

**GENESEE DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
at
Genesee District Library Headquarters
5:30 p.m.
4195 W. Pasadena Ave
Flint, MI 48504
September 15, 2025
Minutes**

Call to Order: 5:33 p.m.

Present: Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky.

Also Present: P. Parker (Corporation Counsel), D. Conklin and A. Goldyn.

Absent: Conerly-Moon and Steffey.

Public Comments: None.

Approval of
Consent Agenda: J. Towarnicky moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey, Towarnicky; nays – none.

Board Development: P. Parker gave an overview of the millage election process, possible ballot language and local Tax Increment Finance Authorities (TIFAs). A. Figueroa stated there is a digital application you can use to help with tracking campaign donations and reporting. D. Conklin stated that would be very helpful when the election committee is formed. J. Towarnicky inquired what month would we prefer for the millage election. D. Conklin stated he recommends August 2026 because it is the gubernatorial primary election because it will be free.

Corporation Counsel:

GDL Foundation: J. Towarnicky stated the Foundation will contribute \$500 towards the millage campaign when an election committee is formed.

Written Reports: J. Towarnicky noticed, in the Director's Report, that the Flint Journal Archive numbers have doubled. D. Conklin stated it is the usage number through NewsBank. J. Towarnicky inquired of OPAC is replacing Libby. D. Conklin stated OPAC is Online Public Access Catalog is a listing of our holdings, which includes Libby.

D. Hostetler offered kudos to D. Conklin for trying to keep the MTA bus stop at Headquarters from being eliminated. D. Conklin stated he was not the only person lobbying to keep it.

D. Hostetler inquired how the first meeting of Union negotiations went and D. Conklin stated they just established the ground rules.

D. Hostetler stated that the millage talking points were very helpful.

D. Hostetler stated he is very impressed with booking Daryl Davis as the keynote speaker for the annual Black History Month Brunch in February. L. Ryals-Massey reminded everyone that the deadline to nominate someone to be an honoree for the Award of Excellence is September 30.

Written Reports
(continued):

D. Hostetler noted that the Grand Blanc story trail has been updated. He stated that he takes his grandson there.

L. Johnson inquired if we are paying Daryl Davis to be the keynote speaker at the Brunch and who is on the committee to decide the speaker. D. Conklin stated that the committee members are diverse. L. Johnson stated that she had spoken to several people and Daryl Davis may be controversial. D. Conklin stated that the performance contract has been signed and the committee overwhelmingly supported having him. D. Conklin stated that Daryl Davis will also play the piano for us. D. Conklin inquired if L. Johnson had watched any videos about him. L. Johnson replied that she had watched several videos and listened to several podcasts. She stated that there are some things that Daryl Davis does and says that are quite controversial with younger folks. L. Ryals-Massey stated that a Board Member is appointed to the Brunch Committee; however, that person has not been active lately and said that L. Johnson could be on that committee and asked if L. Johnson would like to serve on the BHMB Committee. L. Johnson stated she would like to be on the committee.

L. Johnson asked for clarification on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library participation. D. Conklin stated that the Federal funding for the program has ended and it is being discontinued.

L. Ryals-Massey stated that one of her church members had called the Grand Blanc branch about getting a library card and was told she is not eligible since she has a Flint Public Library card. She stated that the church member did rave about the grant writing program she attended at Grand Blanc. D. Conklin stated he will look into the matter, but added that City of Flint residents are not eligible for our premium content, like e-books, and that may be part of the confusion. A. Figueroa inquired why Flint residents cannot access that content. D. Conklin stated that it has to do with the vendor's restrictions when it was set up.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if the parents of the kids that created an incident at the Beecher branch had been contacted. D. Conklin stated the parents were contacted. L. Ryals-Massey inquired if there have been any more problems there. D. Conklin stated that since school has started, there have not been any further incidents.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if any efforts had been made toward identifying a new location for the Genesee Valley location if the GDL chooses to maintain a marketing location. D. Conklin stated the mall location still has traffic; however, it is a shadow of its former self. D. Conklin stated that the original intent of that location was a marketing tool. He continued to say it will remain open until the current lease expires at the end of 2027 unless the mall closes before then. P. Parker stated that we are not supposed to look for new locations. He continued to say that our founding documents state that we are not supposed to own or maintain any buildings other than the Headquarters. A. Figueroa stated that when the current lease is about to expire then we maybe we could use those funds for online services as we are shifting to more virtual services.

L. Johnson inquired about a contract on our current website hosting. She stated that if that contract expires around the mall lease expiration that would be great. D. Conklin stated that our Digital Services Librarian handles the content for our website. L. Johnson stated she is inquiring about the website hosting. D. Conklin stated that the annual hosting fee is approximately \$100, but he will look into it and get back with an exact answer.

L. Ryals-Massey offered kudos to K. Collins, Digital Services Librarian, for everything he is doing.

**Written Reports
(continued):**

L. Ryals-Massey stated she highly recommends everyone attend one of our 3-D printing programs. She also recommends attending other programs as well.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if there is a way to know which schools are participating in the Summer Reading Program. D. Conklin stated he is not sure if the registration form has a place to enter a school name, but he will look into it.

L. Johnson stated that cuts to the Medicaid healthcare program will be made in the next couple of years. She stated the Genesee County Health Department is thinking about putting a healthcare navigator at the local libraries to help people who need it. D. Conklin thinks that would be a good partnership.

D. Hostetler inquired why we have accumulated more interest than budgeted. A. Goldyn replied it is the jumbo certificate of deposit (CD), which we did not have when the 2025 budget was prepared.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired when the Finance Committee should meet to discuss the 2026 budget. A. Goldyn replied that ideally a meeting should happen in late October or early November to review the 2026 budget. She stated that would help answer all questions prior to the regular meeting in November. L. Ryals-Massey stated that it is our practice to attend sub-committee meetings to air out questions prior to the regular meetings. A. Figueroa agreed that the work should be done in committees.

Monthly Statistics:

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if we still capture the circulation by municipalities. D. Conklin stated that we used to provide that information; however, he has tried to streamline the statistical reports for easier reading. A. Figueroa stated that once a quarter, she would like to see the breakdown by location or zip code.

L. Johnson stated she noticed a decline in program attendance and inquired why. D. Conklin stated that our virtual programs have taken a hit because of the recent turnover in the Digital Librarian position.

Finance Committee:

Nothing to report.

**Personnel/Policy
Committee:**

D. Hostetler stated that D. Conklin will give the committee a list of this year's accomplishments in November. He inquired if everyone was comfortable completing the Director's evaluation using Google Docs. He stated that he will reach out to K. Collins, Digital Services Librarian, to help him create the Google Doc. L. Ryals-Massey stated we may need K. Collins to teach the Board how to properly use Google Docs. D. Hostetler stated the committee would need to have the feedback by the end of the year. He continued to say that it would also be the ideal time to complete a Board self-assessment form.

L. Ryals-Massey stated D. Conklin ordered the books she requested on board development. She stated that the books will be available for Board Members to check out any time and they contain a lot of great information, especially for new Board Members.

A. Figueroa stated the committee asks Board Members to announce when they attend a webinar or conference. She stated that she attended the Trustee 101 webinar and asked if there is a Trustee 102. D. Conklin replied that there is a Trustee 102 webinar and he will email the link to her and L. Johnson.

D. Hostetler stated there is an online Library Policy retreat for Boards on September 27. He stated it is sponsored by United for Libraries, which is a subset of the American Library Association, and it is free. He stated that there are two main topics: library policy

Personnel/Policy

Committee (continued): and artificial intelligence. L. Ryals-Massey asked D. Hostetler to share the link with everyone.

L. Ryals-Massey asked D. Conklin to talk about memberships to Michigan Library Association (MLA) and/or American Library Association (ALA). D. Conklin stated that Board Members can always register themselves for memberships with MLA and ALA and we will reimburse you. He stated that all Board Members have a membership to MLA. He stated that your email addresses are on file and you should be receiving email updates from them.

**Tax Increment Finance
Authorities:**

P. Parker stated that he will have C. Stritmatter find out how many Tax Increment Finance Authorities (TIFAs) there are and have him report it at the next meeting. He also said that at times we may have the ability to opt out of the TIFAs.

**Proposed Scheduled
Closings in 2026
(Action Item):**

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if the proposed scheduled would change and D. Conklin replied only if the Union added a holiday during negotiations. L. Johnson inquired if they are all paid holidays and D. Conklin stated some are paid holidays and others are just dates we are closed. A. Figueroa moved to approve the proposed scheduled closings in 2026 as presented. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey, Towarnicky; nays – none.

**Proposed Board Meeting
Dates in 2026
(Action Item):**

J. Towarnicky moved to approve the proposed Board Meeting dates in 2026 as presented. Motion supported by A. Figueroa. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey, Towarnicky; nays – none.

**Board Elections
(Action Item):**

P. Parker stated he would officiate the election process. He called for nominations for the Board Chair. J. Towarnicky nominated L. Ryals-Massey. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. P. Parker called for further nominations; however, none were forthcoming. J. Towarnicky moved to close nominations and declare L. Ryals-Massey the Board Chair. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

P. Parker called for nominations for the Vice Chair. J. Towarnicky nominated D. Hostetler. P. Parker called for further nominations; however, none were forthcoming. J. Towarnicky moved to close nominations and declare D. Hostetler as Vice Chair. Motion supported by A. Figueroa. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

P. Parker called for nominations for Secretary. L. Ryals-Massey nominated J. Towarnicky. P. Parker called for further nominations. J. Towarnicky nominated A. Figueroa. P. Parker discussed how to proceed with more than one candidate. A. Figueroa respectfully declined. A. Figueroa moved to close nominations and declare J. Towarnicky as Secretary. Motion supported by L. Ryals-Massey. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

P. Parker called for nominations for Treasurer. L. Ryals-Massey nominated A. Figueroa. P. Parker called for further nominations; however, none were forthcoming. J. Towarnicky moved to close nominations and declare A. Figueroa as Treasurer. Motion supported by

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L. Ryals-Massey. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Hostetler, Johnson, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Committee
Appointments
(Action Item):

L. Ryals-Massey stated she would like the committee members to remain the same. She stated since L. Johnson is not currently assigned to a committee, she would like her to be on the Finance Committee.

Millage Language
(Action Item):

Discussion tabled.

Millage Election Date
(Action Item):

L. Ryals-Massey stated this was discussed and agreed that millage would be on the August primary ballot because it will be free.

Strategic Plan
Adoption
(Action Item):

L. Johnson expressed her concerns about the strategic plan. Further discussion centered on the data results; goal building; and reporting progress updates. L. Ryals-Massey stated that the plan should begin in 2026 and some of tonight's discussion points be inserted. D. Conklin inquired if it should be tabled and L. Ryals-Massey replied yes.

Board Comments:

D. Conklin stated that the annual staff in-service will be on October 13 and Board Members are invited to attend.

L. Johnson stated she would like to be given some talking points as a Board Members for public events. L. Ryals-Massey stated that typically we let D. Conklin be the spokesperson or defer to Corporation Counsel.

A. Figueroa wanted to thank whomever changed the language on the door sign for the meeting. D. Conklin stated that A. Goldyn made the change.

L. Ryals-Massey thanked the Board for their emails, cards and flowers after her daughter's sudden passing. She also thanked D. Hostetler for chairing the July meeting in her absence.

L. Ryals-Massey reminded the Trustees of the upcoming MLA Conference in Lansing, 10/29-10/31/25 and that D. Conklin was presenting.

Adjournment:

8:02 p.m.