



Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Public Library Board of Trustees

February 26, 2025

Meeting held in Library Community Room

Trustees Present:

Jim Windisch, Board Chair
Ruth Pratt, Board Member
Katie Saylor, Board Member
Melisa Carper Bell, Board Member
Steve McCrea, Board Member (Teams)

Others:

Dan English, City Council Liaison
Holly Stetson, Library Foundation Manager
Ayla Frens, Student Representative
Elizabeth Westenburg, Library Director
Melissa Searle, Librarian
Angela Flock, Teen Coordinator (Notetaker)

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Jim Windisch at 4:03pm.

Public Comment

Karen Campbell (of Coeur d'Alene) referred to the definition of "sexual conduct" from House Bill 710 (the Children's School and Library Protection Act). She then read passages from "Autoboyography" aloud. Following that, she quoted multiple Bible verses; one passage was from Romans 1:25-27, and one passage was from Luke 17:1-2. She believes these verses "pertain to all of us" for the protection of children, "but especially those in leadership positions".

Marianna Cochran (of Rathdrum) believes that the board is well-aware of the Children's School and Library Protection Act, and that the board has failed to protect children. She mentioned an online list of books that the group, Clean Books 4 Kids, believes are inappropriate. Then she mentioned the upcoming Pageturners' Book Club choice, "Verge", and her frustration about the book club being open to 16 years old. She read several passages out of context and claimed that the library is promoting obscene material to minors.

Consent Calendar - Moved to approve Ruth, Katie 2nd

Unanimously approved.

Director's report (Elizabeth Westenburg)

Steve McCrea asked about the mention of the new TV in the Nelson Room. Elizabeth Westenburg mentioned the uptick in adult programs that are using the space, such as Job Skills classes and the Audubon Society, and how these programs need technology to share presentations. There's been a need for more reservable spaces for 10-20 people, too. There was a projector and a screen that's been used in the past, but the projector was falling apart and the screen wasn't as convenient as the TV will be for presenters.

Katie Saylor appreciated how much time Elizabeth has spent listening to staff. Katie also noticed that the stats were down for programming and was curious why. Elizabeth talked about some possible reasons, such as the rush back to the library from the end of COVID that might have driven up the previous year's stats and that all-ages stats are being counted differently. Elizabeth asked Angela Flock if she knew of any other reasons, and Angela mentioned that the closed libraries in the area reopened around that time, as well, which may mean that people were going back to their local library.

Jim Windisch commented, "I like the new format for the stats a lot".

Other Reports

City Council Liaison (Dan English)

Dan English was in a meeting where a grant for libraries came up and had to recuse himself from the discussion, but that there may be an opportunity there. He also offered to talk to the board and staff about the budget-making process. He'll be on vacation soon though but wanted to offer his services. Elizabeth mentioned how happy library staff was to have him come to the library to provide assistance recently.

Student Representative (Ayla Frens)

Ayla Frens has been studying and reserving study rooms so often that staff know her. It's been paying off, and she got a good grade on the test she was worried about. She's happy that Angela is combining the Creative Arts Club & Gamers Guild into TGIF Club. Now Ayla gets to do nearly everything she loves. She still hopes that someday laptops will be available again that can handle playing full-fledged League of Legends.

Friends (Elizabeth Westenburg)

Elizabeth shared that the Friends approved a request that will enable the funding for several more Wonderbooks (fancy, interactive books that are highly desired, but very expensive).

Foundation (Holly Stetson)

Holly Stetson shared that she's been trying to get things finalized for the Foundation's annual budget review.

Upcoming Foundation events:

- March 20 - Music of the River
- April 10 - Novel Destinations - Brazil
- July 24 - Jess Walters Author Talk - new book coming, too

The Foundation calendar project is still underway. Dan English is an actor recreating "Of Mice & Men", too.

Unfinished Business - None

New Business

Closing for an all staff training every year discussion

Elizabeth said that we've closed for an all-staff training day in the past. She loves a good staff day. She was considering different dates and wondered whether we were open on Indigenous People's Day. Melissa Searle shared that we typically are. Elizabeth thought that choosing a day where the public thinks we're closed anyway might help.

Katie: Why did we stop? Can you remember, Melissa?

Melissa Searle: We might have done a half-day, but it was so long ago I don't remember why we stopped.

Katie: When is Indigenous People's Day?

Melisa Carper Bell: Monday, Oct 13, 2025

Jim wrapped up discussion and called for a motion. Ruth made a motion to approve the library's closure for all-staff training on Indigenous People's Day on Monday, Oct 13, 2025. Katie seconded it.

Unanimously approved.

Confidentiality of Library Records policy review

Katie wondered if there were any changes to the policy. Elizabeth said there hadn't been. Jim confirmed that the trustees don't have to vote on it then, and it could just be marked as "reviewed". Katie double-checked that that's what will happen. Elizabeth confirmed that previous policies with no changes had been marked as "reviewed" with the date, as well, and had been reuploaded to the online policy manual.

Legislative updates

Jim mentioned that there's been changes since he asked for this agenda item to be added. Elizabeth explained that a bill that they were concerned about had been dropped. Jim explained that there had been a bill that would have allowed the City Council to hire/fire the library director, but it died in committee.

Board officers

Katie announced the results for the current board officers; Jim will serve as chair for a year and Steve will serve as vice-chair.

There were no other nominations made. The trustees proceeded to vote for this year's officers.

The nominees were unanimously approved.

Katie's Report on Committee Chairs Meeting

Katie took the opportunity to discuss the Committee Chairs Meeting (that she'd attended in Jim's place). She mentioned a previous CDA-TV Production staff member, who had attended, but the role is currently filled by Mike Dziak. Katie thought we should talk to him more. Elizabeth mentioned that JD Smithson (the Communications Coordinator) had talked to him quite a bit about things like the city's Youtube channel and other communications-related topics.

Katie learned several other things from the meeting; that the price of firetrucks has doubled, that neighborhood trees will be replaced with cherry trees citywide (because the former tree choice can't handle the climate), and that three American Chestnut trees in city park can trace their DNA to pre-100 years ago (potentially 130 years ago). There's national interest in the Chestnut trees and scientists would like to cross-breed them with some modern strains that are resistant to fungal diseases. Elizabeth mentioned a book on the topic.

Katie mentioned several other topics that she thought might be of interest, such as the city's need for attainable housing, free concerts in the park that are coming, that electric-assist bikes are okay on bike trails, but not electric-only, that while we have 65 childcare programs in the city, there's still more demand than availability, and that in the future, teens may be able to be licensed childcare providers (with supervision), and that there's a new park element, the "fire dragon", from Wastewater.

At the meeting, the Mayor also mentioned that he would like more accountability for student representative positions. Many student representatives aren't following through on their assignments. The Mayor believes there needs to be more guidelines and expectations. Katie was hoping Ayla would still be there, so she could get her thoughts on it, but Ayla had to leave early.

In the future, student representatives may have to put in a certain number of volunteer hours outside of meetings. At the end of their term, they may have to give a report about their time with the committee that could be shared with the committee, Mayor, and Council. The hope is that if they know what's expected ahead of time, they might not fail. Katie expressed that they'd had problems in the past that this might address, but that Ayla has done a wonderful job, and there hasn't been any concerns since she's been the student rep.

Melisa: Do we have any idea about who might be our next student rep?

Angela: We have a teenager, named Kat, who's expressed interest, and she's been attending the library board meetings, as often as possible, since she first expressed interest. Kat is currently in 8th grade, but she'll be in 9th grade by the time the student representative application is due.

Strat Plan

Katie liked the ideas of "Create, Learn, and Share", but wondered how they're being measured. Elizabeth pointed out that there's a section under every goal that addresses "Measurements" and that JD will create a one-page report of how we measure-up to our goals that will be shared online.

Steve asked about library materials, feeling they were left out. Elizabeth explained that the Strategic Plan doesn't necessarily include everything that the library does, and that it includes more special tasks that come up. Katie further explained, "What we're focusing on here [in the Strategic Plan] is something we're not doing as much or something new."

Steve was concerned that other aspects were missing and wanted to add providing entertainment and "the humanities" to the mission statement somehow. Steve was especially concerned about adding "the humanities". He felt they are important to the mission of the library.

Jim asked if the mission statement was our current one. (Elizabeth said it was.) Jim said, "I get what Steve's saying," but he also felt that "Share" speaks to it a bit. "Still, explicit support of the humanities is important," he said.

Elizabeth talked about how she'd been trained that the mission statement and the vision statement should really only be two sentences long.

Steve said that when he reads the mission statement, he thinks, "That's a school, and we're not a school. We do more than that."

Ruth Pratt said that she thought some of the wording in the mission statement covered the concept already.

Dan expressed that he's been to several Humanities Council meetings, "where the Humanities Council itself isn't really sure what the humanities are." He also asked if it fit in the vision statement instead.

Elizabeth said that she'll take and rewrite the mission and vision statement and read from a humanities statement from the Programming Librarian website. ((I didn't catch enough of this to be sure, but was it from this site: <https://programminglibrarian.org/articles/perfect-partners-libraries-and-humanities?>))

Steve mentioned that he thinks it's important in a world of misinformation that people have a place to figure out what's true.

Dan said that he thinks the humanities statement is great, but that mission and vision statements are usually more concise and suggested that the board add it as a separate purpose statement.

Steve would really like to see something about the humanities added to the mission. "We have people that attack the library and don't like it," he said.

Elizabeth said that she'd come up with some language. It wouldn't be done by the March meeting though, but maybe by April's.

Melisa said, "But we can still move forward on the strategic plan, right?"

They came to a consensus that the main content of the Strategic Plan could be acted on, which would allow Elizabeth some time to look into the mission and vision statements.

New Statistics format - Questions/Concerns?

Steve thought that there were lines with just numbers, but when Elizabeth screen-shared the new format document, Steve realized that he'd been looking at an old one and apologized. "I got it. That looks good; it's great!" Steve said.

Jim expressed again that he really liked the new format.

Other Business - None

Next regular scheduled meeting - March 26 2025, 4 p.m. in Library Community Room.

Adjourned at 5:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Flock, Teen Coordinator (Notetaker)
Elizabeth Westenburg, Library Director