



City of Muscatine

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

The Library Board of Trustees meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. in the Library Conference Room

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Tony Loconsole called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. In addition to Loconsole, also present were Steve Truitt, Stacy Beatty (Zoom), Nora Dwyer, Diana Boeding, Diana Gradert, Mary Odell (Zoom), and Scott Comstock. Kraig Reed had an excused absence. Also present were Bobby Fiedler, Molly Garrett (Zoom), Greg Benefiel, and Emerson Taylor.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Dwyer moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Odell. All ayes; motion carried.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Comstock moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Truitt.

Fiedler asked that on the fourth page, in the second paragraph, verbiage be added indicating that he had attempted to contact the patron.

Vote on minutes as amended — All ayes; motion carried.

4. RATIFY BILLS FOR PAYMENT

Dwyer moved to ratify the library bills for April 22, 2026 and May 6, 2026. Seconded by Gradert.

Fiedler, speaking in reference to the bills for April 22, 2026, stated that on the first page is an entry for lock replacement, which was for the repair of the drop box. He stated another lock would be purchased in the future to have on hand.

Fiedler, speaking in reference to the bills for May 6, 2026, stated the entry for Emerson Taylor was for reimbursement for driving everyone to the PLA conference in Minneapolis. He stated that on the second page is an entry to Scholastics from the Trust Fund, which is for summer reading prizes.

Fiedler stated the trust funds are in great shape. He stated the General Fund is where it should be. He noted the Trust Fund is over \$200,000, which includes donations for the Summer Reading Program.

Taylor stated the library has received over \$16,000 in committed donations.

There was discussion about using the Trust Fund to cover budget shortfalls.

Fiedler stated the Trust Fund could potentially be used for a portion of the patio project.

Boeding asked what other expenditures had come out of the Trust Fund, and Fiedler stated that in the past, it had been used to fund Channel 5 and to purchase a microfilm machine. He noted that, generally, people who make donations specify where they want the money to go.

Benefiel stated the kids' loft and fire truck in the Children's Department had been purchased using the Trust Fund.

There was discussion about how much the city would allow the library to carry over into the Computer Rollover Fund.

Vote — All ayes motion carried.

5. RECEIVE COMMUNICATION

6. COMMUNICATIONS - CITIZENS

7. STAFF LIAISON

Benefiel stated we had a new employee that started at the library this week.

Taylor stated her name is Caroline Nims, and she lives in the Iowa City area. He stated she is attending the University of Iowa and will be graduating with an American History major. He stated she would then be pursuing a Master's in Library Science, which means we would probably have her at the library for the next three years.

8. FRIENDS' REPORT

Fiedler stated that Kathy Kuhl would be leaving the Friends' board to work full-time in North Liberty.

Fiedler stated the group is discussing the possibility of changing the meeting time to see if more people can be drawn into the group.

Fiedler stated the golf tournament had 27 participants and raised approximately \$945. He stated it went really well, and there were many amazing gifts donated by our sponsors and local businesses.

Boeding stated it was a nice day and stated the group may want to look at the timing of the event.

Fiedler stated the group is talking about holding the tournament earlier in the year.

9. DIRECTORS' REPORT

2nd Session of the 91st General Assembly:

Fiedler stated the session ended on May 3, 2026, and the property tax bill passed which would implement a 2% hard cap on revenue growth beginning with the budget for Fiscal Year 2027/2028. He stated the local option sales tax increase was not included, and no library bills were passed.

Fiedler stated staff would be meeting to discuss ways to offset possible reductions.

Fiedler stated this was a good opportunity to regroup and get prepared for the next legislative session that begins in January.

Fiedler stated the governor's election this fall would probably have a major impact.

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget:

Fiedler stated that Clinton left RiverShare, which means the library would be seeing a yearly savings of \$2,300.

Children's Position:

This issue was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Patio Update:

Fiedler stated that HNI would be presenting the library's funding request at its Foundation meeting in July. He then stated that the Carver Charitable Trust gave the library a green light to present our funding request for \$50,000. He stated their meeting would also be held in July. He stated he would be submitting the application tomorrow.

Donation:

Fiedler stated a \$5,000 donation to the Trust Fund was received from Norma Lewis, who is a long-time patron of the library. He stated she requested that half of the donation go to the Children's Department and the other half to adult reading.

Loconsole stated he would get a "Thank You" card for Board members to sign.

State Accreditation:

Fiedler stated the library's request for Tier 3 status was approved. He stated the next submission date would be in 2029.

Library Holiday Closure:

Fiedler stated the library would be closed May 24–25, 2026 for the Memorial Day holiday. He stated Sunday would be an unpaid holiday for staff, which means they would need to make up those hours.

Other:

Fiedler stated the library might be getting an intern this summer from Iowa State University, who is interested in the Summer Reading Program.

Taylor stated plans are still in the works, noting it is an unpaid internship.

Boeding pointed out that the intern is from Muscatine.

Loconsole stated it would be great if this could happen on an annual basis, and Fiedler agreed.

Fiedler stated a lot of furniture was moved around to allow for the creation of the Teen Center. He stated this would be a dedicated space for teens.

Taylor gave an overview of some of the highlights of the new Teen Center.

Fiedler stated the library may add additional shelving as books are moved around.

Fiedler stated he wanted to mention that Diana Gradert would be retiring from the Board at the end of June. He thanked her for her 11 years of service to the Board.

Gradert stated they were interesting years.

10. BOARD TRAINING

A. Summer Reading 2026 Update by Emerson Taylor

Taylor gave a presentation on this year's Summer Reading Program (SRP). He put on a hat and vest, stating he wears them at his school presentations.

Taylor stated that this year's SRP theme is "Unearth a Story". He noted that book reading for the program would begin on June 1, 2026 and run through the end of July.

Taylor stated the kickoff for the SRP would be "Dino at the Dome", which would be June 3, 2026 at the Musco Sports Center. He explained what would be happening at the event. He stated staff would be available to sign people up for the SRP.

Loconsole asked if volunteers were needed, and Taylor stated space could be found for anyone that would like to volunteer.

Taylor stated he feels it is going to be the largest event of the SRP.

He then listed the titles for each week of the SRP. They are as follows:

Dino Play (June 1-6, 2026)
Fresh Dirt (June 7-13, 2026)
Paleontology (June 14-20, 2026)
Digging for Info (June 21-27, 2026)
4th of July (June 28-July 4, 2026)
Archaeology (July 5-11, 2026)
Celebrate Summer Reading (July 12-17, 2026)

Taylor stated there would be multiple shows and programs, and evening activities would be tried this year.

Taylor stated there would be a bilingual program on June 17, 2026 with three programs throughout the day.

Taylor then gave an overview of what would be happening during each of the weeks of SRP. He noted that Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday would be the biggest days at the library. He then added that the baby lapsit would still take place on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Taylor then listed the sponsors as follows:

Storyteller (\$2,000+) — Kent Worldwide, Friends of Musser Public Library, Unity Point Health (Muscatine campus), and MPW

Novel (\$1,000-\$1,999) — HNI and MUSCO

Chapter (\$500-\$999) — Stanley Consultants, CBI, Vision Center P.C., and Betty's Orchard House

Bookmark (\$200-\$499) — SSAB

Taylor stated the teens would have their own set of programs this year, and reading would be measured by books instead of minutes. He noted that every teen who reads five books would get a certificate to the Black Pearl. He then gave an overview of some of the activities that would be available for the teens.

There was discussion about the Discovery Trunk from the University of Iowa.

He ended his presentation by stating that a lot of prizes have been donated to the SRP this year.

Boeding asked if the same platform would be used as last year, and Taylor answered that Beanstalk would be used again this year.

Fiedler thanked Taylor and Becca Fillmore for the work they have done to date.

Odell stated that the SRP sounds amazing.

Loconsole stated he liked that there were both teen and adult activities. He asked that staff keep pushing the information out to the public, noting that he felt the Dinos at the Dome would be a great opportunity to potentially get great coverage for the library.

Taylor stated he would be inviting all the sponsors to the event.

Loconsole suggested that Taylor meet with Connor at the radio station, and Taylor stated he had met him already and would be having a sit-down session with him.

11. OLD BUSINESS

A. Request to Approve FY27 Budget Planning Document

Loconsole read the request as submitted.

Odell moved the request be approved. Seconded by Comstock.

Fiedler stated that changes to the library to meet the shortfalls for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 are as follows:

Closed on Sundays

Closing an hour early on Monday-Thursday

Program cancellations included Adult Trivia and Pages for All Ages

Community outreach services reduced by 10%

Hours of 28-hour employees would be reduced to 20 hours

Stopped three digital resources, which included Heritage Quest, Morningstar, and Freegal

Shelvers hours reduced by 50%

Fiedler stated that the city administrator stated the Arts Council Summer Concert Series could still take place without library staff and no food could be served. He noted that the home delivery services would not have to be reduced.

Fiedler stated there would be a series of Facebook posts announcing the changes and the reason why they are taking place and there would be an informational paragraph in the June newsletter. He stated that staff would receive a FAQ sheet as well as fliers to hand out to patrons.

Fiedler stated that if the Board chooses to approve this request, the library would move forward with the changes effective July 1, 2026.

There was discussion about how a donation, such as the one received by the Art Center, would be handled.

Fiedler stated that another thing that will be happening is documenting questions and comments from patrons that could be shared during the next budget season.

Dwyer asked if there was a document that the public could use, and Fiedler stated it was on the website.

There was further discussion on this issue.

Vote — All ayes; motion carried.

12. NEW BUSINESS

A. Nomination of FY27 Library Board of Trustees Slate of Officers for Approval at June 2026 Board Meeting

Loconsole read the request as submitted.

After in-depth discussion, it was decided to approve the slate of officers at this meeting. Fiedler stated he would contact Reed to see if he would be okay with remaining as secretary for the Board.

Boeding moved the request be approved as submitted. Seconded by Truitt. All ayes; motion carried.

B. Request to Approve Letter of Support to the Carver Charitable Trust as Part of the Formal Patio Project Fundraising Phase

Loconsole read the request as submitted.

Comstock asked if the library had ever submitted a funding request to the Carver Charitable Trust before.

Fiedler stated that applications can be made to the Trust every five years, noting that the last application was for \$550,000 in 2017 for the new library.

There was discussion about what would happen if more money than needed was received.

Vote — All ayes; motion carried.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Truitt moved the meeting be adjourned at 5:43 p.m. Seconded by Gradert. All ayes; motion carried.

14. NEXT MEETING

A. June 17, 2026