

Published in the Penn-Franklin News on January 6, 2021.

Board Resets 2021

Any new year comes with a reset for the Boards of the WLN and its 22 member libraries, with changes brought about by expired, sometimes term-limited, Trustee/Director tenures, and by fiduciary and programmatic realities and needs. They all get addressed at the first Board meeting of the year in January. It's a time for setting the way forward with an approved budget as guide. So, let's look at what those first meetings, January 27 for the Westmoreland Library Network and January 21 for our local Murrysville Community Library, foretell.

First of all, they foretell changes in Board structure. In the case of the WLN, there are two new Board Directors to seat. This Board normally is comprised of five members who are Trustees of their local libraries, selected by member vote at the Annual Meeting, and two who are appointees of the County Commissioners. (By the way, it is appropriate to call the members from the local libraries "Trustees," rather than "Directors," a word that applies more generally.) Two member seats were term-limited by the WLN's three-year rule. (County Commissioner appointees are not term-limited.) The member seats have been filled by new Trustees from New Florence and Mt. Pleasant Public Libraries. Welcome to them.

One of the term-limited Trustees is yours truly. For a complex set of reasons, I have actually been on the WLN Board continuously since 2003, serving alternately as a Murrysville Community Library Trustee and an appointee of the County Commissioners, but also serving successive three-year member terms because of an exception in the WLN bylaws. The bylaws allow reappointment when other member libraries do not step up to serve, and that was the case in 2017.

In the case of the Murrysville Community Library Board, the Trustees are selected by the Council. There are not any term limits. The three Trustees whose three-year terms are expiring are awaiting official word from Council at this writing about their reapplications. They are Susan Long, Theo van de Venne, and me. So, in the future, I may be speaking to you more often through The Magic Library Card! series from a local position, although I would continue to be Murrysville Community Library's liaison to the WLN. I would attend WLN Board meetings and report from an audience perspective.

New Board officers for each are voted on in January from a slate. The proposed slate for Murrysville has yet to be named. For the WLN, there will be a new President and Treasurer at least, as we are the term-limited Directors.

Both Boards will also approve budgets with multi-year Budget Plans, which is expected to be fairly routine in each case. The WLN will also approve its 2021 committee memberships, also without expected fanfare.

For neither Board this time are there any new, major capital projects on the horizon. The WLN's Technology Infrastructure Upgrade project should wrap up early in the year; Murrysville's TechNook little theater project described previously should as well.

Published in the Penn-Franklin News on January 6, 2021.

However, the Boards need to address, even as the COVID-19 crisis may abate with the advent of sufficient vaccine supplies, what has been learned from the crisis. Libraries have been changed by it. Patron expectations have changed. New models have been suggested, especially having to do with virtual programming. Presently, you have only to go to “Events & Programs” on the WLN web site (<https://www.wlnonline.org>) to register and take part in the virtual programming already being offered.

Please do that, and also look for the new Boards to be setting an expanded virtual tone for the future. I feel certain that you will be seeing more of virtual interaction, but plans for it are only in the formative stage now. We welcome your inputs going forward.

Charles B. Greenberg,
WLN Board President