

**Bozeman Public Library
Library Board of Trustees
November 19, 2025**

Minutes

Attendance: Library Board Chair Ken Spencer, Trustees Mike Long, Stew Mohr and Mike Redburn; Bozeman Public Library (BPL) Director Susan Gregory; Assistant Director Becky Kasten; Administrative Assistant Lauranna Cossins; Department Heads Carmen Clark, Ellie Newell, Ben Nielsen and Sarah Widger; Library Friends & Foundation Director Janay Johnson

Not Present: Trustee Pam Henley & Commission Liaison Jennifer Madgic

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Ken Spencer at 4pm.

Public Comment- provided by Tom Burnett

Tom Burnett addressed the Library Board, identifying himself and noting he was accompanied by his two granddaughters. He expressed concern about what he views as ideological conformity or a “monoculture” in the Bozeman Public Library’s nonfiction book purchasing. Based on his own review of new nonfiction lists, he believes the collection shows a strong ideological slant, with far more books reflecting left-progressive viewpoints than right-traditional ones.

To support this, Burnett described using two different chatbots to analyze a list of new nonfiction books and assign ideological ratings. One chatbot found 15 books to be left or very left and one to be right or very right; another found 20 left or very left and two right or very right. He contrasted these findings with the Library’s “Freedom to Read” statement, arguing that the stated goal of providing a wide range of viewpoints is not being met in practice.

Burnett emphasized that he did not want merely to complain but wanted action to better align Library purchasing with its stated ideals and the principles of librarianship. He then briefly raised a second issue, noting that, per his calculations, per-capita visitation at the Bozeman Public Library declined by about 40.7% from 2016 to 2020, and argued that such a decline does not justify expansion plans, particularly on the west end of town.

Approval of the Minutes

Action: Trustee Redburn moved to approve the Minutes from the Oct 15, 2025 , Library Board meeting as submitted. Trustee Long seconded. There was no further discussion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the Minutes as submitted.

Action/ Discussions Item: Site Decision making- Trustee Redburn provided a draft outline for a policy or procedure for the Library Board to assist in making decisions related to the use of the Library Building and property.

The process would involve one or more specially scheduled, facilitated Board work sessions lasting a total of two to three hours. These sessions would be planned and led by the Board of Trustees with an external facilitator. Participants would include the Trustees, the Library Director, a non-Library City official, the Library Friends and Foundation Executive Director, and potentially others suggested by Trustees. A neutral recorder would document the discussion.

An initial orientation would review the session's purpose and process, clarify the Board of Trustees legal authority, and examine the legal definition and boundaries of the Library site using a site map.

The proposal recommends completing policy development and formal Board adoption by the end of the Trustees' February 2026 meeting.

Next steps are for Trustee Redburn, Board Chair Spencer and Library Director Gregory to continue discussion.

Reports

Correspondence Highlights presented by Director Gregory.

“You should have a handout of all the sculptures and artists titles.”

“In the creative labs, the 3D printer test project should be allowed to be chosen by the tester.”

“It'd be great to have quiet hours and/or sensory friendly times when talking isn't allowed and/or lights are dimmed.”

“Have real Minecraft on the computers”.

“Korean language culture books for kids please – Sage”

“The Buffalo Bill portrait in the McLeod reading room is by Rosa Bonheur (name spelling correction) Thank you for a wonderful inspiring room.”

Several book suggestions.

Emailed comment- Patron registered their concern that the large windows may be a danger to birds; the Library staff should consider adding decals to help prevent birds from smacking into our huge glass windows.

Director's Report- Director Gregory provided her report to the Library Board prior to the meeting.

Highlights from the Directors' Report-

“We continue to make progress on increasing Library security, the solar panel project is moving forward with a contractor picked and Facilities administration is working on getting the Library boilers replaced. Symbozium was a huge success with standing room

only attendance at the Museum of the Rockies auditorium. This civil discourse series continues to grow in popularity.”

Department Reports provided in the Board packet prior to the meeting.

Friends & Foundation Report – Director Johnson reported that the Library Gala was successful, generating a net return of just under \$100,000. The Friends and Foundation members are looking at changing locations to the SUB at MSU next year. The feasibility study for a potential west branch project is nearly complete, with results expected in mid-December. Johnson suggested scheduling a discussion in January so Library Board members can review the consultants’ findings and provide input, noting that any decision about moving forward with construction would require broader consideration beyond just the Board.

Commission Liaison Update – City Commissioner Madgic- Not present, no report provided.

Meeting adjourned at **5:20pm** by Chair Spencer.