

Montana State Library Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: August 13, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Montana State Library, Gertrude Buckhouse Conference Room, 1201 11th Avenue, Helena, MT 59601

Recording Link: https://youtu.be/Hp_T6YS-XRQ?si=EuiZxhXMxirr3Mpo

Attendance:

- **Commission Members:** Robyn Scribner (Chair), Peggy Taylor, McKenna Gregg, Tom Burnett, Tammy Hall, Brian Rossmann, Carmen Cuthbertson
- **Staff:** Jennie Stapp (Montana State Librarian), Malissa Briggs (Central Services Administrator), Evan Hammer (Digital Library Administrator), Victoria Gersdorf (Admin)
- **Guests:** Carol Ann Davis, Misty Ann Giles, Lisa Colligan (Department of Administration), Michael Fashoway (MSL), Troy Blandford (MSL), Dave Ratz (MSL), Sarah Widger (MLA)

Call to Order and Introductions

Timestamp: [00:00:05](#)

- **Chair Robyn Scribner** called the meeting to order.
- **Introductions:** Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.
- **Agenda Changes/Additions:** No changes or additions were made to the agenda.
- **Welcome:** Victoria Gersdorf was welcomed as the new administrative assistant.
- **Staff Longevity Recognitions:** Dave Ratz was recognized for 20 years of service.

Consent Agenda

Timestamp: [00:03:03](#)

- **Items:** June 13, 2025, meeting minutes, 4th quarter Fiscal Year 2025 financial report.
- **Discussion:** The Commission reviewed the consent agenda items. There were no corrections or additions to the minutes or the financial report.
- **Motion:** To approve the consent agenda.
- **Moved by:** Peggy Taylor
- **Seconded by:** Tom Burnett
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Serving the Community, Open Hours Public Library Standard Draft Administrative Rules Amendments and Timeline

Timestamp: [00:06:55](#)

- **Discussion:** Extensive discussion on the wording and legal implications of the draft administrative rules. Concerns were raised about the phrasing of "everyone" and its potential legal implications. Commissioners debated the need for clarity and precision in the language to avoid future legal challenges. The importance of flexibility for local libraries was also emphasized. Some commissioners expressed concerns about the potential for lawsuits if the language was not clear. The discussion also touched on the need for public input and the process for making amendments to the rules.
- **Motion:** To initiate the administrative rules process of the open hours library standard as it pertains to serving the community. ARM 10.102.1159 (1).
- **Moved by:** Tom Burnett
- **Seconded by:** Tammy Hall
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Next Steps:** The administrative rules process will be initiated, and further discussions will be held to refine the language.

Continuing Education Program Draft Administrative Rules Amendments and Timeline

Timestamp: [00:36:30](#)

- **Discussion:** The Commission discussed the certification process, initial and renewal tracks, and the role of the Commission in approving courses. The importance of clear terminology and the need for public feedback were emphasized. Commissioners highlighted the need for a streamlined process to ensure timely certification and renewal. There was also discussion about the challenges faced by new hires in meeting the initial certification requirements and the need for flexibility in the timeline for completing certifications. The Commission agreed on the importance of providing adequate support and resources for library staff to meet the certification requirements.
- **Motion:** To accept the continuing education administrative rules and amendments timeline.
- **Moved by:** Tammy Hall
- **Seconded by:** Peggy Taylor
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Next Steps:** The proposed amendments will be implemented, and public feedback will be solicited to ensure the process meets the needs of all stakeholders.

Excellent Library Services Award Retirement

Timestamp: [00:56:40](#)

- **Discussion:** The decision to retire the Excellent Library Services Award (ELSA) was discussed due to difficulties in creating meaningful and objective criteria. Commissioners noted that the award had become more of a participation award rather than a meaningful

recognition. The historical value of the award was acknowledged, but the need for a more impactful recognition was emphasized. Some commissioners expressed regret about retiring the award but agreed that it was necessary to develop a more effective way to recognize outstanding library services.

- **Motion:** To retire the Excellent Library Services Award.
- **Moved by:** Carmen Cuthbertson
- **Seconded by:** Tammy Hall
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.
- **Next Steps:** The award will be officially retired, and the Commission will consider alternative ways to recognize outstanding library services in the future.

State Library Activities and Electioneering

Timestamp: [1:00:20](#)

- **Discussion:** The motion to prevent the State Library from participating in the production, promotion, or distribution of images of state legislators was discussed. Commissioners emphasized the importance of maintaining neutrality and avoiding political involvement. The potential implications for public perception and trust were considered. There was a discussion about the role of the State Library in promoting reading and literacy without appearing to endorse any political figures. The Commission agreed that it was important to avoid any actions that could be perceived as political endorsement.
- **Motion:** That the State Library does not participate in the production or distribution of images of state legislators.
- **Moved by:** Carmen Cuthbertson
- **Seconded by:** Brian Rossmann
- **Vote:** Aye: All except Peggy Taylor (abstained).
- **Next Steps:** The policy will be implemented to ensure the State Library remains neutral and avoids any appearance of political endorsement.

The Roles of Government and the Private Sector in GIS

Timestamp: [01:11:00](#)

- **Presentation:** MSL staff introduced GIS, its components, and its applications in various sectors, including asset management, emergency management, and facilities management. Examples from the U.S. Air Force, city planning, and DNRC employees were provided. The presentation highlighted the importance of coordination and standardization in GIS data collection and usage.
- **Discussion:** Commissioners discussed the role of GIS in improving efficiency and decision-making across various sectors. The need for ongoing collaboration between government

and private sector entities was emphasized. There was also discussion about the challenges of maintaining accurate and up-to-date GIS data and the importance of quality control. Commissioners expressed interest in learning more about specific GIS projects and their impact on state operations.

- **Next Steps:** Continued efforts to enhance GIS capabilities and collaboration will be pursued.

Lunch Break

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Department of Administration (DOA) Review

Timestamp: [03:10:35](#)

- **Presentation:** Director Giles and Lisa Colligan from DOA reviewed the Remote and Office Workspace Study, DOA services centralization, and the job classification process. The presentation highlighted the ongoing efforts to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of services across state agencies.
- **Discussion:** Commissioners discussed the implications of the centralization efforts for the State Library. The importance of maintaining flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the State Library was emphasized. There was also discussion about the potential impact on staff and the need for clear communication and support during the transition. Commissioners expressed interest in receiving regular updates on the progress of the centralization efforts.
- **Next Steps:** The State Library will continue to collaborate with DOA to ensure that the centralization efforts support the Library's mission and operations.

American Library Association (ALA) Motion Review

Timestamp: [04:23:45](#)

- **Discussion:** The decision to withdraw from the ALA due to DEI concerns and the political nature of ALA's advocacy was reviewed. Commissioners reaffirmed the decision and discussed the potential impact on the State Library. The importance of aligning with organizations that reflect the values and mission of the State Library was emphasized. Commissioners also discussed the potential benefits and drawbacks of the withdrawal and the need to communicate the reasons for the decision to stakeholders.
- **Next Steps:** The Commission will continue to monitor the impact of the withdrawal and explore alternative affiliations that align with the State Library's values.

Montana Library Association's Relationship to ALA

Timestamp: [04:45:45](#)

- **Presentation:** Sarah Widger from MLA discussed the relationship between MLA and ALA. The Commission considered the implications for the State Library's involvement with MLA.

- **Discussion:** Commissioners discussed the potential benefits of maintaining a relationship with MLA while being cautious about political affiliations. The need for clear guidelines on the State Library's involvement with external organizations was emphasized. There was also discussion about the potential impact on MLA's operations and the importance of supporting local library associations.
- **Next Steps:** The Commission will review and update guidelines for affiliations with external organizations.

Initial 2026 Executive Program Planning Discussion

Timestamp: [05:15:22](#)

- **Discussion:** Initial planning discussion for the 2026 executive program. The Commission discussed potential priorities and goals for the upcoming year, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning and stakeholder engagement. Key areas of focus included digital outreach, community engagement, and resource allocation. Commissioners also discussed the need for measurable outcomes and regular progress reviews to ensure the success of the executive program.
- **Next Steps:** The Commission will develop a detailed plan for the 2026 executive program, incorporating input from stakeholders and aligning with the State Library's strategic goals.

Trustee Manual Quick Start Guide Review

Timestamp: [05:25:15](#)

- **Discussion:** Review of the Trustee Manual Quick Start Guide. The Commission discussed the importance of providing clear and concise resources for new trustees, including a one-page guide and links to relevant information.

State Library Reports

Timestamp: [05:30:48](#)

- **Reports:** Final FY 25 Work Plan Dashboard, FY 26 Work Plan Dashboard, 4th quarter FY 25 staffing memo, 4th quarter FY 25 grants and contracts memo, Continuing Education and Certification dashboard. The Commission reviewed the reports and discussed project tracking, remote work, and job descriptions.

Commission Goals and Objectives

Timestamp: [05:37:03](#)

- **Discussion:** Review of meeting motions and directives to staff to confirm Commission intent, standing committee appointments, review and prioritize agenda items for October business meeting. The Commission emphasized the importance of transparency and communication in achieving its goals.

Public Comment and Non-Agenda Items

Timestamp: [05:39:40](#)

- **Public Comment:** Written public comment from a library user asking if the Commission has authority to implement a tool lending library at Lewis & Clark Library. Jennie will respond.

Adjournment

Timestamp: [05:51:55](#)

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting.
- **Moved by:** Robyn Scribner
- **Seconded by:** Carmen Cuthbertson
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.