

Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, June 27, 2023
Great Falls Public Library – Cordingley Room (Basement of the Library)
(Virtual access to meeting was available upon request)
4:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Anne Bulger, Ms. Jessica Crist, Mr. Brad Eatherly, and Ms. Whitney Olson.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Sam DeForest

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Susan Wolff - City of Great Falls Commissioner, Ms. Rae Grulkowski - Cascade County Commissioner

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Ms. Susie McIntyre, and Ms. Sara Linder-Parkinson

GUESTS PRESENT: Ms. Sandy Rice – GFPL Foundation liaison, Ms. Ashley Munden – GFPS Intern, Carl Donovan – Resident of Great Falls, Stephen Underwood – Resident of Great Falls, Jasmine Taylor – Resident of Great Falls, Dawn Skerritt – Resident of Great Falls, Richard Irving – Resident of Great Falls, Larry Anderson – Resident of Great Falls, Melissa Smith – Resident of Great Falls, Hannah Pate – Resident of Great Falls, Jacob Bachmeier – Resident of Great Falls, David Saslav – Resident of Great Falls, Jane Weber – Resident of Great Falls, Nancy Anderson – Resident of Great Falls, Steven Vinnedge – Resident of Great Falls, Sharon Patton-Griffin – Resident of Great Falls

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. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the agenda items as presented. Ms. Crist 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. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Olson asked if there were any questions or comments from the committee regarding the consent agenda.

Ms. Munden from the Great Falls Public School introduced herself and explained that she was at the Great Falls Public Library as an intern to get her library endorsement. She has spent 60 hours in the library in several departments and tonight was her last night.

Ms. Bulger stated that on page 7 the volunteer hours were way up and asked what that was attributed to. Ms. McIntyre explained that the Friends of the Library book sale always sees an increase in volunteer hours but also noted that Mr. Kueffler has changed the way that he tracks hours and she felt that it was more accurate as everyone has an individual card for their time and it can be logged easier. Ms. Bulger gave kudos to Mr. Kueffler.

Ms. Olson stated that it was a great email that was sent out requesting volunteers from Mr. Kueffler. She thought that it was nice and hopes that going forward when we are more fully staffed that this is something that could go out regularly. Good job Mr. Kueffler. Ms. McIntyre noted that with him doing that, the Vista positions and Ms. Munden's help Kids' Place has been able to get caught up and stay that way.

Ms. Wolff pointed out on page 20 the heading should be May 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Ms. McIntyre stated that she would correct that error.

Ms. Bulger inquired if we use credit cards that have the cash back option and Ms. McIntyre said that she did not think so but she would look into that.

Ms. Bulger asked if the end of the year was July 31st and Ms. McIntyre said it was June 30th that was the end of the fiscal year. She also stated that there has been no bill for the election yet so that may have to be paid next fiscal year. Ms. Bulger was impressed at how closely everything was to on budget. She pointed out that most accounts were 99 to 100% used and appeared to be spot on. Ms. McIntyre told the board that next year budget is not going to be as accurate. Personnel costs will be lower as what had to be budgeted may not be the whole picture but in other areas it may be higher as there is set up costs to hiring new staff (chairs, computers, etc.).

Ms. Bulger sent out kudos to Mr. Kueffler as the packet had no errors.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees approves the consent agenda items with changes. Mr. Eatherly seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment. Upon hearing none she called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

III. DIRECTORS REPORT

Ms. McIntyre shared her joy and expressed her thanks to all that helped with the Mill Levy. There will be so many changes coming and there is a draft of the implementation plan in the back of the board packet. The goal is to be open 7 days a week as of March 1, 2024. That is the same date that we hope to have the Bookmobile out running 6 days a week as well. We are hoping to have an open house in July to share all the information about the changes with the public. Ms. Crist suggested that we make posts announcing changes as they unroll. One suggestion is when parking is free to announce, "Because you asked for it, as of July 1, 2023, parking in the lot at the library will be free." Ms. McIntyre stated she would work on that. She noted that the Library Clerk in

Technical Services has been posted and we hope that the Assistant Director, Community Engagement Coordinator and the Public Relations position will be posted soon. We will begin taking credit cards on July 5, 2023. We were going to try for July 1, 2023 but with the holiday it made more sense to push it back.

The Imagination Library is up and running in Cascade County and 25% of the eligible children have been enrolled. Huge thanks to Ms. Carol Paul, Ms. Cindy Einan, Ms. Rae McFadden and Family Connections for taking huge strides to make that happen.

The Public Services staff did the Pennies in the Cup training on dealing with difficult interactions. There is further description in your board packet.

As mentioned previously, we will begin taking credit card payments on July 5, 2023 and training for staff will take place this Friday. We will take Visa and Mastercard only and there will be a minimum transaction with a 3% convenience fee. It's a good step forward.

Mr. Kueffler has done a great job of getting the Summer Music in the Park lined up. He is out there tonight and has worked hard to make it a success.

Summer Reading has kicked off and is going great. It's wonderful to have 2 Vista workers this year to help out.

Ms. McIntyre explained that we would not be moving forward with the solar project for the library. One of the main issues being that we would need to update the electrical grid to handle the solar energy. We will look into further when the library remodel happens.

The Friends of the Library had the most successful book sale they have ever had in the history of book sales. Huge kudos to Mr. Kueffler, Ms. Sandy Rice and the Friends of the Library group. They made over \$13,000 and will be funding our continued participation in the Partners courier service and supplies, paying for the complimentary parking spots on 2nd Avenue North, purchasing book sets for Library book clubs, maintaining the subscription to Kit Keeper and paying for the subscription to the Wowbrary newsletter. It was noted that the everyone loved the sign and Ms. McIntyre pointed out that Mr. Kueffler got it donated and it was fantastic. Ms. Rice was asked what she felt was the reason for the success and she stated that library was in the news every day. She stated that the newsletter is up in copies as well and they are hoping to recruit some new members and will have brochures at the baseball game on Thursday, June 29, 2023. Ms. Olson said that they sure need help and getting the word out to people that they are here is important. The best perk is getting to see what is coming in when you are taking donations. Ms. Rice agreed that it is a great perk being able to see what is coming in and setting it aside to pay for it and take it home early.

An update on the automatic renewals is we were not as far in the project as originally thought but the Montana Shared Catalog is working on it and we are on the list to have it implemented when they go live. This will be great for our patrons and eliminate them being blocked from using services due to overdue items.

For over 10 years the Great Falls Public Library has won the Excellent Library Service Award and this year was no exception. Unfortunately, we did not have anyone that attended the Montana Library Association conference to get the award but it is an honor to have one again.

An addition to the Directors Report is that Ms. McIntyre has been in consultation with the legal team and they think everything is ready to close out. The monitor and the election went smoothly. Ms. Lynn DeRoche is owed \$850 for her time and Ms. McIntyre feels it is appropriate to pay for this and that she is compensated for her time. Ms. McIntyre did hear that the school district received their bill and it was \$5000 over the projection that they had. This is something that we are most likely going to have to pay for out of next fiscal years budget.

Another addition is problems in the Library Park. Ms. McIntyre was approached by an ambassador of the community and was talked to about the growing problems in the library park and the people that are utilizing it creating a huge mess. She stated that the bandshell is checked daily and there is alcohol and drug use that are being addressed at each visit. Mr. Miller and the maintenance staff are picking up human feces from the grounds and cleaning up urine off the walls and sidewalks daily. The idea would be to put a fence around the park and you have to book it like you do the Cordingley Room. Ms. Crist cautioned Ms. McIntyre from going forward without talking to our neighbors to see how they felt about the fencing option. Ms. Crist also suggested that at the next meeting prices and design options were presented to the board with community feedback. Ms. McIntyre agreed she would work on this.

IV. GFPL FOUNDATION REPORT

Ms. Rice reported that the quarterly meeting was held on June 19, 2023 and that the new Executive Director, Brianne Laurin, would be starting on 07/10/23. Three new trustees were voted in, they are Marilyn Parker, Synde George and Rachel Arthur. Ms. Rice talked about the Friends of the Library book sale again and stated that the total amount of items sold was \$13,195. The Voyagers baseball game is 06/29/23 and Ms. McIntyre has tickets available for staff. What is not given to staff will be presented to patrons at the Wednesday programming. There will not be 50/50 on 06/29/23 at the ball game but that will happen later in the season on the night in July when there is a double header. There was a sub-committee created at the quarterly meeting to work on the new logo and advertising. This committee is made up of Mr. Kelly Wiles and Mr. Tom Kotynski.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ms. Olson reported that she filled in for Ms. Deforest at the Pathfinders meeting. They talked about disaster preparedness and this is something that will be worked on soon as ours is outdated. She reported that the State Library's budget is in great shape and an additional \$400,000 will be used to support the hot spot program in the coming biennium. HB 91 was signed and that is going to increase state aid funding by 25% and adds Tribal College Libraries. We received an additional \$2,100 and that money was used to pay part of our OCLC bill. She reported that each federation was given an additional \$4,000 and that money would be used for the book club kit project that will be coordinated and housed at the Great Falls Public Library. Ms. McIntyre was asked

what the amount of increase would look like for our funding and she stated that it would go from \$29,000 to around \$32,000. Ms. Deforest was reelected to the Pathfinder Federation board.

VI. BOARD REPORTS

No reports or comments were given.

VII. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

No new proposals or comments were given.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Olson reported that they would move Ms. McIntyre review to the end of the meeting. They would go in to Executive Session and the room would be cleared except for board members. Then they would come out of Executive Session and call the meeting back to order, then end the meeting at that time.

LIBRARY LOGO

Ms. McIntyre reported that they had put this on hold until after the Mill Levy as there was so much going on but she felt a committee should be formed and Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist and Mr. Eatherly agreed to be on the committee. They will work in concert with the Great Falls Public Library Foundation committee to ensure that the logos work together,

BOARD APPOINTMENT

Ms. Olson stated that each board member serves for a 5-year term and when asked if she was willing to continue to serve Ms. Bulger stated that she was.

Ms. Olson moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees approves the appointment of Ms. Anne Bulger to a second term on the Library Board of Trustees.

Ms. Crist seconded. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Upon hearing none, Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

At this time, 5:27pm, the meeting went into Executive Session for Ms. McIntyre's review. The Executive Session lasted until 6:08 pm.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented or comments given.

X. PUBLIC COMMENT

Community member Jasmine Taylor spoke about the challenge to the Library policy that had been previously on the agenda. She stated that she felt that the library board needed to brace itself because people seeking censorship and oppression are coming. She feels as the library is a place where censorship of any kind is a fight worth having. She felt that the policy was good and should not be changed and that representation of all should be on the shelves of the library. Removing LGBTQI+ materials from the shelves would not serve our community in a good way.

Hannah Pate came to the podium and she too spoke about the Library policy challenge. She wanted to preemptively thank the board because it's hard to be an organizer of change. She would hate to see the policy change because the library has always been a safe place to her.

Jane Weber read a letter that she had addressed to the Board. She addressed the efforts to control library policies regarding the selection of materials for public libraries. This is an effort that is spreading from library to library across America and it is the same people that are spreading disinformation about happenings at the library. Information such as; drag queen readings and pornographic materials at the library. She went on to talk about the library is a space that is intended to expand our minds, people and experiences. Please see the attachment for the entirety of her letter and The River Press that included the letter to the editor about libraries. This was presented to Ms. Olson.

David Saslav came to the podium and said that he shared the sentiments of all who have spoken. He also talked about the events site at KGPR called The Electron. This is a free site designed to tell the community about events that are happening in and around our community. He feels that Ms. McIntyre has been a huge contributor and posts things regularly. He felt this may have been a reason that there was more foot traffic for the Friends of the Library book sale. He states that from February to present there was 1300 unique visitors to the site. He gave a card to members of the Board.

Dawn Skerritt stated that full inclusion of books with a wide variety of subjects is the best use of the library. Great Falls Public Library is a beacon of hope beyond the limiting options of the small town she grew up in. Limiting options create problems for many and she hopes that the library stays strong on their policies.

Ms. McIntyre told the people present that she was appreciative of the support and that this was a heartbreaking subject. Dealing with misinformation and meanness is always hard and she hopes that we can work together to bring people together. Having great dialogue and moving forward in a positive manner is the route she would like to see things go.

Ms. Crist stated with staff working on Pennies in a Cup it is a way of us working through difficult situations that we are faced with. She herself was faced with these issues when

she was assisting with RFID tagging. She saw books she found interesting, appalling and gross. She had to remind herself that although they were not on subjects she would like that the library is about everyone.

Attached is several more public comments that we emailed to Library Board trustees about changing library policies.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Olson asked if there were any other questions, upon hearing none she would entertain a motion.

Mr. Eatherly moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting. Ms. Crist 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.

Ms. Olson adjourned the meeting at 6:10 pm.