

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

October 29, 2024 | 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, Kathryn Dilley, Sheila García Mazari, Kevin Peterson (arrived at 5:26 pm), Lauren Woolsey
Board Members Absent:	
Administration Present:	Robert Adcock, Megan Biggins, Natalie Drew, Lindsay Laplow, John McNaughton, Ann Neff-Rohs, Jen Vander Heide, Patrick Beatty
Staff Present:	Amy Cochran, Nic Coppernoll
Public Present:	Steven Assarian, GREIU; Jay Vissers, GR Documenters

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

**MOTION: By Commissioner Woolsey, supported by Commissioner Boston, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of September 24, 2024.**

Boston comments that there is a correction to Item 5b which should read, "lending model" instead of "vending model."

Laplow comments that Vander Heide's name is missing from the list of Administration Present and needs to be added.

**ACTION: AYES 5 – 0**

**Motion passed.**

**3. BOARD COMMENTS**

Boston comments that she enjoyed the Meet Me at the Library! program at the Seymour Branch. She adds that she dropped her ballot off at the Seymour Branch's ballot box and appreciates that we have them at all of our locations.

García Mazari comments that she attended the Café Con Libros Book Club hosted by the Latina Network of West Michigan. She adds that she is grateful for GRPL's community connection with the Latina Network of West Michigan and hopes that we continue this very valuable partnership.

Woolsey comments that she recently drove by a community trunk-or-treat with the GRPL van present. She adds that she loves that the new logo is easy to recognize.

#### 4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

##### a. Legislative

No comments.

##### b. Policy

No comments.

##### c. Board Retreat

No comments.

#### 5. STAFF & FOUNDATION REPORTS

##### A. Library Director's Report

McNaughton comments that the staffing assessment is underway and ReThinking Libraries (RTL) will be at the November regular meeting. He adds that RTL has offered to attend the upcoming annual board retreat to present the board their findings. The board agrees that the end of February will likely work for scheduling the 2025 annual retreat.

McNaughton thanks Zychowski for the Annual Impact Report that she and the Communications Department created.

##### i. GRCM Collaboration

McNaughton comments that he has decided to pause GRPL's involvement in this collaboration until the staffing assessment is complete in March 2025. He adds that he and Vander Heide spoke yesterday to the Grand Rapids Children's Museum (GRCM) about what we'd like to see from this partnership, the timeline we envision, and the importance of the BoLC being involved.

Dilley asks if there are meetings that take place without McNaughton's knowledge. McNaughton answers yes and explains that they involve him in some meetings and update him on meetings he's not in.

Dilley asks if we can involve the Foundation more fully. McNaughton says yes, when the time is right. He adds that they have previously met with and presented their ideas to the City, but the City's needs may change soon due to newly elected City leadership. He concludes that it's time to slow down until we have a fully-fleshed idea.

Dilley comments that she is worried that the library isn't a big enough part of the conversation and asks if the library is losing influence or involvement. McNaughton says that Anderson and Woolsey are part of the steering committee, but we need to talk about what both parties' expectations are. Woolsey confirms that it has been a while since they have met as a steering committee. Anderson comments that the GRCM has moved away from working with Fishbeck, so some of the communication structure has been impacted.

Boston asks what happens with the parking lot if this partnership doesn't work out. McNaughton answers that if this doesn't work out, despite hoping it does, then GRPM will need to find another partner and the parking lot will stay as it is.

Boston comments that she appreciates that this has been paused and appreciates that McNaughton is coming to the board to let them know. McNaughton says he will share the timeline Vander Heide put together with the board soon. Peterson asks if we have any contract obligations with this project. McNaughton answers no.

Anderson asks about the Community Resource Fair. McNaughton says it was a huge success. Biggins comments that this involved many partner organizations that we regularly work with. McNaughton reads the list of community partner organizations that were present. Anderson asks if we plan to host it at different times of day going forward. McNaughton answers that they are looking into how best to do this in the future and thanks Resource Navigator Sabrina Slenk for all of the work that went into organizing it. Boston asks how often staff want to do this. McNaughton answers that it's still up in the air.

Peterson comments that the Literacy Center is moving and will be GRPL's neighbor soon.

## **B. Financial Report**

Adcock comments that we came in slightly above our budget projections. Now we're switching gears to focus on the FY26 budget.

Anderson asks about the last column showing 2023's numbers instead of 2024. Adcock answers that 2024 is the previous closed year, but since we are comparing actual totals, he uses 2023's numbers.

Anderson asks about the Supplies and Postage line coming in high. Biggins answers that this is because of a reallocation of the budget for the Books by Mail program.

Boston clarifies her question regarding the digital versus print budget from the September regular meeting. Woolsey asks if the board could see how much was spent the last 2 years on print items and how much was spent on digital items. Neff-Rohs answers and says that she will send the numbers over.

Boston asks if, within the Stats report, the unique borrows by month numbers are only physical items. Neff-Rohs answers yes. Boston asks if we can include digital items as well. Neff-Rohs says yes. Boston asks how we estimate cost if things change so often due to the lending models. Anderson comments that having this data public helps our users understand what the costs are.

McNaughton comments that he attended a presentation on trends of digital usage, and it continues to skyrocket throughout the US and Canada. Dilley asks about the breakdown of usage by age. McNaughton says that when the dashboard is accessible, he will share it with the board. Anderson clarifies that GRPL is not limiting availability of digital items. McNaughton agrees.

Dilley comments about an article she read about critical thinking skills decreasing due to an increase in digital material usage. García Mazari clarifies that university libraries have more money to put toward digital materials for textbooks and adds that not many people have an opportunity to read for leisure due to demanding school schedules. Boston shares that accessibility options are improved with digital materials and adds that people can "skim" printed materials too.

## **C. Foundation Update**

No comments.

## 6. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Discussion of Board Replacement of Resigning Member

Peterson thanks everyone for completing the skills matrix. He explains the data within the matrix.

Anderson reminds everyone of the timeline: Applications will go out to the commissioners for review after the posting closes and we will have interviews at the regular board meeting in December. She asks the board to remind their social networks of the open board seat so they can apply by November 1.

Peterson comments on the list of skills that we may be losing when García Mazari's term expires. He also talks about the areas in which we may want to invest for additional areas of support.

Woolsey comments that this tool can help us inform the questions we ask the candidates in interviews. She adds that she would like to send candidates the interview questions beforehand. Anderson comments that she will send the questions to the board prior to sending them to the candidates. Woolsey concludes that we can talk through this at the November regular meeting.

Boston thanks Peterson and says that the skills matrix is very helpful. The board discusses other ways they can use this tool.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Summer Reading Challenge Program Evaluation

Youth Services Manager Cochran and Adult Services Manager Coppernoll introduce themselves and present a summary of the 2024 Summer Reading Challenge Program.

Cochran concludes that they are looking at how they can be more accessible to single-parent and busy-parent households next year, as well as inspiring more older adults to participate. She adds that she would like to partner with GRPS again to introduce the program to kids before they are out of school for the summer.

The board thanks Cochran and Coppernoll.

García Mazari suggests asking GRPS to share some of their demographic data.

Peterson asks how many people completed the follow-up survey and asks about awareness of the challenge. Cochran answers that we did not ask awareness questions but will reconsider asking them next year. She adds that we had over 550 returned surveys.

Boston asks what grade levels were in summer school. Cochran answers that GRPL focused on K-8. Biggins comments that getting into a school in the capacity we achieved was a huge triumph.

## 8. INFORMATION ITEMS

### A. Media Index

Boston comments that GRPL's social media has been a great way to get to know the staff.

### B. Staffing Report

No comments.

**C. Statistical Report for September 2024**

No comments.

**9. GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION**

No comments.

**10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: NOVEMBER 19, 2024**

- Policy Review Committee Update
- Nominating Committee Appointment
- Continuation of board member appointment discussion

Anderson reminds the board that the next two meetings are earlier in the month than usual due to holidays.

**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.**