



**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the
Coeur d'Alene Public Library Board of Trustees
March 25, 2026
Meeting held in Library Community Room**

Trustees Present:

Jim Windisch, Board Chair
Ruth Pratt, Board Member
Katie Sayler, Board Member
Melisa Carper Bell, Board Member
Tonya Coppedge, Board Member
Student representatives: Absent

Library Staff Present: Angela Flock, Teen Coordinator/Meeting Secretary, Evan Lantzy, Public Services Librarian

City Council Liaison: Absent

Others Present: Holly Stetson, Foundation manager
Cly Ritter, Idaho Commission for Public Libraries Consultant

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Board Chair at 4:04 pm

Public Comment: None

Consent Calendar- Action Item

Items to be approved as a group with a single motion; items may be removed for discussion and singular approval

- Approval of **date** Agenda
- Approval of **date** Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Financial Reports

Moved to approve by melisa, Ruth second. Motion carries.

Director's Report

Katie expressed concern about circ stats being on a downward trend. Evan explained that previous stats seem to have been unintentionally misreported. He also mentioned a shift to digital. Katie asked if the Overdrive stats were just CDA patrons. Evan wasn't sure if Overdrive circs can be separated out. Katie mentioned it might be a question for Christopher. Angela mentioned that Hoopla stats can, since they are only available to Coeur d'Alene patrons.

Melisa wondered about using historical data to project for future decisions. Evan expressed concern about the data and how it's only complete in the new method of reporting back to 2025. Clay asked to address the board and recommended not to use projected stats. "Libraries evolve faster than most industries... Digital circ stats is a good example." He mentioned the IMLS search and compare tool and using it to look at similar libraries with a slightly higher population size to consider what will change due to population increases, etc.

Other Reports

City Council Liaison - absent

Student Representative - absent

Friends of the Library - absent

Library Foundation

Bill Wiemuth event tomorrow (March 26 at 7pm)

April 9 at 7pm - Let's Talk About Sax event (Ruth will be performing)

Bear Tales statue - Nancy White's daughter has donated it back to the library in memory of her late mother (the statue was originally a \$2000 donation/purchase)

"Nightjar", by Emily Ruskovich, is coming July 7. Holly hopes to get on the author tour at the end of July. Sharma Shields has a new book coming next year. It's another one that she's hopeful for an author event.

She commented that there's not as many grants available as there used to be.

The "Born to Read" backpacks for new parents were shown to bring awareness of them to the new board member. There's over 200 births (and backpacks given) at the hospital every month. There's a Spanish version, too.

Melisa recommended “Sleep Baby” (by John Hutton), a book to help parents with SIDS education. The author has gifted the book for good causes in the past.

Unfinished Business

Updated bylaws accepted - Ruth moved, Katie 2nd

Unanimously approved.

The updated by-laws were signed by all the trustees.

New Business

Volunteer Policy - Katie expressed concern about a lack of the word “equally”, wanting it to match a passage from Idaho code, but she couldn’t find the section where she wanted that to be added. Jim mentioned that it wasn’t an action item, so they could give Katie time to find where she’d like to make an edit, and the policy was tabled until the next meeting.

Other Business - Board Training presented by Clay Ritter (ICfL)

Clay congratulated the board on having such a small audience. “The ultimate compliment for Library Boards is to have no one show up.” It can be an indication that your community trusts you.

He went over a packet of information that included topics that are important for library trustees to understand. He explained how the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) is there to assist libraries to better serve their communities and how ICfL is not a regulatory agency. They’re “consultants not cops”.

He commended the board for how the room was set-up. “Thank you for formalizing your process. This helps—so much.”

Four roles

- 4) You create public records. “Minutes are forever documents.”
- 4) You set policies. “They are your map—your charting course”
- 4) “You have legislative authority, not individual authority.” The only time one trustee has authority is in a quorum in a meeting.
- 4) Advocating for your library is your most important role. To do that, you need to “understand what your library does for your community in an intrinsic way.”

As long-lasting library directors retire or move on, there's a power and advocacy vacuum. Clay sees a lot of issues in libraries and controversy. The controversial folks aren't listening to trustees and librarians. You want your community to shout down the controversial claims for you.

Statute and City Libraries

You have an interesting relationship with the city. "You all are married, but you're sleeping in separate beds." Katie stated that the city employees don't always understand the unique needs and differences between city administration and library administration. Clay responded that the city cannot directly influence trustee decisions, even with the latest bill that's on the governor's desk right now. The power dynamic is important to acknowledge though. "Make the city mad, and they can find a way to mess up your budget." Clay recommended that trustees show up at city meetings even though they are outside of the power structure in some respects.

You can do things that are not usual city business, as long as it's not inconsistent with law. The library director manages the operational budget. The State only cares about revenues, not expenses. The library board can set firm financial guidelines, but doesn't have to.

H715 - If signed by the governor, City Council *in addition to* the Library Board has hiring and firing control over the director. It's not removing you from the director process. It is adding an extra step. It was written to *protect* a certain city library's director. But the power of both parties is equal. If the City Council wants to hire/fire a director, but the library board doesn't, it's a stalemate. Nothing can be imposed upon either party.

HR can handle director-related personnel issues. Jim - How does that work? Clay - However, you want it to work. Most city libraries don't have a separate personnel policy for their director. Without one, the city is going to treat them like any city employee. But directors are *library* employees. Melisa - The library can even create separate personnel benefits packages, etc, for the director? Clay - You can, but it's not advised.

Director Dynamic

"Appointing a director is the most important decision that you will ever make. Without you, there is no library... The library director is your library in the community."

Clear expectations are very important. Build a strong sense of trust and transparency with your director.

Clay told a story about parents who complained about a story their kids had told them about rocks getting thrown at them "by the director". The director was unexpectedly put on the hot seat in a meeting. On the day in question, the roof was being worked on and asphalt was coming off, unknowingly hitting patrons. Two weeks after the meeting, the director left.

"Please don't believe the worst in people... It's not breaking open meeting laws to reach out to the director and find out what's happening."

Katie - The library board here has operated by sharing concerns with the chair, rather than directly to the director. That way, "there's only one voice." Concerns are brought to the chair (Jim); Jim would be the one to investigate further. Clay - "That's a good way to avoid collusion."

Advocate in your Community regularly

Bring community opportunities and ideas to the library.

Operate in a "Noses in - Fingers out" way. Know what's going on. But don't get into operations.

Evaluating your Director

There should be no surprises. If there's a surprise on any side, supervision has failed.

They should be given a chance to fix their behavior, if it's problematic.

They should be complimented, if their behavior is good.

Who does the director work with the most? Make sure you're not only taking feedback from staff who don't regularly interact with them.

Your performance evaluation should start with goals and expectations. The conversation should be something like, "This is what we see as expectations and goals. What do you see?" Make sure they're measurable. Link your job description to their performance indicators.

Within the first 3 years of a change in direction, it's usually a "bloodbath" staff-retention wise.

Speak to those goals, expectations, and indicators during the director's report section in board meetings. "Our brains are wired to remember negative experiences. Feedback is feedback. It all needs to be weighed equally."

Melisa - Is there a good example of a transparent evaluation process? Clay - Not that he knows of. It used to be that library directors would stay until retirement in Idaho. Not now. People tend not to stay as long. As a result, a lot of libraries are not doing evaluations. Clay recommends talking to the Rupert Library, Madison Library in Rexburg, and Caldwell Public Library. City evaluation might come into play. Jim - City Manager does his own evaluation here. But he doesn't have any authority, right? Katie - HR has input but not authority. Clay - The City is a good source of information. The City Manager and the Library Director are equals. Tonya - Are director evaluations once a year? Katie - She believes they've usually formed a recommendation in August, and it was finalized in September. Jim - Personnel policy from the City has something similar. Clay - He recommended saying to the city, "Hey, we're redoing our evaluation process. Could you fill out this form? Bring your City Admin into the process."

Clay - "Evaluations are tough." Get the facts of the situation. Clear goals. No surprises.

Clay has a three and a half hour policy training available, if they're interested. Melisa - What do you cover? Clay - All of them.

They expressed some interest.

Laws and Rules

The Attorney General's office has been willing to give public entities their opinion on Open Meeting Laws, in the past. If something's not an action item, it didn't happen. If you mess up, you can "cure" the issue using the Open Meeting Law Manual.

Katie (with the help of Angela for details) told the story about how the board had to "cure" a mistake they'd made that involved being online during Covid, and that it was embarrassing to fix, but it wasn't hard.

Melisa - What makes something a meeting? Clay - Anything above two trustees on an email chain or together. If you decide to have a picnic (separate from library discussions), you can even post that there will be a quorum, but no library business will be discussed.

Melisa - What can I do over email and not? She was concerned about providing evaluation procedure suggestions. Clay - Form an evaluation committee. Form committees officially or not, but do it. Formally might be better for higher stakes issues.

Jim - Book challenges... committee? To bring recommendations? Clay - You're the decider. Be cognizant of your scope, because it can creep. Code says you have to answer book challenges. Make it very clear that the board decides. Jim - We had a committee in the past, but it was an ad hoc committee and was difficult to continue to meet the new deadlines. Clay - Standing committees should be part of your by-laws.

Public Records law

City of Caldwell has a good retention policy. There are library-specific records. You could get in trouble for deleting an email, if you don't have a policy. Declare it if you have a conflict of interest. If you have a question, reach out to the Attorney General.

Control of Expenditures

Financial reports are approved each month in the consent calendar. Get an audit report every year. Katie didn't think we'd gotten it. Clay - It's good to have multiple eyes on everything.

Policies - bare minimum list provided

Social Media policy protects from impersonation by saying "these are our platforms".

Don't be afraid of borrowing or lending policies. East Bonner Library & Boise Library are good examples.

Have your legal dept review your policies.

Internet Safety policy - By state law, you have to have one and review it every 3 years

Relocation policy - have the entire definition spelled out on the form. H819 mentioned as a possible new law that might require updates to this policy.

Melisa - Can we advocate? Clay - As an individual, you can send a letter as a board member “representing myself”

Melisa - How do you suggest finding out about upcoming legislation? Clay - Not through ICfL, but the Idaho Library Association lobbies and has an email listserv that can help keep people informed.

Next regular scheduled meeting - April 22, 2026, 4 p.m. in Library Community Room.

Adjourned at 6:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Flock
Teen Services Coordinator