

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY (MSL) COMMISSION MEETING
Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 9 a.m.
Montana State Library, Gertrude Buckhouse Conference Room, Helena and Zoom

MINUTES

Recording can be found at:

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/G57yXAf4Z9s>

Unedited closed captioning is available.

ATTENDEES:

Commissioners:

Superintendent Elsie Arntzen, Vice-Chair Tom Burnett, Carmen Cuthbertson, Tammy Hall, Chair Robyn Scribner

Commissioners Absent

Brian Rossman

MSL Staff:

Sean Anderson, Nick Beckstrom, Marilyn Bennett, Jennifer Birnel, Malissa Briggs, Tracy Cook, Erin Fashoway, Lee Fossum, Sharon Hardwick, Rebekah Kamp, Ashley Kanduch, Amy Marchwick, Bryce Maxell, Cara Orban, Guil Poelsma, Savanna Sill, Jennie Stapp

Guests:

Khrys Homes (Montana Arts Council), CK, Courtney, Dani Hess, Dustina Deans, Dylan Klapmeier (Governor's Office), Ella Smith, Emily Wicks, iPhone, Jenifer Alger, jfinn, Katie Burkhalter - Billings Public Library, Kirk Vriesman, Kristin Burgoyne, Matt, Melissa Hedstrom, Michele DesRochers - W Yellowstone, Mickey Steward, Nancy Hall, OBPP, Pam Henley, Bozeman Public Library trustee, Pamela Benjamin, Patrick Heinen, Rita Koganzon (UNC), Sarah Peterson (MCPL), Sarah Widger, Slaven Lee, Tina Peterson-HPL, Wedsworth Library Nancy Royan

Agenda: [Attachment 1](#)

(00:00:00) Call to Order and Introductions
(00:01:43) Changes or additions to the agenda
(00:01:58) Staff longevity recognitions

Business items

(00:20:04) Consent agenda – Action
• [October 9, 2024 Minutes](#)

- [2025 Meeting Dates](#)
- [Amendments to the FY'24 Montana State Library Annual Report](#)

The Commission reviewed meeting minutes, the suggested meeting dates for 2025, and the Amendments to the FY24 Montana State Library report.

There were a few questions about the meeting schedule – mostly surrounding the upcoming legislative session and the possible need for a work session. Commissioner Arntzen shared ideas for interacting with legislators. The group agreed to discuss legislative day later in the agenda.

(00:26:46) Motion made by Tammy Hall and seconded by Carmen Cuthbertson to approve the consent agenda.

(00:30:26) amended motion passed

- **Elsie Arntzen-Aye**
- **Tom Burnett-Aye**
- **Carmen Cuthbertson-Aye**
- **Tammy Hall-Aye**
- **Brian Rossmann-Absent**
- **Robyn Scribner-Aye**
- **Peggy Taylor-Abstain**

Commissioner Cuthbertson had a question about an update to the FY24 Montana State Library Annual Report. She did not see an edit that she requested. In October she asked about adding the reason for the administrative rule change regarding MLS degrees. The change was made to bring the standards in line with MCA which states that hiring of the library director is the sole purview of the board. Stapp apologized as she thought she saw a document with that edit. She will check on the edit as it is possible that the wrong document was uploaded.

(00:28:50) Motion made by Tammy Hall and seconded by Carmen Cuthbertson to amend the current motion to remove the state library annual report for consideration at the next meeting and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Elsie Arntzen-Aye**
- **Tom Burnett-Aye**
- **Carmen Cuthbertson-Aye**
- **Tammy Hall-Aye**
- **Brian Rossmann-Absent**
- **Robyn Scribner-Aye**
- **Peggy Taylor-Aye**

(00:31:04) [Freedom to Read Statement](#)

(00:31:18) Motion made by Tammy Hall and seconded by Carmen Cuthbertson to remove the freedom to read statement from our website, our literature, and all references to it. The motion passed.

- **Elsie Arntzen-Aye**
- **Tom Burnett-Aye**
- **Carmen Cuthbertson-Aye**
- **Tammy Hall-Aye**
- **Brian Rossmann-Absent**
- **Robyn Scribner-Aye**
- **Peggy Taylor-Abstain**

Commissioners explained their reasoning for removing the statement. Reasons included questions about the constitutionality regarding the right to read, lack of neutrality in library collections, and a lack of recognition about the role of local libraries.

Commissioners asked if there were any implications for MSL staff. Stapp responded that staff have not placed this in multiple locations and recognize that it was a statement from a different Commission.

Discussion Items:

(00:37:18) 2025 Legislature and the Commission's Role - Chair Scribner moved this item up due to the Commission being ahead of schedule, and the next presenter was not available before 10am.

Stapp explained how legislative sessions have worked in the past. She gave an overview of the process and what to expect. Stapp explained that she works closely with the Governor's Office and follows their instructions on when to testify. She doesn't anticipate testifying very often this session.

Commissioners requested, and the minutes reflect, that Stapp inform them when MSL staff are testifying.

Commissioners discussed whether to advise the State Librarian on which bills to testify. Stapp suggested asking Dylan Klapmeier for guidance because of the role of the Governor's Office in working closely with Executive Agencies during the legislative session. Stapp is normally the one to testify unless there is a need for GIS expertise. She is usually an informational witness and would never testify without the Governor's approval.

Commissioner Arntzen reminded Commissioners that anyone has a right to remove their badge and testify as citizens. She also explained how fast paced the legislature is and suggested the Commission develop positive policy statements that can be shared and will give guidance to the State Librarian on certain bills. She suggested the State Librarian can read those statements before giving testimony.

Klapmeier was able to join the Commission at 10am and addressed this question before discussing draft legislation. He explained how the process typically works and expressed a desire for the State Library and Governor's Office to avoid being on opposing sides of a bill. He didn't think that would happen, but still believed it was important to mention the concern. He recognized the Commission's authority and encouraged regular communication.

Commissioners recognized the challenges and discussed ideas such as a legislative committee or email updates with enough notice to call a meeting in 48 hours. Commissioners discussed some possible bills such as family/parental rights where they may want to speak as individuals.

Commissioners agreed to discuss the legislative session and a possible work session after Klapmeier's presentation.

(00:57:32) Governor's legislative priorities – Dylan Klapmeier, Education Policy Advisor

- [Administrative Attachment Memo](#)
- [Draft Legislation](#)
- [2-5-121, Montana Code Annotated](#)

Klapmeier discussed the proposed legislation regarding the administrative attachment of 3 agencies – the Montana State Library, Montana Arts Council, and Montana Historical Society. He gave a history of the process, described what changes were made from previous draft legislation, and why the Governor's Office is proposing this change. The primary value for MSL is access to services through the Department of Administration. This includes human resources and legal services. The state library would remain part of Section E which is education, and the State Library Commission would retain its current authority. Due to the budget process and timing issues, the change would not take effect until July 1, 2027.

Commissioners asked if the Governor was seeking endorsement of the legislation or if this was informational. At this point, the presentation is informational. Commissioners discussed why they may want to formally support this legislative change.

(01:31:21) Chair Scribner called for a 5 minute break

(01:31:36) [State Library Support for Trustees](#) – Cook shared a memo that discussed the services currently offered to board members. She asked for feedback from the Commission on those services and any next steps.

Commissioners suggested the following which are reflected in the minutes:

- Ask directors to let consultants know when there are new board members

- They liked the idea of including a “yes, please subscribe me” box on face-to-face training sheets and encouraging directors to include on agendas.
- They suggested the newsletter could ask people “what do they want to know?” It could include kudos, photos, and information from the board members. Commissioners also suggested asking a city council member or county commissioner to write something for a newsletter.
- Make Trustee Manual shorter and include photos and contact information for the consultants.
- Create a 1-page document on MSL CE and Consulting services for board members. This could be given to them by the director or their appointing body.
- Create resources and help for library facilities. This includes information about grants.
- Work to change the culture to get board members involved and directors and board members working as a team.

(01:47:28) Informational presentation from Rita Koganzon, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of North Carolina – Koganzon gave a presentation about her article “There is No Such Thing as a Banned Book: Censorship, Authority, and the School Book Controversies of the 1970s.” She mentioned there are different standards for what constitutes censorship for adults versus minors. Her presentation covered the history and purpose behind young adult literature, court cases, and both parent and librarian responses to requests to remove items from school libraries.

Commissioners discussed their takeaways from the presentation.

(02:12:55) Future of the Excellent Library Service Award – Cook requested feedback from the Commission about the Excellent Library Service Award. The Commission discussed the history, purpose, and meaning of the award for libraries. They brainstormed possible metrics.

They requested staff complete the following:

- Offer the Excellent Library Service Award in 2025. Libraries are requesting the award for activities completed in 2024.
- Commissioners are okay with letting the award go. They prefer not to give it annually.
- Talk to library directors and board members about the award and the following criteria
 - The award will no longer be annual. It will be periodic.
 - The Commission would prefer to have the metrics be measurable. Examples include increases in library visits, circulation, or number of cardholders.
 - The Commission would like the recognition to happen in the local community and would appreciate it if local libraries recognized a community member, patron, or volunteer that gave back to the library as part of the process.

- The questionnaire for the award would be included as part of the public library survey. It might be as simple as asking libraries to answer the question “what have you done that you believe is worthy of an award?”

(02:31:33) State Library Reports – Stapp and staff

- [FY 25 Work Plan Dashboard](#)
 - [PDF Version](#)
- [Website analytics and broken links report](#)
 - [PDF Version](#)
- [TRAILS contracted services use statistics](#)
- [Downloading dashboard instructions](#)

Stapp reported that Bennett and Kamp are working on collecting statistics regarding usage of TRAILS’ databases. She reported changes in the update schedule for the dashboards.

Commissioners discussed their experiences with the dashboard and wondered if they could be made more user friendly. The language includes acronyms and uses a lot of library terminology that may be difficult for members of the public to follow. Board members have also struggled to access the information on their phones. It does not appear to be mobile friendly.

Stapp will speak with Kamp to learn more about mobile friendly options and to see if the language of the dashboards can be modified. She may need to ask follow-up questions. Commissioners suggested having focus groups comprised of people of different ages test the dashboards and give feedback.

Commissioners appreciate the buying power State Library services offer. They suggested connecting seniors with library technology assistance and had a few questions about other parts of the state library report.

Commission Goals and Objectives – Commission

(02:37:53) [Annual business calendar](#)

- [PDF Version](#)
 - (02:38:00) Library Legislative Night, January 9, 2025, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - (02:40:55) Montana Library Association Conference, March 26-29, 2025

Commissioners discussed a possible open house before their February meeting. They would like to meet with legislators. Stapp asked Commissioners to let her know if they would like her to arrange an open house before the February meeting or if they would like to implement any of Commissioner Arntzen’s suggestions for connecting with legislators.

Stapp reported that she will follow up with the new Belgrade Library Director to confirm the library's meeting room is available for the March Commission meeting.

Commissioners discussed the "Conversations with Commissioners" session. They liked the idea of having round tables with 2 commissioners who would like to talk to attendees about a topic of interest. Commissioners discussed history of the session and goals for the session. Ideas proposed included bridge building, connecting with board members, or discussing things like literacy. Commissioners mentioned that federation meetings may be a better venue for reaching board members.

Commissioners requested time on each federation's meeting agenda. Cook will follow up with federation coordinators.

Commissioners discussed previous experiences and concerns with the Montana Library Association and its conference. They would like to know if the librarians want them to attend the conference. They discussed ideas for becoming more involved from attending sessions taught by staff members to pursuing the federation idea. If MLA wants the Commissioners to attend, they would like to have "Conversations with Commissioners" on Thursday morning.

Commissioners moved to discussing library legislative night. They asked about who was sponsoring the event, funding, and purpose. They are concerned about legislators being confused about which entity is involved and requested that State Library staff have their tables together and separate from MLA since MLA is a private entity. They would like us to have signage, so it is clear we are separate entities. They requested that MLA send out all invitations. In the future, the Commission would like to see the two entities have separate events.

Commissioners asked about the email updates from the State Librarian. Stapp reported on how the process has worked in the past. She discussed frequency of updates, process, and who received the emails.

Commissioners requested that the email updates from the State Librarian not include the positions of private entities, and that this request be reflected in the minutes. Stapp confirmed that she will only send out the bill information.

(03:14:10) Public Comment on any matter not contained in this agenda and that is within the jurisdiction of the State Library Commission.

There was no public comment.

(03:15:10) Other Business & Announcements.

Chair Scribner reported that a discussion about the mission statement will occur when the meeting reopens.

(03:16:13) Executive Session – State Librarian’s evaluation

(03:21:23) Motion was made by Carmen Cuthbertson and seconded by Peggy Taylor to schedule a consultation with state HR. The motion passed.

- **Elsie Arntzen-Absent**
- **Tom Burnett-Aye**
- **Carmen Cuthbertson-Aye**
- **Tammy Hall-Aye**
- **Brian Rossmann-Absent**
- **Robyn Scribner-Aye**
- **Peggy Taylor-Aye**

(03:22:56) Motion was made by Peggy Taylor and seconded by Carmen Cuthbertson to have a legislative statement work session. Taylor withdrew her motion.

(03:25:22) Motion was made by Carmen Cuthbertson and seconded by Peggy Taylor to schedule a work session for January 3. The motion passes.

- **Elsie Arntzen-Absent**
- **Tom Burnett-Aye**
- **Carmen Cuthbertson-Aye**
- **Tammy Hall-Aye**
- **Brian Rossmann-Absent**
- **Robyn Scribner-Aye**
- **Peggy Taylor-Aye**

(03:26:07) Chair Scribner asked if there was any more public comment.

(03:27:07) Meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

Minute document created by Tracy Cook, 12/12/2024.