

Pathfinder Federation Meeting
Fall 2024 Minutes
Thursday October 3, 2024
Fort Benton

Chair Patty Hall called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Roll call

- Belt Public Library-
- Blaine County Library- Valerie Frank, Patty Hall
- Choteau/Teton Library- Crystal McLoughlin, Karen Ferris
- Chouteau County Library- Emily Wicks, Jessalyn Ritland, Maren Engen
- Conrad Public Library- Tiffany Christensen, Patrick Heinen
- Dutton/Teton-Cheri Fuhringer (online), Marcia Quillen
- Fairfield/Teton-Tracie Roeder, Carol Idland
- Glacier County Library- Austin Castle, Becky Kimmet (online)
- Great Falls Public Library- Susie McIntyre, Sam Deforest
- Harlem Public Library- Carley Vauthier, Teresa Cornell
- Havre-Hill County Library- Rachel Rawn, Janet Williams (online)
- Liberty County Library- Julie Erickson, Belinda Hawks
- Stone Child College Library- Joy Bridwell (online)
- Toole County Library- Heidi Alford, Emily McDermott
- Valier Public Library- Cathy Brandvold, Chris Grotbo
- Wedsworth Memorial Library- Nancy Royan, Heather Milburn
- Montana State Library-Corey Sloan, Colet Bartow, Cara Orban
- Montana State Library Commission- Robyn Scribner
- Montana Library Association- Sean Anderson (online)

Spring 2024 Minutes- Karen Ferris moved to accept the minutes of the Spring meeting as submitted, second by Belinda Hawks. Motion carried unanimously.

State Library Report-Cara Orban presented the Montana State Library report. Cara introduced Corey Sloan, the new consultant for the Pathfinder and Broad Valleys Federations. Cara is the consultant for South Central and Tamarack Federations and Tracy Cook is now the consultant for Golden Plains and Sagebrush Federations. The Public Library Survey is open and is due by November 29. New Lifelong Learning virtual programs are available on the MSL YouTube channel. Montana History Portal has virtual trunks with ideas and templates. Savannah Sill replaced Cara. Savana is collecting data on hot spots and the current level of need and the courier service. The Shared Catalog meeting is October 24 from 10:00-12:00.

MLA Discussion- Sean Anderson, Vice-President of MLA gave an overview of the Montana Library Association. He spoke about the Trustee Interest Group and its purpose. The group is currently looking for someone to chair the group. The Cahir would schedule two Zoom meeting per year, work with the Executive Director of MLA, and lead the group at the annual conference. MLA would like libraries to share their stories- How your library is benefiting from participating in shared resources, and how your patrons are impacted by those shared resources.

YA Discussion- Corey Sloan led a discussion about YA areas in libraries, collections and current practices. Several libraries discussed how their libraries handle the YA books and sections. Corey asked what level of support libraries need from the MSL.

Proposed Bylaws revisions- Bylaws changes were discussed. Motion by Carol Idland to strike the in-person portion of the meeting attendance, second by Heather Milburn. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Karen Ferris to remove Article VI- Executive Board, second by Marcia Quillen. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Theresa Cornell to eliminate the nominating committee, second by Karen Ferris. Motion carried unanimously.

Plan to spend the additional \$4,000 awarded by the commission- The group discussed the extra funding and ways to spend the funds. Due to a misunderstanding of the intent of the commission regarding the extra funding, reimbursement to Tribal Library Directors for attending Pathfinder meetings is not in compliance with the current intent of the funding. The intent of the funding is for trustee training. This could be for travel reimbursement to Pathfinder meetings, attendance at a special training or MLA. Motion by Theresa Cornell to use the extra \$4,000 for trustee training and mileage, second by Emily McDermott. Motion carried unanimously. Other ideas for training opportunities were discussed. Great Falls Public Library offered to share access to Linked in Learning. Libraries would need to contact Susie to get a GFPL card and could use the training videos at board meetings. This option would not cost the Federation any money but would provide great training opportunities. One suggestion was to pay for online training and have virtual watch parties at our own libraries and use funds to host.

CE Committee Expansion- Coordinator Valerie Frank asked for more members to be a part of the CE committee. Currently the CE committee is comprised of Valerie Frank, Patty Hall and Nancy Royan. Karen Ferris, Theresa Cornell, Rachel Rawn and Austin Castle will join the current members on the committee. Frank will compile training options and set up a meeting with the members to decide on training.

FY24 Federation Expense Reports- Valerie Frank thanked the directors for completing their federation reports in a timely manner.

Treasure State Foundation- Teal Whitaker did not attend the meeting, so this topic was not discussed.

State Library Commission Meeting- Coordinator Valerie Frank asked if the group had anything they would like her to tell the MSL Commission. The group would like to express how much we appreciate the MSL and trainers for all that they do and all the support they provide to the libraries.

Spring 2025 Meeting Date- Thursday May 1, 2024, will be the date for the next Pathfinder meeting.

Joys and Concerns

Blaine County Library Joys- We purchased forward facing bins for our easy books. Our new Assistant Librarian is working out well. We are doing a book club collaboration with the Blaine County Museum. Concerns- We are still waiting for new windows in the library and meeting room and new doors for the meeting room.

Conrad Public Library Joys: Our library employees have been proactive in starting new programs and projects. Everyone adds a different perspective and skill set that help enhance library services. We have a wonderful team!

Concerns: Some hazardous materials were found in our building that require remediation before any other projects are begun. This is a significant unanticipated expense.

Fairfield Joy- Received an ALA grant and in-kind donation for a ramp. Concern- No AC for months

Glacier County Library Joys: Cut Bank Library Roof is completed (hopefully), finally received our DEQ Brownfields Phase 2 Assessment for the Browning Library building, increased Summer Reading participation, started experimenting with Friday Story Times and that seems to have increased our attendance numbers, looking to do some "welcome back to the library" outreach to increase our foot traffic and circulation. Austin received his certification.

Concerns: Cut Bank Library boilers, the constant delays to progress with the Browning Branch Library, miscommunication and/or lack of communication with local government officials and other department heads Additional Concern: Cut Bank Library now needs gutters after roof installation since water is dripping onto the sidewalk by the front door

Great Falls Public Library Joys:

- **LIBRARY MILL LEVY:** Mill levy implementation is going very well. We are delivering on our promises. We are proud that we delivered on our promises in less than a year. We've already improved access by making Library parking free. We provide more educational programming and digital resources, including eBooks, language resources, and free online classes for job seekers and local business owners. The library is now open seven days a week, and the Bookmobile provides service six days a week. We restarted our homebound service for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. We are providing more educational programming for children and families, including adding more story and toddler time events and expanding early literacy programs.
- **LIBRARY REMODEL:** We are continuing work on our remodel design. It is incredibly exciting to plan for the future.
- **SUMMER PROGRAMMING:** We had great summer reading programs for youth and adults. Our Summer Music Series had great attendance—including our biggest program ever with Supaman. Both our Juneteenth and Shakespeare in the Parks events had a larger attendance than last year.

Concerns:

- **CITY/LIBRARY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT:** We continue to work on negotiating a new agreement with the City of Great Falls. In March 2024, the City requested the library open the current City/Library agreement for negotiations. The City Renegotiation Committee and the Library Renegotiation Committee have been meeting over the last five months. On August 28, the City Renegotiation Committee presented their "last, best, final offer" which included eliminating the City's seven mills of financial support of the library by 2027. But the Library Board, at their special meeting on Sept. 5, voted 3-1 to counter the City's proposal. The Library Board approved a proposal that agrees to all of the City's structural requests but would reduce

the library funding by 2.5 mills, or about \$300,000 annually. The Library Renegotiation Committee welcomes the plan to meet in October to continue negotiations.

Harlem Public Library Joys: Four computers have already been upgraded to Windows 11. Great turnout for Summer Reading kick-off and our Friends community appreciation taco meal. Colleen retiring end of June 2025

Concerns: Lost active member of community/library this summer, Colleen retiring in June (concern for Carly), Still no update on new windows with ARPA funds, Nervous about hiring new replacement for Carly

Havre-Hill County Library Concern-Flickering lights Joy- It is October, so flickering lights are spooky.

Liberty County Library Joy-Labeled all Accelerated Reader books

Medicine Spring Library Joys

- Donations have been coming into the library that are very exciting. One of the last donations received was a 250 picture collection of portraits of community members in the 1938-1942 time frame. They are beautiful pictures and the family included the rights, pictures, negatives, and a high quality digital copy!
- We have been trying to start our new content management system for six years. We received training two weeks ago and are adding materials quickly. Because it took so long to figure out the system we have six years of backlogged digitized material to make available (this might be a bit of a concern, but not too big. I'm just excited it is getting done!) If you want to take a look at what we have up so far the address is: www.medicinespringlibrary.org and go to Browse Collections, we haven't quite figured out how to put a collection on the front page.
- I'll be joining the Montana Historical Society advisory board this year! I'm excited because I want to focus much of my time this year on the archival collection and being on the board will help me learn more about how an established archive runs.
- We have new room booking software that is saving us from the problems of having five different ways to request space, and three different people taking notes and adding it to our whiteboard in a timely fashion.
- We have a new class at the college called "Street Art" and they are going to do a mural in the children's area. I'm super happy about that because it's something I've wanted to do but have not had the funding to do it.
- The library is making new partnerships with archives and museums across the nation to help return Blackfeet knowledge to our Blackfeet archives. It is truly one of my biggest highlights behind the donations.
- I had the entire summer off (8 weeks). While it wasn't the best time in the world, I'm happy to have had the ability to step away for a brief period. The joy is that my staff are amazing and did a great job while I was gone.
- Our greenhouse I built last summer is producing lots of cucumbers, bell peppers, and we will have a few ears of corn. With luck we might get a few squashes. My team did a great job of planting and keeping things alive while I was gone.

Concerns

- Budget cuts have been heavy on my mind. We had a hiring freeze with a vacancy in the library. Last year we also had a vacancy all year but I was able to hire temporary

employees to help fill the gap, this year I am not so lucky. Not only is it frustrating that I didn't hire for the position last year, it is very frustrating not to have a full crew.

- This funding problem has also made me scale our programming down by about 90%. We are offering very few programs in order to maintain the sanity and work-life balance of the staff and director (really it's for me, I tend to do all of the programs out of normal business hours so I don't have to rework the library work schedule.)
- Building woes: we have many outdated features in the library, a super old door, bathrooms that are in desperate need of updating, and many of our walls need to be worked on as the sheetrock is no longer in the best shape. I fear that the library is often at the bottom of the list of campus improvements. I can also only attend so many meetings per month and it frustrates me that I have to attend a meeting in order to get any of my issues heard. I just have to go, I just don't want to. We have a new keyless entry system and because the front door is so old they had to place a mag-lock on the door. It is programmed to unlock/lock at our exact opening and closing times. While we can get out, we cannot get into the library at any time other than open hours (not useful when we often have activities outside of business hours and our janitorial staff also cannot get in after we are closed)

I'm sure there is plenty more to both be grateful for and to be concerned over but that is all my brain is allowing me to think of at the moment.

I hope everyone has a great meeting and I hope things will be a little less hectic in the spring so that I can attend the meeting then.

Teton County Libraries Joy- All three libraries are going into the black, due to the three librarians working har, finding grants and getting donations.

Toole County Library Joy and concern-- MSC! Hahaha Whew, my brain hurts!

Joys - All county employees got cost of living raises. We have a potential new "home" for our Friends of the Library Book Sale. We have a new and improved website (no thanks to me!)

Concerns: - Heidi's mental health

Valier Public Library Joy- Homeschool preschool Moms are bringing their kids to the library.

Wedsworth Memorial Library Concerns: The sweeping changes of the Town Council and change of Town's employees has created some large hurdles we are trying to overcome. We recently lost a valued Board member. This has caused a serious shift in our Board.

Joys: We think we are close to receiving our ARPA Funds after several years of negotiations. We had our annual Harvest Dinner, and it was well attended with great donations. Our annual Book sale is next weekend so we have our fingers crossed.

Motion by Belinda Hawks to adjourn the meeting, second by Theresa Cornell. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Colet Bartow presented ASPeN and CE Credit Training. CE Credits were earned.

Training concluded at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Valerie Frank, Pathfinder Federation Coordinator

Urgent	Long-term
all age programming	succession plan
YA programming	learning to work with the county commissioners
MSC	using statistics (for commissioners and board)
new resources	utilizing social media more
top 10 technology apps	Does AARP work with the libraries?
setting up new staff computer and receipt printer without IT help	Can you get library cards at out-of-county facilities?
succession planning	Learn all of the ins and outs of the program (ASPeN)
succession training - from retiring director to new director	As a trustee, coming up with goals as board, discuss what to do when the director retires and handle with county officials and board members
hiring new assistant - process, recruit, interview, hire	as a trustee, learn more about my duties as a trustee concerning things that come up at the library that the director needs guidance
project management	using AI in developing unique, interesting programs
capital improvement plans	policies and procedures
budget process	day to day library procedures - to be more supportive of staff from a trustee perspective
local funding and budgeting	building strong management teams that work together effectively and efficiently
How does the legislature decide on the amount of funding for the libraries	How to plan for permissive mill levy renewal
my role as a board member	opening a new branch/physical location
best practices for meeting minutes for library board	effective communication skills
Roberts Rules of Order	accessing government documents
As a trustee, support the director and their staff with their reporting, technology and continuing education	efficient strategic planning
how to recruit involved board members	writing effective policy for our community library
ways to be a more effective advocate for the library--i.e., community outreach	how to support the director and staff
collection development	2.5 years to retire with 5 year plan in place for library
documenting CE in ASPeN	how collection development works
how do I get all of my credit hours to show up in ASPeN?	grant writing
as a trustee, navigate ASPeN and use more for information	DEI diversity audit
organizational charts	IT for small library without tech department