

MINUTES OF THE



BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR BOARD MEETING November 19, 2025

Paul Travis called the regular board meeting of the Bay County Library System Board of Trustees to order at 5:33 p.m. on November 19, 2025. The meeting was held in the Kantzler Community Room at the Alice and Jack Wirt Public Library, 500 Center Avenue, Bay City

Roll Call: Sherry Bledsoe, Mary Herr, Charlie Parke, Doug Stone and Paul Travis

Board Members Absent:

Others Present: Kevin Ayala, Jolene Faber and Kirsten Wellnitz

STAFF GREETING: Amy Churchill: Managing Librarian – Wirt Branch

Amy is the new Managing Librarian at our Wirt Branch but has been a degree librarian for over 22 years. She started her library career at the Public Libraries of Saginaw and worked as a branch manager at the Zaul Library for the majority of her time there. In 2020 she became the Director of the Lapeer District Library and in 2024 had the opportunity to be closer to home and joined BCLS as the Managing Librarian at our Sage Branch. This fall, she moved over to Wirt as Managing Librarian as Kirsten Wellnitz became Director. Amy believes BCLS is one of the best in the business offering extensive services and programming to its patrons. As a manager, her focus is on customer service and team building with staff. Amy is married with two grown sons. She enjoys spending time with her family, cooking and the outdoors.

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS: No additional agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No Public Comment.

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – October 22, 2025 (**Approve**)

Motion by C. Parke, seconded by S. Bledsoe to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2025 regular board meeting. Motion Carried.

BILLS PAYABLE

K. Ayala reported that the bills payable for the month of October were routine. M. Herr asked about the charge from Michigan Library Association - Think Space. K. Ayala explained that was a conference that K. Wellnitz attended down in Lansing. M. Herr also asked about the charge from Pinny Mini Farm and K. Ayala informed her that was for a program at our Pinconning Branch where they had alpacas come to the branch for the Llma-versary party. It is called the Pinny Mini Farm because they are based out of Pinconning. M. Herr asked what Samsa was for hosting fees and K. Ayala reminded the board that is for our website and is a monthly fee; Samsa is based out of Saginaw.

K. Ayala also pointed out that we are starting to put down payments for our Summer Reading Program performers to hold our spot for next year's programs.

Motion by M. Herr, seconded by C. Parke, to approve the bills payable for the month of October 2025. Motion carried.

PENAL FINE REPORT

K. Ayala reported October penal fines came in at \$16,753.69 slightly under budget but bringing our ten-month total to \$189,938.21 which is still above budget.

FINANCIAL REPORT

K. Ayala reported revenue for October was \$45,399.61 (does not include revenue from Penal Fines) with the majority coming from the Universal Service Fund and VEBA Trust Reimbursement. We are right on track for most revenue items and ahead of budget on some. So far for the year, revenue has been favorable.

On the expense side, K. Ayala commented that we have taken care of the unexpected expenses that have come up and for all other normal general expenses we are trending at or below budget.

Looking at the comparison from October 2024 to October 2025, the revenues are almost the same and a good sign revenues are coming in where we anticipated them to be. The Personnel total has increased which is to be expected with the increase in wages. The Supplies total was nearly identical with only a \$73.52 difference. The bulk of the difference in expenses came from the Second Floor Refresh that was done this year.

S. Bledsoe expressed she has thought about the boiler situation and it being a big unexpected expense. She is concerned about the boilers at the other branch locations and believes that we should hire someone to inspect the remaining boilers at those locations. K. Ayala reiterated that the reason we had to replace the boilers at Wirt was because they could no longer get replacement parts to fix the boilers; if we could have gotten replacement parts it wouldn't have been an issue. K. Ayala also explained we are required by law to get the boilers annually inspected. K. Ayala will get with our Maintenance Supervisor and see if they can get something lined up to get the boilers looked at for potential failures by a professional.

Motion by C. Parke, seconded by S. Bledsoe, to receive the October 2025 Penal Fine and Financial Reports as presented. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT – Kirsten Wellnitz

We are very excited to have a new resource at the library. Sensory Kits have been implanted at all the branches for children, teens and adults. The kits are filled with a variety of items to help contribute to a calming experience for those who may have sensory processing challenges.

The third annual Local Author Expo took place on November 1st with around 20 authors from the Great Lakes Bay Region. Books were available for sale and it was a great way for authors to get together and network with each other.

Linda Smith, our Teen Coordinator, has started a new bi-monthly teen box titled Teen Pop Culture. This box will hopefully draw in non-readers in grades 6-12 as this age group is getting harder and harder to get into the library.

Our most favorite time of the year, the reindeer visits, will be taking place in December at all the branches. Each branch will have live reindeer outdoors for patrons to enjoy as well as crafts and activities inside the library.

Motion by M. Herr, seconded by S. Bledsoe, to receive the Administration Report as presented. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE – No Correspondence.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee

2026 Budget – M. Herr stated the Finance Committee met and went over the budget for 2026.

~~D. Stone expressed that the library doesn't have a budget, they have a spending plan and what was presented is last year's budget. D. Stone asked what the library is trying to achieve with next year's budget versus this year's budget. M. Herr stated we are providing books and other materials and services to the public. D. Stone expressed that the board doesn't know what goes into the budget and the library needs to spend less.~~

~~S. Bledsoe asked if the benchmarks the board requested were taken into account in the budget to which D. Stone stated he never received the benchmarks. J. Faber proceeded to provide D. Stone with copies of the benchmarks as well as a copy of the email which included him when they were sent via email.~~

~~D. Stone stated he hates to draw a line in the sand but he is seeing and hearing that there is going to be no more millage renewals until we can prove we need one. C. Parke responded he doesn't think millage renewals are ever automatic to which D. Stone stated that they won't even be asked for because we can't prove that we need one. C. Parke responded that we can.~~

~~S. Bledsoe referred back to the benchmarks which she stated some categories she thought we were strong but it would be helpful to have a narrative report provided for the board by a professional.~~

~~P. Travis suggested that the budget be discussed and that some of the other issues could be brought up in upcoming meetings to which S. Bledsoe agreed.~~

~~K. Ayala proceeded to attempt to cover the budget for 2026 and pointed out that with the library, we don't tear the budget apart from year to year and rebuild it. We have the same staffing, we do the same programming, we purchase books, and we maintain the building grounds. D. Stone stated this is just a rehash of last year. K. Ayala stated it's a continuation of what we've been doing over the last decades.~~

~~D. Stone stated that he believes before any money is spent, they need to approve those items for purchase. Several board members disagreed and responded that is absurd. D. Stone stated the bills are thrown in front of them and asked if they are liked after the money has already been spent which is bullshit.~~

~~K. Ayala attempted again to discuss the 2026 budget informing the board of increases to revenue. He stated there will be a 2.7% increase in Property Tax Revenue with most of the other revenue line items staying the same or slightly increase. K. Ayala explained he~~

~~likes to take a more conservative approach when budgeting revenue and monitor it throughout the year. All the spending that is done is to benefit the public.~~

~~The board continued to discuss issues D. Stone had with the budget. He stated the board is nothing but a rubber stamp and a joke. He proceeded to talk about how the bylaws were changed to take any control the board had out of the policy.~~

~~P. Travis expressed it seemed like the board was stuck and he appreciated all the board's comments but one of the things they came for was to approve the 2026 budget and there should be a motion to approve it so it could be voted on.~~

~~C. Parke asked if the budget was a living document and K. Ayala stated it was. The budget is amendable if need be. (- Above redacted for 1/28/26 packet)~~

~~The 2026 budget was discussed by the board.~~

~~P. Travis asked for a motion to approve the budget. (-Above redacted for 2/25/26 packet)~~

The Finance Committee reviewed the proposed 2026 budget and presented it to the board for discussion. The budget reflects a continuation of the library's core operations, including staffing, programming, materials acquisition, and facility maintenance, rather than a complete rebuild from year to year.

Board members discussed the goals of the budget and how it supports the library's mission of providing books, materials, and services to the public. Questions were raised about benchmarks previously requested by the board, and it was clarified that those benchmarks had been provided. Some members noted that while the library performs well in several benchmark areas, a professional narrative report could be helpful to give additional context.

Revenue projections were reviewed, including an anticipated 2.7% increase in property tax revenue, with other revenue sources expected to remain stable or see modest increases. The assistant director explained that revenue estimates are intentionally conservative and monitored throughout the year, and that the budget is a living document that can be amended as needed.

The board discussed keeping the focus on approving the 2026 budget, with the understanding that broader policy and operational questions could be addressed in future meetings. It was confirmed that the budget is flexible and can be adjusted if circumstances change.

Motion by M. Herr, seconded by C. Parke, to accept the 2026 Budget as presented.

In Favor: Sherry Bledsoe, Mary Herr, Charlie Parke, Paul Travis

Against: D. Stone

Motion Passed

B. Personnel Committee - No meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Rules of Conduct Policy –

Board member M. Herr was contacted by a patron that was very upset that one of the library staff asked that his child that was not wearing shoes in the children's area put their shoes back on per our policy which states footwear must be worn. The previous policy stated patrons could not be barefoot which left it open for interpretation that you could wear socks. It was revised in September 2025 to state patrons must be fully dressed, including shoes at all times while on library property.

The board discussed the policy and it was concluded that the revised policy will stay in place and that shoes are required.

NEW BUSINESS

Delivery Van Purchase –

K. Ayala proposed the purchase of a new delivery van for deliveries between the branches. They would like to purchase a van that has AWD as the current van is only front wheel drive.

Motion by C. Parke, seconded by D. Stone, to approve the purchase of the new AWD delivery van from McDonald Ford as recommended by K. Ayala. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

K. Wellnitz wanted to reiterate the importance of written communication with the board and emails are the expected form of communication; be sure to be checking your email regularly. Also a reminder on the Open Meeting Act that if you have three board members that meet outside of a board meeting and talk about library business, it is considered a quorum and violates the Open Meetings Act. K. Wellnitz also reminded the board what they are responsible for with their three main duties being: Approve the annual budget and give the library the responsibility and trust to spend the money that was approved throughout the year, hire and fire the director, and approve policies. There is board training that can be provided if the board is interested

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by M. Herr, seconded by D. Stone, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Motion carried.

Mary Herr
Secretary/Treasurer

Jolene Faber,
Recording Secretary