

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of a Meeting of the Library Board of Directors
August 19, 2025.

The hybrid meeting of the Library Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at the Advanced Learning Library with the following present in person: Ms. Sarah Balderas, Ms. Lauren Hirsh, Mr. Kurt Oswald, Mr. Chuck Schmidt, Ms. Robin Templin, Ms. Susie Ternes, and Mr. Jonathan Winkler. The following attended virtually: Ms. Karyn Shorter.

Staff Presentation

Brad Richards and Misti Bruckner of the Public Policy and Management Center at WSU gave a presentation on Wichita Collective Impact, a community initiative that focuses on improving early childhood literacy in the 67214 ZIP code area through collaboration and resource mobilization to improve kindergarten and third-grade reading levels. Guiding principles include building trust, focusing on the community, being informed by data, committing to dignity, promoting positivity, and aligning for impact. The collective impact framework emphasizes the importance of organizations working together towards a common goal. Partnerships with core local organizations like the Greater Wichita YMCA, Wichita Public Schools, and the PPMC provide the backbone for these unified efforts.

Mr. Richards discussed the importance of kindergarten readiness, highlighting barriers such as lower access to resources, non-English speaking households, and parents' low levels of educational attainment. Students who do not read at grade level by third grade struggle to transition from learning to read to reading to learn, and thus become four times less likely to graduate from high school. Long-term implications of low literacy include lower employment rates and worse health outcomes later in life.

Summer programs such as the STAR Program at Spaght Elementary are helping to engage families and the community in improving student literacy. Though data on academic performance has not yet been collected, qualitative feedback from parents and teachers notes that students in the STAR Program are more confident about reading and are reading more at home.

In addition to STAR, collaboration with the Wichita Collective Impact and the Library has historically happened through events such as back-to-school literacy celebrations and the United Way's Champions for Literacy book giveaway. These have engaged up to 300 students, have proven invaluable to the community, and demonstrate the value of continuous support and communication with the library in aligning efforts to promote literacy in the community.

Call to Order

Lauren Hirsh called the meeting to order at 12:36 p.m., a quorum being present.

Approval of the Agenda

Jonathan Winkler moved (Oswald) to approve the agenda as published. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the regular meeting held on July 15, 2025 were presented. Robin Templin moved (Shorter) to approve the minutes as included in board packets. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Director Nix reported that the 2026 City budget has balanced. She also provided updated documents explaining how activity descriptions are used to show where help from support organizations is directed and to explain more clearly how performance measures gauge the effectiveness of services provided through six core activities. The library is tasked with a \$35,000 reduction for the coming fiscal year.

Finance Committee Report

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Chuck Schmidt moved to approve the July 2025 finance report and supplemental bills in the following amounts: General Fund bills of \$1,135,449.11; Grant Fund bills of \$31,315.08; and Gift bills of \$61,883.36, for a total of \$1,228,647.55. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Operations Committee Report

Jonathan Winkler reported that the package of proposed updates to the meeting room policies would eliminate rental fees across all Library facilities and would also prioritize use for library-aligned organizations and nonprofits. These changes aim to increase community engagement, reduce administrative costs, and remove financial barriers to use of the spaces.

On behalf of the Operations Committee, Jonathan Winkler moved (Ternes) to approve the changes to policies REF-009, REF-009.1 and REF-009.2 as provided by staff. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Sarah Balderas left.

Planning & Facilities Committee Report

Director Nix reported that a need exists for a planning document to secure future funding for library operations. Discussions are also to be held to explore the possibility of a new facility in District 2, which has not had a library presence since Dillons declined to renew the lease for the former Comotara branch inside the supermarket at 21st and Rock. Councilmember Becky Tuttle has expressed an interest in progressing this concept in the remaining two years of her term.

Public Affairs Committee Report

Kurt Oswald reminded board members to continue reaching out to their City Council members to impress upon them the importance of the library.

The grand reopening for the Alford Branch will take place on August 23rd, beginning with a ribbon cutting at 9:45 a.m. At the City Council meeting scheduled for September 12, Library Success Stories will be presented. Board members are encouraged to follow and support the library on all social media platforms.

Special Committee Reports

Friends of the Library – Leslie Meiring reported that the Friends of the Library will be at the Alford branch reopening with T-shirts and lawn signs available to the public for purchase.

Library Foundation - Kourtney Carson reported the Foundation is developing a fundraising campaign focusing on the book bus and its programs.

Wichita Genealogical Society (WGS) – Margaret Cramer provided an update on the Memory Lab, which will offer equipment for digitizing various physical formats. Plans are to have some of this equipment operational by October.

Director of Libraries Report

Director Nix reported that the punch list for Rockwell is being drawn up this week. The library is extending an invitation to Senator Moran to visit library facilities while he is in Wichita during the legislative recess.

All board members are encouraged to attend the Alford reopening. September is National Library Card Signup Month, and the library plans activities that will focus on getting more community members to sign up for library cards.

Planning is underway for celebrations of the 150th birthday of the library as well as the 250th birthday of the country.

Announcements

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be September 16, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaime Nix