

Great Falls Public Library
Board of Trustees Board Meeting
Tuesday, July 22, 2025
Great Falls Public Library – Montana Room (3rd Floor of the Library)
(Virtual access to meeting was available upon request)
(zoom recording of meeting is available on the Great Falls Public Library YouTube page)
4:30 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Anne Bulger, Ms. Sam DeForest, Ms. Jessica Crist, Ms. Noelle Johnson, Ms. Whitney Olson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Shannon Wilson – City of Great Falls Commissioner (zoom)

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Joe Briggs – Cascade County Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT: Tina Cowhick, Heather Hayes, Aaron Kueffler, Sara Linder-Parkinson, Susie McIntyre, James Simmons

GUESTS PRESENT: Beth Cummings – Resident of Great Falls, David Dennis – City of Great Falls Attorney, DJCTRL (zoom), Rae Grulkowski – Resident of Cascade County, Kathy Hansen – Resident of Cascade County, Matt Hudson – Montana Free Press, Richard Irving – Resident of Great Falls, Sara Kegel (zoom), Melissa Kinzler – City of Great Falls Finance Director, Brianne Laurin – Great Falls Public Library Foundation Executive Director, Ginny Roglizno – Resident of Cascade County, Corey Sloan – Pathfinder Library Federation, Ron Staley – Resident of Great Falls, Colleen Stewart – Resident of Cascade County, Sharon Thompson – Resident of Great Falls, Jennifer Wagner (zoom), Emily Wolfram – Resident of Great Falls

Ms. Olson called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

I. AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Olson asked for an agenda approval.

Ms. Bulger requested that the agenda be amended to move the Director's report to after staff introductions. She also requested that New Business be moved before Old business.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the agenda as amended. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He was glad to see an attorney attend the meeting. He suggested that the board redo the agenda, or adjourn the meeting until next week. He cited that the resignation of the director is all over the media, but the agenda only references a proposed director transition plan, not an item to accept the resignation of the director. He stated that it was his understanding that resignations consist of two things; 1) a written letter or communication from the director with conditions; 2) the board accepting it. He added that he cannot imagine how the board will continue with the agenda without dealing with that first.

Ms. Johnson recommended that the old business item should be tabled until after the board talks with Human Resources. She added that it is unprecedented increasing an employees' compensation after a formal resignation.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any more comments. Upon hearing none, she called for a vote. Motion passed 4-1. (Voting YES: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Olson. Voting NO: Ms. Johnson)

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Tina Cowhick and Heather Hayes introduced themselves and talked about their positions at the library.

At this time, the board jumped to the Director's report.

Ms. McIntyre stated that Mr. Dennis was present to discuss the memorandum he created that is in the board packet.

Mr. Dennis gave a brief overview of the current legislature's bill focused on tax relief for homeowners and some businesses; and how that affects the Library's mill levies. Mr. Dennis added that the Library's adjustment to mills only occurs in FY26; and that the reduction in taxable value will not go into effect until FY27.

Ms. Kinzler added that after the taxable value in August is acquired, we will see what the value is and raise the number of mills that will get the library to the assessed value in FY25. That number of mills will be used going forward. The mill values should be available by the first week of August. The second meeting in August is when the new value is set. The City Commission will then have a resolution making this change.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He asked that the board ask the chairperson to step down. He stated that the chairperson, during an interview,

stated what the board was going to do about the director. He added that he knows of no such board in which the chairperson can speak for the board without the board having a meeting or a vote authorizing the chairperson to speak on a matter. Unless the board had a meeting, the chairperson is speaking without the board's permission and should be asked to step down.

V. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Ms. Olson asked for a motion on the executive session minutes from the June meeting.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the minutes as edited. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any public or board comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He stated that he was happy when he read the minutes to see that he only spoke once.

Rae Grulkowski, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She informed the board that under guests present, Ms. Christensen is listed as working at the wrong company.

Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson asked Mr. Kueffler to make note to add the June executive session minutes to the August agenda.

VI. ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Olson asked if anyone had questions regarding the financial reports.

Ms. McIntyre informed everyone that she will present a final year-end report as soon as the city finalizes their closeout. She expects to present it at the August or September board meeting.

Ms. Johnson inquired about the recent expenditure on legal fees. Ms. Olson stated that it was an older bill that got paid late.

Ms. Johnson asked how the legal fees would fit into our insurance and liability insurance. Ms. McIntyre stated that the internal investigation is not covered by MMIA; but the Human Rights Bureau complaint is covered. Ms. Johnson asked what the deductible is. Ms. McIntyre stated that it is \$7,500.00 that will be applied in the next fiscal year.

Ms. DeForest asked what positions are still open at the library. Ms. McIntyre stated that we have an open Safety Specialist position with interviews happening on Friday. The other position open is the Assistant Director.

Ms. Olson asked for a motion.

Ms. DeForest moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees accept the financial reports as presented. Ms. Bulger seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He said it appeared to him that half of the cash out for June went to legal expenses. He added that he would like to know, to what extent does state law requires the library to say more than just legal expenses. The taxpayers and patron deserve to know the purposes of those legal issues.

Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. REPORTS

Management Team Report

James Simmons recapped his written Technology Systems report.

Ms. Olson asked if Mr. Simmons could physically see what a person is looking at when he monitors the patron computer. He stated that he could not.

Ms. Olson asked what the expectations of privacy are. Ms. McIntyre stated that the public computers have filters for pornography and other inappropriate materials. Ms. McIntyre added that the public computers have software on them that will completely reset, wiping all information on it when the computer is restarted.

Ms. Bulger asked when Mr. Simmons expected to have his policy manual completed. He stated that he expects to finish it by the end of the year.

Ms. DeForest asked Mr. Simmons what he would grade the library on how up to date we are with technology. Mr. Simmons said a B to B+.

Director Report

Ms. McIntyre recapped the remaining points on her written director's report.

Ms. Johnson asked if the board needs to vote on accepting grants. Ms. McIntyre stated that a policy can be developed if the board would like.

GFPL Foundation Report

Ms. Laurin recapped her written report.

Cushing Terrell Report

Ms. McIntyre gave a quick update.

Ms. Johnson asked about the transparency with the public. Since the public is a stakeholder of the library, when will the design documents be available to the public. Ms. Laurin stated that she would reach out to Cushing Terrell for a reveal. A discussion was had on how it would be presented. Ms. Johnson suggested a special board meeting with the reveal being the only item. Ms. Laurin added that she would prefer a board session over an event at this point in time since the money has not yet been raised.

Chair Report

Ms. Olson had nothing to report.

Board Reports

Ms. Crist informed us that she is working on the board evaluation plan that was discussed at the last meeting.

At this point, the board moved on to new business.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

PERSONNEL MATTERS: LIBRARY DIRECTOR COMPENSATION

Ms. Johnson asked for an explanation on how individual privacy exceeds the merits of public's disclosure for the library director's public salary?

Ms. Olson stated that there were a couple of different things to discuss in executive session, including an update.

A lengthy discussion was had on what should and should not be in executive session.

Ms. McIntyre asserted her right of privacy as the Board would be discussing her performance.

At this time, it was requested that the board go into executive session to discuss the personnel matter item under old business.

Ms. Olson stated that Pursuant to MCA §2-3-203 (3) The presiding officer of any meeting may close the meeting during the time the discussion relates to a matter of individual privacy and then if and only if the presiding officer determines that the demands of individual privacy clearly exceed the merits of public disclosure. The right of individual privacy may be waived by the individual about whom the discussion pertains and, in that event, the meeting must be open. If closed executive session is held, re-opening of the meeting and report on executive session.

Ms. Olson added that the individual has asserted their right to privacy.

BOARD ENTERED EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:49pm

BOARD EXITED EXECUTIVE SESSION 7:38pm

Ms. Olson provided an overview. She stated that the board discussed some recommendations that were given to us by the City of Great Falls HR department and another organization that does salary studies. We also talked about the pay for the library director position.

Ms. Olson asked for a motion.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees follow the Great Falls Human Relations Department's recommendation of a proposed grade change for the library director position from a 27 to a 29, and that we follow the PSPC's (Public Sector Personnel Consultants) recommendation to increase the library director position by \$11,809 in order to maintain the compared ratio within the new grade range for a total compensation of \$127,020 annually; retroactive to July 1st, 2025. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He asked for what period of time. Ms. Crist answered that it was annual compensation for the position, not the person.

Ms. Crist added that one of the reasons we're doing this is that we want the position to be competitive financially as we advertise for the position.

Ms. Johnson added that she be voting no because the recommendation from HR came in the end of April and we're in a different position now after Ms. McIntyre's letter of resignation.

Ms. DeForest added that she will be voting yes for many reasons, but also for Ms. McIntyre for being generous enough to give the library a six-month window for resignation.

Ms. Bulger added that she will be voting yes because Ms. McIntyre has earned the raise for all the work she has done over the year for the library.

Ms. Olson agreed with Ms. Bulger and stated that she will be voting yes as well.

Ms. Olson added that it is important to note that these numbers came from a salary study that looked at the entire city and identified specific issues that needed to be corrected to be within the ranges that they identified. The board also looked at the compensations from other large libraries in our area, and a little bit outside of our area. The numbers came from consultants whose job it is to determine whether or not we're in the right ranges and they made the recommendation.

Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed 4-1. (Voting YES: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Olson. Voting NO: Ms. Johnson)

At this point, the board moved on to Proposals/comments from trustees.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Olson asked for a motion for the board chair position.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees elect Anne Bulger to the position of board chair. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He stated that he hopes the new board chairman will not take it upon herself to speak on behalf of the board without the board's action and permission.

Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Bulger why she considers herself the best candidate to move forward with as this position is typically one that has the most interaction with the city. Ms. Bulger stated that she has no problem dealing with the city or HR. Ms. Johnson added that in public meetings, Ms. Bulger has stated how frustrated she was with the city. Ms. Bulger stated that she was frustrated because the library didn't get information that had gone to various other parties. That is why she went and talked to the city and that was a perfectly fine meeting.

Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Bulger how she feels the board chair differs from the other four people sitting on the board. Ms. Bulger replied that as a leader, they must lead the board meeting so all the information is on the table, and that everybody that has questions can ask them. It is not the Chair's job to direct the board to make any decision

at all. Everyone should have their own opinion and their own vote. It is not the chairs place to try and convince people how they should vote.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any more comments. Upon hearing none, she called for a vote. Motion passed 4-1. (Voting YES: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Olson. Voting NO: Ms. Johnson)

Ms. Olson asked for a motion for the board vice chair position.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees elect Jessica Crist to the position of board vice chair. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Rae Grulkowski, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She stated that the vice chair and chair have to be able to lead the meeting which involves Roberts Rules of Order and have an understanding of that process. She hopes to see candidates in these positions that thoroughly understand that process. She added that she has seen a revolution of that understanding and it is unfortunate that the candidate that brought that forward hasn't been nominated.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He asked who was nominated. Ms. Olson answered Jessica Crist.

Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Crist what she views as her role as vice chair. Ms. Crist replied that it was mostly to step in when the chair isn't around and being part of the executive committee, if necessary. She also added that she would be helping put together the agenda for the meetings. She thanked Ms. Grulkowski for bringing up Roberts Rules, and stated that upholding Roberts Rules could be something the vice chair could do.

Ms. Olson asked if there were any more comments. Upon hearing none, she called for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

At this point, Ms. Olson handed the meeting over to Ms. Bulger.

TRANSITION PLANNING

Ms. Bulger thanked Ms. McIntyre for all her hard work over the years.

Ms. Bulger stated by recommendation of the staff, the board approve this transition plan. The new agreement states that the board is in charge of the appointment of the director. Ms. Bulger appreciates that this transition plan has been created. As far as the fiscal impact, the library will have to spend money on recruitment. There will be a hiring committee that will involve board members, foundation members and patrons that have been involved in the library in some way. Ms. Bulger stated that she will determine

will be on the hiring committee. She stated that herself and Ms. DeForest will be on the committee, adding that Ms. DeForest has been on the hiring committee in the past.

Ms. McIntyre added that HR has reviewed the transition plan and says it generally looks complete. It is their expectation that HR will be on the hiring committee and participate throughout the recruitment process, including executive sessions.

Ms. Crist added that she appreciates all the work that went into this, and would like to use it as a guide and not a step-by-step. The order may change and things may be added or removed.

Ms. Johnson asked if she could read some written comments. The comments come from the perspective that open public meeting law has not been followed since the resignation letter. The board needs to ensure they are moving forward and following that.

In the press release and articles in the media, it stated Ms. McIntyre has agreed to assist with onboarding and training for the incoming director as requested by the library board. The library board has held no public meetings in which to discuss and make requests since receiving that formal letter of resignation.

In the past two weeks, Ms. Johnson has been diligent to review public meeting laws as well as Montana Code. On page nine of an information guide from the open meeting law and public comment from the Montana State Library, it states that any subcommittees of the board must also comply with the open meeting law as they are acting on behalf of the board, even if only two board members are discussing something that would be of interest to the public.

If the discussion influences or predetermines the outcome of an upcoming vote, this discussion should take place in an open meeting. Therefore, any and all conversations, discussions and more that have already occurred with board members that led to that request being made, as well as to the creation of the transition plan really need to be set aside.

This includes meetings with Ms. Olson, Ms. McIntyre, and two members of the foundation who wrote the press release that stated the board announced something.

It also includes meetings between Ms. McIntyre, Ms. Bulger, Ms. Laurin, and Ms. Crist, to work on and discuss this transition plan.

The formal letter did not give an effective date of resignation of December 27. When a letter of resignation does not give an effective date, the decision is left to the body organization who receives that letter.

Ms. McIntyre did state that she was willing to serve until that date, and towards the end of the resignation, she also commented to assist as the board deems appropriate.

The information regarding the date released in the press release and news articles does not reflect any discussions or actions taken by the board. That should also be set aside until such dates are discussed and decided upon as an entire board in a public meeting.

Many items in this plan actually state what HR will do, so we should not approve it without first approaching HR.

In that, there's a lot of timelines with this that we might have to set multiple special meetings in the coming months. It's clear Ms. McIntyre worked hard to have all her ducks in a row with her resignation; as well as to create this transition plan. Ms. McIntyre has put in a lot of time and work; however, this is the board's responsibility. Since the board has never done this process of hiring, we need to do the process.

We as a board are in new territory. The process of hiring is a new endeavor for each of us. It will take considerable time and we need to take the steps and responsibility to learn that process.

Clearly there's already been a lot of conversation about this hiring committee which once again should take place in this setting. If you read the 2023 Montana State Library handbook, they actually give a very good list of suggestions for who's on a hiring committee. One board member and one additional person should meet with HR to go forward. The reason why I'm suggesting just one board member and one additional person to meet with HR goes back to the statement from the state library that meetings of two or more people must comply with open meeting law.

If individual privacy plays a role in the process, such as interviews, then I understand how those would go into executive session. The way this board in the past has handled subcommittees will need to be adjusted moving forward based on that guide from the Montana State Library.

Ms. Johnson move that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees select one board member and one additional person to schedule a meeting to follow up with human resources and then take next steps from there.

Ms. Olson asked if there was a second.

Ms. Johnson reminded the board that the public has pointed this out before that when we don't second a motion, that's actually taking away the right of the public to participate in a public meeting. Whether or not you agree has nothing to do with seconding a motion that takes place in a vote.

Upon hearing no second, Ms. Olson directed the meeting back to discussion.

Ms. Bulger stated that historically the library board chair has appointed the hiring committee.

Ms. Johnson asked that the board go back to discuss that the board has never discussed or made a request to have Ms. McIntyre serve until December. Ms. Olson stated that it is what they are doing now, talking about a new task. Ms. Johnson clarified that the board is discussing a hiring plan with the assumption that Ms. McIntyre is serving until December, even though the board has made no such offer. Without the board formally knowing what that timeline looks like; this other proposed plan doesn't mean anything. Ms. Johnson added that she is intentionally being very formal because when a letter of resignation is turned in with no effective date and then in the public media it says the board requested.

Ms. McIntyre stated that she has apologized to Ms. Johnson. She added that the press release had some errors in it and there was no ill intention and that she had spoken to each board member individually. Ms. McIntyre added that she finds it a bit disturbing that some people seem to think that something was done in an underhanded way or that there was bad intent. She was trying to do this in as transparent a way as possible in a way that takes care of staff, in a way that takes care of all the people involved.

Ms. McIntyre added that when the media has asked for a statement from the board it has been past practice that the board chair gives a statement; it is not voted on it is something that has been done. If the board decides to make an official policy about that they certainly can but she apologizes that the press release was not written as tightly and as well as it could have been.

Ms. Johnson added that her and Ms. McIntyre had a discussion regarding the wording at the beginning of the press release, but there was never any discussion about the agreed and requested.

Ms. Crist added that when she saw earlier versions of this, she kept saying to Ms. McIntyre that if she resigns then she has to let it go. After listening to the webinar, it stated that the current director should be involved. This has left us with two opposing sets of information. We're all just trying to make this work. We're trying to do what's best for the library. Mistakes have been made, and we will make more mistakes in the future. I guarantee that. We're trying to work together and just make this a good thing.

Ms. Johnson added that the Montana State Library Trustee Handbook, volume two has a whole section on director turnover, and it actually lays their responsibility on the board in loads of different areas. Ms. Olson asked if that was in response to the director of the state library. Ms. Johnson stated they give guidelines for everything related to board of trustees. Ms. McIntyre confirmed it is a handbook for local libraries.

Ms. DeForest stated that she understands Ms. Johnson's frustrations, but the board needs to move on and come together as a team. Mistakes have been made, some mistakes we could fix, some we can't, but we're where we're at now. Ms. McIntyre has given her resignation and we don't have an assistant director. Ms. DeForest added that she is unsure what is being argued over.

Ms. Johnson stated that she is not arguing, but wants to bring it back to decisions and requests that are made by this board. Our obligation to transparency to the public has to be done in open meeting; and there has been too much of this done, not in public meeting. This is a new process, it didn't happen like this last time when a new director was hired, it was HR is who led that process due to the agreement. Our foundation and structure of everything we do have to start with public meeting law. Everything we do, all of our dialogues, our discussions, our debates, need to start with the structure of the law.

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees accept the resignation of Library Director Susie McIntyre with thanks and requests that she be available until a new director is hired, no later than December 27th, 2025. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Rae Grulkowski, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She thanked the board for the interaction, stating that this is what boards are all about. She stated that she did not hear a date on when the resignation would be effective. She added that it is confusing whether or not Ms. McIntyre will continue to be a full-time employee or if it is just part-time as the board searches for a new candidate. She believes it would be best for the public to identify a specific date that Ms. McIntyre intends to resigning but then be available so that they can view those two positions separately. Ms. McIntyre's full-time permanent and then to have her assist.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He asked if this is the motion on this or is this a motion that's coming free to the transition motion so I understand what I may or may not comment on. Ms. Olson stated that he can comment on the motion that Ms. Crist made which is accepting the director's resignation. He added that he was glad that the board accepted the resignation, although he is not sure about the clarity of the wording of it.

Kathy Hansen, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She stated that she wants all of our citizens to be representative. She wants all of our citizens to have decency and honesty and to know what's going on. She feels as though there is a situation where people are saying, "We don't have to follow the law. It's not something that we do or have done." She stated that it is concerning to her because we are all expected to follow the laws of the state of Montana. She asks that as representatives to look at these laws and know them and follow them so that the things that we as public

people find so important are also important in our library because this is what is going to be taught to our children, to our grandchildren, to our community as far as community standards. She would like that to be honesty and integrity and being open with one another.

Corey Sloan, a representative of the Montana State Library Consultant servicing the Pathfinder Federation, addressed the board. She introduced herself and stated that transition planning and succession planning is something that the state library can assist with. She added that directors resign and retire and move on from positions all the time in Montana. Montana has some specific and unique laws about library governance. She added that the handbook mentioned for board members has been condensed and should be available online in the new Fiscal Year. She offered her help, if the board would like it.

Beth Cummings, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. She appreciates having this conversation out here in the open so that the public can understand and have that transparency. She encourages the board to understand the purpose of these people here is very valuable. We are the head, we're not the tail. The public wants to come here knowing full well what's going on. When you talk about an open meeting law, you can just look at that and say, what's the big deal? What the big deal is, is the open meeting law contains rights of people. We have a right to participate, and we also have a right to know. When we do not conduct this in accordance with open meetings, we're trampling on the rights of people and it opens it up for a lawsuit. There are cities that have been sued for that very thing. She encourages the board to think about the people out here or the people out there, and that the reason for you're being that is to be in a servant's position, and you're serving the public. In doing so, we want know what you're doing.

Ms. Olson asked for a vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson led the conversation back to the transition plan.

Ms. Olson asked the board what their vision was for how to update each other in the board meetings. Will it be a standing item under board reports?

Ms. Bulger feels that it would be helpful to have a report in the agenda from the hiring committee until someone is actually hired.

Ms. Johnson suggested that we reach out to the Montana State Library in regards to the information guide they wrote. In the information guide on open meeting law and public comment there is a section on board subcommittees. She added that any subcommittee of the board must also comply with open meeting law as they are acting on behalf of the board. Ms. McIntyre stated that we can reach out to the Montana State Library, but she suggests we also reach out to the city attorney because there are differing opinions

about whether or not having two board members have a conversation constitutes something that requires an open meeting. Getting guidance from the city attorney as well as the state library would be helpful.

A discussion was had on different scenarios involving sub-committees and transparency. It was decided that the Montana State Library, the city attorney, and the city HR department should be able to offer guidance on how to proceed.

A discussion was had on whether it should be Ms. Bulger and Ms. McIntyre reaching out or if it should be Ms. Bulger and Ms. Laurin. Ms. McIntyre stated that in the agreement, the library director shall serve as the library's administrative liaison to the city.

Ms. Bulger moved that the Great Falls Public Library Board of Trustees approve the proposed director transition plan as presented. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson opened for any board discussion or public comment.

Richard Irving, a resident of Great Falls, addressed the board. He informed the board that they are on the cusp of a huge step forward or a huge step back. The board is about to decide whether or not they are going to become a board that directs the director and works for the citizens, the patrons and the taxpayers; or to continue to be a lab dog for the library director, the foundation director, and whoever the other secret stakeholders are. He encourages the board to take the step forward.

Colleen Stewart, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She appreciates all the discussion and the back and forth conversations. Like Ms. Bulger wanting to have a subcommittee report back, the public would like that as well. The public would like to know what is going on and that is why transparency is so important. She thanked the board for all they do.

Rae Grulkowski, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She stated that she is hearing aggravation in the motion. She believes the aggravation is resistance to change. When we make decisions, we've got to keep those decisions according to laws and bylaws and the Constitution, and they all very much promote transparency. We've got to start with that. There have been three different times in the discussion where she has heard reference to it's the way we've always done it, that is where we go down the slippery slope. The resistance to changing the way we've always done it because we've always done it that way isn't particularly the way it should be done. Government is deliberative and slow and tedious, but that is so that the public who is the sovereign people can participate. In deciding if a policy conflicts with anything where the public would be, or laws, constitutional rights, or the bylaws would be conflicting, the board should think about it again.

Kathy Hansen, a resident of Cascade County, addressed the board. She thanked the board for all the work they are doing. One of the things that has always been a part of

what was expected was once you resigned, you no longer had a part of the plan. Once you resigned, the doors never close behind you with that institution; that institution continues on. It has an obligation to do the best for the people that it serves. We are at a point where we are hopefully looking to include our public where and what our public wants. Once a person has resigned, they should no longer be a part of that plan because now you are looking at the future and how do we support and honor the people that pay the taxes, the people that live in the community, the people that attend the library, the children that are coming up. We have looked at the statistics and seen that the part that we have gone along with and schools, this kind of thing, the harder that we have gone on with computers and this kind of thing, the lower our test scores have been for our children, the lower our literacy rates have been, and we need to get back to the point where our library serves and educate all other people, especially children, that it serves.

Ms. Johnson stated that a lot of this talks about the hiring committee. She feels that whether or not subcommittees have to comply with open meeting laws needs to be answered first, before taking on these steps. Ms. Bulger replied that the plan itself is an outline from which to work. We are not making any decisions about anything that's in the plan. We're just saying this proposed plan is a good skeleton from which to work.

Ms. Johnson asked what stuff will be done prior to the next board meeting. Ms. Olson believes that dates will become fluid after a certain point in the transition plan. Yes, we need answers to some of these questions and then next steps can happen. There's value in saying what is down the road. Here's the roadmap of where we want to go. We might have to adjust what each of those points say, or more people may be involved at some point. Having the roadmap doesn't lock us into doing any particular thing. Ms. Bulger added that we're not rushing through anything. If we have questions that we need answered, they can get answered. I do think it's important that whatever does happen, we can have a monthly report to say what has been done what we've accomplished or what we have done in regards to this transition.

Ms. McIntyre stated that it is her understanding of the previous conversation was that there was a question about whether or not the hiring committee has to follow the open meeting laws. If it's decided that they do or don't, that doesn't really impact this progress. If we approve this and the city attorney says, yes, you have to follow open meeting laws, then we will do this according to open meeting laws. If he says No, then we will not.

Ms. DeForest recapped what she remembered happening the last time a director was hired. Ms. McIntyre stated that she had the official minutes from that time if anyone would like a copy.

Ms. Johnson asked how long the process took from resignation to hire the last time. Ms. McIntyre stated that Ms. Mora resigned in early October and that she was hired as director in March; about 6 months.

Ms. Johnson added that all five of us as board members, moving forward need to ensure that any conversation we are having outside of a board meeting is not leading towards decision making; that it's just information. We have a duty to uphold to transparency to the public. The board meeting is the place where most of the discussions and dialogue and debate need to happen. In this process we have to have a commitment to transparency.

Ms. Olson called for a vote. Motion passed 4-1. (Voting YES: Ms. Bulger, Ms. Crist, Ms. DeForest, Ms. Olson. Voting NO: Ms. Johnson)

At this point, the board moved on to new business.

X. PROPOSALS/COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Crist proposed the idea of a board retreat on best practices as a board and also as human beings; and that we find ways to work with each other and trust each other because we have a lot of important work ahead. A discussion was had regarding best time and day for a retreat; as well as reaching out to the city attorney regarding the process to keep it legal.

Ms. Olson offered to become the Foundation Liaison now that Ms. Bulger is chair.

Ms. Bulger stated that she felt the Montana Room was more conducive to discussion and less threatening than using the basement room. Ms. DeForest agreed. Ms. Johnson voiced concern that public comment may not be heard on the zoom recording.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Crist moved that the Great Falls Library Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting. Ms. DeForest seconded the motion. Ms. Olson called for a vote.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Olson adjourned the meeting at 7:51 pm.