

MINUTES
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

August 26, 2025 | 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, Justine Bryant, Kathryn Dilley, Kevin Peterson, Lauren Woolsey
Board Members Absent:	Bryan Holt (with notice)
Administration Present:	Robert Adcock, Natalie Drew, Lindsay Laplow, John McNaughton, Jen Vander Heide, Katie Zychowski, Patrick Beatty
Staff Present:	Megan Biggins, John Bosma, Erin Hart, Erin Keener, Hannah Snow
Public Present:	Dustin Hunt (via Google Meet); Rachel Diener, GREIU; Dan Poortenga, GRPLF

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING ON JULY 29, 2025

MOTION: By Commissioner Woolsey, supported by Commissioner Bryant, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting of July 29, 2025.

Peterson states that his comment in Item 3 should read “13 year old niece.” Laplow says she will make the correction.

ACTION: AYES 6 – 0

Motion passed.

3. BOARD COMMENTS

Peterson comments that he went to the River For All Festival this past weekend and saw a lot of people engaging with the GRPL booths. He adds a congratulations to HR Director, Natalie Drew, for being accepted into Leadership Grand Rapids.

Woolsey comments that she has heard a lot of people saying good things about Comics Plus and is glad to see how much it's being used already.

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 states that the Staffing Assessment and Strategic Plan need to be done with community and Board involvement, so GRPL is working with Method + Craft for the Strategic Plan. He details the timeline and concludes that they are hoping to have a plan completed by early February. Anderson asks if Method + Craft will be doing interviews and surveys and whether they can use part of the survey for McNaughton's annual evaluation. McNaughton answers yes.

McNaughton introduces Deputy Director, Jen Vander Heide. Vander Heide talks about folios and deaccessioned items found in the Main Library's basement, which are mostly in the French language and were first assessed in 2015. GRPL has reexamined them and determined that these items are outside of the library's scope and don't belong within GRPL's collection. GRPL is looking at trying to sell the rest in a public auction because of the space needed in the basement for available and accessible items for the community that are within GRPL's collections scope. Woolsey asked if these were taken out of circulation in 2015. Vander Heide answers that they were never in circulation. Dilley asks if there are items in other languages than French. Vander Heide says she will need to look at the list, but knows it's predominantly French. Boston asks if GRPL has reached out to Frederick Meijer Gardens because they have an art library. Vander Heide says she will look into that. Anderson congratulates Director of Collections, Ann Neff-Rohs, in cleaning out the basement.

McNaughton introduces Director of Marketing and Communications, Katie Zychowski. Zychowski speaks about GRPL's General Awareness Campaign. She explains that it's a marketing effort to let the community know that the library exists and explains the details of the campaign. She adds that GRPL has partnered with many local businesses for discounts. Woolsey asks if the discounts are only through September. Zychowski answers yes. Peterson asks about how GRPL will be tracking engagement with the local businesses. Zychowski says GRPL will be tracking it through a QR code located within the spaces.

i. GRPL + GREIU Contract Negotiations

Drew states that GRPL had a session on August 21 and the next 3 sessions are scheduled for September 2, 4, and 9. She adds that GRPL remains committed to getting the contract resolved. The Board thanks Drew for her ongoing work. Anderson asks if the other city departments have completed the ratification of their contracts. McNaughton answers that he believes so.

b. Financial Report

Adcock states that he anticipates having the final FY25 numbers next month and should have a full report each month now going forward.

c. Foundation Update

Poortenga comments that GRPLF approved \$52,000 in grants for GRPL programs including AAPI, Black History, the Van Belkum Mural Reveal Party, and One Book One City.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Van Belkum Branch Mural Presentation

McNaughton introduces Van Belkum Branch Manager, Erin Keener. Keener presents on the Mural Project. She thanks the Board and Lions and Rabbits for providing input and for the work done so far. She says that GRPL is hosting a mural Paint by Numbers event for the community on September 13.

Keener introduces the mural artist, Dustin Hunt. Hunt presents the draft of the mural. Boston asks if the mural will be wrapped or painted on the wall. Keener answers that it will be painted. She explains that maintenance is contracted through Lions and Rabbits for 3 years and she is working on a longevity plan.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Salary Ordinance Amendment

McNaughton states that the current scope of work has exceeded what the Communications Assistant position was created for so GRPL is proposing changing the classifications of the Communications Assistant positions to Graphic Designer and Digital Communications Specialist. Anderson asks if these will replace the Communications Assistant positions. McNaughton and Drew answer yes.

MOTION: By Commissioner Woolsey, supported by Commissioner Dilley, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the proposed salary ordinance amendment, effective August 26, 2025.

Peterson asks if the current staff in these roles will see the changes immediately due to the listed effective date. McNaughton answers yes. Anderson asks what wage step they will be at. Drew answers they would stay at their current step. Boston and Woolsey ask to confirm that these positions replace the Communications Assistant classification. McNaughton answers yes.

ACTION: AYES 6 – 0

Motion passed.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Year End Reports

Woolsey comments on the Security Report and asks if Community Services Manager, John Bosma is still comfortable with the classifications and framework chosen. Bosma answers yes. Anderson states that this continues to be something the Board needs to pay attention to. McNaughton adds that it's important that the Board is fully informed. Boston states that she appreciates the security team. Peterson states that he appreciates all of the new community partners GRPL has been able to bring in.

Anderson comments on the HR Report and asks if the FY25 turnover rate is considered low. Drew answers yes.

McNaughton thanks Library Analyst, Rebecca Near for creating the FY25 Snapshot. Peterson asks what is driving the increase in programs. McNaughton and Biggins answer. Woolsey said it's good to see that GRPL's checkouts are back to pre-COVID numbers and adds that the digital checkouts have now surpassed physical.

b. Media Index

No comments.

c. Staffing Report

No comments.

d. Statistical Reports for July 2025

No comments.

9. GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION

No comments.

10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

Anderson asks the Board to please let her and McNaughton know if they would like anything added to the agenda.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm.