

Employee Handbook Introduction (New – Please Read All Policy)

Welcome to Wells County Public Library (WCPL). This Employee Handbook describes, in summary, the personnel policies and procedures that govern the employment relationship between WCPL and its employees. The policies stated in this handbook are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of WCPL Board of Trustees. You may receive updated information concerning changes in policy from time to time, and those updates should be kept with your copy of the employee handbook.

This employee handbook is drafted to familiarize employees with policies. This handbook does not create a contract of employment between WCPL and its employees. While WCPL hopes that your employment relationship will be long-term, either you or WCPL may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice, unless otherwise prescribed by applicable law. Our relationship remains at-will notwithstanding any provision in this handbook to the contrary. No supervisor, manager, or representative of WCPL other than the Director has the authority to enter into any agreement (approved in writing) with you regarding the terms of your employment that changes our at-will relationship or deviates from the provisions in this employee handbook. WCPL complies with all applicable laws governing the employment relationship. None of the policies in this Handbook will be applied to prevent employees from discussing their terms or conditions of employment or to otherwise interfere with their rights under applicable laws.

WCPL management and staff are expected to support the philosophies and direction provided in our Mission and Vision Statements.

Mission Statement

“The Wells County Public Library provides the communities it serves with access, knowledge, and growth supporting research, popular interests, and lifelong learning.”

Vision Statement

The Wells County Public Library is committed to providing library service that is all encompassing, oriented for lifelong learning, economically and equally accessible, inviting and offers a “small town” atmosphere, committed to innovative technology, professional and forward thinking and customer focused.

The Wells County Public Library will be considered essential to the community, embrace technology, produce innovative programs for all ages, seek continual improvement in its facility, its people and its processes, serve patron’s individual informational, enrichment and entertainment needs, seek cost-effective, convenient knowledge delivery, be the best source of information about Wells County.

History of WCPL (New – Please Read All Policy)

The Bluffton Public Library had its beginning May 15, 1902, when a seven-member Library Board met in the home of Mrs. James P. Hale for the purpose of organizing a public library. The Library was first housed in the southeast basement room of the Court House; soon afterwards, it was moved to the northwest corner room. Because of the early twentieth century was the era of Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy to public libraries, the secretary of the Library Boards was instructed to write to other cities in the state that had Carnegie Libraries to obtain information concerning the method of application to these funds. The secretary and twenty or more other prominent citizens wrote to Mr. Carnegie to request money for a library. Mr. Carnegie agreed to furnish Ten Thousand Dollars to erect a Free Public Library Building for Bluffton.

After the promise of the money, the Board chose the Mary E. Stoddard property on West Washington Street and was purchased for \$2,975. The Board members next actions were to confer with architects about the plans and specifications for the erection of a library building. The Library Board sent a copy of these plans and specifications to Mr. Carnegie with a request that he contribute \$2,000 more than he promised. Mr. Carnegie responded by increasing the amount of his gift to \$13,000. After campaigning for the difference the total amount received was \$18,909.20 with which the lot was purchased, the building erected and the interior furnishing acquired. The lowest bidder, Fred Illingsworth and Company, was granted the contract. After two and one-half years of planning and construction, the Library was opened to the public on May 15, 1905.

In November 1937, a two cents levy was approved for the townships, and the Library was opened to the county. With the county system established, book collections were then provided to the county schools. The Library mailed books to patrons until locations for book stations were in operation. Stations were eventually opened at Uniondale, Ossian and McNatt, which were open ten hours per week.

On June 1, 1939, the Board met to discuss the best way to meet the needs of the county. A book trailer was favored. Later that year a twenty-foot semi-trailer, pulled by a one-half ton pick-up truck, was purchased from Sylvan Tonner, The trailer feature three skylights and ventilators on the roof. It held approximately 2,000 books. The book trailer was the pride of the community. Circulation increased by fifty percent with the addition of the book trailer, since one-half of the cardholders resided outside of the Bluffton city limits. By 1951, seventy-seven percent of the total circulation figure was attributed to the county residents.

In 1970, a self-contained bookmobile replaced the book trailer, which had been in operation for thirty-two years. It was twenty-nine feet long and featured air-conditioning. The new unit was a single unit vehicle like a school bus rather than the common truck rig style having a separate cab and chassis. It arrived in Bluffton on September 30, 1970, just in time to begin the busy school schedule. Because of its many stops throughout the county and its stops at the schools, up to 40 percent of the library's circulation was handled by the mobile unit. The bookmobile had three thousand five

hundred books aboard and served as a branch library to towns and schools throughout the county.

On December 8, 1979, the Ossian branch library was opened to the northern Wells County residents. In 1989, the library purchased the northwest corner of Jefferson and Mill Streets in Ossian, with the hopes of building a new branch facility.

Citizens of Zanesville in northwest Wells County petitioned the Library Board for a branch facility in their town. In May 1986 a new branch library was opened in Zanesville. It subsequently closed in 1990 as demographics shifted.

The Library was bursting at the seams and expansion was a necessity was not questioned. After many months of controversy, divisive meetings, plans adopted, pursued and then ultimately rejected, a compromise was finally achieved and the county was ready to move forward in their pursuit of an all-new, modern library. The former jail lot on Washington Street was to be the new home for the 24,000 square foot, \$2.6-million-dollar library. The new library in Bluffton was officially dedicated on August 25, 1991. The staff, along with hired movers, had carted much of the equipment, furniture, supplies and materials across the street in the weeks preceding moving day, which arrived on a sunny Saturday morning, September 7, 1991. Two hundred ninety-six volunteers participated in the well-orchestrated move. The new library officially opened its doors for business on Tuesday, September 24, 1991.

The decade of expansion was just beginning for Wells County residents. Once the need for a new central library was met, the people began to focus on the southern part of the county and what could be done to better serve the people there. Southern Wells and the library entered into a cooperative agreement whereby the school would provide space for a small library branch in exchange for use of the catalog during the day. The Southern Wells Branch opened on May 2, 1993. It was open two nights a week to serve both adults and children during non-school hours.

Once the central and the southern parts of the County were well situated, it was time to move on to Ossian's Branch. The ground breaking ceremony for the Ossian Branch was held on Sunday, October 31 and a little over a year later on Sunday, November 14, 1994 the new facility was dedicated and open for services.

When the library was built in 1990, no one dreamed how important public technology would be or that the library would become a vital social and learning center for Wells County. The number of computers grew from 12 to 81. The media collection has more than doubled in 13 years. There is also a shortage of programming and storage space. Because of the need for more space because of services have increased an expansion to Wells County Public Library was proposed. The project expanded the library from 22,180 square feet to 39,280 square feet – a 77% increase in floor space. The Wells County Council unanimously voted for the \$3.050 million – 15-year bond project. The new library addition was opened to the public on January 2, 2007 and is currently WCPL today.

Purpose of this Handbook (New – Please Read All Policy)

WCPL's personnel policies reflect its belief that its employees are one of its most valuable assets. This employee handbook (1) answers some of the questions you will have, (2) provides information WCPL believes you should know about your employment, and (3) informs you of some of the rules, regulations and policies related to your employment.

The matters discussed in this employee handbook are of great importance. Every employee is expected to comply with each of the rules and policies discussed in this handbook as well as any others adopted by WCPL in the exercise of its right to manage its library.

You should understand that a violation of any of WCPL's rules or policies may result in discipline up to and including termination.

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