

Fort Dodge Public Library Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2025

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 3:35 p.m. on October 27, 2025 at the Fort Dodge Public Library.

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

II. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Kelleher and seconded by Griffith. Motion carried.

III. Approval of Minutes

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

IV. Comments/Questions from the Public

V. Bills and Financial Reports

- a) Kelleher moved payments in the amount of \$2,741.50 to be approved in the Gift and Memorial Accounts Griffith seconded. Motion carried.
- b) Griffith moved payments in the amount of \$5,272.15 be approved in the City Funds Accounts Hindman seconded. Motion carried.

VI. Communications/Board Education

Griffith attended a zoom training that discussed responsibilities of trustees. Encouraged members to be in contact with legislators and community people. Ila.iowalobby.com is a good resource. It's important to protect access and intellectual freedom. Iowa is the 2nd most state for having anti library legislation.

Dixon attended an online training on Iowa open records and said it was very informative. She also attended Strategic Planning Essentials: Planning to Impact. Griffith, Hindman and Kelleher will watch online as well.

Hindman reported on the meeting in Badger. Maryann Mori was in attendance. Emphasis on a people focused library, functional and flexible spaces with moveable furniture and bookshelves.

VII. Committee Reports

Nothing to report at this time. Foundation meets 10/28 and Friends meet in November.

VIII. Director's Report

Programming/Services

- The visit of 100 first graders from Duncombe Elementary on Friday morning, October 3, went very well despite a late start.
- Outreach activities are now being planned for Duncombe Elementary. Anastasia will be focusing on how to use the library and other related skills.
- A storytime/activity session for a small group of children from Childcare Discovery Center is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12.
- Fall storytimes will wrap up on Wednesday, November 12.

Adult Services

- In addition to our regular adult activities, Pascale has hosted several different programs this month and is starting to plan some craft activities for this winter.
- The Brown Bag Briefings have been going well this month, with attendance averaging in the 30s.

General Services

- A new Adventure Pass to Blue Zoo Aquarium Des Moines will be available soon. The pass will provide free admission for two adults and two children.
- We are also considering adding a pass for Brenton Skating Plaza, which would cover admission for two adults and two children and include free skate rentals.

Budget

- Budget season has begun. Our proposed budget is due to the City Manager on Friday, December 19. An initial draft will be ready for board review and approval next month, with the opportunity to make changes and reapprove in December if needed.
- Our budget presentation to the city council is scheduled for Monday, January 26 during the 5:00 p.m. workshop.
- Access Systems was unable to reduce the color overage rate to \$.0036 (will be \$.0039) as quoted in our new lease. To compensate, they lowered our monthly lease rate from \$302.28 to \$299.06.

Technology

- The server currently hosting our TBS computer and print management software is at least 13 years old, and recent software updates have caused compatibility issues. We will need to purchase a new server to maintain reliable access to this software. Included in this month's board packet is a quote from Dell for a new one. The purchase will be funded through Hillesland monies.
- Our new photocopiers are scheduled for delivery and installation on Monday, October 27.

Personnel

- Our new Library Assistant II, Tami Tendal, started on Monday, September 29. She brings valuable experience in public service within a government setting, is very personable, and catching on quickly to all things library.
- The Public Library Association Conference will be held in Minneapolis in early April 2026. While in-person attendance would be ideal, their virtual option offers an affordable way for Anastasia, Pascale, and Rita to participate without significant scheduling disruptions.
- Rita's annual review will need to be completed by the end of December or January.

State Library

- The FY25 annual report for the State Library has been completed and submitted. A copy is included in this month's packet.
- Rita completed a revised draft of our Strategic Plan and shared it with Maryann Mori for feedback. A copy of the draft is also included in this packet. Please review it and share any suggested edits or changes so they can be incorporated into the final version for approval at next month's board meeting.
- Baker & Taylor, the company that provides the software used for several State Library reports (including the accreditation report), will cease operations by the end of this year due to financial challenges. The State Library hasn't selected a replacement system yet, so the process for submitting our report in February remains uncertain.

Miscellaneous

- The Fall Citywide Staff Meeting presentation went well, and a copy is included in this month's packet. Rita will also incorporate it into our January budget presentation to the city council.
- We received a thoughtful thank-you note from the director of Badger Public Library for our attendance at the recent countywide trustee training.

- Badger Public Library will be switching from its current ILS to TLC and joining our consortium. I have agreed to assist them with configuring circulation rules, patron types, and other system settings.

Board Education Opportunity

Catch an end-of-year webinar for boards on **November 20th** (6:00-7:30 PM) titled **“The Top 5: Self-Evaluation of the Library Board’s Core Functions.”**

The Iowa Library Trustee’s Handbook explains the five primary roles for library boards; this webinar asks the question “how are we doing?” District Consultants Becky Heil and Bonnie McKewon will suggest to evaluate your board’s level of success with each of the following:

1. Hiring and evaluating the library director
2. Approving and monitoring the budget
3. Developing and adopting policies
4. Planning for the library’s future
5. Evaluating service and advocating for advancement

We’ll share our ideas for self-reflection and give participants a chance to share their own success stories. How do you gauge successful efforts? Join us to share your trustee experience and your board engagement.

IX. Old Business

- a) Space Audit-nothing at this time.
- b) Strategic Plan Discussion-Rita has revised and removed things we’ve already accomplished. Some things were added and asked Maryann to review. She has given her feedback and will revise accordingly. Will evaluate quarterly. Focus on teen programming with an advisory board. Will review the plan more next month and implement in January.

X. New Business

- a) Quote for new server was presented as our current one is outdated and cannot support our programs. The quote is from Dell for \$10,074.27 and will be paid from Hillesland monies. Kelleher made the motion to purchase the new server and Griffith seconded. Motion carried.
- b) Dixon will be in contact with other board members to start on annual review of the director.

XI. Adjournment

Griffith moved a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Kelleher. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.