

GENESEE DISTRICT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
at
Genesee District Library Headquarters
5:30 p.m.
4195 W. Pasadena Ave
Flint, MI 48504
March 16, 2026
Minutes

- Call to Order: 5:30 p.m.
- Oath of Office: C. Stritmatter administered the oath of office to G. Poletti, who replaced T. Barnes as a Grand Blanc Township appointee.
- Present: Figueroa (at 5:32 pm), Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky.
- Also Present: C. Stritmatter (Corporation Counsel), D. Conklin, J. Ekleberry and A. Goldyn. Public: T. Carlton, A. Berry, A. Klebba and A. Naber.
- Absent: None.
- Public Comments: T. Carlton, Chapter Chair for AFSCME 496, stated she is concerned about how long it took for Administration to take action on patron incident that happened at the Clio branch in October 2025. She stated the employees just want to feel supported by the Administration and their safety concerns are addressed.
- Approval of Consent Agenda: J. Towarnicky moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion supported by D. Hostetler. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey, and Towarnicky; nays – none.
- Board Development: J. Ekleberry, the Technical Services Manager, gave a presentation on his daily responsibilities. He answered questions from various Board members.
- Corporation Counsel: C. Stritmatter had nothing to report.
- GDL Foundation: J. Towarnicky stated the Foundation voted to donate \$1,000 for the Summer Reading Program and \$1,000 to the annual Black History Month Brunch.
- Written Reports: Director's Report
- A. Figueroa inquired if the purchase policy revision go to the Finance Committee before going to the Policy Committee and D. Conklin replied that it can go to the Finance Committee first.
- J. Towarnicky stated the technology tutoring is a great way to meet the needs of the community.
- L. Johnson inquired if the purchasing policy changes were recommendations from the audit process. D. Conklin replied that this is an internal recommended change.
- L. Ryals-Massey inquired about D. Conklin's take on The Librarians film. D. Conklin stated that it was quite interesting. He further stated that some libraries around the

Written Reports
(continued):

country are seeing different types of censorship happening and how these libraries are handling it. He stated there was a panel of various library Directors who answered questions. She inquired if we could get a digital copy of it so the Board members could see it. J. Ekleberry stated he will check into it.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if we have spent any of the funds donated by D. Davis. D. Conklin stated that it was placed in the Headquarters gift fund; however, about \$8,000 was used to finish the remodeling of the bathroom at the Mount Morris location.

L. Ryals-Massey thanked D. Conklin for the information regarding going fine free. She inquired what is driving the push to go fine free. D. Conklin replied it is to remove monetary access barriers for people using the Library. D. Conklin stated he has resisted this trend for some time because it has been a source of revenue for us. He stated that since more people are using our digital materials, which is fine free, that source of revenue has steadily declined over the last few years. He further stated that because we are in a good financial position, we no longer need that revenue source.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired if the E-rate funding would cover the cost of the wiring at the new Flushing building. D. Conklin explained that the E-rate funds were used to re-wire the network cabling at the old Flushing building. He stated that moving the contents from the old location to the new building and connecting to the fiber network cost made up the approximate \$100,000 cost mentioned in his report.

L. Ryals-Massey stated that State Legislators are looking at ways to ease the property tax burden on seniors. She stated this is in addition to possible penal fine changes. She wanted the Board to be aware of this because it could impact the GDL's revenue in the future.

L. Ryals-Massey offered kudos to K. Collins for his tech tutoring sessions.

L. Ryals-Massey stated that she received mostly positive feedback about the annual Black History Month Brunch. She stated there were only a couple of negative comments and expected people to give public comments today, but they did not show up.

L. Ryals-Massey asked D. Conklin for more information regarding the incident mentioned in the letter from employee, P. Ponzetti. D. Conklin stated it was a confusing situation involving two different women and their children, which wasn't clear in the staff's incident report. He stated the first woman had a bad interaction with a staff member and then left. He stated the second woman had a bad interaction with the same staff member, did not handle it well and threw the book at staff. D. Conklin stated that he and A. Klebba reviewed video footage of the incident. He stated that was when they realized it was two different people. He stated it took a couple of days to investigate it further to ensure the correct woman was banned from the Library. He stated that we always encourage staff to call 911 whenever they do not feel safe in these types of incidents; however, staff did not call 911 in this case. L. Ryals-Massey stated that we certainly want staff to feel safe and supported by Administration. She inquired if it is a policy that small children will be accompanied by an adult while visiting the Library and D. Conklin replied that is our policy. D. Conklin stated that since then a Safety and Security Committee meeting has been held and P. Ponzetti is on the committee.

Finance Manager's Report

D. Hostetler complimented A. Goldyn for her outstanding budget management and ending the 2025 year with the expenditures under budget.

Written Reports
(continued):

L. Johnson questioned the Barracuda firewall purchase in the check register. A. Goldyn stated that is listed on the Equipment Replacement Fund report and not the check register. D. Conklin stated that the Equipment Replacement Fund is basically a savings account to help offset the cost of replacing equipment in the future.

A. Figueroa marveled that the OPEB fund is 162% funded. A. Goldyn stated that she made it a top priority to make sure it was fully funded.

D. Hostetler mentioned that the February revenue was down compared to the same time in 2024 and 2025. A. Goldyn replied that it depends on when the County Treasurer's office starts distributing the property tax funds.

L. Ryals-Massey stated she noticed that there was no grant revenue in 2025. D. Conklin stated that the State eliminated the little grants we had applied for in the past. B. Gow stated that a lot of grant opportunities have just disappeared. A. Figueroa stated that more entities are competing against each other for the few remaining grants.

L. Ryals-Massey inquired about a check to Midwest Collaborative for Library Services and wanted to know if it was related to Midwest Tape. A. Goldyn explained that we get several of our databases from Midwest Collaborative for Library Services, while we get DVDs and audio materials from Midwest Tape. A. Goldyn also stated that our MeL delivery service is billed through Midwest Collaborative for Library Services.

L. Johnson inquired if there was a certain dollar amount for purchases or contracts that must go to the Finance Committee for approval. D. Conklin stated that new contracts for services/materials over \$25,000 need to go to the Board for approval. D. Conklin also stated that some of the checks over that amount were approved during the annual budgeting process. A. Goldyn stated that most of the large checks written are because multiple invoices were being paid at the same time. B. Gow inquired if the auditors would review those invoices and A. Goldyn replied they always do. L. Ryals-Massey stated that the auditors ask the Board to share any questions or concerns with them as they begin the audit process. A. Goldyn stated that all the Board members should have received a questionnaire from the auditors. She also stated that the auditors will be at the May meeting to present the final audit report and they will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Monthly Statistics:

D. Hostetler stated he believes there's a typo in the statistical narrative. He stated it probably should say 2025, not 2024 and D. Conklin replied that it should be 2025.

L. Ryals-Massey stated if you have a different idea of how to present the statistics to please get with her to see if it can be done.

Finance Committee:

Nothing to report.

Personnel/Policy
Committee:

D. Hostetler stated that the committee met on January 10. He stated that they are trying to see if there's any interest in doing a Board self-assessment. He stated that A. Figueroa has provided a self-assessment form. He stated that it would be included in the next packet. He asked the Board members to then review it and provide feedback at the May meeting. D. Conklin stated that if he sends it in the May packet, it only gives everyone about a week to review it. D. Hostetler stated he will email it to D. Conklin tomorrow to distribute it to Board members before the May packet to allow more time to review it.

D. Hostetler inquired if there was any interest in having an off-site Board retreat. B. Gow stated she really likes the idea of visiting our other branches.

Personnel/Policy Committee
(continued):

D. Hostetler stated A. Figueroa suggested taking a few minutes after each meeting to jot down some notes about how the meeting went and hand it in. He believes this would help promote better communication. D. Conklin suggested working out the details of who should receive the notes before implementing it. L. Ryals-Massey stated that she would hope that if someone has an issue that it could be discussed after in person.

Tax Increment Finance
Authorities (TIFAs):

D. Conklin stated that we partner with municipalities to bring libraries and library services to our communities. He stated that these municipal partners support various TIFAs throughout Genesee County and fighting TIFA funding would likely cause awkward relationships between us and partnering municipalities. He stated that funding these TIFAs over the past ten years has not been detrimental to us and recommends the Board remove the previous directive of opting out of TIFAs at every opportunity. A. Figueroa inquired if we opt out of a TIFA then we don't get the money. D. Conklin stated that if we opt out of a TIFA, then we get the money instead of the partnering municipalities. B. Gow inquired if we can only opt out in millage election years. D. Conklin replied we can only opt out when they are forming. C. Stritmatter stated we can opt out when they are changing their boundaries or seeking a renewal of the TIFA. D. Hostetler moved to rescind the previous Board directive to opt out of TIFAs at every opportunity. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Millage Language:

C. Stritmatter stated that he drafted two different ballot language resolutions. He stated that the County Equalization Director will not have the estimated revenue figure until late April or early May. He also stated that the County Equalization Director is still verifying the various TIFAs that have to be listed on the ballot proposal. B. Gow stated she would like to see how the proposed language compares to the ballot language used ten years ago and C. Stritmatter stated that it is very similar. L. Ryals-Massey inquired what happens after we decide which resolution to use. C. Stritmatter stated that it goes to the County Equalization Director to get the estimated revenue amount and TIFA list and then it goes to the County Clerk. A. Figueroa moved to approve resolution number two for the ballot language. Motion supported by J. Towarnicky. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none. J. Towarnicky moved to approve the resolution approving the millage renewal ballot proposal and include the language from resolution two. Motion supported by L. Johnson. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

2025 Budget
Adjustments:

A. Goldyn stated the budget amendments do not increase the overall budget total. She stated it is simply reallocating funds to the various budget line items as required by government accounting standards. J. Towarnicky moved to approve the 2025 budget adjustments. Motion supported by A. Figueroa. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Strategic Plan:

After much discussion, the strategic plan approval was tabled until the May meeting.

HQ HVAC Update
Quote:

D. Conklin stated that the HVAC equipment in the Headquarters building is outdated and needs to be replaced. He stated that he attempted to get multiple quotes to present to the Board; however, he only received one vendor quote. He stated that Goyette couldn't provide a quote on the asbestos remediation because they do not do that type of work so the figure he used is just an estimate. B. Gow inquired if it would make sense to switch to a furnace instead of using a boiler. D. Conklin stated it would not be cost effective to change to a furnace because it would require changing the pipes that are already in place. He also stated that because of the size of the building, he does not believe a furnace

HQ HVAC Update Quote
(continued):

would be very efficient. J. Towarnicky moved to approve the HVAC replacement proposal and asbestos abatement provided the total cost does not exceed \$450,000. Motion supported by B. Gow. Roll call: ayes – Figueroa, Gow, Hostetler, J. Johnson, L. Johnson, Poletti, Ryals-Massey and Towarnicky; nays – none.

Director's Evaluation:

D. Hostetler stated that every November/December it is the Board's job to evaluate the Library Director's performance for the year. He stated that every Board member and Department Manager is asked to complete an evaluation form. He stated the Personnel/Policy Committee then combines the different evaluation scores to determine an average performance rating. He stated that out of a possible score of five, the Board ranked D. Conklin's performance at 4.068. He stated the Managers' rating averaged 3.25 for a combined score of 3.659. He stated that D. Conklin has received a copy of the evaluation feedback. He stated that no action is required on this item as it is just simply recorded in the minutes.

Board Comments:

L. Ryals-Massey welcomed G. Poletti and thanked him for willing to serve on the Board.

J. Towarnicky offered kudos to our new printing services. She stated that her home printer ran out of ink. She stated that M. Fecher was very helpful getting her through the printing process. She said that while at the Grand Blanc location, the parking lot was packed and there was a yoga class in session in the branch.

J. Towarnicky also offered kudos for the Libby and Hoopla services. She stated that several people have commented how much they enjoy using those services.

A. Figueroa stated she and L. Johnson are attending a Michigan Library Association (MLA) advocacy day presentation on April 28. B. Gow asked A. Figueroa to forward the information to her.

L. Ryals-Massey stated that the American Library Association (ALA) has several talking points for Board retreats.

B. Gow stated the Family Service Agency is holding an annual gala fundraiser on Friday, May 15. She stated it is similar to the annual Black History Month Brunch.

Adjournment:

8:05 p.m.