

MINUTES**BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS**

February 25, 2025 | 5:15 pm

111 Library St NE | Board Room

Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.**1. ROLL CALL**

Board Members Present:

Rachel Anderson, Kelly Boston, Justine Bryant,
Kathryn Dilley, Bryan Holt, Kevin Peterson,
Lauren Woolsey

Board Members Absent:

Administration Present:

Robert Adcock, Megan Biggins, Natalie Drew,
Lindsay Laplow, John McNaughton,
Ann Neff-Rohs, Patrick Beatty

Staff Present:

Alexis Asaro, Ashley Bovin, Brittany Boza,
Tabitha Frazier, Erin Hart, Jen Heatly,
Jason Kotarski, Wyatt Lardie, Sue Lester,
Shannon Lewis, JR Martin, Merlyn Milzarski,
Gabrielle Obiden, Aubrey Wagg

Public Present:

Carsten Forester, AFM Local 56;
Carly R., Cherry Health;
A. Dominguez, GRMC;
Steven Assarian, GREIU;
Hannah Berry, Ann Marie Buller, Lions & Rabbits;
Jerel Pomer, Rapidian;
Eran Hile, United Way;
Jacob Chovaz, Tom Nieboer, IWW;
Zach B., Wren Burns, Lee Cleary, Justin Deluca,
Tyler Henderson, Kaia Hurley, Nick Hyma,
Jax Johnson, Ben Kolk, Michaela Meyer,
Michelle Seguin, Allison Troyer, Scott Troyer,
Johnathan VolkDunbar, Hilary Wilson**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING ON JANUARY 28, 2025****MOTION: By Commissioner Woolsey, supported by Commissioner Peterson, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting of January 28, 2025.**

Dilley asks a clarifying question about Committee assignments. Anderson answers.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

3. BOARD COMMENTS

Anderson comments that Backstage Library Works will be presenting in April, and Regional Branch Manager Andrea Cosier is unable to present today due to a medical emergency.

Anderson welcomes all who are present at the Board meeting.

Dilley says she is looking forward to the Lions & Rabbits presentation. She also says that she is encouraged to see the branded elements showing up within the branches. She adds that she had the opportunity to attend a well attended and well received presentation at GRPL by former Board member Sofia Brewer.

Bryant reached out to the City of Grand Rapids Office of Oversight & Accountability on information to provide to staff regarding ICE. They said that they could only provide materials on immigration agencies. She adds that Director of HR Natalie Drew reached out to the Office of Oversight & Accountability as well, and they will be coming to provide staff training. Drew comments that this training will be happening in the coming weeks.

Boston thanks Biggins for following up with the Board on the information they requested regarding the needed documents a patron needs to present to get a library card.

Woolsey attended the Author Talk program with Meryl Wilsner and Director of Public Services Megan Biggins, which had a great turnout.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Legislative

Peterson says that they had their first committee meeting of the year where they discussed community-based events that are happening and how they can join them. He adds that they will be attending the new Mayor Mondays program. Biggins comments that the meetings for Ward 2 will be here at GRPL.

Peterson says that April 30 is MLA Library Advocacy Day and he and Anderson are planning to attend. Director of Collections Ann Neff-Rohs and McNaughton will also be going. Neff-Rohs comments that the Mobile Library will also be present.

Woolsey comments that she will provide a 1-page document to include with the Board packet that will have ongoing events that they are considering attending.

b. Policy

No comments.

c. Board Retreat

Boston comments that the retreat date is March 15 at Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities (GAAH). She adds that Director of Lakeland Cooperative Carol Dawe will be presenting, and she has a draft of an agenda that she will send out to the Board.

5. STAFF & FOUNDATION REPORTS

A. Library Director's Report

i. GRCM Collaboration

McNaughton states that the Steering Committee for this project got together last month. He explains that there had been a misunderstanding of the goal of the project. Because we didn't have documentation stating what each party expected out of this, we presented a document in November to make sure GRPL's expectations were represented. Since then, there were discussions of GRCM buying the property without GRPL. Within the Steering Committee meeting, Deputy City Manager Kate Berens suggested writing a MOU which is being drafted up now. McNaughton adds that this has also been discussed with the Mayor.

Boston asks if the MOU will be presented to the Board. McNaughton answers yes and he will have a healthy discussion with the Board about this project. Anderson commends Deputy Director Jen Vander Heide on the research and work she has put into this project.

McNaughton comments that a storytime kit has been provided for each Commissioner by Youth Services Department Librarian Betsy Zandstra. Anderson asks why storytime kits are only available from December-March. Biggins answers that she will research this and let them know.

Peterson comments that he is very excited for the Lions & Rabbits Mural at the Van Belkum Branch.

B. Financial Report

No comments.

C. Foundation Update

No comments.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Budget Information Review

McNaughton explains that this is informational and asks the Board to make appointments with Adcock or himself to ask about the budget.

Woolsey asks about the fee schedule for printing. McNaughton clarifies that this is not removing the 50 free pages. Biggins explains the purpose of the single fee for color and black and white prints, which includes 50 free pages per week. Anderson comments that she would like to see the 50 free prints within the fee schedule as well.

B. Seymour Branch Presentation

Will be moved to another date. Anderson comments that she looks forward to hearing more.

C. Backstage Library Works Presentation

Postponed to a future date.

D. Lions & Rabbits Presentation

North Region Branch Manager Jason Kotarski presents the mural project at the Van Belkum Branch. He introduces Placemaking Facilitator Ann Marie Buller and Executive Director Hannah Berry with Lions & Rabbits. Hannah Berry presents.

Dilley asks if the artists are given specifics of where on the building the painting will be. Berry answers yes.

Peterson asks if the survey is available in multiple languages. Berry answers yes.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Media Index

No comments.

B. Staffing Report

No comments.

C. Statistical Report for January 2025

No comments.

9. GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION

Assarian comments that the Library Pages have organized and want to be unionized. He presents a document that includes the names of the Library Pages petitioning to join the GREIU.

Library Page JR Martin, head of the organizing committee, talks about being proud to work at GRPL. They add that they have had conversations with Library Pages over the years about the essential work they do to keep the library running and says that the Seasonal classification is outdated. Martin asks that the BoLC recognize the Library Pages as being accepted into the GREIU and looks forward to hearing a response.

10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: MARCH 25, 2025

- Director Evaluation Documents
- Budget Approval

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anderson reminds the public to keep their comments at no more than 3 minutes.

Sue Lester, Library Page, comments on the tasks expected of her and her support of the Library Pages joining the GREIU.

Jax Johnson, member of the public, comments that they have seen the great work Library Pages do and supports them joining the union.

Tabitha Fraizer, Library Page, comments that she supports this petition.

Kaia Hurley, member of the public, comments that there is no such thing as unskilled labor and supports the Library Pages joining the union.

Allison Troyer, member of the public, comments that she supports the Library Pages joining the union.

Thomas Nieboer, community member, comments that he formed a union in his workplace and had a difficult time. He encourages the Board to not be a roadblock in the Library Pages unionizing.

Carsten Forester, community member, comments in support of the Library Pages joining the union.

Scott Troyer, resident and library user, comments that his spouse worked as Library Page, and comments in support of the Library Pages joining the union.

Wyatt Lardie, Library Page, reads a comment from Earnest Timothy Castillo, Library Page, in support of the Library Pages joining the union.

Alexis Asaro, Library Page, comments that she supports the Library Pages joining the union as it is a job security issue.

Aubrey Wagg, Library Page, comments in support of Library Pages joining the union for higher wages.

JR Martin, Library Page, comments on the safety of patrons and staff in regards to immigration. They comment that ICE is clearly increasing their efforts in Grand Rapids. They add that they are glad to work in a safe space and suggest that the library display signs declaring itself as a safe space. They add that they appreciate the effort McNaughton and the Board are taking already to address the ICE issues. They conclude that they would like the library to support GR becoming a sanctuary city.

Wren Burns, resident, speaks in support of Library Pages joining the union.

Michelle Sequin, member of the public, comments in support of Library Pages joining the union.

Ashley Bovin, Library Assistant II, comments that she worked as a Library Page until a promotion last August. She comments in support of Library Pages joining the union.

Shannon Lewis, Library Assistant II, comments in support of the Library Pages joining the union.

Merlyn Milizarski, Library Page, comments in support of the Library Pages joining the union.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Commissioner Holt that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm.