

Library Board Meeting Minutes

TUESDAY, October 21, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

WALT BRANCH LIBRARY

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Present: Jackie Ostrowicki, Lisa Hale, Joe Shaw, Morgan Gerteisen, Marilyn Moore, Nichole Bogen. Absent: Patty Beutler

City of Lincoln Staff present: Ryan Wieber, Jennifer Hatfield, Amanda Calloway, Wyatt Packard, Vicki Clarke.

CALL TO ORDER AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF POSTING OF OPEN MEETINGS ACT

President Ostrowicki called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. and announced that the Open Meetings Law was posted and available for review.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA*

Ostrowicki noted that the Agenda was posted according to the Open Meetings Act of the State of Nebraska. Gerteisen moved approval of the Agenda. Shaw seconded. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Gerteisen, Hale, Ostrowicki, Dunlap, Shaw, Moore – AYE. Motion passed 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

No Public Comment.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2025 MEETING MINUTES*

Hale moved approval of the September 16, 2025 meeting minutes. Gerteisen seconded. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Hale, Ostrowicki, Dunlap, Shaw, Moore, Gerteisen – AYE. Motion passed 6-0.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee on Administration

Director Wieber reported that the Committee met on October 3, 2025 and discussed Central Library funding status, potential Library partners, and the idea for an Advocacy committee.

Committee on Buildings and Grounds

Wieber reported that the Committee met on October 2, 2025 and heard a review of current library projects from Dan Miller, Facilities Superintendent, about some potential art at one of the branches, and the parking situation for the new bookmobiles. They also received a brief review of the Central Library project.

Committee on Finance

*Approval of Monthly Recap of Expenditures for August 2025**

Treasurer Dunlap reported that the total Operational Expenditures for August was \$904,878.98. The total Expenditures from Other Funds was \$200,663.50, for Total Expenditures of \$1,105,542.48. Shaw moved

approval of the Expenditures. Moore seconded. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ostrowicki, Dunlap, Shaw, Moore, Gerteisen, Hale – AYE. Motion passed 6-0.

*Approval of Monthly Recap of Expenditures for September 2025**

Treasurer Dunlap reported that the total Operational Expenditures for August was \$949,330.91. The total Expenditures from Other Funds was \$5,333,800.34, for Total Expenditures of \$6,283,131.25. Gerteisen moved approval of the Expenditures. Hale seconded. Discussion: Wieber noted that the large increase was due to the \$5.2 million from Capital Improvements for the purchase of the new building. There was no further discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ostrowicki, Dunlap, Shaw, Moore, Gerteisen, Hale – AYE. Motion passed 6-0.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries

Tiffani Hill shared that the Foundation has raised \$7.45 million. They just received a \$100,000 donation last week. There is \$5.25 million out in requests. They'll find out about the \$250,000 request at the end of the month, and the \$5 million request at the end of December. The Foundation has reached out to five different foundations, and there's more to come.

The NLHA Spelling Bee occurred two weeks ago. Tickets were sold out. The Foundation received over \$500 in raffle tickets. There was great attendance and excitement. Hill shared that they're nearing the finish line on the new website, much of which is dedicated to the new Central Library project. The Foundation has reached out to Branch Managers to get ideas on what projects they'd like to have spotlighted. The Foundation Board meeting is this week, the first Capital Campaign committee met, with Carl Eskridge as Chair.

One Book One Lincoln

Gerteisen shared that a reception will be held for One Book One Lincoln winning author, Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai at the Asian Community and Cultural Center on Sunday evening. The author will give remarks, and possibly a short reading. There will be music and food, invitations will be sent tomorrow to the Board and other stakeholders. Her main talk will be held Monday night, November 3 at the Lincoln High School auditorium at 7:00 p.m. She will also give a presentation to Lincoln High students on Monday morning. She's set to arrive on October 31st and will stay all weekend.

NEW BUSINESS

Board Observations

Ostrowicki shared a handout about Banned Books Week from the American Library Association (ALA). Seventy two percent of the past year's attempts to ban books have come from organizations, not individuals. Discussion followed. Wieber shared Lincoln City Libraries' process for working with book challenges. Walt Branch Library Manager, Wyatt Packard shared more details from ALA on the number of reported challenges, which have decreased slightly in the past year. He noted that most challenges go unreported. He shared that some states have enacted laws regulating what school libraries can purchase, often with vague and difficult to follow guidelines for library staff which can encourage self-censorship. Shaw shared that a local store, Ray Gun, offers many t-shirts and other products with pro-library messages. Bogen shared that she's recently read *The Fire We Carry: The Generations-Long Fight for Justice on Native Land*. By Rebecca Nagel who will be speaking at the Sheldon Museum of Art on October 28.

Approval of Contract for Services with Project Control, not to exceed \$570,600*

Wieber introduced Caleb Swanson from Project Control who has been working with the Central Library project. He noted that Project Control has a contract with the City for construction management services and invited Swanson to give a summary of what they'll be doing for the project.

Swanson noted that he's been working with this project since the Pershing site was the goal. Project Control's role is Owner's representative, to represent the Libraries and the Library Board. A number of different partners will be involved, with competing interests. Their goal is to make sure the libraries interests are at the forefront. They'll be assisting with procurement, working with design consultants, schedule and budget coordination among other tasks. He shared his excitement, and that Eiseley is his family's neighborhood branch. He'll be working with colleague Anthony Fitzgerald from Project Control, to create this transformative project. They're happy to continue reporting to the Board. Discussion followed.

Hale expressed appreciation that Project Control will be the Library's eyes and ears during the complex process. Shaw noted that he'd experienced a large renovation without an agent, and was grateful to have the assistance in this situation. Wieber noted that he's been extremely impressed with Project Control's work that's gone on thus far, and that there is a lot of excitement among the various entities because they realize how special this project is.

Hale moved approval of the contract. Shaw seconded. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Dunlap, Shaw, Moore, Gerteisen, Hale, Ostrowicki – AYE. Motion passed 6-0.

Approval of Contract for Library Van Delivery Service with Mail Management Services, not to exceed \$88,000*

Wieber informed the Board that this is the final year for renewals with this company. We've been pleased with their service providing inter-office delivery six days a week. There is no increase in price from last year. Hale motioned approval. Moore seconded. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Shaw, Moore, Gerteisen, Hale, Ostrowicki, Dunlap – AYE. Motion passed 6-0.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ostrowicki shared some poetry and book excerpts to remind the board of the importance of libraries and literature to readers. She gave some history on Banned Books Week. It's also the ALA National Friends of Libraries week – thank you to Tiffani! She gave some history about the Read to a Dog (and Cat) program.

Ostrowicki reminded board members to complete the online survey she emailed out. She also discussed the Library Board Field Trip scheduled on November 15 to tour the Columbus Library and have a conversation with the Columbus Library Director. Folks can park at Gere and carpool.

Ostrowicki discussed the newly formed Advocacy Committee, made up of current and past Library and Foundation Board members along with others to advise and advocate for the library. They will meet monthly during the building process.

ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Assistant Director Glaesemann shared staffing updates. There have been two Library Service Associate rehires, one at Gere, the other at Bennett Martin. A contingent offer has been made to a replacement for HR

Office Specialist Gewecke, and interviews have been completed for the Library Desk Sub position, the new position that's a stepping stone from the Library Aide position to the Library Service Associate position, and those new Desk Subs will be starting those folks on their new tasks shortly.

Glaesemann shared photos of the new bookmobiles with the awning, wheelchair lift, and wraps. Supply chain issues have moved the arrival date of the two vehicles, they're now expected around Thanksgiving. As the garage at Eiseley isn't quite large enough to hold both, the second bookmobile will be parked at Gere in a place highly visible to passersby for the present, but indoor storage is still being sought out.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Wieber introduced Branch Manager, Wyatt Packard.

Walt Branch Manager Report:

Packard introduced Librarian, Vicki Clarke and Practicum Student, Holly from UNL. He shared some updates to Walt, including transforming the Computer Lab into the Collaborative Learning Lab, a flex space for programs, studying, board games and other activities. Vicki has led the effort to procure learning resources in the room for students. The entryway has been re-carpeted, and is seeing lots of use. Walt now has computers in all study rooms that include webcam monitors so folks can participate in meetings and interviews, which is a wonderful accessibility tool. He shared information about multiple successful programs at Walt for kids, adults and teens including the *Circle of Friends* program, *D&D Dice Guild*, and LEGO® sets folks can check out and build in the Learning Lab. Packard shared that Walt's circulation is up 7-8%, partially attributable to the road construction surrounding Gere. He shared that their overflowing storytimes are being addressed with storytellers coming from Bennett Martin to lead additional sessions.

Director Wieber shared the news that Omaha Public Library is ending their collaborative agreement with Lincoln City Libraries, effective December 31st. The high cost of digital materials is part of the concern, they are acting to keep limited digital items available for their own patrons.

Organizational Structure Overview

Per President Ostrowicki's request, Wieber reviewed the current organizational structure of the Library to give the Board a clearer picture.

Currently, LCL has 135 employees (+10-15 temps in the summer.) That translates to 108 Full Time Employees (FTE's). 1.5 of the FTE's are non-tax funded (the Heritage Room is funded by the Foundation, and Polley by its own endowment). The Library Director reports to the Board and Mayor. Reporting to the Director are: Buildings & Grounds Superintendent, Virtual Services Manager, Assistant Director, Accountant and Administrative Aide. Glaesemann supervises the Branch Managers and Coordinators. All positions are shown in the [City Budget](#). Please note, back in 2002 when Walt and Eiseley branches opened, we had an increased number of FTEs. Then in 2006-2007 it was reduced to 108 FTEs, and hasn't increased since.

Discussion: Shaw: Will more staff be needed at the new Central Library? Wieber posited that some efficiencies will be possible, but overall, more Public Service positions will be needed. The new rooftop auditorium alone will generate a lot of activity, and coordination of that space and services will be necessary. There's time to plan, but as an example, when Omaha Public Library opened their new facility, they had sixteen new positions. They planned for that increase over multiple years.

Hale: Do we have benchmarks for the number of staff hours needed to provide programming? Wieber: This is a time to look at peer libraries, and we already know that despite LCL staff managing a huge amount of programming services, our staffing numbers are quite low by comparison, which impacts all locations, not just downtown.

Wieber returned to the organizational structure, noting Library Aides (minimum wage), Library Service Associates (paraprofessionals), Library Service Supervisors (supervising the LSAs), Librarians (professionals). We're low on librarians on staff by comparison. Managers and Coordinators supervise the Librarians and Service Supervisors. Eighty-eight percent of our staff directly provide public services. Lincoln City Libraries is short in some areas, and have been for a number of years.

Peer library information from annual IMLS statistical reports shows us near the bottom in the number of professionally trained librarians we have on staff (e.g. 22 at LCL compared to 58 in Madison, WI.) Staff expenditures (payroll/benefits): At Howard County Maryland, there is \$21 million spent on staff vs. LCL at approximately \$9 million. LCL's operating expenses are quite low as well.

Biggest staffing needs: Facilities, additional Public Service staff at quadrant branches, Marketing (which is currently a department of one,) and the new Central Library. President Ostrowicki noted that while we're getting a lot of great work from relatively few people, the comparisons are a little depressing. She expressed excitement about making the situation better.

Central Library Update

Results for Construction Manager at Risk RFP are in. Next steps will be taken in November. The Coffee Shop RFP choice will be announced soon. All will go to the City Council for approval. Wieber reviewed the process on finding partners - KZUM is a strong contender, and the UNL is also in the mix, looking at a collaboration with our Local History room.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tim Gebhart, 6226 Mapleview Dr., gave public comment. He greatly appreciates the diversity of services offered and the knowledgeable and experienced Board members. He and his wife like Walt branch so much, they chose a home within walking distance when they moved to town.

Adjourned 7:44 p.m.