

Bozeman Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
Oct 16, 2024
Minutes

Attendance Library Board Chair Stewart Mohr; Trustees Mike Long, Mike Redburn, Pam Henley, Ken Spencer; Bozeman Public Library (BPL) Director Susan Gregory; Assistant Library Director Kit Stephenson; Administrative Assistant Lauranna Cossins; Department Heads Carmen Clark, Ellie Newell, Ben Nielsen & Sarah Widger; City Commissioner Jennifer Madgic, Library Foundation Director Janay Johnson

Not Present: Friends of the Bozeman Public Library President Marilyn Kennelly

Call to Order Meeting was called to order by Trustee Mohr at 4 pm.

Public Comment – No Public present, no comment received.

Approval of the Minutes

Action Trustee Long moved to approve the minutes from the Sept. 18, 2024, meeting. Trustee Henley seconded. There was no further discussion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Action/ Discussion

Parking Discussion- Susan and Stew met with Interim City Manager Chuck Winn on October 15th to discuss the Library parking situation. Chair Mohr said that the concern is primarily about use of the space we have right now: there have been situations in which our patrons and staff have not been able to find parking because the lot is full. The Library is currently averaging a thousand visitors per day, more on weekends. There is additional pressure on our parking from employees of nearby businesses, visitors to downtown and Lindley Park and trails visitors. ICM Winn's advice was to start by making it clear that the lot is for the use of the Library and Peet's Hill visitors by having signage on the spaces. We need to be incremental in our steps and tighten procedures as they're needed. The Library Board could write a letter to the surrounding businesses notifying them of the new signage and restrictions. After an appropriate amount of time, City Parking officers would begin to monitor the lot and write tickets for illegal parking.

There are a lot of factors to consider. The Library lot has been perceived as a public lot for many years. Chair Mohr stated that we will continue to work with appropriate City staff to investigate options and that the issue will be on future Library Board agendas.

Correspondence- Patron comments were digitally provided in the Board packet. There were several requests for specific books and DVDs, a request for more seating on the first floor, a compliment for one of our Children's librarians for excellent and kind service, a request for a

coffee shop and 31 individual comments that all said “Hire better staff” in the same handwriting. (Library staff know the individual and work with the person on a regular basis.)

Highlights

Director’s report - - Director Gregory provided her report to the Library Board prior to the meeting. Highlights were reviewed.

Gregory gave an update on the recent Montana State Library Commission meeting at the State Capitol in Helena. She was in attendance as the current Broad Valleys Federation Coordinator. Gregory explained to the Trustees that Montana is divided into six library federations and that the Bozeman Public Library is in the Broad Valleys group. The federation coordinators each gave a verbal report to the Commissioners and State Librarian Jennie Stapp. One of the coordinators brought up the issue of how difficult it is to get library trustees, especially in very small towns. The Commission discussed how to provide more trainings for trustees on the importance and impact of the position.

One issue on the Commission agenda was the necessity of young adult collections in public libraries. One of the Commissioners asked that it be on the agenda so she could share her opinion that libraries should only have children’s and adult collections. She was concerned that adults read young adult (YA) books, too, and that could indicate that the books are unsuitable for youth. She was reassured by the librarians present that Montana librarians are responsible in selecting YA materials and that the separate space in libraries for teens is necessary to keep them safe and draw them to the library. The Commissioner thanked them for their work. There was a discussion between the Commissioners and the librarians present on the changing role of public libraries in communities; one Commissioner expressed concern that libraries are doing too many different things. Gregory asked to respond and shared the mission of the Bozeman Public Library, which is to create opportunities that provide curiosity, exploration, and connection. She explained that programs and creative labs can draw new patrons to libraries, introduce people to books and materials and give people a place to connect with each other.

Department Heads’ Highlights – Department reports were provided to the Board prior to the meeting. Chair Mohr stated that he would like to compliment all the department heads. He commented that the departmental Board reports are thorough, complete and provide a lot of information.

City Commission Library Liaison - City Commissioner Jennifer Madgic- no report provided.

Library Foundation- Foundation Director Johnson stated that the Library Foundation and the Friends of the Bozeman Public Library (FOL) are very close to being merged into one organization. Both of their boards are in agreement that the merger will benefit the Library and clarify things for the public and potential donors. The goal is for the merger to be effective January 1st, 2025.

Johnson said that she was happy to report that this year’s September Library Gala at the Kimpton Armory Hotel was the most successful Gala yet. The Foundation netted **\$121,000** for the Library, which was more than last year. The “DISCOVer Your Library” theme brought lots of

attendees in huge wigs, peace sign necklaces, high platform shoes and sequin pants to the evening – and that was just the men. It was great fun and a successful fundraiser.

Johnson shared that she and her staff are going to fundraise for a 2025 Summer Lunch Program at the Library for children under 18 years of age. The cost will be approximately \$18,000. The Library has worked with the Gallatin County Food Bank and HRDC for many years to provide daily free lunches all summer to children but this year we were denied the federal funds to produce the program because the Library's neighborhood has become too prosperous to qualify. The Children's staff have provided valuable youth programs outside during the lunches. Not having summer lunch this year meant attendance numbers were down by 60% for kids. It will be a huge gift to children and families in the area if we can resume this program again.

Friends of the Bozeman Public Library (FOL) – no report provided.

The meeting was adjourned at 5 pm by Library Board Chair Mohr.

Board of Trustees Training- Board Members watched a presentation from United for Libraries on "Book Banning and Challenges," then discussed the process that the Library uses to deal with patron complaints about materials. Gregory shared the "Request for Reconsideration" form and explained the steps that ultimately can lead to a Library Board review and decision.