



April 2025

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Burlington Public Library was called to order by President Becky Godfrey, Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 4:37 p.m. in Meeting Room A. Board members Becky Godfrey, Mary Weinand, Jennifer McMillan, Roger Hatteberg, Amanda Mansheim, Brandon Orth and Library Director Brittany Jacobs were present. City Manager Chad Bird, Friends Liaison Anita Wagner, library staff Sara Garland, Kathy Gerling and Lois Blythe and Becky Nelson were also in attendance. Board member Don Schmidgall and West Burlington Liaison Rebecca Teater were absent. Notification for this meeting was sent to KBUR/KGRS, KCPS, KKMI, and WIUM radio stations and The Hawk Eye, on April 11, 2025.

Roger Hatteberg moved the Board to approve the agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the last meeting. Second by Mary Weinand; motion approved unanimously.

#### **Communication, Correspondence, & Public Address**

Becky Godfrey read aloud a letter that was received in March from a patron in Michigan thanking library staff member Nancy Halls for her help in locating an obituary and donated \$25 to the Friends of the library.

#### **Board Training**

- a. **Article: The State of America's Libraries 2025, A Report from the American Library Association**  
The board discussed the article. The report shows a small decrease in book bans in 2024. Several writers in this report have been helping give advice to libraries regarding the obscenity clause.
- b. **Micro-Training: Iowa Code 728, continued**  
The board discussed the micro-training sheet Brittany put together regarding Iowa Code 728: Obscenity including the definition and how to file a complaint. Board discussion of library patron exposing himself in front of other patrons – the police can be called directly by the concerned patron in this case.

#### **Expenditures**

Jennifer McMillan moved the Board to approve expenditures. Second by Mary Weinand; motion approved unanimously.

#### **Friends Liaison**

Anita Wagner briefed the board on Friends activities. They are currently busy planning the annual dinner that is coming up next Friday.

#### **Presidents Report**

Becky Godfrey thanked Jennifer McMillan for attending yesterday's Foundation meeting in her absence and thanked the committees for their continued work during this busy season.

## **Board Committees**

### **Advocacy Committee**

- Jennifer McMillan briefed the board.
- Most of the anti-library bills have died. Brittany will keep the Advocacy page on the library's website informed with legislative updates.
- We are keeping an eye on how the defunding of IMLS will impact our library. Discussion of the board writing letters to the elected officials.
- Jennifer mentioned the non-profit 'Every Library' and will send information to the board.

### **Building Committee**

- Becky Godfrey briefed the board.
- The percussion play instruments have been purchased and we are awaiting their arrival.
- There are some heat pump issues with the geothermal system that need to be fixed.
- The proposed bus shelter is on hold pending site reconnaissance.
- The elevator is going to need some major repair soon.

### **Finance Committee**

Brandon Orth, on behalf of the Finance Committee, read the following to the board:

*"The Finance Committee has worked with the Library Director, Library Foundation, City Manager, City Council, and even appealed to our state legislators over the past 12 months in preparation for the FY26 budget for the Burlington Public Library. Due to the entire loss of the library levy (roughly \$200,00 annually) in House File 718, along with tax reform that put restrictions on the City of Burlington's General Fund, and the failed Utility Franchise Fee referendum, we now find ourselves with having to cut \$75k from our budget per City Council's FY26 allocation for the library."*

Due to budget cuts, the board is faced with the difficult decision of finding where to cut the \$75,000 from. The options are either 1 – stop purchasing and databases or 2 – cut from personnel.

The Finance Committee made the motion and recommended cutting \$75,000 from the personnel line. Second by Roger Hatteberg; motion approved unanimously.

The board expressed its concern and frustration with continually being at the receiving end of budget cuts. While the other departments are having capital projects deferred, the library is having to cut staff. They felt as though the library department did everything they could to try to pass the franchise fee and put a lot of effort into educating the community. Brittany expressed how the library supporters work is not done – we need to work with the city to confirm long-term funding, especially considering further proposed property tax reform.

Roger expressed his kudos to the staff – the stats are up – even with less resources.

### **Personnel and Policy Committee**

The committee is awaiting an answer from a proposed candidate to fill Don's board position. The committee will get together when Don returns to town. The board recommendation will need to go to city hall in May.

## **Library Services Report**

Chris Murphy of Burlington By The Book launched his initiative in March to donate a book a week for a year to support the library in light of the current budget situation. Many other people are jumping on board this initiative and helping. Brittany is working with Chris on an organized list of books interested folks can purchase to prevent duplicates.

The Hoopla bill is cut in half since we had to cut back to two circulations per patron per month.

Brittany mentioned the possible effects of losing IMLS funding. Libby is a huge service to patrons, and we afford this by paying into the consortium. This would be unaffordable to purchase on our own if it gets defunded. Brittany is going to Bettendorf to explore possible backup plans if we lose access to Libby due to IMLS cuts. More info to come.

**Old Business**

**a. FY26 Foundation Memo Update**

- Brittany explained the FY26 Memo to the Foundation with a list of anticipated needs. The Board of Trustees will vote on this in June and the library will present it to the Foundation in July.
- Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) were put on the City's CIP.

**b. Danville contract**

- No new movement with the potential Danville contract for library services.

**New Business**

**a. Alternative models of library governments**

- Brittany discussed options for breaking from the City governance due to this year's budget, the city not keeping up with the cost of this facility, and the forecasted budget issues in the near future. A document called 'Alternative Forms of Governance' was presented to the board and is included in the board packet. The timeline for a full break from the city is 3 to 4 years out, but these are options to keep on our radar.

Roger Hatteberg mentioned that Brittany did an excellent job with the City's Citizen Academy.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Roger Hatteberg moved the meeting to be adjourned at 5:50 p.m. Second by Jennifer McMillan; motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Brittany Jacobs,  
Library Director