Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, June 23, 2026
Great Falls Public Library – Montana Room (3rd Floor 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, Ms. Sam DeForest, Ms. Noelle Johnson, Ms. Whitney Olson
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Shannon Wilson – City of GF Commissioner
EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Joe Briggs – Cascade County Commissioner

GFPL STAFF, GFPL FOUNDATION, GFPL LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT: Amy Dissmeyer, Treva Higgins, Aaron Kueffler, Sara Linder-Parkinson (zoom), Jake Sorich

PUBLIC COMMENT PROVIDED BY: Richard Irving – Resident of Great Falls

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

I. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library cardholder, stated that he had no comments regarding the meeting agenda and concluded his remarks.

Ms. Bulger asked if there was any addition board or public comment.

Ms. Bulger called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library cardholder, requested that the Board clarify for the record whether the meeting agenda and board packet had changed since their initial publication and, if so, identify any revisions.

Mr. Irving also expressed concerns regarding the library's promotion of programs and events, stating that some event descriptions lacked sufficient detail to help the public locate or understand the events. He cited recent examples and encouraged clearer communication to

improve public participation. He additionally expressed concerns regarding the content and presentation of a recent library program.

Ms. Olson informed Mr. Irving when he had reached the allotted three-minute time limit for public comment.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees adopt the minutes of the May 21st 2026 Special Board Meeting. Ms. Olson seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library cardholder, commented on the timing of the publication of a board-related document, stating that he believed it was made available later than it should have been. He expressed the opinion that the information should have been publicly available prior to the City Commission's interview process.

Ms. Bulger called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

Ms. DeForest moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees adopt the minutes of the May 26th 2026 General Board meeting as presented. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library cardholder, commented on the Board's meeting minutes, stating that he appreciated instances in which his public comments were reflected in the record. He expressed concern that some of his previous comments had not been included and indicated that, as a result, he intended to raise those matters with other local governing bodies.

Ms. Bulger called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

V. ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Bulger invited questions regarding the financial reports.

Ms. Olson asked about a fuel classification adjustment reflected in the financial report. Mr. Kueffler explained that the charge represented fuel costs associated with the Bookmobile and library van.

Ms. Johnson requested clarification regarding Google services listed in the expenditures. Ms. Dissmeyer explained that the expense covers the library's email and web server services. In response to additional questions from Ms. Olson and Ms. Bulger, Ms. Dissmeyer confirmed that the service is billed monthly and noted that the library plans to purchase the service directly from Google rather than through its current vendor, which is expected to reduce future costs.

Ms. Johnson also inquired about an expenditure associated with the Great Falls Rescue Mission. Mr. Kueffler explained that the expense represented the library's booth fee for participation in the organization's back-to-school event.

Ms. Olson asked why no personnel report was included. Mr. Kueffler reported that there had been no personnel changes during the reporting period.

Ms. Olson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the financial reports as presented. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment. Upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

VI. REPORTS

MANAGER REPORT

Ms. Higgins reported on the library's transition from Baker & Taylor to Ingram as its materials vendor. She explained that, unlike the previous arrangement, invoices from Ingram are currently processed individually until the library completes the required setup to transition to a prepaid billing process. She expressed the expectation that this transition would be completed later in the calendar year.

In response to questions about materials processing, Ms. Higgins reported that although the number of repaired items had decreased from the previous year, staff experienced a significant increase in processing work due to the change in vendors. She explained that while Ingram now supplies materials with protective covers, library staff must currently complete additional processing tasks, including applying RFID tags, barcodes, spine labels, and ownership stamps. She noted that processing has also been affected by supply shortages and delays in obtaining materials such as Mylar covers.

Ms. Olson asked whether Ingram would eventually perform the additional processing functions. Ms. Higgins confirmed that the library has already established the required specifications and is awaiting implementation. Ms. Dissmeyer added that the delay is due to the large number of libraries transitioning to Ingram following industry-wide disruptions, noting that the library was well-positioned because it had begun the transition before demand increased.

Board members discussed Ingram's capacity to support library processing. Ms. Higgins explained that Ingram has long provided services to libraries but has experienced increased demand as many libraries shifted additional materials to the vendor. Ms. Dissmeyer noted that many larger libraries previously divided acquisitions between multiple vendors and have since consolidated orders, creating implementation delays based on library size and existing processing configurations.

Ms. Higgins also reported that, despite the processing challenges, material delivery times have improved and new releases are now arriving before their official publication dates, representing an improvement over previous service levels.

Ms. Higgins concluded her report by sharing circulation highlights for the reporting period. She reviewed the library's most frequently circulated fiction, nonfiction, and audiovisual materials, noting that circulation figures included Bookmobile checkouts. Board members discussed the popularity of several collections and observed that display placement and community interest may have contributed to high circulation of certain titles.

No further questions were raised, and the Board thanked Ms. Higgins for her report.

DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Dissmeyer reported that she assisted with the Juneteenth programming while a staff member was on vacation. She thanked Board members who volunteered at the event, and Board members noted that attendance was strong, with approximately 200 participants. Ms. Dissmeyer stated that attendance counts became difficult once food service began and noted that future event planning would include a checklist to ensure attendance-counting equipment is available.

Ms. Dissmeyer reported that she had contacted Mr. Patrick regarding his appointment and planned to conduct a board orientation following the Independence Day holiday. She noted that his previous board experience would likely make the orientation process straightforward.

Ms. Dissmeyer also reported on the library's recent TED Democracy event, describing it as the library's first experience hosting a live-streamed discussion program. She stated that the technology functioned successfully and that the library received participant feedback indicating the event differed from some attendees' expectations. Because the content was produced externally, the library had limited control over the program itself. Ms. Dissmeyer said staff are exploring whether recorded sessions could be made available for future events to support additional discussion and community engagement. She noted that the event generated productive conversation and was well received by those who attended.

Ms. Crist shared that representatives from Montana PBS have expressed interest in partnering with public libraries to host nonpartisan public discussions on democracy and Montana public affairs. She stated that she had informed the organization that the library would likely be interested in participating. Ms. Dissmeyer indicated support for exploring the opportunity, noting that attendees at the recent democracy program appeared interested in similar community discussions.

GFPL FOUNDATION REPORT

No report given.

CHAIR REPORT

No report given.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

LIBRARY DIRECTOR COMPENSATION

Ms. Bulger asked Ms. Dissmeyer whether she wished to waive her right to privacy regarding discussion of her evaluation. Ms. Dissmeyer agreed to have the discussion held in open session.

Ms. Bulger reported that she had met individually with each Board member and consulted several times with the City's Human Resources Director to better understand the evaluation process. She stated that Human Resources provided procedural guidance but did not offer recommendations regarding the outcome of the evaluation, emphasizing that the Board's decision was its own responsibility.

Ms. Crist noted that any personal opinions held by Human Resources regarding the evaluation outcome were not matters for Board discussion, emphasizing that the Board's role was to conduct its own evaluation.

Ms. Bulger explained that, based on discussions with Board members, there was general agreement that any compensation adjustment should be prorated to reflect the Director's approximately six months of service rather than a full year. She noted that the Director could be reevaluated after completing a full year of service to consider future compensation adjustments. Ms. Bulger further stated that conducting an evaluation after six months was unusual but appropriate in order to align future evaluations with the City's fiscal year.

Ms. Bulger summarized the Board's consensus that Ms. Dissmeyer had successfully met the majority of the goals established for her evaluation and had effectively assumed the responsibilities of the position. She noted that community outreach efforts remained an ongoing objective but that progress had been made in that area. Based on those discussions, Ms. Bulger indicated that a prorated four percent compensation increase appeared to reflect the Board's consensus and then requested a motion for Board consideration.

Ms. Olson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees offer a four percent raise to Ms. Dissmeyer effective July 1st, 2026. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library cardholder, expressed concern regarding the Chair's statement that she had spoken individually with Board members prior to the meeting and referenced a perceived consensus. He questioned whether those communications were consistent with Montana's open meeting laws and requested a legal opinion on the matter, stating his belief that the discussions may have constituted a private meeting outside the public process.

Ms. DeForest noted that the pending motion should specify that the proposed compensation increase would be prorated to reflect the Director's partial year of service. Ms. Olson amended her motion to include the prorated adjustment, and Ms. Crist seconded the amendment. The

Board discussed the procedural steps for voting on the amendment before considering the amended motion.

Before the vote, Ms. Johnson stated that she was comfortable with the proposed four percent increase but had also considered a three percent increase due to the fact that the evaluation covered only six months of service. She emphasized that her comments were not a reflection of the Director's performance but rather the unusual timing of the evaluation.

Board members also discussed the process used to prepare for the evaluation and compensation discussion. Ms. Wilson stated that individual conversations among Board members can be helpful in understanding members' perspectives prior to a meeting, provided deliberation and decision-making occur in open session. Ms. Olson commented that obtaining clarification between meetings helped the Board move business forward after the previous meeting concluded without action.

Ms. DeForest stated that following the prior meeting she met with the City's Human Resources Director, accompanied by Ms. Bulger, to obtain clarification regarding the evaluation process. She indicated that the discussion helped address questions she had regarding the compensation recommendations. Ms. Wilson noted that the meeting did not constitute a quorum, and Ms. Crist asked whether the discussion had resolved Ms. DeForest's concerns, to which she responded affirmatively.

Ms. Bulger explained that her intent in speaking with Board members individually was to ensure members had the necessary information to consider the compensation proposal after additional salary information became available. Ms. Wilson observed that preliminary communication can assist Board members in preparing for discussion, while emphasizing that formal deliberation occurs during the public meeting.

Ms. Johnson noted that the discussion highlighted the importance of remaining mindful of Montana's open meeting requirements. She recalled previous Board discussions regarding communications outside of meetings and observed that the distinction between informational conversations and deliberation on the same topic can sometimes be unclear. She suggested the Board remain attentive to those considerations in future discussions.

Ms. DeForest made a motion to amend the open motion to add “prorated for six months”. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

Ms. Olson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees offer a four percent raise, prorated for six months, to Ms. Dissmeyer effective July 1st, 2026. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

JULY 4th HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Ms. Dissmeyer presented a proposal to close the library on the Sunday following a holiday weekend when the holiday falls on a Saturday. She explained that, based on previous experience and practices at other libraries, Sunday usage is historically very low during holiday weekends. She stated that the proposal would not result in additional paid leave for affected staff. Employees scheduled to work that Sunday would either adjust their work schedules during the week or choose to use accrued leave if desired. Ms. Dissmeyer reported that the affected staff supported the proposed scheduling option.

Ms. Olson asked whether the City supported the proposed schedule. Ms. Dissmeyer explained that the decision falls within the library's authority, provided staff are offered scheduling options consistent with policy. Ms. Olson also asked whether staff preferred the change, and Ms. Dissmeyer indicated that they did.

Ms. DeForest asked whether the proposal applied only when a holiday falls on a weekend. Ms. Dissmeyer confirmed that the discussion was specific to holidays occurring on a Saturday, explaining that library visitation typically declines on Sundays and decreases further during holiday weekends, making closure a potential cost-saving measure.

Ms. Bulger added that the proposed schedule could also have a positive effect on staff morale.

Ms. Olson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the closure of the library on Sunday, July 5th, 2026. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion upon hearing none she asked for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

IX. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

The Board discussed how written citizen communications should be handled when received by the library and whether such communications should be reflected in Board meeting minutes.

Ms. Johnson questioned whether written citizen communications presented during a public meeting should be referenced in the minutes, noting that the format used at this meeting differed from past practice. Ms. Bulger asked whether written comments are typically included in board packets, and Ms. Johnson observed that previous packets had handled the information differently.

Ms. Olson asked Ms. Wilson how written communications are handled by the City Commission. Ms. Wilson explained that correspondence is distributed to commissioners by the City Clerk, retained as part of the City's records, and generally is not included in meeting minutes.

Board members discussed whether communications received between meetings should continue to be distributed in board packets or by other means. Ms. Olson noted that distributing information before meetings allows Board members to receive timely updates but

expressed concern that discussion outside of meetings could raise open meeting considerations.

Ms. DeForest asked why the format had changed. Ms. Dissmeyer explained that the change was not intentional and resulted from including several handwritten notes and drawings received from children, as well as correspondence that arrived shortly before the meeting packet was finalized.

Ms. Crist commented that she had previously assumed only selected correspondence, rather than all communications received, had been included in board packets. Ms. Olson noted that many of the communications were not specifically addressed to the Board, distinguishing them from formal public comments made directly to the trustees.

Board members agreed that both positive and negative citizen feedback is valuable for Board awareness. Ms. DeForest and Ms. Johnson emphasized the importance of ensuring the Board is informed of community input while remaining mindful of appropriate public meeting procedures.

The Board agreed to seek guidance from legal counsel at a future meeting regarding the appropriate handling of written citizen communications, including whether such materials should be included in board packets, meeting minutes, or otherwise maintained as part of the public record. Ms. Olson suggested notifying legal counsel in advance so the issue could be addressed at the next meeting.

Ms. Crist expressed appreciation for Ms. DeForest's nine years of service on the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees. She recognized Ms. DeForest's longstanding commitment to the library, her thoughtful participation in Board discussions, her willingness to seek clarification on complex issues, her steady leadership during significant periods for the library, and her service as a library volunteer. Ms. Crist proposed that the Board formally recognize Ms. DeForest for her dedication and service.

Ms. Olson expressed her support for the recognition.

Ms. Johnson noted that, because the discussion occurred during the proposals and comments portion of the agenda, the Board could not take formal action at that time and suggested that the recognition be reflected in the meeting minutes.

Action Taken: No formal action was taken. By unanimous voice assent, Board members expressed their appreciation and support for recognizing Ms. DeForest's service to the library.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Olson moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger called for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

Ms. Bulger adjourned the meeting at 5:17pm.