Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 25, 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. Noelle Johnson, Mr. Brian Patrick
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Jessica Crist, Ms. Whitney Olson

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: None
EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Joe Briggs – Cascade County Commissioner, Shannon Wilson – City of GF Commissioner

GFPL STAFF, GFPL FOUNDATION, GFPL LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT: Bill Bronson – Counsel, Amy Dissmeyer, Kim Hernandez, Aaron Kueffler, Sara Linder-Parkinson, Rae McFadden, Robbie Schwenck

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. Johnson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Patrick seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment. Upon hearing none she asked for a vote. Motion passed by unanimous vote of members present.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. STAFF INTRODUCTION

Robbie Schwenck, the new safety specialist, introduced himself to the board.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library card holder, addressed the Board regarding the timing of flag-lowering following the death of Senator Graham. He commended Ms. Dissmeyer for contacting the American Legion to ensure that the library is notified of future flag-lowering orders and avoid delays that could appear disrespectful to the deceased.

Mr. Irving also commented on the Youth Services Department's planned use of Mango Languages during Talk Like a Pirate Week. He reiterated his concern that the service's voice-recording methodology could create risks if electronic voice patterns were accessed by

unauthorized individuals and suggested that the library warn prospective users of those potential risks.

V. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Bulger asked Ms. Johnson to clarify her suggestion regarding community involvement or volunteer support for exterior maintenance. Ms. Johnson explained that her initial suggestion related to planters and landscaping, which had previously been supported by volunteers. She acknowledged that community involvement might be less applicable to the broader maintenance issues discussed and stated that she did not have a specific plan for recruiting volunteers.

Mr. Patrick noted a wording correction on page six, fourth line from the bottom. He stated that the sentence should read, “The reading manual does not appear to contain any forms.”

Ms. Johnson asked whether Mr. Kueffler had received any additional corrections by email. Mr. Kueffler stated that he had not.

Ms. Johnson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Patrick seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a Great Falls resident and library card holder, thanked the minutes writer for accurately summarizing his comments from the previous meeting. He clarified that his reference to not finding the meeting notice on two bulletin boards concerned the library bulletin boards located on either side of the downstairs elevator, rather than City bulletin boards. He noted that the meeting notice was posted on the library bulletin boards that week but did not know how far in advance it had been posted.

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

VI. ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Bulger asked if anyone had questions regarding the financial reports.

Mr. Patrick noted a typographical error on page 21.

Ms. Bulger asked whether Vincent Draco Management was a band. Mr. Kueffler explained that it was the name of a agent for a summer music band. Ms. Bulger asked how the performers were selected and why the payment amounts varied. Ms. Dissmeyer informed Ms. Bulger that Ms. Cawley was in charge of booking bands for Summer Music.

Ms. Johnson asked about the numbers listed at the end of the Foundation descriptions on page 27. Ms. Dissmeyer explained that the numbers were account numbers. Mr. Kueffler clarified that the accounts were part of the Foundation’s overall account and were not separately displayed on the reports, although they were broken out in the internal spreadsheet. He

explained that bold account numbers indicated they were designated for materials and that the numbers corresponded to specific projects or material categories in the City's accounting system. Ms. Johnson asked whether projects requested and approved by the Board could have different account numbers. Mr. Kueffler confirmed that they could.

Mr. Patrick moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees accept the financial reports as amended. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a local resident and library card holder, commented that the library's use of the City's financial accounting system can be confusing for Board members. He suggested that, despite the additional expense and effort, the library consider maintaining a separate double-entry bookkeeping system to make its finances easier for the Board to understand.

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

VII. REPORTS

YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

Ms. McFadden presented her report. She provided an update on the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program in Cascade County, noting that 2,605 children under age five were actively enrolled and 1,428 children had graduated from the program. She also shared information about the program's broader reach and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to administer it locally.

Ms. McFadden reported that the 2026 Summer Reading program included 130 library boxes prepared for teens, compared with 124 the previous year, and nearly 420,000 minutes read, an increase from approximately 401,000 minutes the previous year. She highlighted collaborations with several community and educational organizations, including the Montana Raptor Conservation Center, Museum of the Rockies, Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument, Starbase, and MSU Extension's Future Chefs program.

Ms. McFadden reported that Amanda Baugus had been hired as a part-time library specialist and was being onboarded. She also noted plans to move the Youth Services offices to the basement to provide additional space.

The department's second teacher night with the school district was scheduled for September 22 and would be open to teachers from other districts, early childhood educators, and homeschool families.

Ms. McFadden described a planned self-guided Talk Like a Pirate Day program featuring a pirate-themed English lesson through Mango Languages and a drawing for a 3D-printed pirate treasure chest.

In response to questions, she clarified that Xander Lee's last day of employment was August 8 and that Ms. Baugus had been hired to fill the position.
She also stated that approximately ten teachers attended the previous teacher training event and that attendance estimates for the upcoming event would be coordinated with the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation, with additional capacity planned for non-school-district participants.

DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Dissmeyer reported that projected revenues are expected to exceed the amount originally budgeted because the taxable value per mill is higher than anticipated and the budget was based on the previous year's collections.

She also discussed the ongoing review of job descriptions in connection with recent and upcoming staffing changes and the City's practice of reviewing job descriptions every two years as part of its competitive wage study. Ms. Dissmeyer stated that she would work to ensure consistent language across all library job descriptions, with the review expected to continue through September 18.

Ms. Bulger asked about the progress of the relocation work identified in item seven. Ms. Dissmeyer stated that the work was still in process. She explained that the library was awaiting estimates for electrical work to determine whether an additional outlet or surge protection would be needed for genealogy scanners and was also preparing and organizing space for the genealogy materials.

GFPL FOUNDATION REPORT

No report given.

CHAIR REPORT

Ms. Bulger reported that she, Ms. Dissmeyer, and Mr. Patrick met to review grounds maintenance. Ms. Dissmeyer noted that power washing had been scheduled for the upcoming Sunday.

Ms. Bulger expressed concern about the nonfunctioning sprinklers in front of the library and asked whether the issue had been discussed with Ron Hall Sprinklers. Ms. Dissmeyer stated that she and Ms. King had discussed the matter and that the affected area might need to be excavated and repaired. She explained that the sprinkler section had been shut off because of the leak and that staff were considering whether to address the sprinklers separately or incorporate the work into a larger future project involving sidewalks or plantings.

Ms. Bulger also asked whether staff had contacted Public Works or the City forester about trimming the boulevard trees. Ms. Dissmeyer stated that she had a contact and was working with another City department on the matter.

BOARD REPORT

Ms. Bulger asked about Board liaisons to other organizations, including the Library Foundation and Pathfinder. She noted that Ms. Olson had previously expressed interest in serving as the Foundation liaison but was unsure if she could. Ms. Dissmeyer stated that the Foundation meets quarterly, and Ms. Bulger noted that the Pathfinder meetings were also held quarterly. Ms. Johnson stated that, because of her other business responsibilities and being the sole person managing those responsibilities, she did not currently believe she could feasibly serve as a liaison. Ms. Bulger suggested that Board members consider serving as the Foundation liaison and stated that the matter could be discussed further when Ms. Lauren returned.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business was discussed

IX. NEW BUSINESS

POLICY MANUAL: COMMUNITY USE AGREEMENT

Ms. Linder-Parkinson presented the proposed Community Use Agreement, formerly referred to as the Patron Behavior Policy. She explained that the revised document is intended to frame library use in terms of shared responsibility and community engagement rather than focusing primarily on prohibitions. The agreement emphasizes respectful, courteous, welcoming, and non-threatening interactions with staff and other patrons; allowing others to work without disruption; keeping conversations and device volumes low; following staff guidance; and maintaining a safe and positive library environment.

The agreement addresses parental and caregiver responsibilities, including supervision of children and clarification that the library does not provide babysitting services. It also addresses respect for shared spaces, appropriate attire, personal hygiene, and remaining awake while on library property. Ms. Linder-Parkinson explained that the language regarding sleeping was revised to request that patrons remain awake rather than impose an absolute prohibition, which could require staff to wake sleeping infants or create other enforcement concerns.

The Board discussed the proposed three-foot limit for personal belongings. Ms. Bulger asked whether the limit would permit a three-foot-by-three-foot area. Ms. Linder-Parkinson clarified that belongings may be kept near a patron's chair if they do not block walkways, interfere with other patrons, or create an obstruction. She explained that the limit was based on policies reviewed at other libraries and was intended to address blocked pathways rather than prohibit patrons from bringing necessary belongings into the library. Small bags, purses, briefcases, and backpacks would be permitted, while larger bags and hiking backpacks would need to remain within the established space and not obstruct others.

Ms. Johnson expressed support for the agreement's emphasis on responsibility, noting that the language recognizes both the public's right to use the library and the responsibilities associated with that use. Ms. Linder-Parkinson also reviewed provisions concerning restroom use, furnishings, bicycles, scooters, and skateboards. She stated that the library was seeking to purchase a bike rack with space for securing skateboards and scooters. Until the rack is

installed, skateboards and scooters may be brought into the building, but they may not be ridden inside or charged. After the rack is installed, skateboards and scooters will be required to remain outside. Ms. Johnson suggested contacting a local high school welding program about potentially creating a bike rack, and Ms. Bulger recommended Paul Hogan as a possible contact. Ms. Linder-Parkinson appreciated the suggestions.

Ms. Linder-Parkinson reviewed provisions concerning care of library resources, responsible use of computers and internet access, park use, smoking, alcohol, marijuana, drugs, service animals, firearms, illegal activity, and access to designated areas. She explained that computer-use provisions would be addressed in a separate section because of the breadth of the related rules and guidelines. The agreement would also clarify that camping is prohibited in the park except for library-approved functions and would distinguish camping from an individual briefly resting or falling asleep. She noted that staff would be monitoring the park more consistently and would address smoking within 30 feet of entrances, including areas of the library property.

The agreement would clarify that children, teens, and their families may use designated youth areas for programming and materials, while individuals without children should not use those spaces. It would also identify areas designated for staff or personnel to help prevent disputes over access. The Community Use Violation Guidelines would be included as an appendix to the policy rather than maintained as a separate document.

Ms. Linder-Parkinson described the proposed enforcement process. A first violation would result in a verbal warning, a second violation would result in expulsion from library property for the day, and a third violation would result in a two-week ban from library property. Continued violations after the two-week ban could result in a trespass request. In response to Ms. Bulger's question, Ms. Linder-Parkinson explained that enforcement had previously been handled on a case-by-case basis, with varying warning and exclusion periods. The proposed language would establish a more consistent process. She added that if a person returned during a two-week ban, the ban would restart from that date. Patrons would have the right to appeal, and the Police Department had worked with the City Attorney to support enforcement of trespass requests.

Ms. Linder-Parkinson stated that staff procedures had been removed from the document because it is intended to be a patron-facing policy manual rather than a staff procedures manual. She also reviewed the provision concerning unattended dependent persons, including the responsibility of parents and caregivers to ensure that children are appropriately supervised. She emphasized that staff are working to replace a directive-based approach with respectful requests for assistance and cooperation, which has resulted in more productive interactions with patrons. In response to Ms. Bulger's question, Ms. Linder-Parkinson described an incident involving two young children whose caregiver had left them unattended. Staff contacted the Police Department and worked with the children's parents when they returned, reiterating that the library is not responsible for providing child care.

Ms. Johnson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve replacing the "Patron Behavior Policy" with the "Community Use Agreement" in the Great Falls Public Library Policy Manual. Mr. Patrick seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any public or board discussion.
Richard Irving, a city resident and library card holder, expressed several concerns regarding the proposed Community Use Agreement. He questioned the use of the Minneapolis and Seattle library policies as models, stating that he believed those libraries were particularly accommodating to individuals who use library spaces without actively using library services.

Mr. Irving also raised concerns about provisions based on age, asking how staff would determine whether a child was seven or eight years old or whether a child was eleven or twelve years old. He suggested that the policy should provide additional guidance for staff addressing those situations.

Mr. Irving further stated that the trespass section used the term incorrectly and was confusing. Because trespass enforcement could involve the Police Department, City Attorney, City Manager, or City Council, he recommended that the Board's attorney review and revise the language.

He further expressed concern that prohibiting sleeping in the library or library park would result in significant community opposition. He thanked the Board for its time.

Ms. Johnson supported the approach of framing the Community Use Agreement around responsibility and positive expectations rather than prohibitions. Drawing on her experience writing classroom rules and guidelines, she said this approach could encourage more constructive engagement and be effective with both adults and children.

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

<u>POLICY MANUAL: LIBRARY CARD POLICY UPDATE</u>
Ms. Linder-Parkinson presented proposed revisions to the library's card types, checkout guidelines, and related policies. She explained that, through the Montana Shared Catalog, the Library collaborates with 24 partner libraries and is working to reduce its card types from nine to five. The proposed changes would consolidate staff, parent, homeschool, and other resident cards into one resident card with a three-year renewal period, while retaining separate institution, limited-use, homebound, and non-resident cards. The changes would also eliminate the practice of issuing temporary "new" cards and later contacting patrons to convert them to regular cards.

Ms. Linder-Parkinson explained the requirements and uses for each remaining card type, including institution cards for organizations, limited-use cards for individuals without a permanent local address, homebound cards for bookmobile patrons, and non-resident cards, which would remain $30 annually. She also reviewed identification requirements, including the

use of verified pre-release face sheets, and explained that patrons may have only one card within the partner-sharing group and must be in good standing.
The proposed checkout guidelines retain 28-day loan periods and two renewals unless an item is on hold. The revisions clarify reminder and overdue-notice procedures, encourage email and text notifications, and retain the $10 threshold for restricting checkout due to unpaid charges. Ms. Linder-Parkinson said the partner-sharing and interlibrary loan sections were primarily reorganized and clarified, rather than substantively changed. She noted that interlibrary loan requests may not be placed for items owned by a partner library unless all copies are lost or more than three months overdue.

Ms. Bulger suggested adding public information explaining the difference between interlibrary loan and the Montana Shared Catalog partner-sharing service. Ms. Linder-Parkinson agreed and said the library could expand its existing bookmarks and provide information near the checkout area.

Mr. Patrick recommended spelling out acronyms such as OCLC and GFPL when first used.

Ms. Johnson asked whether the 45-day duration of a limited-use card should be stated directly in the policy. Ms. Linder-Parkinson and Ms. Dissmeyer agreed that the card could be labeled a “45-day card” for clarity.

Mr. Patrick also asked whether eliminating card categories would affect annual reporting to the County. Ms. Linder-Parkinson explained that patrons would be reassigned to the appropriate remaining categories, so the library would retain the necessary statistics. She added that demographic information would continue to identify city residents, county residents, state residents, non-residents, Malmstrom patrons, and bookmobile patrons.

Mr. Patrick moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve replacing the three, “Library Card”, “Fees and Recovery of lost, Damaged and non-returned Materials” and “Partner Sharing and Interlibrary Loan” Policies with one “Circulation Policy” in the Great Falls Public Library Policy Manual. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Ms. Bulger opened for any public or board discussion.

Richard Irving, a local resident and library card holder, asked whether the library would decline to use interlibrary loan when an item was available through the Montana Shared Catalog partner libraries. Ms. Linder-Parkinson confirmed that this had been the library’s policy for several years.

Mr. Irving stated that he had previously needed specific editions that were unavailable through the partner libraries and expressed concern that the policy would cause him to stop using the library. Ms. Linder-Parkinson clarified that the library would request an item through interlibrary loan when a particular edition was needed and was not available through the partner libraries.

Mr. Irving maintained that patrons should not be required to accept an edition they did not want.

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

X. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Bulger reported that the City Attorney had determined Mr. Patrick's vote was valid because Library trustees are not municipal officers subject to the statutory oath requirement. She also addressed Ms. Crist's comments regarding the distinction between the Montana Shared Catalog partner-sharing service and interlibrary loan.

Ms. Bulger noted that Sarah Cawley had received an Alexander Temple award for her community service and said the Board should recognize her accomplishment. She also supported consolidating the library's policies and separating them from the staff manual to streamline the documents.

Mr. Patrick commended the library's support of Shakespeare in the Park and reported that the Friday evening performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* had a strong audience. He expressed appreciation to the library for its involvement.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

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

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