

Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 26th, 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, Ms. Sam DeForest, Ms. Noelle Johnson, Ms. Whitney Olson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Rae Grulkowski – Cascade County Commissioner, Ms. Shannon Wilson – City of Great Falls Commissioner (via zoom)

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Ms. Treva Higgins, Mr. Jacob Krantz, Mr. Aaron Kueffler, Ms. Susie McIntyre, Ms. Sara Linder-Parkinson, Mr. Trevor Stearns

GUESTS PRESENT:

Molly Beck – Resident of Great Falls, Carol Beckman – Resident of Great Falls, John Beckman – Resident of Great Falls, Sara Buley – Resident of Great Falls, Dennis DeForest – Resident of Cascade County, Jeni Dodd – Resident of Great Falls, Linda Fagenstrom – Resident of Great Falls, Gayle Heishman – Resident of Great Falls, Anthony Houtz – Resident of Great Falls, Richard Irving – Resident of Great Falls, Brianne Laurin – GFPL Foundation Executive Director, Susan Lee – Resident of Great Falls, Karla Luttrell – Resident of Great Falls, Sharon Patton-Griffin – Resident of Cascade County, David M. Price, Sandy Rice – GFPL Foundation Liaison, Jenn Rowell – The Electric (via zoom), David Saslav – Resident of Great Falls, Jolene Schalper – Resident of Great Falls, Melissa Smith – Resident of Great Falls, Bill Tacke – Resident of Great Falls, Gayle Wadsworth – Resident of Great Falls, Sue Warren – Resident of Great Falls, Millie Whalen – Resident of Cascade County, Donna Williams – Resident of Great Falls, Susan Wolff – City of Great Falls Commissioner, Dinah Woods – Resident of Great Falls, Nancy Zadick – Resident of Great Falls, (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. DeForest moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the agenda items as presented. Ms. Bulger seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment. Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

II. STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Jacob Krantz and Mr. Trevor Stearns 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. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He suggested that the board should not take any action on any agenda item. He stated that misinformation was given to the City Commission last week that needs to be corrected.

Ms. Jeni Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She questioned why the library has had functions to celebrate other groups, but has done nothing to celebrate Women's History Month. She stated that she was a supporter of the library in the past by donating books and performing for a low cost during the Summer Music in the Park series. Since Ms. McIntyre took over she has felt she has been discriminated against for her political beliefs. She stated that she has pointed out previously how the library board and director has been dishonest about a number of things.

Ms. Donna Williams, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She stated that when she first moved to Great Falls, she did not like the library due to it not having the books she was looking for. She started to love the library when she volunteered to shelve books and saw how quickly books moved on and off the shelves. She found that the library was well loved in the community. She was happy when she saw that she can now check out books from other libraries in the system.

Mr. David Saslav, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He stated that all the No More Violence Week events have been uploaded to the Electron. He thanked the library for their co-sponsorship of No More Violence week. He also apologized for interrupting public comment at last month's board meeting.

Ms. Molly Beck, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She congratulated the library on their programs last week; including Chris La Tray, and the International Women's Day Celebration program.

Ms. Sara Buley, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She thanked the library for the Amy Pearson program a few weeks ago.

Ms. Sharon Patton-Griffin, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. Wanted to thank the board for their patience with the negative comments that they receive, and for being gracious. It is appreciated.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Bulger made a motion that the Great Falls Board of Trustees approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He stated her appreciated how the minutes reflected public comments. He did not feel one of his comments were recorded accurately from the last meeting. He requested that he be able to listen to his comments to verify.

Ms. Olson asked Ms. McIntyre how a member of the public might review the previous meeting. Ms. McIntyre stated that the link to the video is available on the Library's website.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any additional comments, 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 Financial reports.

Ms. Johnson if the telephone cost was double due to it not being paid the previous month. Mr. Kueffler confirmed; but stated that he had paid the bill and received the next month's bill shortly after, and paid that. That is why it shows it was paid twice.

Ms. Johnson asked if we have considered subscribing to Canva annually, instead of monthly. Ms. McIntyre said we will look into it.

Ms. Crist asked how often the story walk plexi-glass needs replaced. Ms. McIntyre stated they hold up well, but due to vandalism they sometimes need to be replaced.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had any additional questions. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

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

Ms. Jeni Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She stated that she is concerned about the Library's financials. There is no category in the monthly budget that details revenue deposited in a reserve account. At the January 2nd city commission work session, Ms. McIntyre stated that the library needed 60% of FY25 operational budget in the Library Fund by June 30th, 2024. When asked how she would meet that Ms. McIntyre stated that they would have to stay within the budget and push back hiring additional staff until April. The spending plan brought to the board on January 23rd doesn't mention if the reserve fund was met or not. She noted that the library did hire people in February and March, with more planned in April. She asked the board if the Reserve fund has met 60% yet, and how will tax payers know if the library is being responsible when it is not recorded in financial records released to the public.

Ms. McIntyre stated that we do not have a reserve fund, only a Library Fund. The Library fund is like a checking account. Any amount that is unspent goes into the library fund. At the April board meeting, she will be presenting the budget, and will have more information regarding the library fund.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He feels the way the Director submits and explains the financial reports to the board suggests she is in need of financial education. He strongly suggests the board insist that the director get financial education and clarify the financial reports.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any additional comments, upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. REPORTS

Management Team Report

Ms. Higgins gave her tech services report.

Ms. Johnson asked if people are paying for damaged books. Ms. Higgins stated that it depends on what type of damaged it is.

Ms. Crist asked why the damaged books are higher. Ms. Higgins stated that she is unsure if it is higher, or if we are just keeping better statistics.

Director Report

Ms. McIntyre presented her director's report.

Ms. Olson asked if the MLA conference sends stuff back with participants for training. Ms. McIntyre said yes, but they do not post the webinars.

Ms. Olson asked the board members what training they would like. Ms. Crist stated that she was fine with the training suggestions made in the packet, but she would be interested in learning more about library lingo such as Grab and Go. Some information specific to our library. Ms. Bulger agrees. She explained how she learned about Linked-in Learning. Ms. Johnson stated that the first four Montana Library trainings are very helpful.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the SMART objectives.

Ms. Johnson said the objectives look fantastic, but had a question on page 104. She asked why the number of Library Holders has decreased since the info graphic that was in last month's board packet. Ms. McIntyre stated that was accurate. The Library deletes expired cards that are not used. She explained that new card holders have a 3-month probationary period, if they do not reach out after three months their card is expired. After that initial three months, unused cards are expired after three years. If a card remains expired after five years, it is deleted from the system. When the library joined the Montana Shared Catalog, the library's regular way of handling expired members wasn't happening. Ms. Linder-Parkinson has worked with the MSC to get it caught up and that is the reason for the sudden drop. It should not be that big of a decline next time.

Ms. Olson asked if any subscription prices based on the number of library card users. Ms. McIntyre stated that there were none at this time, but some services are based on population served.

Ms. Olson asked if home bound services would be included in the bookmobile objective. Ms. McIntyre didn't think so, home bound will be its own service and will be kept track of separately. She did state that this high goal is based on the bookmobile going to large events.

Ms. Johnson wanted to acknowledged that on page 104 the average number of monthly visitors is only 8,501 and that is about 14% of the city population. She asked that we remember that when having discussions regarding the "will of the community". This shows we are serving less than half of the community currently.

Ms. McIntyre stated that 20-25% if our monthly checkouts are electronic, so these people are not coming to the library. She also stated that one person coming in can be checking out for multiple people.

Ms. Bulger asked the status of the band shell. Ms. McIntyre stated we are waiting for an asbestos report before moving forward.

Ms. Crist asked about the "Book-a-Librarian" program. Ms. McIntyre explained the concept of it.

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

Ms. Bulger asked why the statistics on page 30 were so high. Ms. McIntyre stated it was because Google changed their analytics

GFPL Foundation Report

Ms. Rice informed us that the foundation annual report is ready to send out. It should be mailed mid-April. Give Great Falls is the week of April 29th-May 3rd. The Friends of the Library are still accepting books on Saturdays from 10a-2p; the sale will be in May.

Chair Report

Ms. Olson gave an update on the renegotiation committee. The library will retain Mr. Bill Bronson to represent the public library. No information has been received from the city yet on where they would like to start. Ms. Johnson asked how many inquiries were made to various attorneys. Ms. Olson replied with four. Ms. Johnson asked if it was pro-bono. Ms. Olson stated he will be charging \$150 per hour; a discounted rate.

Ms. Johnson asked if there were ideas about what was wanted during renegotiation. Ms. Olson stated that they wanted to retain an attorney before having those conversations.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS: LIBRARY STANDARDS ROADMAP REVIEW – REVENUE

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

Ms. Johnson asked for clarification on page 35, seeking another levy by 2028. Ms. McIntyre stated that a county levy could be approached in connection with the Belt and Cascade libraries.

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS POLICY REVIEW: PATRON CONDUCT AND GUIDELINES

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

Ms. DeForest asked what the dimensions of the box referenced on page 39, item 8. Ms. Linder-Parkinson presented the physical box that will be used.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had any additional questions. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

Ms. Johnson moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the updated Patron Conduct & Guidelines Policies as presented. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Ms. Jeni Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She had concerns regarding item one on page 38. She stated that it was far too subjected and sounded unconstitutional and overreach.

Ms. Crist asked if it was part of our previous policy. Ms. McIntyre said yes, it has been part of the policy for a long time.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any additional comments, upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

LIBRARY BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION UPDATE

Ms. McIntyre gave an overview of the update. Ms. Johnson stated that it is about 95% the same as it was presented at the last meeting. The majority of it comes from the Montana State Library recommendation. Adjustments we made to clarify and simplify. Ms. Crist added that it now allows potential board members to know what they are signing up for.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had any additional questions. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the updated library board of trustees job description as presented. Ms. Deforest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He likes number 10 on page 55. He does not like the position paragraph also on page 55. It starts with board of trustees, then it says you provide governance for the library, then it says you provide leadership to the library director and that the board-director relationship is a partnership. He stated that if you are a board of directors and a governing board you are the boss and the director should follow your orders; there is no partnership. He asked the board make up their minds. He stated that now is the chance to become a board of directors and a governing board like the city requested.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any additional comments, upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW: RULES AND CONDUCT AND PROCEDURE OF BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETINGS

Ms. McIntyre gave an overview of the update.

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had any additional questions.

Ms. Johnson referenced page 62, in regard to Robert's Rules of Order. At the Dan Clark presentation, it was referenced that you cannot use Robert's Rules of Order for minutes. She asked if that was something that needed to be removed. Ms. McIntyre didn't think it needed to be removed. We don't follow Robert's Rules of Order exactly. It can be removed if the board would like it to be but it does give structure. Ms. Olson stated that it was not presented at the session she attended. Ms. Johnson stated that he said in Robert's Rules of Order there are very specific and intentional language about briefness and things you do not do. In Montana Law there is requirements that if you use Robert's Rules of Order you cannot comply with what Montana State Law says. Ms. Crist attended the same night as Ms. Johnson and didn't take it as absolute. She took it as Robert's Rules says to not list everything everyone said, it is not a transcript, and Montana Law needs to know someone said something and someone seconded it. Ms. McIntyre suggested the line be rewritten as "Pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order, and the Montana Code Annotated..." The board as a whole agreed to amend that line.

Ms. DeForest referenced section 5 on page 63. She asked if that was for within the same meeting or multiple meetings. Ms. McIntyre stated that key thing is if it disrupts, disturbs or impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting. If it is relevant that someone continues to bring something up than that is allowed; but if disrupts, disturbs or impedes the orderly conduct it isn't. Ms. Olson added that if there is a concern, anyone on the board can ask for a point of order.

Ms. Olson asked if there was any more discussion. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the Rules of Conduct and Procedure of Board of Trustee meetings as amended. Ms. Bulger seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Ms. Jeni Dodd, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She cited prior meeting minutes where Ms. Bulger proposed to the board shortening public comment to three minutes to be consistent with the City. Ms. Dodd pointed out that the city allows three minutes for public comment at the beginning of their meeting, but on agenda items five minutes are allowed.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He objects to the wording of rule number 8 on page 62. He said there are a lot of excuses to not make the recording of the meetings official. The only reason for them not to be official is to be able to change the written minutes.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any additional comments.

Ms. Johnson added that since the meetings are recorded, they will need to be kept for three years per Montana law.

Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

LIBRARY REMODEL DESIGN CONTRACT

Ms. McIntyre presented the library remodel design contract that was presented in the board packet.

Ms. Johnson had a question regarding the fiscal impact section on page 66. She asked what line item of the budget are the funds mentioned from. She also asked if levy money would be used, as it was her understanding that they cannot. Ms. McIntyre stated that the \$117,000 comes from two different sources. One source was reallocated funds from a Foundation Approved Project. The other portion is from a donation made directly to the library. Ms. Johnson asked why it wasn't showing up on the budget anywhere. Ms. McIntyre said it was in the Foundation budget not the library operational budget. Ms. Olson clarified that levy money can be used for building maintenance purposes.

Ms. Johnson asked if there was a timeline in place. Ms. McIntyre stated that the library will be working with the foundation and Cushing Terrell to define that. Ms. Laurin added that the approval of the contract is the first step.

Ms. Olson asked if there was any more discussion. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the library remodel design contract as presented. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He asked the board to exercise their governing authority and not allow the library director to stick the kids in the basement so the unhoused and social workers can be on the first floor. He also asked that the board to do what is only necessary for the remodel and not frills that will serve as a memorial someday.

Ms. Olson asked if there was anymore discussion regarding the motion. Upon hearing none, she asked for a vote. Motion passed 4-1 (voting yes: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Whitney Olson. Voting no: Ms. Johnson).

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS: MATERIALS BUDGET

Ms. McIntyre presented the materials budget that was presented in the board packet.

Ms. Bulger asked Ms. Higgins if she and Ms. McFadden came up with the numbers, or did they get outside input. Ms. Higgins explained that she looks at how much has currently been spent, then she looks at the amounts that she is seeing increases in for processing costs. Magazines costs have also risen as well as printed newspaper costs.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any more questions. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

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

Ms. Johnson stated that she finds it odd that only 2.25-3% of the entire budget is spent on the primary thing the library is suppose to be used for.

Ms. Crist recommended looking at what the numbers are at other equivalent libraries. Ms. McIntyre said she could provide that information for the board.

Ms. Olson asked if there was more board discussion regarding the motion. Upon hearing none, she asked for a vote. Motion passed 4-1 (voting yes: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Whitney Olson. Voting no: Ms. Johnson).

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY: OPEN FOR 7 DAY A WEEK SCHEDULE

Ms. McIntyre presented the 7 Day Week schedule that was presented in the board packet.

Ms. Crist stated that she liked the idea of being open at 9am. She asked if staff were unhappy about working on Sunday. Ms. Linder-Parkinson has had discussions with all her staff. Several of her staff requested working a Sunday shift. Ms. Linder-Parkinson has been working on the schedule and expects to have 10-12 staff working daily, both full and part time; a number that we have not had before. Ms. McIntyre added that discussion has been made at the Manager level on who will be working as Manager on Duty during the open hours.

Ms. DeForest asked if staff works a set schedule or does it rotate. Ms. Linder-Parkinson said they are set schedules.

Ms. Wilson made a comment about opening again on Sundays. She stated that it is important to have those hours on Sunday because that may be the only day some people can come in.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any more questions. Upon hearing none she asked for a motion.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the proposed open hours as presented. Ms. Crist seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or comment.

Mr. Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He noticed a lot of the new hires have been part-timers. If part-timers do not get the same pay and benefits as full-timers, he requests that the board order the director to hire as many full-timers as possible rather than save money by shortchanging other employees.

Mr. John Beckman, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He voiced concern that there were no comments on the cost of expanding hours. As a governing board they need to look at how this effects the budget.

Ms. Donna Williams, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She reminded everyone that the library is one of the few public meeting spaces that is free. The evening hours will be really important to local groups. She requested they be extended to 9pm.

Ms. Susan Lee, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She stated that 40 years ago she worked at the library shelving books. The open hours proposed don't compare to what they use to be. She understands the situation and gives thanks for it being open as much as it can be.

Ms. Olson asked if there was any board discussion.

Ms. Johnson spoke in regards to Mr. Beckman's comment. She said it is something that has to fiscally consider. Some of the hours were already built into the levy budget. We now match Billings for open hours, but have half the population. With personnel being 80% of the budget we have to be very mindful of this going forward.

Ms. McIntyre stated that when the levy was put to the public for vote, it included the hiring plan to open seven days a week. It was discussed in previous budget meetings and library levy discussions.

Ms. Olson agreed. There may not have been discussion at this meeting, but there has been leading up to it.

Ms. Olson asked if there was more board discussion regarding the motion. Upon hearing none, she asked for a vote. Motion passed 4-1 (voting yes: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Whitney Olson. Voting no: Ms. Johnson).

IX. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Olson asked Mr. Kueffler what he accounts for their volunteer hours and what he needs from them. Mr. Kueffler stated that he keeps track of what board members attend the meeting and records it as 2 hours, the minimum time we request from volunteers. Ms. Olson asked how he would like committee hours to be recorded. Mr. Kueffler asked that the board keep track of any outside time spent on board duties. He asked that they be submitted to him at the end of the month. Ms. Johnson asked if the board hours are also included in the volunteer statistics chart. Mr. Kueffler said yes. Ms. McIntyre added that the library pays workers' comp for everyone that volunteers for the library. Ms. Linder-Parkinson added that we are not the only city department that does this. It is required through the risk management department at the city.

Ms. Olson stated that the MLA conference is in April. Ms. McIntyre stated what was available to the board. All board members are welcome to attend and the library has funds set aside for training. Ms. DeForest asked if there would be a zoom option. Ms. McIntyre said not this time.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.