

Fort Dodge Public Library Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2026

I. Call to order/Roll Call

President Merrily Dixon called to order the regular meeting of the Fort Dodge Public Library Board of Trustees at 3:31 p.m. on January 26, 2026 at the Fort Dodge Public Library.

The following persons were present: Rita Schmidt (Director), Heidi Ingram (Staff), Merrily Dixon, Sheryl Griffith, Jim Kramer, Deb Kelleher and Brittney Hindman.

II. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Kramer and seconded by Kelleher with a note to move Old Business to the end. Motion carried.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the December meeting minutes was made by Kelleher and seconded by Kramer. Motion carried.

IV. Comments/Questions from the Public

V. Bills and Financial Reports

- a) Kramer moved payments in the amount of \$12,262.70 to be approved in the Gift and Memorial Accounts Griffith seconded. Motion carried.
- b) Kelleher moved payments in the amount of \$4,984.88 be approved in the City Funds Accounts Hindman seconded. Motion carried.

VI. Communications/Board Education

Nothing at this time.

VII. Committee Reports

Friends met 1/26/26. There are three open positions on the board. They sent 171 letters to individuals and 44 to businesses for membership renewals. They have already met 55% of their budgeted revenue goals for the fiscal year. Will re-deposit \$50,00 with Foundation. They have set the book sale dates for the first week of May. Will hold four Brown Bag Briefings in April and October.

VIII. Director's Report

Programming/Services

Children's Services

- Storytimes began January 6–7 and will run through mid-March. Attendance has been strong despite winter weather.
- Anastasia is finalizing plans for her grant-funded literacy program. It will run for seven weeks beginning in April.
- The December Escape Room programs for children ages 10–13 were very well received.
- All Tuesday Adventure programs for this summer have been booked. The series will both open and close with "Bubbles on the Square", and several new performers have been added to the lineup this summer.

Adult Services

- A special drop-in adult craft program is scheduled for Thursday, January 22. Pascale is also planning an additional program for February or March.
- Pascale has been actively booking educational speakers for 2026, with programs currently scheduled for April, May, and October.

General Services

- In response to frequent patron questions about the location of our “new” DVDs, staff created a separate shelf for them. New DVDs are now labeled with an orange sticker and shelved together in the DVD area for approximately six months.
- To ensure adequate staffing for Tuesday Adventure programs, the library will again be closed on Tuesday evenings during June and July.

Budget

- The library’s budget presentation to City Council is scheduled for Monday, January 26. A copy of the slides is included in this month’s packet.
- Due to a projected reduction of \$50,000–\$100,000 in city tax revenues for FY27, General Fund departments were asked to identify potential budget reductions. Rita proposed the following adjustments if needed (**total potential savings \$9,700**):
 - Reduce line 6259 Maintenance Contracts by \$3,000 (Foundation to fund ScanEZ workstation agreement and microfilm reader/printer maintenance)
 - Reduce line 6268 Internet Services by \$700 (full cost must be budgeted prior to applying the E-rate discount)
 - Reduce line 6281 Gas/Electricity Combined by \$5,000 (based on a two-year average of approximately \$50,000, while still planning for potential rate increases)
 - Reduce line 6321 Operating Supplies by \$1,000.

Remodel/Renovation

- Rita will be working with Assistant City Manager Ryan Maehl on the upcoming renovation/remodel. Given his leadership role in the City Hall remodel, his experience will be valuable as we move forward. We are currently compiling a list of architects with library-specific experience in preparation for issuing an RFP. Ryan’s assistance will be especially helpful when items are presented to City Council.

Personnel

- The City has launched a Leadership Development Series for department heads and supervisors. Anastasia, Pascale, and Rita will participate in various sessions over the coming year, along with assigned leadership readings and discussion groups.
- Fort Dodge native Joey Coleman, Chief Experience Composer at Design Symphony, will present a customer service workshop at ICCC on Friday, February 27. Rita plans to send our staff so the library will be closed to the public until 1:30 p.m. that day.

State Library

- The library’s accreditation report was submitted to the State Library on January 5th.

Miscellaneous

- Jo Berkland approached Rita about using our large meeting room for a free weekly Tai Chi class for seniors offered through Elderbridge, beginning in February and running through May. Although our current meeting room policy limits reservations to twice per month, Rita approved the request due to the program’s community benefit and our facility’s accessibility. This request has prompted director to consider revising the meeting room policy to better accommodate similar recurring community programs in the future.

IX. Old Business

- a) It was moved by Kramer and seconded by Kelleher to go into a closed session to discuss Director Rita Schmidt's annual review with her. Motion carried. Close session began at 3:56 p.m.
- b) It was moved by Kramer and seconded by Griffith to approve the Library Director's annual review. Motion carried.
- c) Closed session ended at 4:07.

X. New Business

- a) Library Director job description-revision matches city format, codes/grades and pay scale. HR director has reviewed. Moved by Kelleher and seconded by Griffith to approve. Motion carried.
- b) Financial responsibilities policy-revision was just for the addition of job title changes. Moved by Griffith and seconded by Hindman to approve. Motion carried.
- c) Personnel Policy-revision for the removal of reference to collective bargaining. Moved by Kramer and seconded by Griffith to approve. Motion carried.

XI. Adjournment

Kramer moved a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Hindman. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.