



Auburn Public Library
February Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, February 24, 2026 4:30 PM

Present: Rick Whiting, Ralph Harder, Nicole Rancourt, Lisa Cesare, Pat Gautier, Courtney Reed-Marsh, Amy Heimerl, John Cleveland, and Jen Lynch.

Staff: Donna Wallace, Haley Warden

Excused: Sharon Bergeron, Rachel Randall

Karen Choate, LPL representative, attended the meeting. There were also seven community members who attended as observers.

1. Call to Order/Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.

2. What Are You Reading?

A full list was posted.

3. Approval of the January 27, 2026 Minutes

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 27, 2026 Board Meeting as presented was made by Lisa Cesare and seconded by Amy Heimerl. All were in favor.

4. Marketing Plan Review

Haley Warden gave an overview of the new three month APL Marketing Plan that will show how APL supports the Auburn community. The Plan aligns with the Strategic Plan. She explained that there will be costs of approximately \$5,000 associated with the Plan. Where the funding will come from will be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting. The core message of the new plan is “APL is here for your next chapter”, and the campaign starts on April 1, 2026 during National Library Month. For a \$20.00 donation, people will be given a Library sign to put on their lawns. On April 21st Haley hopes the Board will do something for the staff that shows its appreciation for all they do.

The objective of the Marketing Plan is to get the Library brand out in the public more aggressively. One exciting marketing opportunity is that Flagship Cinemas has agreed to donate 30-second ad time to APL which will run before every movie on the large screens from April to June and will also be shown in the lobby television. Spectrum has also agreed to run ads for the Library. Both ad campaigns would be in-kind donations. After the three month campaign, they are hoping for more program attendance; more hits on the APL website; and more community support for the Library. A motion to approve the marketing plan as presented was made by Courtney Reed-Marsh and seconded by Nicole Rancourt. All were in favor.

5. Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee met in January to discuss the current financials. In Sharon Bergeron's absence, Committee Member John Cleveland gave an overview of the financials and reported that all financials are in line with the budget. A motion to approve the January Financial Report as presented was made by Nicole Rancourt and seconded by Jen Lynch. All were in favor.

A motion to approve the unrestricted Carnegie Donation of \$10,000 to the Board-Designated Account was made by Pat Gautier, seconded by Courtney Reed-Marsh. All were in favor.

Sharon Bergeron, Library Treasurer, provided to the Board a written letter with an additional Finance Committee request for a motion to eliminate the interlocal contract with Minot at the end of the current contract. Rick Whiting reported that he, Donna Wallace and Sharon Bergeron met with City leaders to try to come to a middle ground regarding the Minot contract, and the fee for non-resident patrons.

In the proposed FY 2027 budget request to the City of Auburn, the Board included the \$23,000 from Minot on the revenue side and a requested additional monies on the expenditures side to increase pay for staff members who currently earn less than their counterparts in the City of Auburn. The Board wanted to do what is best for the Library and were in hopes that the City Manager would put this in his budget request of the City on March 2, 2026. There had previously been discussions with the Mayor and the City around discontinuing the interlocal agreement with Minot as part of an effort to review all interlocal agreements Auburn has. They were pushing the Board to do this, thus removing the \$23,000 from the revenue side of our budget. The City suggested they would cut the request for increased staff pay from our budget request if the Board did not discontinue the contract with Minot. APL would then lose the Minot payment, as well as the monies for the increased wages.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

Lisa Cesare read a statement to the Board asking that the Board not approve the Finance Committee's motion to terminate the yearly contract between APL and Minot.

Donna Wallace then read her statement to the Board. She recapped:

- The City will cut \$37,653 from our budget request submitted on January 13, 2026. However, the Board must raise those funds to offset the reduction. If the

Board chooses not to raise the funds and, as a result, programs and services at APL are reduced or cut, the City will further reduce its share of our budget.

- The City has suggested that APL charge a \$176 fee to non-residents for use of the APL. This would also increase Minot's current contract fee from \$23,000 in FY 2027 to \$54,270. The rate of \$176 would be the highest non-resident fee in the State by \$101 and nearly triple our current fee.
- Going forward, APL would only be allowed to honor Lewiston Library cards that are issued to Lewiston residents or employees of the City or Lewiston School Department. This would put an undue burden on our Lending staff, creating confusion and might alienate patrons and potential donors.

This document was received 5 business days before our scheduled budget meeting with the City. This budget meeting occurred on February 11 here at APL. Present at that meeting were Mayor Jeff Harmon, City Manager Phil Crowell, City Finance Director Kelsey Earle, APL Board President Rick Whiting, APL Board Treasurer Sharon Bergeron, and me.

Also, following this meeting, Mayor Harmon called our Board President and Board Treasurer to offer an alternative. If we end our agreement with Minot, effective June 30, 2026, he will reinstate the \$37,653 we requested in our budget proposal. However, by losing \$23,000 from Minot, for which we will see no immediate budgetary savings, the \$37,653 becomes only a budget increase of \$14,653, which is 1.06% of our initial 3% request of \$35,577. The assumption is that all 350 current cardholders from Minot will come to APL and pay directly out of pocket for a Library card. If the card fee rises to \$176, it is highly unlikely that ANY non-resident cardholder -- Minot or otherwise -- would pay out of pocket for an APL card.

Rick Whiting then reported that he met with the Library's Pro Bono attorney and was advised that it was in the library's best interest to terminate the contract with Minot. Board members questioned why the city would cut a dedicated revenue source.

There was further discussion about this issue that reflected confusion and lots of questions, many opinions, as well as information and explanations from different Board members.

Rick Whiting requested a vote to "terminate the contract with the Town of Minot effective the end date of the contract (June 30, 2026) which will keep APL in 'good graces funding-wise' with the city of Auburn". A motion was made by John Cleveland and seconded by Rick Whiting. (No one seconded the motion until Rick Whiting did so a vote could occur). Rick Whiting then pointed out that Lisa Cesare is ineligible to vote under the APL conflict of interest policy as she is the President of the Minot Select Board and has a vested interest in the outcome. After more discussion, the vote was taken and the motion failed: two (2) board members voted in favor (John Cleveland and Rick Whiting); three (3) were opposed (Nicole Rancourt, Ralph Harder and Pat Gautier); and three (3) abstained (Courtney Reed-Marsh, Amy Heimerl, and Jen Lynch).

6. Fundraising Committee Report

The Marketing Plan shared at the beginning of the meeting constituted the Fundraising update.

7. Governance Committee Report

The Governance Committee met in February with Ralph Harder becoming the interim chair of the committee. They spent much of their time talking about the letter from the city regarding the Minot proposal. They also talked about the Committee assuming responsibility for the oversight for the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. Lisa Cesare reported that she has completed the first draft of the Director's annual survey in Google Forms. She reported that she will turn over this task to another committee member to complete. Ralph Harder suggested and it was agreed 1) that all subcommittees generate meeting minutes and 2) these minutes be included in the Board materials on the both the Board portal and the Board packet before each monthly Board meeting.

8. Director's Report

A full written report was provided. Please reach out with any questions about the written report.

9. Lewiston Public Library Report

Karen Choate, a representative from LPL, attended the meeting to give an update. They are holding a Wild West Murder Mystery Night fundraiser on April 11. Cost is \$90 per couple, and \$50 for an individual. After that wraps up, they will begin working on a Strategic Plan.

The LPL Board meets on the first Thursday of the month at 5:30 PM at LPL on the first floor Couture Room. The list of APL Board members who will attend the LPL Board meetings was revised:

March 5	Nicole Rancourt
April 2	Ralph Harder
May 7	Lisa Cesare
Sept. 3	Pat Gautier
October 1	Amy Heimerl
Nov. 5	Sharon Bergeron
Dec.3	John Cleveland

11. Other Business

None.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM on a motion by Jen Lynch, and seconded by Courtney Reed-Marsh. All were in favor.