Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees
Rules of Conduct and Procedure of Board of Trustee Meetings

Introduction: Rules of conduct and procedure are to facilitate the transaction of public business in an orderly way. These rules of procedure are intended to ensure that the Board of Trustees can accomplish its work efficiently, in full view of the public, and with reasonable opportunity for the public to participate in the deliberations and decisions of the Library.

The Board of Trustees thus adopts these Rules of Conduct and Procedure of Board Meetings this __26th___ day of __March_____, 2024:

Rule 1. Meetings of the Board of Trustees

1.1 Regular Meetings

The established regular meetings of the Board of Trustees are held at the Great Falls Public Library, 301 2nd Ave. N, on the fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 4:30 o'clock p.m., except legal holidays and federal election days. The Board generally omits one monthly meeting each year, on a month determined by the Board.

When the day affixed for any regular meeting of the Board falls upon a day designated by law as a legal or national holiday, such meeting may be scheduled at the same hour on the next succeeding day which is not a holiday, rescheduled to the proceeding week day and time, or the meeting may be canceled by the Board.

1.2 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chair or by any two members of the Board.

1.3 Emergency Meetings

In the event of an emergency situation, such as a storm, fire, explosion, community disaster, insurrection, act of God, or other potential destruction or impairment of Library property or business that affects the health and safety of the residents, employees or the functions of the Library, the Library Director may call a meeting to be convened by a majority of the Board without providing two days' notice. The Library Director shall use reasonable efforts to inform the public of the emergency meeting.

1.4 Executive Session/Closed Meetings

The presiding officer of any meeting may close the meeting during the time the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy if and only if the presiding officer determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public

disclosure. The right of individual privacy may be waived by the individual about whom the discussion pertains and, in that event, the meeting must be open.

A meeting may be closed to discuss litigation strategy when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Library, except when the opposing party is another governmental entity.

By majority vote in a public meeting, the Board may hold executive sessions as permitted as set forth above. The motion and vote to go into executive session must be made in public, and the reason must be stated. No vote or formal action shall be taken in executive session, except to return to public session.

After returning to public session and calling the meeting back to order, the presiding officer or designee shall generally report what was discussed in executive session. The presiding officer shall then, if appropriate, ask the will of the Board, and call for the vote.

Minutes of closed meetings or executive sessions shall be maintained and sealed by the Library Director, or Board-approved designee.

Rule 2. Notice

The schedule of regular meetings of the Board has been established as the fourth Tuesday of every month at 4:30 o'clock p.m. with the exception of one month each year; on a month determined by the Board.

The agenda for the meeting is a legal document that, when posted, provides additional notice to the public that the Board is planning to meet and to conduct the Library's business at a certain time and place. To perform this legally required "notice" the agenda for all official meetings of the Board (as set forth in Rule 1, with the exception of Emergency Meetings) should be posted on the Library's website and Great Falls Public Library posting board on the first floor of the Library, 301 2nd Ave. N, at least two days prior to the meeting and must set forth the date, time, place and all items to be considered.

Rule 3. Requirements of an Open Meeting

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, except for those portions of meetings in limited situations as set forth in Rule 1.4. The four essential elements in the Montana "open meeting" laws are:

- If a quorum of the Board is convened by either the physical presence of the members or by means of electronic equipment; and
- The Board will hear, discuss or act upon a matter over which it has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power; then
- The meeting must be open to the public; and

- Minutes of the meeting must be kept and made available for public inspection. Meetings will also be recorded and made available for the public, but the written minutes remain the official record of the meeting.

3.1 Violation of the Open Meeting Laws

Any decision made in violation of the open meeting laws may be declared void by a district court having jurisdiction. A suit to void a decision must be commenced within 30 days of the date of which the plaintiff or petitioner learns, or reasonably should have learned, of the Board ’s decision.

Rule 4. Parliamentary Authority

Meeting conduct, decorum, and procedures not provided for in these rules, state statute or Library rules or regulations, shall be guided by General Parliamentary Procedure.

Rule 5. Attendance

Board members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings and special sessions. In the event of a foreseeable absence, board members shall give prior notice of an absence by notifying the board Chair or the library staff.

The Board shall follow attendance requirements as provided in Title 2, OCCGF, Chapter 56, Sections .010 through .020. A board member who misses more than one third of the regular meetings in a calendar year without a health or medical excuse, shall lose his or her status as a board member. In addition, a valid, excused absence may be accepted by the board.

The City Commission shall appoint replacements to the Board to fill out the unexpired terms of Board members so removed.

Rule 6. Agenda Preparation

The purpose of an agenda is to provide a framework within which a meeting can be conducted. The agenda for a meeting provides opportunity for public participation before a final decision is taken by the Board that is of significant interest to the public. However, the Board may not take action on any matter discussed unless specific notice of that matter is included on an agenda and public comment has been allowed on that matter.

Rule 7. Agenda – Order of Business

The agenda shall be in substantially the following form:

Agenda Approval
Staff Introductions
Public Comment
Adoption of the Minutes
Acceptance of the Financial reports
Reports

- Director's Report
- Statistical Reports
- Personnel Reports
- Foundation Report
- Chair Report
- Board Reports
- Other Reports as deemed necessary

Proposals/Comments from Trustees
Old Business
New Business
Adjournment

The order of business may be adjusted by consent of the Board, but items will not be added that require action without the required public notice.

Rule 8. Regular Meeting Minutes

Appropriate minutes of all meetings will be kept and be available for inspection by the public when requested. Minutes will include: the date, time and place of the meeting; a list of the individual members of the Board who were in attendance; the substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided; and, a record of votes taken. Pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, and the Montana Code Annotated, minutes are a concise and official record of the proceedings of a meeting, not a verbatim transcript. Meetings will also be recorded and made available for the public, but the written minutes remain the official record of the meeting.

Rule 9. Public Participation

Procedures for encouraging and assisting public participation, and established protocol and rules of decorum at public meetings held by the Library Board, are as follows:

1. Persons addressing the Board shall provide for the record that person's name and address, and, if applicable, the person, firm or organization the person represents.

2. Speakers shall address their comments to the presiding officer and the Board as a body and not to any individual member of the Board or Library staff.

3. During public comment periods, speakers shall limit their address to the Board on agenda items to three (3) minutes, unless further time is granted by the presiding officer with the concurrence of the Board.

4. Speakers shall keep their comments germane to the subject item on the agenda or, during petitions and communications, matters of significant public interest which are within the jurisdiction of the Board. Public comment generally is not intended for a two-way dialogue between speaker(s), Board member(s), and/or the Library Director or Library staff; however, the presiding officer, with the concurrence of the Board, may allow questions to be asked of or by speakers. The time involved in such questions and replies shall not count against any time limit imposed by these protocols or by the presiding officer.

5. Speakers shall refrain from irrelevant or unduly repetitious communications or other behaviors, which disrupt, disturb or impede the orderly conduct of the meeting, or incite violence.

6. Speakers are prohibited from using vulgar, discriminatory, profane or impertinent speech, or personal attacks and personal accusations, which disrupt, disturb or impede the orderly conduct of the meeting, or incite violence.

7. Speakers and persons in the audience shall not delay or interrupt the proceedings or refuse to obey the orders of the presiding officer.

8. Any person, including one with special needs, who may want to offer public comment on any matter, may provide a written statement for the record to the Library Director for distribution to the Board in lieu of offering oral comment. The time limits set forth above shall apply to any oral presentation or reading of any such written statement of testimony.

9. Objects that are deemed a threat or perceived to be a threat to persons at the meeting or the facility infrastructure are not allowed and the object, or the person

possessing the object, may be subject to search for weapons and other dangerous materials.

10. Speakers and persons in the audience shall refrain from creating, provoking or participating in any type of disturbance, which disrupts, disturbs or impedes the orderly conduct of Library business or which incites violence, including but is not limited to, unwelcome physical contact, or verbal, physical or emotional abuse or intimidation.

11. Cell phones, pagers, smart phones or other electronic communication devices shall be put in silence mode during meetings. Persons who need to place or receive a telephone call are requested to leave the room for that purpose.

12. Failure to comply with the rules of decorum which disturbs, disrupts or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting shall, at the discretion of the presiding officer, be ruled out of order, and may result in the speaker's removal from the meeting and/or possible arrest.

Rule 10. Effective Date and Amendment

These Rules and Procedures shall be effective from March 26, 2024. Any amendment to these Rules and Procedures shall be approved by the Board of Directors.