

Lewistown Public Library



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

**Wednesday, January 21, 2026
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.

1:05 PM – Call to order – Roll call – Regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees called to order by Mary Callahan Baumstark. Trustees Present: Mariah Shammel, Andrea Payne, Jean Collins, Deb Bowser (New City Commission Representative), and Mary Jo Hamling. Library Staff present: Alissa Wolenetz. City of Lewistown Staff present: Holly Phelps and Tyler West.

Appoint Recorder of Minutes: Alissa.

Reading of the Mission Statement: Jean.

Revisions to the Agenda: None.

Comments for the Good of the Library: Mary CB noticed the Circulation Desk has had 2+ people every time she's been here, lots of use. Lots of traffic! Mariah was recently traveling and enjoyed Hoopla. Tyler's interlibrary loan came in recently, and his kids are really enjoying the library.

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

Disposition of November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

- Mariah asked that the minutes be corrected to include that the Board also discussed Library cleaning.
- Jean moved to approve the minutes with corrections, Andrea 2nd. No discussion. All in favor.

Financial Reports

- Endowments have generated roughly \$63,000 in interest, which will appear on our January statements.
- The Board may consider moving funds to the new Building Fund soon. Mary CB recently read the Roundup article about this fund.
- Mariah asked about the building maintenance line in the 2706 (Dowler Trust) fund. It is budgeted for capital improvements and emergencies but has not been spent at all this year so far.
- Andrea moved to accept December 2025 Claims, Jean 2nd. No further discussion. All in favor.

Discussion of Director's Report

- Alissa provided an overview of the statistics and the incoming \$10,000 Carnegie Foundation donation. Tyler answered questions about the hiring process. The Board briefly discussed library cleaning.

Communications

Friends of the Library (Mary Jo Hamling)

- The FOL gifted new Trustee Deb Bowser with a copy of *The Best Gift: Montana's Carnegie Libraries* by Kate Hampton.
- The January Book Sale made \$548.78. Mary Jo provided an overview of how the Book Station works. The public is very grateful for services, and the parking lot is a fantastic asset for the Library. The building and parking lot were purchased in 2007, then mitigated because of the location's history as a gas station.
- In other news, Mary Jo noted that trash costs are rising.

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

- There were 107 paying customers for Chili Bowl, and about 30 volunteers total. This year had some changes to day of the week, partnerships, and catering. Mary CB thought it performed about as well as last year. The goal this year was 200 paying customers. FOL split revenues with Winter Fair. The Chili Bowl Committee will report more at the next FOL meeting, and will also host a postmortem with Committee and FOL officers.
- Mary Jo thought the Trade Center was a good venue, especially because of the parking. She noted that there were lots of other events that night as well.

City Commission - Deb Bowser

- The City Commission recently appointed members to committees, approved a daycare application, and started working on training with the City Attorney, including learning about Robert's Rules of Order.
- Deb is excited to be on the Library Board! She got her card here when she was 12, and has been a member ever since. She thanked the Board for being so welcoming.

New Business

- *Overview of roles and responsibilities of Board of Trustees (Discussion)*
 - The City Attorney provided training on roles, responsibilities, and separation of powers within the Library. The training included the respective responsibilities of the Board and Director; a note on separation of powers, including that Trustees should not attempt to direct employees in their work, and employees should not attempt to go through Board members one-on-one if they want to see changes; open public meeting laws, the public's right to know, and the individual's right to privacy; what constitutes a quorum, and which practices (e.g., walking quorums, digital quorums) to avoid; laws that must be followed when hosting executive (closed) sessions; best practices for posting agendas, recording minutes, and distributing Board packets; the City's social media policy, including that individual Board members should not represent themselves as speaking for the Library; and the role of the City Union and Collective Bargaining Agreement, including the grievance process and which employees are covered by the CBA.

Continuing Business

- *Library Master Plan Updates (Discussion)*
 - The Board received an update on the Library Master Plan process, including the project timeline, federal requirements for funding, preliminary concerns raised by the grant administration team, and options for moving forward.
 - Board members expressed interest in receiving additional information from the Building Committee before making a recommendation. The Board requested that the Building Committee meet with a City representative to review candidates and provide a formal recommendation by the end of the month.
- *Review of FY26 Collections Budget Spending (Discussion)*
 - The Board checked in with the Director to ensure that current use of Library materials is aligned with spending and the annual budget. There were no questions for continued spending levels and the Board opted not to pursue reducing the collections budget set for FY26.

Trustee Minute: Andrea listened to *Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books* by Kirsten Miller and *James* by Percival Everett. Mary CB is reading *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* by Robert D. Putnam. Mariah hasn't been reading recently, besides the School Board's Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations. Tyler is reading lots of children's books every night. Deb is only reading City Commission things. (And will soon be reading more about Library Board things!)

*2:57 p.m. Mariah moved to adjourn, Jean 2nd. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.
Respectfully submitted by Alissa Wolenetz.*