

# ST. HELENS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 10, 2025, at 7:15 PM  
Virtually over Zoom

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## APPROVED MINUTES

### Members Present

Chair Fatima Salas  
Member Jay Echternach  
Member Ellen Jacobson  
Member Kelsey Knutson  
Member Jana Mann  
Member Lynn Pettit  
Member Erin Wheeldon

### Members Absent

Member Rob Dunn  
Vice Chair Aaron Martin

### Council Liaison in Attendance

N/A

### Visitors

None

### Staff Present

Library Director Suzanne Bishop  
Library Board Secretary Dan Dieter

## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:16 p.m. by Chair Salas.

**VISITOR COMMENTS** *Limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.*

No visitor comments.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes from the regular board meeting, October 13, 2025, were reviewed.

Motion: Upon Member Echternach's motion and Member Pettit's second, the Library Board unanimously approved the regular board meeting minutes dated October 13, 2025. [Yeas: Chair Salas, Member Echternach, Member Jacobson, Member Knutson, Member Mann, Member Pettit, Member Wheeldon; Nays: none]

## OLD BUSINESS

2. STRATEGIC PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Library Director Bishop stated that there are plans to connect the subcommittee with a staff member from the State Library who is familiar with strategic planning. There will be a report about that at the next board meeting.

3. MAKERSPACE FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE REEPORT: Member Echternach stated that he has updated his membership with the Grant Watch website, which lists thousands of foundational grants. This will give access to regional as well as state grant opportunities. The Oregon Community Foundation grants fall into subsets that include community engagement, education, arts and culture, health and wellness, economic and community vitality and homelessness. They give anywhere from \$3,000 to \$50,000 for capital improvement, staffing and even budgets. Director Bishop stated that connection donations through the Friends of the St Helens Public Library (Friends) would work well because they are a 501(c)(3) and can take donations that the City can't because they are a governmental agency.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

4. 2026 MEETING DATE SCHEDULE: The schedule was introduced and the group discussed whether any meeting dates needed to be cancelled. The group agreed that the schedule for next year can remain the same as last year. The meeting calendar will be approved by resolution of the City Council at an upcoming City Council meeting.

## **LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Bishop stated that the library has received an Oregon Heritage grant for \$4,323 that will allow us to have the University of Oregon digitize the issues of the St. Helens Chronicle from 2015 to 2024. We are partnering with the Museum Association for this project, as they own some of the original paper issues. Adult Services Librarian Herren-Kenaga will hand-carry the issues down to the University of Oregon for digitization and will be able to check in with the archivists as well. Tom Myers gave a talk on birding with kids last Saturday that was very successful. There were 35 participants. Tom Myers is a third-grade teacher from Scappoose and has written a book about birding with kids. The Domestic Violence Awareness Month march kicked off from the library courtyard last Saturday. We opened the big gate, and it all worked really well. The Trunk or Treat was cancelled this year, but the packets that were going to be handed out have since been split up between the library, City Hall and the Recreation Department for distribution. We participated in the Kiwanis Children's Fair with our partner the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program. Youth Librarian Wiersma was able to connect with about 200 people during the activity. We are co-hosting with the Elks for their Warm Welcome program, which collects hats, mittens and coats for distribution to the local Head Start program. We will be holding our first interviews for the newly vacated Library Assistant position next Thursday and Friday. We had 82 applicants. The interview committee will be the Library Director, Library Assistant Karmartsang and Friends of the St. Helens Public Library President Nancy Tarnai. The second set of interviews will be the following Tuesday and will include a tour and a book sorting test. We have inaugurated our weekly email newsletter. This will highlight what's coming up and have little features about something interesting that's happening. We have QR codes that will allow patrons to sign up. We are participating in the 250<sup>th</sup>, that's the semi quincentennial, of the Declaration of Independence next year. There will be plans to hold events by several groups like the Elks and the Kiwanis, and the library will also have special programming, which might include additions to our Summer Library Challenge. The next quarterly report to City Council will be December 3. This report will be show, for example, how many programs we have held and how many people have been in the library. The City Council will also be voting and changing the requirement for having a semiannual report from each department to an annual report. Federal and State funding are not looking very good right now if the federal government does not open by November 30. It is possible that the state library will have to lay off library services staff. The President's budget essentially zeros out the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) budget, so there will likely be some negotiating to keep some of those services going

forward. Our Ready to Read grant funding for the reading program next year may be reduced 2.5 – 5 percent. There are two other grant possibilities available through the State Library. One is for accessibility in the library, so with that we might be able to replace the ADA paddles on the south entry doors. It might also allow for adding materials to the collection for patrons with dyslexia, or support for computer literacy. We will be closed Thursday November 27 through Saturday November 29 for the Thanksgiving holiday. I will be gone on November 20 and 21. We received an anonymous note in the suggestion box that appears to be from one of our kiddos. It was very thoughtful and warms the heart.

### **COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT**

No council report available.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Member Pettit stated that the Friends of the St. Helens Public Library (Friends) have reorganized, and Nancy Tarnai is the new President, and Nancy Kotkins is the new Secretary. They have updated their brochure and their next meeting is December 3. They are also repairing the little library located behind the courthouse.

Member Jacobson and Member Mann described the local author project. There will be several activities as part of the festival scheduled for next year. There will be three targeted workshops for writers, some write-ins, as well as an anthology celebration and a local author book sale. Member Mann will also run FebWordary, the writing challenge that will replace the activities from the National Novel Writers Month (NaNoWriMo) which the local writer's community no longer supports. There will be a kickoff event and a closing event. It would be helpful if these activities are listed in the new library newsletter. We've talked about the library being the living room of the community and this festival will highlight that. The library will also place the local author material in a special collection that will be housed and available through the library.

### **SUMMARIZE ACTION ITEMS**

Chair Salas described the action items. The subcommittees will continue to meet and report back to the board.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Salas adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Dan Dieter  
Library Board Secretary