

Montana State Library Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, June 13, 2025

Time: 10:00 a.m.

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

Recording: [YouTube Recording](#) (unedited closed captioning also available)

Attendees

Commissioners Present:

Robyn Scribner (Chair), Tom Burnett (Vice-Chair), Tammy Hall (via Zoom), Peggy Taylor, Brian Rossman, Carmen Cuthbertson (via Zoom), McKenna Gregg

MSL Staff:

Jennie Stapp, Malissa Briggs, Nicole Lepinski, Tracy Cook, Colet Bartow, Marilyn Bennett, Sharon Hardwick, Sean Anderson, Andrea Pipp, Bryce Maxell, Cara Orban, Evan Hammer, Amy Marchwick, Rebekah Kamp, Savannah Sill

Guests:

Lisa Coligan (State Human Resources), Mark Herring (Winthrop University), Crystal Andrews (Montana Office of Public Instruction), Julie Murgel (Montana Board of Education), McCall Flynn (Montana Board of Education), Alina Prunean (Belgrade Public Library Director)

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Time: [\(00:00:00\)](#)

Chair Robyn Scribner called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., welcoming Nikki Lepinski as a new staff member and recognizing staff milestones for Sharon Hardwick (5 years) and Andrea Pipp (10 years). The Commission highlighted Andrea's work in the Natural Heritage Program and Sharon's dedication to state government service.

2. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

No changes or additions were made to the agenda.

3. Consent Agenda – Action

Time: [\(00:04:31\)](#)

[March 26 meeting minutes](#) - A correction was recommended for the March 26, 2025, minutes: the request to read ELSA recipients' names was made by Tammy Hall, not Carmen Cuthbertson.

[\(00:05:00\)](#) Motion made by Commissioner Hall to accept the consent agenda without the minutes of March 26, 2025; seconded by Commissioner Rossman.

The consent agenda (excluding the March 26 minutes) was approved unanimously by voice vote.

(00:07:57) Motion made by Commissioner Hall to accept the corrected minutes of March 26, 2025; seconded by Commissioner Taylor. The corrected minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

4. [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2026 Budget – Finance Committee](#) – Action

Time: (66:76:09)

The FY26 budget was presented, with discussion focusing on minimum pay increases and the salary for the Montana History Portal Librarian. Commissioners questioned the high starting pay for the position, with clarification that the figure included benefits and was at the low end for the classification. Concerns were raised about outreach and travel funding, which had been reduced per previous Commission preferences.

Motion made by Commissioner Burnett to approve the budget as presented; seconded by Commissioner Gregg. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. [FY 2026 Federations Plans of Service](#) – Action

Time: (66:73:81)

Tracy Cook presented the Federation plans, noting that most funding was allocated for trustee development. Commissioners discussed the number of trustees attending training, with requests for after-action reports on trustee training utilization. There was debate about the rationale for additional funding to coordinator libraries, with explanations that these libraries handle administrative tasks for the federations. Some concern was expressed about neutrality and the use of legislator “Read” posters in libraries, with a consensus to clarify the Commission’s non-endorsement of political content.

(00:35:02) Motion made by Commissioner Taylor to accept the Federation plans; seconded by Commissioner Rossman. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. State Agency Continuing Education Programs Panel

Time: (66:93:86)

A panel with McCall Flynn, Julie Murgel, and Crystal Andrews discussed educator licensure, ARM review, and professional development. The panel emphasized quality assurance, local control, and the importance of stakeholder input in rulemaking. Commissioners asked about the approval process for professional development providers and the measurement of outcomes, with panelists explaining the balance between state standards and local needs. The discussion highlighted agreement on the value of local control and the need for clear standards, though some commissioners expressed concern about the rigor of provider approval.

7. [Subcommittee update & Commission discussion](#)

Time: (67:09:70)

Colet Bartow reported on a survey of library directors, revealing a strong need for new hires with customer service skills and for trustees to better understand their roles and responsibilities. The subcommittee recommended separating hard skills from soft/local topics, requiring pre-approval

of providers, and considering proof of mastery or testing out of required courses. Commissioners discussed phasing in changes and the need for legal consultation, agreeing on the importance of a quick start guide for trustees and commissioners. There was consensus on the need for more oversight of certification providers, with some debate about the balance between flexibility and rigor.

8. State Librarian Evaluation Instrument Options

Time: (68:10:13)

Lisa Coligan from State HR presented the state's performance evaluation system, emphasizing SMART goals, competencies by job level, and confidentiality. Commissioners discussed the flexibility of evaluation forms and the importance of clear, measurable goals. There was agreement on the need for transparency and continuous feedback, with no major disagreements.

9. [Shortened Trustee Manual Review](#)

Time: (69:8:16)

Tracy Cook led a discussion on the essentials for new trustees, with a focus on the need for a quick start guide and the simplification of the manual. Commissioners reviewed content from other states' manuals and agreed that a concise, accessible guide was necessary. There was consensus on the importance of providing both comprehensive resources and a brief overview for new trustees.

10. Excellent Library Services Award Subcommittee Update

Time: (69:9:10)

The subcommittee reported that the award had lost value and now functioned as a participation award. Commissioners debated whether to retire the award, with some noting its historical value and others questioning its current relevance. The decision was deferred to the next meeting for formal action, with general agreement that the award's criteria and purpose needed review.

11. [Research Resources Overview](#)

Time: (69:19:6)

Marilyn Bennett presented on digital resources, the TRAILS Consortium, interlibrary loan tracking, and the resource sharing dashboard. Commissioners discussed eligibility for library cards and access to resources. Marilyn agreed to provide additional information and links to access resources.

12. [Considering Changes to the Open Hours Public Library Standard](#)

Time: (60:6:02)

Commissioner Burnett proposed reducing required open hours for public libraries by 30% and allowing annualized reporting, citing decreased visitation in recent years. Commissioners discussed the flexibility this would provide, particularly for seasonal and small libraries. Some expressed concern about potential reductions in services, but most agreed that local trustees should have discretion. Alina Prunean, the Belgrade Public Library Director, made a public comment in favor of the proposed reduction in required open hours. She said the flexibility in hours would provide her library with the opportunity to save on costs and put that portion of their budget

toward increasing their digital outreach and expanding services. The Commissioners agreed the administrative rules process should be initiated for this change.

13. Presentation: Uniform Procedure for Selection or Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Time: [\(60:37:08\)](#)

Mark Herring presented on South Carolina's model for selection and reconsideration of instructional materials, focusing on legal standards and neutrality. Commissioners discussed distinctions between school and public libraries and protections for children. There was agreement on the importance of clear procedures, though some concern was expressed about censorship and local control.

14. [Legislative](#), [Federal Funding](#), and [Administrative Rules Updates](#)

Time: [\(60:03:73\)](#)

Jennie Stapp summarized legislative changes, including program budget separation and recordation fee increases benefiting GIS. The Commission discussed the impact of these changes and the stability of IMLS federal funding. Procedures for administrative rules and public involvement were reviewed, with agreement on the importance of transparency and communication.

15. Standing Reports

Time: [\(60:67:15\)](#)

Jennie Stapp and staff presented the [FY25 Work Plan Dashboard](#), [staffing memo](#), [grants and contracts memo](#), [CE dashboard](#), [Hot Spot Program final report](#), and preliminary [FY26 work plan](#) priorities. Commissioners discussed project tracking, remote work, job descriptions, and the need to improve internal reporting tools. There was debate about the number of remote workers and the need for more detailed job descriptions, with staff agreeing to provide additional information at the next meeting.

16. [Commission Goals and Objectives](#)

Time: [\(60:08:38\)](#)

The Commission reviewed meeting motions and staff directives to confirm intent, prioritized agenda items for the August meeting, and held officer elections. Robyn Scribner was re-elected Chair and Tom Burnett elected Vice Chair, both unanimously. Commissioners agreed on the need for continued focus on transparency, communication, and strategic planning.

17. [Public Comment](#)

Time: [\(60:69:00\)](#)

Written public comment in support of IMLS funding was shared.

18. Other Business & Announcements

Time: [\(60:51:18\)](#)

Commissioners discussed MLA and ALA affiliation, the posting of job descriptions, and future agenda items. The next meeting is scheduled for August 13, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., Montana State Library, Helena, MT.

19. Adjournment

Time: [6:27:30](#)

Motion by Brian Rossman to adjourn, seconded by Peggy Taylor. The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Minutes were prepared by Nicole Lepinski on June 16, 2025

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