and plot summaries. There was a spot on the menus for patrons to indicate whether or not they would want to read that book, and Courtney used this data to determine the Book Club picks for 2025! It was a really fun way for the patrons to participate and have a meaningful say in what they read next year.
- All PCPLS branches now have Emergency Kits on hand, provided through our community partnerships. The kits contain a lot of great basic necessities. The PCPLS team added community resource information to the kits which can connect patrons to additional help resources and organizations.
- Several crafting programs for adults were offered throughout the month at the Portage and South Haven branches, including diamond art, ornament making, and gingerbread workshops. We had full attendance for all our crafting events.

- Jesse workshopped merchandising and display techniques with the North County management team. These display methods help draw patrons into the space and aid in resource discovery.
- Both South County branches had very well-attended adult art programs this month, led by Sarah M. Patrons had a lot of fun creating holiday trees with acrylic paint and can't wait for the next art program. South County also plans on trying a few more adult arts and crafts programs in the coming months.

### **Collections**

- Our first live order using Baker & Taylor's CLS services was processed in December. While we have identified several enhancement requests and areas for error correction, we are pleased with the overall progress. Additional items continue to be processed, and we are optimistic that once the key issues are addressed, we will proceed with placing the majority of our orders using the service.
- Inge and Elizabeth met with Backstage Library Works again to discuss a potential digitization project for Genealogy materials. Digitizing the materials would significantly optimize space utilization by reducing the need for physical storage, saving valuable floor space, and most importantly, enhancing the collection's access for remote patrons.

### **Genealogy**

- Chris M. finished the first unindexed obituary book.
- Several Lake County High School yearbooks were donated to the department, which we have offered to the Lake County Public Library to add to their collection at the Merrillville Branch. Allen County yearbooks were also donated, which the department may offer to the Allen County Public Library. Many libraries are able to digitize these materials and make them more accessible to patrons.
- Staff in the department sent articles about Beulah Bondi, a local woman who was a major character in "It's a Wonderful Life," to Times reporter, Carrie Steinweg. Her article ran just before Christmas.



# Hebron



1 Santa taught his visitors about where he lives, and how to find it! They got to learn all about what his home in the North Pole is like.

2 Our newest art project: fake stained glass! After learning the history and how it's made, patrons worked together to make their own.

3 Let's learn about holiday decorating in Storytime! A game of dress up showed these little ones what sort of things can go up during the holidays.

4 In this Storytime little patrons learned all about their teeth & how to take care of them! They even practiced on some fluffy friends.

5 Paws to Read is still a very popular event with our patrons. Caleb the Comfort Dog soaks up all the love while kids practice reading to him.



# Kouts



1 Santa had plenty of visitors to see before Christmas! He enjoyed a full audience before Storytime.

2 The Kouts Elementary 4th grade class showed how creative they could be making their very own pirate map based off a recent Storytime!

3 We had a fun time making our own ornaments by cutting out shapes and putting them together.

4 Using what we learned from the pig in our book club story, we made our own toys by getting creative with mundane items!

5 It's time to get festive! After learning about what sort of things go on Christmas trees, we made our own ornaments.



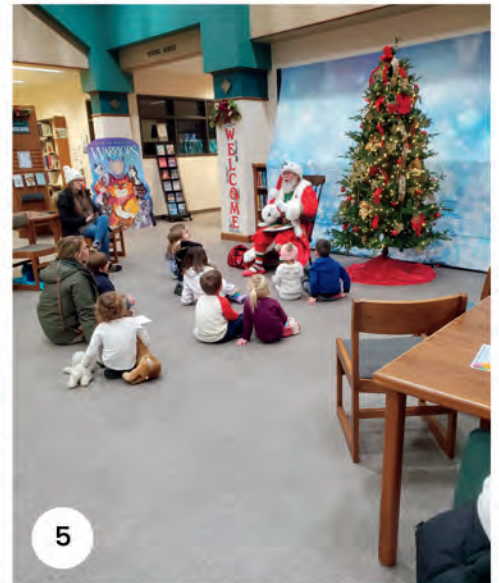
# Portage



- 1 Portage staff were all dressed up and ready to meet Santa with festive cheer for the Winter WonderFest!
- 2 The mural painted by Rocco Schiralli was installed this month during the Winter WonderFest, bringing a pop of color and wonder to the garden!
- 3 A winter-themed Storytime brought everyone some holiday joy as we got closer to Winter WonderFest.
- 4 Painting under the blacklight taught these teens how to use colors in a new way!
- 5 After learning about cubism, kids created an inspired clay self portrait to apply their new knowledge.



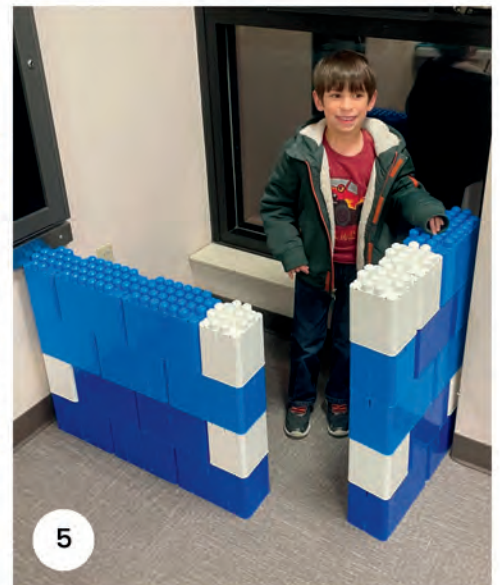
# South Haven



- 1 Diamond art is a great way to flex creative muscles while figuring out how to put odd pieces together!
- 2 Families enjoyed making ornaments together at the library this month.
- 3 Crafting brings everyone together for a relaxing afternoon.
- 4 Creating handmade ornaments encourages everyone to think outside of the box when working with new materials.
- 5 We received great feedback about our Santa Visit program: "He was fun, engaging, and sang!"



# Valparaiso



- 1 Santa always has time for the smallest patrons. Everyone enjoyed a Storytime before getting to make their wishes!
- 2 Let's go to the movies! After building their own cars out of cardboard, everyone is ready to attend the drive-in and an interactive movie!
- 3 The Valpo Team has started to display Community Art Projects for each season. Families love being a part of this beautiful display.
- 4 Science Kids involved fun winter and holiday-themed experiments this month.
- 5 Lego Club is always a popular program. This month kids got imaginative with jumbo building bricks.



# in Our Community



- 1 It was wonderful to see patrons lining up to join the Winter Flurries Reading Challenge during our Winter WonderFest in Portage!
- 2 Everyone was sure to stop by and see Santa during Winter WonderFest!
- 3 The talented Willowcreek Middle School Choir joined us to brighten the festival with music!
- 4 Hebron PTO invited our team to bring Storytime to their Breakfast with Santa event. This gave families a glimpse of library programs.
- 5 The library van looked great in the Kouts Christmas Parade. It was a giant billboard all lit up for everyone to see!