

MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

1. At a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Monroe County Library System held on November 12, 2025, at the Mary K. Daume Library Service Center the meeting was called to order by Chair Peven at 5:02 p.m.

Present: Rob Peven, Chair; Beth LaPensee, Vice-Chair; Rita Gordon, Secretary; Catharine Calder, Trustee; Mike Grodi, Trustee; and Nancy Bellaire, Director

Staff: Lou Komorowski; Barbra Krueger; Eloydia Ladd; Sandy Calkins; Joey Becker; Ashley Liford, Jenn McCarty

After calling roll, the chair determined that a quorum was present. The Board proceeded to transact business.

2. Motion by Cathe Calder, supported by Mike Grodi, to approve the agenda as amended, moving the budget workshop to an earlier position on the agenda, after Public Comment. Motion carried.
3. Motion by Mike Grodi, supported by Beth LaPensee, to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.
4. Public Comment—Barbra Krueger introduced Bookmobile team member Eloydia Ladd, who updated the board on the Association of Outreach and Bookmobile Services conference they attended in October. She said that they attended some great sessions on such topics as underserved populations, translation devices, and the youth.
5. Consent Agenda – Motion, Cathe Calder, supported by Beth LaPensee, to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.
6. Committee Reports

Finance Committee – The Finance Committee did not meet. As of September 30, we have received more than 92% of our projected revenue and have spent almost 70% of our planned expenditures. The October Penal Fine distribution was \$74,456. The average November distribution was \$89,355, so we would need to receive \$95,174 in November and December to reach our budget projection for this line item. We will discuss the 2025 and 2026 budget in detail later in the agenda.

Facilities Committee – No meeting. Nancy Bellaire shared photos of the church that LaSalle Township is considering for a library branch, and also gave an update on the Navarre Branch/Community Center project.

Policy and Personnel Committee – Policy and Personnel met before the meeting to discuss wages, and longevity.

Technology Committee – No meeting. The committee hopes to meet before the end of the year or early in 2026.

Woodlands Update – Nancy Bellaire reported that the Woodlands exit meeting for the Woodlands audit took place last week and they received a clean opinion.

Legislative Update – The Michigan budget has been signed, and the line item for libraries is expected to remain the same for the upcoming year.

7. Budget Workshop – Chair Peven asked Director Bellaire to discuss the state of the current budget and then move on to 2026 revenue. Mrs. Bellaire said that the 2025 budget is on track to finish with revenues of approximately \$9,306,286 and projected expenditures of about \$8,991,492.

The draft budget sets the expected 2026 revenue at \$10,461,675 and expenditures of about \$10,255,578. The Property Tax levy revenue is expected to increase by about \$349,936 from last year's approved revenue line item. We have projected penal fine revenue to still be well under the average next year due to, criminal justice reform, the legalization of marijuana, and staffing shortages in law enforcement. This revenue figure includes a transfer from our fund balance to support projects such as a roof for Ellis, new delivery truck, and other projects that were budgeted for this year, but will carry into next year. An example of this would be funds for computers and other equipment for the new Navarre Branch.

Mrs. Bellaire said that proposed expenditures for 2026 have been calculated to be \$10,255,578, up about \$569,904 from 2025's approved budget of \$9,685,674. These calculations leave us with \$206,097 available for staff wage increases or other purposes. The percentage breakdown for staff costs including retiree costs remains at about 69%, still below the average of 75-80% for other libraries, nationwide. Services and supplies make up about 19% of the budget with about 9% allocated for materials.

Ms. Bellaire compared some of the 2026 line items to those of 2025, especially if there was a big change in either direction. Discussion followed about staff wages, longevity, cost of living, etc.

8. Unfinished Business – Draft AI procedures have been posted for staff pending final versions of policy.
9. New Business–
Motion by Cathe Calder, supported by Rita Gordon, to update the Longevity Pay amounts for 2025 to include an additional category of \$2000 for staff with 25 years or more years of service:

5-9 years	\$1250
10-14 years	\$1400
15-19 years	\$1600
20-24 years	\$1850
25+	\$2000

Motion carried.

Motion by Mike Grodi, supported by Cathe Calder, to appoint Bill Sisk to fulfill the remaining year of Dale Williams' term on the MCLS Retiree Health Care Board. Motion carried.

Motion by Cathe Calder, supported by Rita Gordon, to approve the bills for the month ending September 30, 2025, in the amount of \$375,909.56. Motion carried.

Motion by Rita Gordon, supported by Cathe Calder to approve the bills for the month ending October 31, 2025, in the amount of \$297,703.46. Motion carried.

Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Cathe Calder, to keep the board's compensation at 2025 levels. Motion carried.

Motion by Mike Grodi, supported by Beth LaPensee, to adjust the 2026 wages by 3.5% except for the page wage, which has been increased to meet the new Michigan minimum wage, and to update the 2025 Wage scale by eliminating the first two columns of the wage scale, for all Clerical, Technical, Professional, and Managerial rates, and adding two steps to the end of it, as well as accepting the updates to the page and sub rates.

Motion carried.

Motion by Mike Grodi, supported by Rita Gordon to grant a 3.5% one-time compensation adjustment for all staff, based on budgeted hours, to be paid by the end of the year. Motion carried.

10. Staff Report – Barbra Kreuger reported that the Great Start Collaborative is no longer being funded, but that 200 Ride & Read bags will be distributed. Jenn McCarty shared information about the Writers on the River program held at Ellis. She said that there were 50 authors on site and that the authors were very complimentary of the event.
11. Director Bellaire updated the board on 2 court cases involving illegal behavior by patrons and one involving the mail fraud/check fraud case from 2023. She also shared photos of the new playhouse at Ellis, donated by La-Z-Boy and Habitat for Humanity.
12. Motion by Rita Gordon, supported by Beth LaPensee, to go into executive session at 6:05 for the purpose of conducting the Director's annual performance review.
LaPensee: yes; Gordon: yes; Calder: yes; Peven: yes. Motion carried.
Motion by Cathe Calder, supported by Rita Gordon, to resume the regular meeting at 6:18. Motion carried. Rob Peven reported on the performance review. Cathe Calder congratulated Director Bellaire for an extremely positive review, indicating that she had received very high comments in all areas from all forms. Beth LaPensee noted that Nancy's leadership is seen in employees that are dedicated and willing to go the extra mile.
13. Motion by Cathe Calder, supported by Rita Gordon, to grant Nancy Bellaire a 2% merit increase based on a satisfactory performance review, effective the same day as staff merit increases, as well as the 3.5% one-time-compensation adjustment in 2025, and 3.5% increase for 2026 that was approved for all staff. Motion carried.
14. Board Comments
The board thanked Nancy and Sandy for their work on the budget.

Cathe Calder recognized the Ellis Staff for the Writers on the River program, and is happy that because of careful budget planning and management, the board was able to grant compensation adjustments this year. She said that with the budget increases, she is happy to see innovations that are so important. She suggested that MCLS consider some sort of food closets in branches and advocated for additional hours for Navarre. Rita Gordon said that she is excited about the bags for road trips, the Writers on the River event, and that we were able to grant additional compensation for staff. Beth LaPensee thanked the staff for the author event and congratulated Nancy and staff for another great year. Rob Peven extended his compliments to the staff and wished all a happy Thanksgiving.

15. Public comment—None.

16. Announcements

Date of Next Board Meeting – Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 5 p.m. at the Mary K. Daume Library Service Center, Monroe, MI.

17. Adjournment

Motion by Cathe Calder, supported by Rita Gordon, to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Peven, Chair

Rita Gordon, Secretary