

Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 27th, 2024
Great Falls Public Library – Cordingley Room (Basement of the Library)
(Virtual access to meeting was available upon request)
(zoom recording of meeting is available on the Great Falls Public Library YouTube page)
4:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Anne Bulger, Ms. Sam DeForest, Ms. Noelle Johnson, Ms. Whitney Olson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Jessica Crist

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Shannon Wilson – City of Great Falls Commissioner

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Rae Grulkowski – Cascade County Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT: Ms. Autumn Klein, Mr. Aaron Kueffler, Ms. Susie McIntyre, Ms. Rae McFadden, Ms. Carol Millsap, Ms. Sara Linder-Parkinson, Mr. Jake Sorich (via zoom)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Kenneth Banach – Resident of Great Falls, Molly Beck – Resident of Great Falls, Roberta Beute – Resident of Great Falls, Carol Bronson – Resident of Great Falls, Linda Caricaburu – Resident of Great Falls, Jeni Dodd – Resident of Great Falls, Linda Fagenstrom – Resident of Great Falls, Sharon Griffen – Resident of Cascade County, Steve Grout (via zoom), Lucretia Humphrey – Resident of Great Falls, Richard Irving – Resident of Great Falls, Gerry Jennings – A Resident of Great Falls, Melissa Kinzler – COGF Finance Director, Tom Kotynski – Resident of Great Falls, Brianne Laurin – GFPL Foundation Executive Director, Tommy Lynch – KRTV, JoAnn Metsko – Resident of Great Falls, Kim Ochsner – Resident of Great Falls, Dave Price – Resident of Great Falls, Sandy Rice – GFPL Foundation Liaison, Jenn Rowell – The Electric (via zoom), David Saslav – Resident of Great Falls, Jolene Schalper – Resident of Great Falls, Matthias Schalper – Resident of Great Falls, Becky Scott – Resident of Great Falls, Kay Silk – Resident of Great Falls, Melissa Smith – Resident of Great Falls, Cameron Swathwood – Resident of Great Falls, Bill Tacke – Resident of Great Falls, Millie Whalen – Resident of Cascade County, Kirsten Wavra – COGF Finance, Jane Weber – Resident of Great Falls, Donna Williams – Resident of Great Falls, Susan Wolff – City of Great Falls Commissioner, Ena Woods – Resident of Great Falls, Nancy (Illegible) – Resident of Great Falls, (Illegible) – Resident of Cascade County

Ms. Olson called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

I. AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had additional items to add or remove from the agenda approval.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had additional items to add or remove from the agenda approval.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the agenda items as presented. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment. Ms. Johnson asked if an action needed to be made for the changes to the agenda. Ms. Olson stated that it was her understanding that the Board Chair and the Director can set up the agenda, and that no action is needed. Ms. Johnson referenced the boards rules and procedures policy and indicated that she may make a motion at a later time to add the changes, including recording the meetings via zoom, to the policy. Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

II. STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Autumn Klein and Ms. Carol Millsap introduced themselves and talked about their positions at the Library and how they came to be at the Library. After questions from the board, they left the meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He voiced a concern with not postponing the adoption of the standards at the last meeting. He called on the board to reconsider that motion. He also voiced a concern that the Library Director has been directing the board when it should be the board chair.

Ms. Millie Whalen, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She thanked the Library for the community events held in February.

Mr. Cameron Swathwood, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He spoke of his concerns regarding the presence of homeless individuals, drug users and unmedicated mentally ill persons loitering inside and outside the library.

Ms. McIntyre informed Mr. Swathwood that the library had just conducted interviews for the new safety specialist positions and hope to have them hired by April.

Ms. Melissa Smith, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She voiced her concerns with the commissions desire to revise the city agreement with the library. She stated that the library is vital to the community.

Ms. Lucretia Humphrey, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She thanked the Director and the Library board for their hard work. She stated her support for funding the library and enjoys the programs that the library offers.

Ms. Kay Silk, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. Stated that libraries help make connections. She attends book clubs at the library and is participating in the book reading challenge.

Ms. Carol Bronson, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She thanked the library for their many activities and has attended library events. She thanked the library for offering multiple book clubs and has attended the silent book club.

Ms. Jeni Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She had a concern regarding the absence of public comment on New Business: Library Board Presentation to City Commission. Ms. Olson stated that there is no motion and only discussion today. Ms. Dodd pointed out that the presentation is a requirement of the M.C.A. 22.1.301.7

Ms. Dodd encourage library supporters to read the M.C.A.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Johnson made a motion that the Great Falls Board of Trustees approve the minutes as corrected. Ms. Deforest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment, upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the January Year-to-date report. Ms. DeForest asked about line item 371100. Ms. Kinzler explained how the interest process works and that the average currently is about four percent interest. As the cash balance increases, you will see more interest coming in.

Ms. Johnson asked about the year-to-date expense totals. The total does not match the total if you add the prior months together. Ms. Kinzler explained that the monthly reports that the board receives are not actually closed. The city applies expenses backwards. Some expenses are billed in arrears. The monthly reports are fluid and can change.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the library vendor report. Ms. Johnson asked what Evonence (Google Services) on page 16 was for. Ms. McIntyre stated that is was the email service we have through Google Suites.

Ms. DeForest asked what the difference was between De Lage Landen and Fisher's Technology on page 15. Ms. Linder-Parkinson stated that Fisher's Technology is the month-to-month services on the copy machines, and De Lage Landen is the company that provides our lease contract for the copy machines.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the Library Foundation vendor report. Upon hearing none she asked if anyone had questions regarding the January donation report. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the financial reports as presented. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Mr. Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He asked the board to question why \$1,500 was used to rent the Mansfield Theater for a Native American Event that no one went to.

Ms. Olson asked for any board comments, upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed 3-1 (voting yes: Ms. Bulger, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Whitney Olson. Voting no: Ms. Johnson)

VI. REPORTS

Ms. Kinzler gave a report on the City of Great Falls Budget process and Financial Policies.

Ms. Johnson asked if the library budget would be impacted by the February Priority session due to the City agreement, City Charter, MCA and the Mill levy. Ms. Kinzler stated that in the past the priority session is just the overall city of Great Falls priorities and not specifically for the library at that point.

Ms. Kinzler explained the City's audit process. Ms. DeForest asked how long the audit takes. Ms. Kinzler stated it begins in early September and is completed by end of December. Ms. DeForest asked if the audit is available. Ms. Kinzler stated that the audit is available on the Financial Page of the City's website.

Ms. McIntyre asked Ms. Kinzler to talk about the Library Foundation audit. Ms. Kinzler stated that the Library Foundation does have to submit an independent audit to the city and their info is reported in the financials.

Ms. Kinzler explained the purchasing approval process as shown on slide 15. Ms. Johnson asked where the library boards authorization fits in the approval process. Ms. Kinzler indicated that it is a delegation of authority and in the past the library board has just followed the city policies and procedures.

Mr. Irving asked if the Library Foundation was subject to the city policies and procedures. Ms. Kinzler stated that the foundation is their own entity and they have their own audit procedures. Ms. McIntyre clarified that if the foundation spends money on the foundation, they do their own process. If the foundation gives money to the library for a project, the library seeks approval first from the board, then the foundation

board makes an approval and then the library follows city policies and procedures accordingly. Ms. Kinzler stated that the money from the foundation for projects is tracked in the cities accounting system.

Ms. Kinzler explained how the Electric Utility cost are distributed. She stated that they are always billed in arrears and may take one to two months to get the bills. The cost is then distributed based on the meter readings.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions for Ms. Kinzler.

Ms. Dodd asked why the \$300,000 payback to the Foundation did not go through commission approval. Ms. Kinzler stated the state statute is very specific about certain type of purchases and that there are exceptions to the purchasing policy that this fell under.

Ms. Linder-Parkinson asked if this procedure has changed since Ms. McIntyre became the director. Ms. Kinzler stated that the procedures are the same, but the amounts have been changed; the last change occurred in 2020.

Ms. Olson asked Ms. Kinzler how people could contact her if they had further questions. Ms. Kinzler offered to come speak at the board meeting more often, otherwise they can contact her and the finance office via email and phone, and can meet in person as well.

Ms. Kinzler and Ms. Wavra left the meeting after their presentation.

Management Team Report

Ms. McFadden presented her Youth Services report.

Ms. Johnson had a concern with the special story time with the Sip-n-Dip mermaid. She asked if it was acceptable to have a bar icon for a kid's event. Ms. McFadden stated that the mermaid in question is a children's author. She is a Montana author and reached out to the library and offered to do an event and donate her time. Ms. Johnson said advertising it as a Montana author would come off better than as a bar icon.

Ms. McFadden left the meeting after her presentation.

Director Report

Ms. McIntyre presented her director's report.

Ms. Johnson asked when the Levy Smart Objectives would be given to the board by the next meeting. Ms. McIntyre stated she would have them for next months meeting.

Ms. Johnson stated that the Foundation Approved Projects presented at the December meeting were not voted on, only presented. Ms. McIntyre stated that is what has been done in the past. If the board would like to change that process they can.

Ms. Bulger asked for clarification on the Digital Born News preservation project. Ms. McIntyre stated that it is a project with the Montana Historical Society meant to preserve local history that has been recorded digitally. An example would be preserving past digital issues of The Electric, an online newspaper if it ever went out of business.

GFPL Foundation Report

Ms. Rice informed us of the various Foundation Approved Projects that the Foundation has funded.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS: LIBRARY STANDARDS ROADMAP REVIEW – PLANNING & EVALUATION

Ms. McIntyre presented. She recapped the information that was presented in the board packet.

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS: PUBLIC LIBRARY STATISTICS REVIEW

Ms. McIntyre presented the Public Library Statistics review that was presented in the board packet.

Ms. Johnson informed us that the total for open hours on the infographic were wrong. Ms. McIntyre stated it was a mistake and this infographic was provided by the Montana State Library and that she will request the totals be corrected.

Ms. DeForest asked why the pre-school numbers were down. Ms. McIntyre stated that is a result of us phasing out our virtual programs.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

LIBRARY BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATE

Ms. McIntyre presented the library board job description update that was presented in the board packet.

Ms. Johnson made a motion to postpone the updates due to wording that suggest a city employee must actively support or oppose legislation. Ms. Johnson has reached out to

the city attorney and is awaiting a reply. Ms. Bulger seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Mr. Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He supports postponing due to confusion in the description between a governing board and an advisory board.

Ms. Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She is in favor of postponing due to the job description possibly interfering with a person's first amendment right.

Ms. Olson asked for Board discussion. Ms. Johnson added that there are other issues with the job description. Some items do not match up with the city management agreement and the MCA.

Ms. Olson suggested that a committee be formed to address these concerns. Ms. Johnson agreed.

Ms. Olson will appoint a sub-committee to look at the job descriptions and present at next month's meeting.

Ms. Olson asked if there was anymore discussion regarding the motion of postponing the job description approval. Upon hearing none, she asked for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF GFPL GOVERNING DOCUMENTS: MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT, MONTANA CODE ANNOTATED, CITY ORDINANCES

Ms. McIntyre stated that this item was put on the agenda prior to the City Commissions request to renegotiate the management agreement. The current agreement was signed in 1993, but the agreement was reviewed in 2016/2017 when the city rewrote the city ordinances.

Ms. DeForest asked what was in place before this agreement. Ms. McIntyre stated that she doesn't know the exact history, but the City of Great Falls has operated a library since 1892. It operated as just another city department. In 1993 the MCA wanted something more specific.

CITY OF GREAT FALLS/LIBRARY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT RENEGOTIATION

Ms. McIntyre presented details regarding the Management Agreement Renegotiation. She stated that three things can happen every year regarding the agreement. 1) The agreement can be renewed. 2) Either party can terminate if they give 90-day notice before April 20th signatory date. 3) A new contract. The board can decide if they want to open negotiations with the city.

Ms. Olson read a statement from Ms. Crist, who was unable to attend this evening. It expressed Ms. Crist's frustration with the lack of support from the city regarding the mill levy. Having contributed nothing, the city leadership now wants to renegotiate the management agreement. The city is proposing taking money away from the library because the mill levy was successful. The library continues to serve the City and County citizens.

Ms. Bulger added that the voters recognized the importance of the library and voted for the programs that were laid out if the levy passed. We should all support and contribute to the library's success. Ms. Bulger feels that this item should also be referred to a committee. Ms. Bulger would like to change the motion.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees forms a committee to research renegotiation of the City of Great Falls/Library management agreement; and report to the full board at the March meeting on the options available to the library. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson asked for public comment.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He recommends that the committee be appointed at an open session of the board. The committee should have people with different viewpoints. He also pointed out that Ms. McIntyre is not a lawyer and the board should get an attorney for legal advice.

Ms. Jeni Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She stated that the library has failed to implement the current agreement properly. She cited that the board has not reported properly to the city commission.

Ms. Donna Williams, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She encourages the formation of a committee and to take time on it. She does not feel these negotiations are fair and encourages the board to ask for what they need and more.

Ms. Sharon Griffen, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She stated that she supports the Great Falls Library. She thanked the library for all the hard work.

Ms. Julia (unknown), a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She thanked the library for protecting first amendment rights.

Mr. David Saslav, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He informed us that the City Growth Policy update discussion is coming up in the next 18-24 months. All of these outcomes will help determine how the library board and City Commission interact with each other. He suggests the board wait to form a committee until after the city growth update.

Ms. Kim Ochsner, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She recommends that the board allow the city to move forward with their budgeting process before moving forward.

Ms. Jane Weber, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She agrees with the motion. She recommends going in with a strategy.

Ms. Gerry Jennings, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She agrees with the motion to defer. She recommends letting the city come up with the agreement and work with them.

Ms. Molly Beck, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She encourages the board to take their time.

Ms. Olson opened for board discussion.

Ms. DeForest would like the city commission to inform the board what they do not like about the agreement and what they would like changed.

Ms. Johnson agrees with forming a committee but has a concern with the entire board not being able to weigh in on the discussion.

Ms. Bulger clarified that the motion is to allow time to gather research.

Ms. Olson stated that the committee would have a lot of work to do. This is a fluid process.

Ms. McIntyre reminded the board that the board can call meetings between the monthly meeting as long as it follows Montana meeting laws and noticed to the public.

Ms. Johnson stated that it is disrespectful to not enter negotiations. City code says the library board is appointed and the city commission is the governing board. Even with it being disrespectful, she does support forming a committee.

Ms. McIntyre read to the board, Section 5 of the Bi-Laws, in regards to comments about items being delegated to her.

Ms. Bulger wanted to clarify that she would like to have as much information available when going into the negotiation, she never said the board should not negotiate.

Ms. Johnson wanted to clarify that her comment regarding being disrespectful was not aimed at this motion.

Ms. DeForest also stated that she is open to negotiation, but feels the City should approach the library first with what they want.

Ms. Olson reminded everyone there was a motion on the table and called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson stated that she would like herself and Ms. Bulger to be on this committee.

Ms. McIntyre discussed the proposed renegotiation plan of action. Ms. McIntyre suggests that the library board seek outside council for legal advice.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees seek legal council to work with the library board in renegotiation; spending up to \$10,000.00. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Ms. Olson asked for public comment, upon hearing none she asked for board discussion.

Ms. Bulger felt that this is the correct thing to do. Ms. DeForest asked if Ms. McIntyre would be the one interviewing legal counsel. Ms. McIntyre will work with Ms. Olson; they will seek a pro-bono option first. Ms. Johnson asked if it will be a local attorney. Ms. McIntyre said yes.

Upon no further board discussion, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENTATION TO CITY COMMISSION: DISCUSSION

Ms. McIntyre stated that the library board has been requested to speak to the City Commission. The March 19th work session is available. The City Commission would like a report on activities that have happened last year as well as plans for next year.

Ms. Johnson suggest the board follow MCA #7 (22-1-309) as it lays out what should be included.

Ms. McIntyre stated that she does submit monthly reports to the city managers office as well.

IX. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Bulger would like to propose the board adjust public comment to be 3 minutes instead of 5 minutes to be consistent with the city. Ms. Olson requested that it be included on next month's agenda. She recommended a clock be purchased to show time.

Ms. Bulger suggested we revisit the minutes. Minutes should just be a general overview.

Ms. Bulger mentioned that since it is now recorded the minutes do not need to be transcribed.

Ms. Johnson requested an item be on the next months agenda for a formal action regarding the changes made to the order of the agenda.

X. ADJOURMENT

Ms. Olson asked if there were any other questions or comments, upon hearing none, she asked for a motion.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson called for a vote.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson adjourned the meeting at 7:23 pm.