

Lewistown Public Library



**Regular Meeting Minutes
Lewistown Public Library
Board of Trustees**

**Wednesday, November 19, 2025
1:00 PM
Lewistown Public Library**

Mission Statement

The Lewistown Public Library provides free and equal access to quality materials and services, which fulfill the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community.

1:06 PM – Call to order – Roll call – Regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees called to order by Mary Callahan Baumstark. Trustees Present: Dani Buehler, Andrea Payne, Jean Collins, Mariah Shammel, and Mary Jo Hamling. Library Staff present: Alissa Wolenetz.

Appoint Recorder of Minutes: Alissa.

Reading of the Mission Statement: Andrea.

Revisions to the Agenda: None.

Comments for the Good of the Library: Dani mentioned that in the past, Friends of the Library members have volunteered to take minutes. Also, she was excited to hear about recent progress on selecting an architectural firm for the Library Master Plan. Mary CB was happy to see the Library acknowledged in the Lewistown News-Argus for its role in helping connect folks during a recent community-wide communications outage.

Public Comment on All Agenda and Non-Agenda Items: None.

Disposition of September 17, 2025 Executive Session Minutes

- Andrea moved to approve the minutes with one correction, Mariah 2nd. No discussion. All in favor.

Disposition of October 15, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

- Andrea moved to approve the minutes with one correction, Dani 2nd. No discussion. All in favor.

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Financial Reports

- The Board appreciated annotations to this month's financials. Cash flow is holding steady. Half of County funding has been received.
- Due to a high number of emergency building repairs, the line item for Building Maintenance is running low. Alissa will keep the Board posted on any needed changes to the budget.

- Staff have indicated that the collections budget for this year is insufficient to meet community needs. They will present more detailed information soon. Dani suggested a community survey about collections needs in 2026.
- Dani moved to accept October 2025 Claims, Andrea 2nd. No discussion. All in favor.

Discussion of Director's Report

- Mary expressed excitement about upcoming grant applications and invitations to apply for funding.
- Alissa gave a more detailed overview of the process for selecting an architectural firm and thanked SMDC for their help. A contract will be approved soon through the City Commission.
- The hiring panel anticipates making a decision for the Librarian II/III posting before the December Regular Board Meeting.
- Stanford University has once again selected the Library to host a fully-funded summer intern to help with archives and outreach.

Communications

Friends of the Library (Mary Jo Hamling)

- The last FOL Book Sale made \$685. The next sale will be December 5th and 6th.
- Santa's Seconds will be held on December 6th. The Friends are currently looking for locations to store donations.
- The FOL will have a pop-up holiday book sale at the Library after Thanksgiving during Lewistown's Annual Christmas Stroll.
- The November FOL meeting was held earlier today (November 19th) to accommodate Thanksgiving schedules.
- The Book Station continues to overflow with donations.

Friends of the Library - Chili Bowl (Mary Callahan Baumstark)

- Chili Bowl is scheduled for Thursday, January 15th.
- Mary has put together a small group to help plan and is also working on a partnership with the Montana Winter Fair to cover venue costs and event insurance, help with marketing, and sell tickets online.
- In September, due to limited staff capacity, Alissa asked that the committee submit all requests for staff help with Chili Bowl by this meeting. Mary requested help with writing questions, AV setup, scoring, design files from last year's event, and brief announcements from Alissa.
- The Board discussed shifting open hours to later in the day on the Friday after Chili Bowl to ease the impact of a late-night, midweek event. This is possible because the Library is already scheduled to be closed for 3 hours that day in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

City Commission - Dani Buehler

- The Commission recently held the 2nd reading of a new parking and snow removal ordinance. Dani would like materials placed at the Library to help educate the public about changes.
- The City is working with the local government center to address concerns with personally identifiable information included in Commission packets. Until concerns are resolved, packets will not be posted online, but will be available for the public at the City Office.

This is in part because there has been an uptick in spam emails and malicious use of City decals, etc.

- The City is working with the Department of Administration and Department of Environmental Quality to resolve compliance issues.
- The majority of the City's water update has been completed, and the City also recently received a planning office grant. The City is working with the County to create a new planning commission to reduce confusion about zoning, etc.

Continuing Business

- *Updates on hiring for open Librarian II/III position (Discussion)*
 - No updates at this time.
- *Review of regional trustee training (Discussion)*
 - The Board noted that a quorum of trustees was present, but no business was conducted. The training provided a practical, helpful perspective about working with HR and other partners.
- *Updates on Joy Committee (Discussion)*
 - The Board discussed planning a catered or potluck-style meal for staff during the holiday season.

New Business

- *Approve creating a substitute program to provide coverage when the Library is short-staffed*
 - The Board discussed an MOU with the Union for substitute positions, sample policies and procedures from schools, and confirmed that training time will be paid.
 - Andrea moved to approve the substitute program and MOU with the City Union, with review at a later time with the staff, Director, and Board to see how the system is working.
 - Dani moved to amend the motion to identify that this is a pilot program running through FY 26 with staff, Director, and Board review at the end of that period. Andrea 2nd. The Board discussed the process for amending motions.
 - The Board voted on the amendment, with all in favor, then voted on the amended motion, with all in favor.
 - December Board Meeting: Keeping original time and date.
- *Updates on Library Master Plan progress and facilities tour*
 - At the Director's request, the Board opted to reschedule the facilities tour to the December meeting to allow SMDC and Building Committee members to attend if available.

The Board confirmed availability for their next meeting on Wednesday, December 17th.

Mariah hopped off at 2:19 for another meeting.

Trustee Minute: Jean is not reading anything of interest to anyone else. Andrea just read *My Friends: A Novel* by Fredrik Backman. Mary Jo is not reading anything particularly interesting either. (The Board is apparently in a reading slump.) Mary CB, usually a reader, has been focusing on the Fergus Free Fridge instead, as well as an event coming up in the Library's meeting room tonight to prioritize

Montana-grown food for local plates (consumption). (More info about the Fergus Free Fridge is available on Facebook.) Dani is taking a class on social and community innovation, and reading Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as well as *Participatory Practice: Community-based Action for Transformative Change* by Jane Springett and Margaret Ledwith. The fifth-grade band concert is on Thursday, and she is very excited for "Hot Cross Buns". Mary CB also recommends an essay by Claire Bishop called "Artificial Hells". Alissa is very enthusiastic about Season 3 of "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives" and is reading Mayci Neely's *Told You So*, as well as the much more serious title *This is For Everyone* by Tim Berners-Lee.

*2:26 p.m. Andrea moved to adjourn, Dani 2nd. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.
Respectfully submitted by Alissa Wolenetz.*