



BILLINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

September 11, 2025
12:00 p.m.

Board and City Staff present:

Lawrence Klee, Chair	Kelsie Rubich, Interim Library Director
David Darby, Vice Chair	Megan Thomas, Interim Assistant Director
Kathy Houska	Jaclynn Reaves, Patron Services Manager
Peggy McSweyn	
Susan Plath	
Staci Samuelson	
Roger Young	

Absent

Trudi Paulson
Jennifer Smith

Guests

Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator

Public Comment

None

Chair's Comments

Chair Klee apologized for missing the last meeting.

Consent Agenda

Motion and second to approve the August 2025 minutes as written (Plath/McSweyn). All in favor.

Good Neighbor Toolkit Presentation

Rubich presented the Good Neighbor Kits that are now available for checkout at the library. The kits include a cooler, signs, games, chalk, and information on hosting a neighborhood gathering. She explained the purpose is to encourage community development and trusted adult connections for children. Three requests have already been received for the kits. The Healthy by Design Coalition (HBDC) is partnering in this effort, and information is available on the Library's website.

Board members asked whether RiverStone Health has similar kits for checkout. Rubich said the Library currently has the only ones available. Questions also arose about whether patrons keep the kit items; Rubich explained that some consumables are kept (e.g., nametags and coloring sheets), while most other items are returned. Upon return, the consumable items are replaced with extras provided by HBDC.

CO+LAB Update

Thomas reviewed recent CO+LAB activities. She shared highlights from the quarterly report, including positive comments from survey results, summer successes, and plans for future programming. She also noted upcoming Charlie Cart programs and new library partnerships.

Library Director Position Update

Assistant City Administrator Iffland provided an update on the library director position and Rubich's interim status. The city will follow a similar process used in hiring the Fire Department Director, and will work with a consulting firm to conduct first-round interviews for the position. The group brings an outside perspective on the qualifications of applicants and will provide a recommendation to the city administration. Plath expressed support for the internal process and commended Rubich for her work.

BPL Updates

a. BPL Management Updates

Kelsie Rubich, Interim Director:

- The library will begin work on an updated strategic plan, with the first committee meeting on Oct.1, 2025.
 - The committee will include three members from the BPL board: Peggy McSweyn, Susan Plath, and Staci Samuelson.
 - The library will utilize a Montana State Library consultant to help with the early stages of the process.
- The library recently completed its security camera and door access upgrade project. The new equipment enhances image and video quality, offers increased functionality, and utilizes software that is easy to access and navigate. Rubich thanked Bratlie and Thomas for their efforts in managing the project and ensuring a smooth outcome.
 - Rubich confirmed security footage is saved for 30 days, and the project was included in this year's budget.
- Samuelson mentioned a concern about parking issues at the library during the past few months.
 - Rubich acknowledged this has been noted a few times during the summer due to large events occurring at the Lincoln Center.
 - On these occasions, the parking division ticketed vehicles parked at the library over the allotted time, and BPL admin will connect with Lincoln Center staff to remind them about parking expectations.
- The library board was invited to attend Food for Thought. This will function similarly to last year, when it replaced the board retreat. Given the ongoing staffing transitions, Rubich requested the board follow last year's model. As capacity increases in the coming months, work can begin to plan a board retreat later in the year.
- The Library Board was invited to attend the Boards and Commission Dinner, which is being held on October 29th at the Billings Community Center. Rubich will provide a brief presentation on the library's history at the event.

Megan Thomas, Interim Assistant Director:

- September is Library Card Signup month. The BPL is promoting this with a variety of incentives, and the library is working to exceed last year's September signup numbers.
- Adventures in Music, the yearly event in partnership with the Billings Symphony, was highlighted as a large upcoming event.
- The library is co-hosting a program with Billings TrailNet.
- The BPL is expanding its Grow with Google offerings to include an evening session.

Jaclynn Reaves, Patron Services Manager: Reaves told the Board about upcoming Friday night fun programs and shared copies of the September newsletter.

b. Friends of the Library: A FOL representative was not in attendance.

c. **Foundation:**

- Books and Brews at Meadowlark Brewing on Monday at 5:30 pm.
- Food for Thought planning and preparation continue. The event is scheduled for Oct. 14th at 6 pm in the library. The speaker schedule is confirmed, and tickets are currently on sale.
- A donor appreciation event is planned for November, and a year-end appeal letter will be sent out shortly after.
- Additional industry lunches and tours are scheduled for the fall at the library.

Good of the Order

Plath inquired about the status of the library board's annual report. Rubich thanked Plath for the reminder and stated that she would follow up with more information.

Young inquired about the library budget following some recent news about budget cuts impacting the Yellowstone Art Museum. Rubich reviewed the changes to property tax legislation that resulted in no increased tax revenue and necessitated the use of library reserves to balance the budget. The library's funding structure was also reviewed in relation to the interlocal agreement, which outlines the responsibilities of both the city and the county. Iffland reported that he meets monthly with the County Commissioners, and the library budget has not been a topic of conversation. Library admin is closely monitoring this issue and will follow up with any new information.

A follow-up conversation included questions about how non-profits are collaborating or potentially competing for funding in the current landscape. Rubich mentioned that she attended a recent Billings Cultural Partners meeting and came away feeling that those groups are very supportive of one another and are working toward shared success. Some other large projects and funding sources in the community were discussed.

Darby shared that Shirley Steels recently celebrated her 100th birthday and read from her book of poetry. Darby wrote the forward, and the book is available at This House of Books.

Adjournment: Motion and second to adjourn. McSweyn/Young.

Next meeting: 10/9/2025.