



BILLINGS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

October 9, 2025
12:00 p.m.

Board and City Staff present:

Lawrence Klee, Chair	David Darby, Vice Chair	Jennifer Smith
Staci Samuelson	Trudi Paulson	Roger Young
Susan Plath	Kelsie Rubich, Interim Library Director	Megan Thomas, Interim Assistant Director
Jamie Bratlie, Library & Facility Coordinator	Victoria Contreraz, Interim Info. Systems Coordinator	

Absent:

Kathy Houska	Peggy McSweyn
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Guests:

Jeannie Tracy, Library Foundation	Clare Young, Friends of the Library
Carol Young	

Public Comment

None

Chair's Comments

Chairperson Klee said Rubich emailed him that his first term is up for renewal and he affirmed that he will stay on the board for another term. Klee also thanked Smith for partnering with him in pickleball.

Consent Agenda

- a. Motion and second to approve the September 2025 minutes as written. All in favor.
Young/Paulson

Library Board Annual Report

Klee inquired when the Board's report should go to Council and whether it is presented in person or submitted as a written report. Rubich said last year it was on an August agenda. She told him that a written report is acceptable. The Board can send it to her and she will submit it for them. Klee and Plath are working together on the report as they both have served half a year for the report period. There was discussion regarding items to highlight in the report, such as the Library of the Year award, the second Story Trail, new programs at the book lockers, the Co+Lab programs and stats, and board members that have certified during the year. Plath told Klee she will send her items to him via email.

Montana Library Association Conference Update

Rubich told the Board she sat on the planning committee for the MLA Conference in Chico. She said representatives from public, academic, and school libraries attended the conference. Rubich recognized and thanked Darby for accepting the role of keynote speaker at the conference. Darby told the Board that his theme was "libraries are America's commons – everyone is welcome." He explained that libraries should be equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

Strategic Planning Committee Update

Rubich told the Board she is working with a consultant from the State Library to assist the BPL strategic planning process. She noted this month the focus is creating an environmental scan to help draft questions for a survey. She asked the Board to consider groups the Library will want to connect with. Darby stated that the Board needs to be visible to the Community. If meetings with groups are held, he feels one or two members of the board should be present at the meetings.

BPL Updates

a. BPL Management Updates

Kelsie Rubich, Interim Director: Rubich told the Board that Reaves has decided to pursue new things, resigning as Patron Services Manager and stepping into the book locker position. Rubich then introduced Victoria Contreraz and told the Board that Contreraz has been appointed as Interim Systems Information Coordinator. Contreraz told the Board about herself and her road leading into the BPL.

Following the rest of Staff updates, Rubich presented her updates to the Board:

- She said the Patron Services Manager vacancy will be posted next week with the expectation that the person will start early in the new year.
- Rubich explained with Contreraz joining the team, management offices and phone numbers have shifted. She will send updated contact information to the Board.
- Rubich has emailed a couple board members whose terms are up for renewal at the end of the year.
- Elections for the new Chair and Vice Chair will be coming soon. Rubich asked the Board to contemplate if they would like to be considered or who they may want to nominate.
- Food for Thought – the Library will provide tickets for board members to attend. Please email Rubich.
- October 29, 6:00 pm, is the Boards and Commissions Appreciation Dinner.
- Reminder that the Library Board does not meet in December. November's meeting is more informal, including a pot luck. Rubich will send out a sign-up sheet.

Victoria Contreraz, Interim Information Systems Coordinator: Contreraz told the Board she is working on new server firewalls. She said this is good timing because October is cybersecurity awareness month. Contreraz also said there was a power outage at the library during the past weekend. One disc was corrupted, but everything is back online and operations are normal now.

Megan Thomas, Interim Assistant Director: Thomas had a few updates for the Board:

- September was new library card sign-up month. The BPL had 639 new sign-ups.
- Archive librarian Lanning will be participating in a series with the Western Heritage Center, beginning October 16.
- The Co+Lab's 1st birthday party will be held at 3:00 pm on October 18th.
- October 18th will be the first annual Craft & Art Supply Swap from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm.
- The Library will host a special event on October 25 at 2:00 pm – ASL Silent dinner.
- On October 29th, classical guitarist Peter Fletcher will be at the library for a program. He will also appear at a couple other venues in the community as part of his program while in Billings.

Jamie Bratlie, Library and Facility Coordinator: Bratlie told the Board the new Community Room tables have arrived. Approximately half of the original tables are damaged, so it was time to replace them.

- b. Friends of the Library: Clare Young gave a shout out to Oscar at the Stompin' Grounds café. She said he has a great reputation and great food and he is a huge help to the Friends. Young also said the Friends are setting up for their big annual, fall sale. Tonight is member's only, and Friday and Saturday the sale is open to everyone.
- c. Foundation: Tracy gave the Board a few updates:
 - Food for Thought is next Tuesday. Attendance is down a little this year, but this seems to be the trend right now.
 - The industry lunches that were started in the spring have been successful. With a great response, more are planned for this fall. Tracy thanked Rubich for partnering with the Foundation for the lunches.
 - Tracy said November's theme is Thankfulness. She is planning the Foundation's Donor Appreciation on November 5th, Giving Tuesday, and the annual year-end appeal.
 - The Foundation has an open board seat they are looking to fill.

Good of the Order

Darby said happy Banned Books week to the Board.

Paulson inquired about the artwork on the wall in the Board Room. Rubich told her those were created by Staff during Staff Development day. She explained it was a team building exercise.

Adjournment: 12:50 pm. Next meeting: 11/13/2025.

Smith/Paulson