

Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, September 2024 meeting held on October 1st, 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. Jessica Crist (via zoom), Ms. Sam DeForest, Ms. Noelle Johnson, Ms. Whitney Olson (via zoom)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

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: Aaron Kueffler, Mr. Xander Lee, Ms. Rae McFadden, Ms. Susie McIntyre, Ms. Sara Linder-Parkinson, Mr. Jake Sorich, Ms. Reed Witherspoon

GUESTS PRESENT: Bill Bronson – Resident of Great Falls, Matt Hudson – Montana Free Press, Richard Irving – Resident of Great Falls, Jada Ku – Resident of Great Falls, Brianne Laurin – GFPL Foundation Executive Director (via zoom), Robert Moccasin (via zoom), Jenn Rowell – The Electric (via zoom), Sandy Rice – GFPL Foundation Liaison, Jesus Sanchez – Resident of Great Falls, David Saslav – Resident of Great Falls, Bill Tacke – Resident of Great Falls

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

I. AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Olson asked for an agenda approval.

Ms. Johnson Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the agenda as presented. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any public or board comments. Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

II. STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Xander Lee and Ms. Reed Witherspoon 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

Jada Ku, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She asked that she be treated with dignity and respect while she is using the library. She cited several incidents.

When Ms. Ku's allowed time had run out, she proceeded to hand documents to each board member.

Ms. McIntyre stated that she has shared feedback from Ms. Ku to the board chair. Ms. Ku is welcome at the library and will be treated respectfully and in the same manner as other patrons.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board with various concerns including how the mill levy was passed, how the director reports to the board, and his objections to putting children in the basement.

David Saslav, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board and reminded the board that the library had returned \$350,000 to the general fund after the mill levy passed.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Bulger and Ms. Crist provided Mr. Kueffler with written notes regarding grammatical corrections to both the August and Special September meeting minutes.

Ms. Olson asked if there was a motion to accept the minutes from August.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the minutes from the August meeting as amended through emails to Mr. Kueffler. Ms. Bulger seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any public comment. Upon hearing none she asked if there was any board discussion.

The board discussed the length and specificity of the minutes and concluded that minutes record actions. They are not a transcript.

Two board members indicated they would abstain from voting because they had not had time to read the minutes.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any more board comments. Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed by 3 (voting YES: Ms. Olson, Ms. Crist, Ms. Bulger. ABSTAINING: Ms. DeForest, Ms. Johnson.)

Ms. Olson asked for a motion on the special meeting held in September.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the September 5th minutes as amended through emails to Mr. Kueffler. Ms. Bulger seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any public comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls addressed the board, asking that the minutes not be cut too short.

David Saslav, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board suggesting that Zoom has a transcript option.

Ms. McIntyre stated that Mr. Kueffler has experimented with that feature, and, like many new technologies, it made a lot of mistakes.

Jada Ku, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board asking about the law offices on the third floor. Ms. Olson informed Ms. Ku that this is only public comment regarding the meeting minutes.

Ms. Olson asked if there was any more public or board comments. Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed by 3 (voting YES: Ms. Olson, Ms. Crist, Ms. Bulger. ABSTAINING: Ms. DeForest, Ms. Johnson.)

V. ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the Financial reports.

Ms. McIntyre addressed a question from the previous board meeting regarding the year to date amount. The budget less year-to-date actual displays a negative number instead of a positive number. Ms. McIntyre has talked with Fiscal about this. They informed her that the software makes the calculation and they are unable to see what the calculations are.

Ms. DeForest had a question on the reserve fund. Currently 80 percent of the library budget comes twice a year; in December and June. Because the library pays several one-time payments at the beginning of the fiscal year it is recommended the fund be built up. Ms. McIntyre has suggested having 60 percent of the operational budget in the library fund at the end of the fiscal year for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Johnson had a question regarding the donations. Ms. McIntyre and Mr. Kueffler clarified.

Ms. Olson asked for a motion.

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

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls addressed the board. He reiterated his opinion that if the Library kept their books on a credit debit basis instead of cash, the information would be clear.

Ms. Olson asked if there was any more public or board comments. Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed by 4 (voting YES: Ms. Olson, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Crist, Ms. Bulger. ABSTAINING: Ms. Johnson.)

VI. REPORTS

Management Team Report

Ms. McFadden gave the Youth Services report.

Ms. Crist asked how the Teen Scene was going, and if teens are being reached. Ms. McFadden stated that the loot boxes have been really successful as well as the Dungeons and Dragons program.

Ms. Bulger added that she has noticed more teens in the teen scene section. Ms. McFadden stated that is due to Ms. Linder-Parkinson and the Reference desk staff for monitoring it and keeping it open for teens to utilize.

Director Report

Ms. McIntyre give her director's report.

Ms. McIntyre spoke regarding items that did not make it in her Directors Report. She asked if the board would like to continue receiving the management team reports as well as continuing with staff introductions. The board would like it to continue.

Ms. McIntyre added information regarding the charging stations that were discussed at the last meeting. She confirmed that they were purchased in January 2023; they were inexpensive and we got what we paid for.

Ms. Olson asked for confirmation that when the board supplies feedback on the annual report to just reply to Ms. McIntyre. Ms. McIntyre confirmed; don't reply all, just reply to her.

Ms. Olson asked if there would be time available in the November meeting for a discussion on the annual report, or should a special work session be scheduled. Ms.

McIntyre stated that it depends on how the negotiations are going. The final policy review will be in November and if there is nothing about the agreement on the November agenda, there should be time to discuss the annual report.

Ms. Olson instructed the board to let Ms. McIntyre know, after receiving the annual report draft, if they feel a work session is needed. Ms. McIntyre will inform us what the majority would like to do.

Ms. Olson asked Ms. McIntyre if she knew what would happen to ARPA funds that are not used. Ms. McIntyre stated that she did not know. Ms. Olson asked if there was money left over, was there a chance the library could access the funds. McIntyre did not believe so. Ms. McIntyre added that one of the requirements was the funds had to be obligated by December 31st. At that time, she believes the federal government will take it back. She added that she was not 100% sure that was accurate. Ms. Olson added that if the entry doors are more than \$20,000, it wouldn't hurt to ask if other funds would be available.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the statistical and personnel reports. Upon hearing none she moved on to the Foundation report.

GFPL Foundation Report

Ms. Rice informed us that the Foundation's quarterly meeting has been postponed until October 7th. The Book-a-Thon PSA is in production. Ms. Rice thanked Mr. Kelly Wiles and the Great Falls High School Visual Arts department for working on it. The Book-a-Thon letter is in its final editing process. The Foundation will wait until after the election to mail them out. The Energy West flyer will go out again this year. The fall newsletter is in production and the annual audit is under completion.

Chair Report

Ms. Olson stated that the next renegotiation meeting with the city is scheduled for October 9th. Since there has been no meeting since the boards special meeting there is nothing new to report.

Ms. Johnson stated that it was her understanding that communication has occurred between Mr. Dennis and Mr. Bronson regarding the legality of what was actually approved by the board. Ms. Olson asked for clarification. Ms. Johnson added that what was voted on, four to one, actually had legal issues and was not actually legally possible.

Ms. McIntyre believes that what they were actually discussing was the indemnification clause, which Mr. Bronson spoke about at the last meeting. Ms. McIntyre added that in order for the library to have coverage by MMIA for liability insurance and other

insurance, the library has to meet their guidelines. The discussion was whether or not MMIA would be okay with the indemnification clause.

Ms. Olson asked Ms. Johnson if she had heard something else. Ms. Johnson stated that she had heard that requiring the city commission to do the full 17 mills overrides the city charter, which was the illegality part of it. An agreement cannot override the city charter piece. Ms. Olson, Ms. Bulger, and Ms. McIntyre indicated that they have not heard about that. Ms. Olson asked that Ms. McIntyre forward that information to Mr. Bronson since he had to leave the meeting early.

Board Reports

Ms. DeForest indicated that she would be attending the pathfinder meeting this week. Ms. McIntyre added that Ms. Gianforte would be presenting at this meeting. Ms. McIntyre added that Ms. Cook was no longer going to be the Pathfinder representative, it will now be Ms. Corey Sloan.

Ms. Bulger stated that she had nothing to report from the foundation since the meeting had been moved to next week.

Cushing Terrell Design Report

Ms. McIntyre stated that in addition to what was in her director report, she and Ms. Laurin would be meeting with Cushing Terrell to provide feedback, and they it will be presented to the foundation board at their January meeting. It will then be presented to the library board at their February meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS POLICY REVIEW: LIBRARY FORMS

Ms. McIntyre suggested that the city forms be removed from the library's policy manual. The city is in the process of updating their forms. The board has seen most of these forms in conjunction with reviewing the policies attached to them. Some of the forms have had some cosmetic changes such as the logo changing.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had comments or questions regarding the forms, upon hearing non she asked for a motion.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approves the library policy forms as presented. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Ms. Johnson had a question regarding the form on page 102. She remembers there being a discussion on the legality of someone under 18 signing an agreement. She asks if someone 14 or 15 can they by law sign this agreement. Ms. McIntyre stated that she contacted the Montana State Library and other Montana Libraries and this is very common to have an application age of 14 and above.

Ms. Olson asked if there was any more public or board comments. Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed by 4 (voting YES: Ms. Olson, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Crist, Ms. Bulger. NO: Ms. Johnson.)

LIBRARY MILL LEVY SMART OBJECTIVES: 6 MONTH REVIEW

Ms. Bulger stated that a lot of the objectives have been met, and the few that haven't been met are very close to being finished. Ms. McIntyre stated that some of the goals felt like a real stretch, but the library has easily accomplished them. One struggle has been with the website statistics, and that was due to the way the counting changed. She would like to have six months of data before we try to redo that. Another struggle has been with keeping accurate count of active library cards. Ms. McIntyre stated that the Great Falls Public Library is stricter than some others in keeping our active library card numbers up-to-date. Ms. Linder-Parkinson does a great job making sure expired cards are removed from the system.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

No New business this month

IX. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

PARTNER LIBRARIES

Ms. Crist commented that she was in a partner library and was able to choose a book and use her Great Falls Library Card to check it out.

Ms. Bulger asked if Mr. Sorich could better inform the community about using their card at partner libraries. Ms. McIntyre stated that when the library first joined the partners information was presented but it ended up confusing people. Ms. Linder-Parkinson added that the circulation staff does education people about the partners when they come in to get a library card.

Ms. DeForest asked if the library gets people bringing in their library cards from a partner library. Ms. Linder-Parkinson stated that it occurs on a regular basis.

Ms. Bulger added that this is a wonderful service to be able to get books from all of the various libraries.

POLICE CALLS

Ms. Linder-Parkinson wanted to provide the board with updated numbers in regard to the police being called to the library. She stated that she had talked with Captain Otto at the police department. It is important to remember that the numbers he provided are not necessarily the library calling the police because we need them; they also include calls that patrons have asked us to make on their behalf. In May 2023 the police came to the library 24 times, and in May 2024 only 7 times. In June 2023 it was 28 times and in June 2024 only 2 times. Those two times were on behalf of a patron and not because the library needed police assistance. The decrease in calls is related to the presence of the safety specialists

PRESENCE OF ATTORNEY

Ms. Olson proposed to the board that the board consider having Mr. Bronson attend every board meeting. Questions come up at board meetings that he would be able to answer. He is willing to attend the library board meetings. He would charge the library \$150 per hour for his services.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson adjourned the meeting at 5:42 pm.