

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, September 16 2026

5:30 P.M.

SPARKS LIBRARY

1125 12th Street, Sparks NV, 89431

Library Trustees:

Tami Ruf, Chair

Marie Rodriguez, Vice Chair

Marcus Nesbitt, Trustee

Andrea Tavener, Trustee

Elizabeth Cadigan, Trustee

Board Liaison:

Commissioner Alexis Hill

0) Salute to the Flag led by Trustee Nesbitt

1) Roll Call [Non-Action Item]
    - Present: Vice Chair Rodriguez, Trustee Tavener, Trustee Nesbitt, Trustee Cadigan
    - Absent: Chair Ruf
2) Public Comment
    - Cate Salim: Requested clarification on the Chair's authority to appoint committees, and asked what circumstances should trigger committee creation and how committees interact with Nevada Open Meeting Law. Urged the Board to consider allowing public comment on each action item, especially during meetings with dense agendas. Expressed concern that limiting members of the public to a single comment period restricts their ability to speak on multiple agenda items. Requested follow up on a prior public comment asking for expanded hours at the Duncan/Traner Library, noting no trustee response last month. Encouraged trustees to revisit systemwide hours annually as was done in past years.
    - Amy Pulver: Expressed disappointment that agenda item 4a was listed as non-action, delaying decision making another month. Urged immediate initiation of director recruitment to alleviate staff strain, lengthy hiring timelines, and the risk of losing the no-cost option with CPS recruiting. Advocated for maintaining the temporary leadership model under Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro to ensure stability. Warned that continued delay may signal to the community a lack of commitment to strong library leadership.
3) Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 19, 2026
    - Trustee Tavener pointed out that the meeting minutes did not clearly state Tavener's previous remarks regarding training and if more than 2 trustees attending at one time is considered a quorum. She reiterated that it is not considered a quorum.

- There was discussion on this point and it was established that it was unclear if this was noted at the previous meeting but it would be noted in this meeting's minutes for clarification for the public. DDA Kaplan noted that Open Meeting Law does not pertain to non-business items such as trainings. As long as business is not being conducted, there is no issue of quorum being reached. Multiple trustees can attend trainings together without violation of Open Meeting Law.
- On motion by Trustee Cadigan, seconded by Trustee Tavener, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote, the meeting minutes from August 19, 2026 were approved.

4) New Business

a) Discussion regarding the process and timeline for hiring a new Library Director. Discussion could include providing thoughts to staff on the following: requesting Human Resources determine a realistic timeframe for recruitment based on the discussion with the board; determine the feasibility to explore appointment of an acting or interim director which could be an external contract director, or a process to review internal employees; and thoughts on when to engage the executive search firm to conduct a national search for candidates at no cost to Washoe County based on the provisions of the contract for the previous search.

- Chief Human Resources Officer, Patricia Hurley, presented key points regarding the timeline and process for hiring a new Library Director. Hurley noted that the board may launch recruitment anytime before April 2027 without cost. Hurley emphasized the importance of stability and Board cohesion before recruitment begins and noted the lessons HR has learned since the previous recruitment. Urged the board not to rush the process.
- Hurley suggested to the board that the best option is to appoint an interim library director while they start the search for applicants and noted hiring an external interim would have many drawbacks including the time it would take to get them up to speed on the organization.
- Vice Chair Rodriguez voiced her support for hiring an interim director from inside the system and requested more information on the process. Hurley shared that

she would work with Solaro and provide the board with a list of potential candidates. Hurley recommended the board allow HR to choose a qualified candidate.

- Trustee Cadigan asked for clarification regarding distribution of duties if a current library employee is chosen as interim. Hurley clarified that the library staff member would be relieved of their current duties.
- Trustee Tavener asked what HR and CPS will do differently in order to bring about a more positive hiring outcome. Hurley noted they have learned the importance of hiring an interim director and that CPS will have more County input during the process. Only 2 or 3 final candidates will be brought to the board and all will be well vetted. Noted this recruitment will also include new trustees, and a different board dynamic. The interim director will be able to guide the new director and put the strategic plan in place prior to their arrival. Stated that good candidates dropped out of the previous recruitment because of what they saw of the board's dynamic.
- Trustee Tavener urged HR and CPS to consider community meet-and-greets with the candidates. Requested that the board not have a say in narrowing down or reviewing applications, noting that she trusts HR and their judgement. Hurley agreed that the HR process will change to better support hiring the right candidate.
- Trustee Cadigan asked how long the interim director would hold their position before a permanent director is appointed. Hurley clarified that is up to the board and what timeline they choose.
- Trustees voiced their interest in hiring an interim director and Vice Chair Rodriguez noted her preference for the recruitment to start sooner rather than later. Trustee Tavener agreed and commended library staff for stepping up in the absence of leadership.
- Hurley suggested that the board not rush the recruitment process and allow HR to put an interim in place and then come up with a recruitment plan. This would

allow the interim to get settled and for the board to work together to figure out what the library needs, set a firm foundation, and figure out the aspects of an ideal candidate. Advised the board not to start the recruitment process before January 2027.

- Vice Chair Rodrigeuz agreed and shared her appreciation for library staff.
- Trustee Tavener asked for clarification regarding who would choose the interim director. Hurley clarified that HR could work with Solaro to find someone with the right qualifications who is interested in the position. DDA Kaplan added that the board will appoint the interim director, HR will be involved in the recruitment and present their choice to the board for possible appointment.

b) Discussion and possible action to revise the Library Board of Trustees Bylaws as proposed.

- Trustees reviewed proposed changes, including grammar, format updates, and changes to the trustee training requirements. Trustee Cadigan noted that the currently stated 30-day requirement might be an issue for new trustees. She was concerned that the tight timeline might lead to trustees rushing the trainings and not absorbing the information. Trustee Tavener supported the 30-day timeline because the training was self-paced and was important to complete before getting too far into their new role. Vice Chair Rodriguez mentioned many trustees have full-time jobs and some may be in school, like she was, and 60-days would be a better amount of time.
- DDA Kaplan suggested changing the deadline to 45 days with qualifying language such as “if possible”. Trustee Cadigan appreciated the suggestion but was concerned that “if possible” might weaken the requirement. Suggested 90-days, with the understanding that the requirement can always be changed next year when the bylaws are reviewed again.
- Trustee Tavener requested the addition of “and any other required trainings”. Trustees agreed.

- Trustee Cadigan asked if links could be provided for all the NRS statues listed in the bylaws. Trustee Tavener noted links sometimes become outdated. Solaro suggested the NRS links could be added to the library's already existing list of policies and documents on their website.
- Board Liaison and BCC Commissioner Alexis Hill suggested a binder with updated information for the board. Trustees noted this request was made at a previous meeting.
- On motion by Trustee Cadigan, seconded by Trustee Tavener, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote, the proposed changes to the bylaws for FY26-27 were approved with additional language to include "any additional required trainings" and a 90-day training requirement.

5) Presentations

a) Presentation by OnStrategy, Inc. on the proposed FY27-29 Library Strategic Planning process and schedule.

- OnStrategy Consultant Kamryn Onorato shared information on the creation process for the next Library Strategic Plan, noting that the Library Strategic Plan will align with the County Strategic Plan. Onorato explained that the process will be board driven and the implementation will be staff driven, with important value placed on public engagement and input.
- Onorato explained the differences between the County and Library strategic plans, noting that the County plan has a broad vision and focuses on resource priorities, while the library plan focuses on departmental goals and initiatives.
- Onorato explained the four-phase development model:
    1. Assessment & Public Engagement – Trustee interviews, branch manager interviews, public sessions, and surveys.
    2. Set Strategic Direction– Draft the Library Strategic Framework using themes from stakeholder input.
    3. Build the Plan – Staff driven operational planning and budget alignment with Trustee approvals along the way.

4. Implementation – Strategic plan roll out to staff and community. Continue quarterly reporting.

- Onorato explained the difference between strategic and operation work, noting that strategic work is not part of current operations and is measured with project-type metrics. Operational work is the everyday work that focuses on improving current processes and is measured with qualitative metrics.
- Onorato anticipates that the draft framework will reach trustees in April 2027.
- Trustee Tavener expressed excitement for the process but asked who would be paying for OnStrategy's services. Solaro confirmed the funds would come out of the library's portion of the County's general budget.
- Trustee Cadigan noted the phase 3 timeline ends in April and asked how long phase 1 and 2 will take. Onorato stated that the timeline is in flux and that phase 1 will take more time than phase 2. They will most likely move into phase 2 in December. Trustee Cadigan asked if they could start the process right away. Onorato confirmed but noted that the final decision regarding staff time and capacity for the first stage rests with Solaro.
- Trustee Cadigan asked if the phases can overlap. Onorato answered that phase 1 has to conclude before phase 2 can start, but phases 2 and 3 may overlap.
- Trustee Tavener noted that there is a verbal agreement to extend the strategic plan deadline into April. She encouraged whoever is in charge to work with the state to ensure deadlines aren't missed.
- Vice Chair Rodriguez asked if trustee interviews will be virtual or in person. Onorato replied that they can be done either way and will be one on one.

6) Reports

a) Brief Branch Report: presented by Kerry Stendell, Sparks Library Branch Manager

- Spark Branch Manager Kerry Stendell presented highlights from her branch for FY25-26 including high meeting room usage, strong program growth, and nearly 140,000 patron visits. Shared examples of successful partnerships, including

those with Sparks Parks and Recreation, Northern Nevada Legal Aid, UNR and PBS. Noted the collaborative garden redesign with the Nevada Landscape Architects Society. Highlighted staffing challenges which included more than 50 urgent staffing requests, resulting in reduced Friday programs and limited new program expansion.

- Announced that Sparks Library and North Valleys Library would exchange branch managers the following Monday.
- Trustee Cadigan shared her fond childhood memories of the Sparks library and appreciation for the bilingual calendar of events. Thanked Stendell for all her efforts.
- Trustee Tavener shared her appreciation for the great customer service at Sparks.

7) Public Comment – Three Minute Time Limit Per Person
    - Laura Wetherington: Praised trustees for collaborative tone and hopeful direction. Asked how the Board and County will support staff if a branch manager is appointed interim director when staff are already stretched thin.
    - Tara de Queiroz: Noted that past news coverage could deter qualified director applicants. Encouraged trustees to publicly communicate ongoing support for staff, intellectual freedom, and strong library funding to signal a positive cultural shift.
8) Board Comment
    - Trustee Cadigan reported attending her first Friends of Washoe County Library meeting and praised their substantial behind-the-scenes work.
    - Trustee Nesbitt stated he joined the Board to support library staff, having previously worked in the system and seen the volume of effort required. Advocated for restoring Sunday hours to the Downtown Reno Library and improving staffing levels systemwide. Requested ideas on how to show the community and potential applicants that the Board has changed and are in a different space.

- Trustee Tavener offered extensive appreciation for staff resilience and dedication from 2020 to the present. Showed appreciation for the Fall Explorer issue and applauded staff for their community outreach.
- Vice Chair Rodriguez emphasized the importance of public visibility and positive messaging in attracting strong Library Director candidates. Encouraged fellow trustees to share library activities on social media and participate in upcoming library events. Noted that prospective director applicants will review trustee bios and recent meeting recordings as part of assessing the Board environment.
- Trustee Cadigan noted that one of the ALA Short Talks webinars she viewed talked about the importance of trustee advocacy. Seconded Vice Chair Rodriguez's idea and urged her fellow trustees to get on social media and share about the library. Noted her excitement for Northwest Reno's reopening.
- Trustee Tavener requested updates regarding the budget and expenditures. She appreciated last meeting's presentation and would like to see them continue. Reiterated staffing concerns related to the Northwest Reno reopening and the inevitability of emergent staffing needs.

9) Staff Announcements

- Collection Development Manager Debi Stears gave an update about the Northwest Reno Library renovations and shared that staff are back in the branch preparing for the reopening. Announced Downtown Reno Library was named Reno News & Review's Best Library, with Northwest, Sierra View, and Spanish Springs also ranking in the top five. Shared that Friends of Washoe County Library donated $5,317.30 to update early reader materials. Provided major staffing updates, including upcoming branch manager rotations and planned recruitment for South Valleys and Downtown Reno. Announced significant success securing E-Rate federal funding, generating over $105,000 in annual internet service cost savings, and recognized Business Technologist Coordinator Brenda Owens for her work enabling E-Rate participation.

- Public Information and Development Officer Jamie Hemingway presented the newly released Fall Explorer magazine, illustrated by a Spanish Springs staff member. Noted the magazine is produced quarterly through a collaborative systemwide effort.
- Branch Manager Jonnica Bowen expressed appreciation for trustees' supportive comments and public acknowledgment of staff. Announced that Debi Stears is the recipient of the Truckee Meadows Tomorrow Silver Star Award for Education & Lifelong Learning. Highlighted Debi's extraordinary service performing multiple leadership functions over the past year.
- Administrative Assistant Siera Schubach reported that she is building a new trustee binder per the board's request and requested trustees email additional content ideas as needed. Shared that the process has taken longer than expected due to needing to recreate and update past documents.

10) Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 7:24pm