



Montana State Library Commission

October 8, 2025 Business Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Belgrade Community Library, Belgrade Montana

Recording Link: [2025, October 8 Montana State Library Commission Meeting](#)

Attendance:

- **Commission Members Present:** Robyn Scribner (Chair), Tom Burnett, Carmen Cuthbertson, McKenna Gregg, Brian Rossman, and Peggy Taylor.
- **Commission Member Absent:** Tamara Hall
- **Staff:** Jennie Stapp (State Librarian), Malissa Briggs (Central Services Administrator), Victoria Gersdorf (Admin), Tracy Cook (Lead Consulting Librarian), Colet Bartow (Continuing Education Coordinator), and Erin Fashoway (State GIS Coordinator).
- **Guests:** Federation Coordinators Jonna Underwood (Golden Plains), Abby Dooley (Tamarack), Nancy Schmidt (South Central), Valerie Frank (Pathfinder), Susan Gregory (Broad Valleys), Sarah Peterson (Sagebrush), Sarah Widger (Montana Library Association); Taylor Moorman (Montana State University); Mitch Grady (Livingston-Park County Public Library)

Call to Order and Introductions

Timestamp: 00:00:00

- **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.

Consent Agenda Timestamp: 00:02:37

- **Items:** August 13, 2025 meeting minutes
- **Motion:** To approve the consent agenda as presented.

- **Moved by:** Peggy Taylor
- **Seconded by:** Tom Burnett
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

Federation Reports – FY2025

Timestamp: 00:03:21

- **Discussion:** Federation Coordinators presented updates on trustee training, infrastructure, and programming. Highlights included:
 - Golden Plains: 10 trustees attended training; suggestion to host a future meeting in Miles City.
 - Tamarack: Cost of living challenges continue and renovation in Polson led to increased patronage at the North Lake County Library.
 - South Central: Mini trustee training sessions and OWL camera use expanded access for board meetings and trainings, particularly due to the increase in remote participation in meetings.
 - Pathfinder: 1/3 of library usage from Library2Go in some libraries. Frank reports that without Federation funding, they would not have been able to afford the most basic services for library patrons- access to digital books is important.
 - Broad Valleys: After canceling the spring retreat, the Federation equally distributed funds to federation libraries; Bozeman Library reported 326,000 visits and 1,600 programs.
 - Sagebrush: Over 50% of patron transactions are done via Library2Go; infrastructure grants used for ADA compliance. Like South Central, access to technology to allow for remote meetings has helped to facilitate training and trustee meetings, allowing for strong and active boards.
- **Motion:** To approve the FY2025 Federation Reports.
- **Moved by:** Carmen Cuthbertson
- **Seconded by:** Brian Rossmann
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved by voice vote.

Montana Geospatial Information Plan (FY2026–2028)

Timestamp: 01:06:48



- **Discussion:** Fashoway presented the plan and explained funding, grant program goals, and flexibility for future updates. Priorities of the plan are to continue to standardize Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) and other geospatial information; improve MSDI's data value, expand GIS coordination and to create and updated and sustainable grant program.
- **Public Comment:** None
- **Motion:** To approve the Montana Geospatial Information Plan for State Fiscal Years 2026–2028 as presented.
- **Moved by:** Peggy Taylor
- **Seconded by:** Tom Burnett
- **Vote:** Unanimously approved.

State Librarian Evaluation Process

Timestamp: 01:20:35

- **Discussion:** The Personnel Subcommittee (Scribner, Burnett, Taylor,) reported on the evaluation process. It is recommended that they utilize the Talent system as required by the State and the Commission agreed to use a checklist provided by Commissioner Hall and to document the process for future use. Taylor suggests any action that is taken on this requirement in the future to be put in writing. The evaluation process will begin in November.

Legal Services Update Timestamp: 01:23:01

- **Discussion:** Stapp reported that the Department of Justice's Agency Legal Services Bureau was dissolved. Interim legal support is being provided by the Department of Administration (DOA) and the Governor's Office. DOA is working with the Governor's Office to find solutions for agencies in the meantime, although they currently do not have a fully-formed model for support.

Montana Library Association (MLA) Relationship Audit Timestamp: 01:26:02

- **Discussion:** The Commission reviewed a staff-prepared audit of MSL's relationship with MLA. Topics included:

- Value of MLA's conference and communication tools and the subsequent interest in continuing them as suggested by Taylor and Scribner.
- Concerns about diversity, equity and include-related programming and library neutrality.
- MLA's affiliation with the American Library Association and its implications.
- Public comments from MLA representatives and library directors emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and open dialogue.
- **Next Steps:** The Commission agreed to revisit the topic at the December meeting.

MSL Learn Platform Update

Timestamp: 02:19:55

- **Presentation:** Bartow presented an overview of MSL Learn, the State Library's online training platform. The system has documented over 500 course completions since its launch. Trustees can earn certification through the platform, which integrates with the ASPeN system. Improvements are currently being made to the ASPeN legacy system.

Break rolling into lunch from 11:45am to 12:30pm

Presentation: Artificial Intelligence and Libraries

Timestamp: 02:28:09

- **Presentation:** Taylor Moorman (MSU) presented on Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy and its implications for libraries. Key points included:
- Generative AI is a predictive tool that is good at pattern recognition, it is not truly intelligent. It does not generate unique thoughts and conversations, instead, it mirrors the person who is using it.
- AI is best for supporting work rather than replacing work.
- AI literacy is essential for students, library staff, and the public. Because AI is changing rapidly, the best resources for information on AI are peer-reviewed articles rather than books.
- Libraries should support critical thinking and human-centered engagement.
- MSU initiatives include interdisciplinary faculty collaboration, machine learning labs, and open-access resources.



Standing Reports and Information Items

- Stapp described the impact of the government shut down, MSL was able to do a funding draw-down to keep MSL funded through the month of October and they will work with the Governor's budget office to figure out solutions to maintain funding past October as needed. Caution is needed in terms of spending funding moving forward until the shutdown is resolved. Stapp is optimistic when it comes to access to federal funding and are trending towards normal. Federal budget negotiations are currently ongoing.

Interim Budget Committee House Bill 864 Resource Sharing Study Report

- In response to questions from Cuthbertson, Stapp explained that should this legislative study result in a legislative appropriation to fund resource-sharing, how the appropriation is made, including funding sources and spending priorities would be up to the Legislature.

Commission Goals and Objectives- Commission

Standing Committee appointments

- Chair Scribner appointed Scribner, Burnett, and Cuthbertson to the finance committee; Scribner, Burnett, and Taylor, to the personnel committee; and Burnett, Taylor, and Rossman to the union negotiations committee.

Future Suggested Agenda Items

- The December agenda will include the FY 26 first quarter financial report, administrative rules actions, approval of 2026 meeting dates, a presentation on the Montana 250 Committee from the Montana Historical Society, initial discussion of the Commission's 2026 goals, and the State Librarian evaluation.
- Commissioner Cuthbertson will offer a presentation on equity vs. equality.
- The next meeting is on November 3rd for the public hearings on the administrative rules actions from 9:00am to 11:00am. Taylor will not be present but will watch the recording as soon as she can.

- The written public comment on the administrative rules actions will be closing on November 7th and will be made available on November 10th.

2025 Commission Goals Status

- The commission has agreed on the instrument to be used for the State Librarian's evaluation.
- Administrative rules actions are progressing as planned
- All other goals are complete or ongoing.

Public Comment

- Sarah from the Miles City Public Library says that they received an ALA Transforming Communities grant that allowed them to exceed ADA standards for their entrances and exits, and with leftover funds they also bought inclusive furniture. The George McCone Library has received \$46,000 in the last 5-6 years from the same grant program which has allowed them to add more civics books, music books to address their struggling music program, and CD players and audiobooks for reluctant readers. They purchased a wheelchair for onsite use and created a large accessible restroom. With this grant, they've increased tangible lasting change for library accessibility that they would not have been able to do without those funds.

Other Business and Announcements

- Brian Rossman will be resigning from his position at the commission because he has accepted another opportunity elsewhere. He has informed the Commissioner of Higher Education of his resignation and has reached out to potential candidates and MSU to help recruit his replacement.

Adjournment

Timestamp: 04:00:001

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