

ST. HELENS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Monday, April 13, 2026, at 7:15 PM
Virtually over Zoom

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present

Chair Fatima Salas
Vice Chair Aaron Martin
Member Rob Dunn
Member Ellen Jacobson
Member Kelsey Knutson
Member Jana Mann
Member Lynne Pettit
Member Erin Wheeldon

Members Absent

Member Jay Echternach

Council Liaison in Attendance

Mayor Massey

Visitors

None

Staff Present

Library Director Suzanne Bishop
Library Board Secretary Dan Dieter

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:18 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, March 9, 2026, were reviewed.

Motion: Upon Member Dunn's motion and Member Pettit's second, the Library Board unanimously approved the regular board meeting minutes dated March 9, 2026. [Yeas: Chair Salas, Vice Chair Martin, Member Dunn, Member Jacobson, Member Knutson, Member Mann, Member Pettit, Member Wheeldon; Nays: none]

OLD BUSINESS

2. STRATEGIC PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Library Director Bishop stated that she is working on scheduling a meeting with a consultant from the State Library Association. The consultant will meet with the Strategic Plan Subcommittee when it is scheduled.

3. MAKERSPACE FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: No report available.

NEW BUSINESS

4. BOARD MEMBER REAPPOINTMENTS: The board discussed two members whose terms will expire at the end of June 2026. Both members agreed to be reappointed.

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Martin's motion and Member Dunn's second, the Library Board unanimously recommended the reappointment of board members Martin and Pettit. [Yeas: Chair Salas, Vice Chair Martin, Member Dunn, Member Jacobson, Member Knutson, Member Mann, Member Pettit, Member Wheeldon; Nays: none]

The board discussed the proposal of scheduling board meetings every other month starting after the May 2026 board meeting. Vice Chair Martin asked if there were any conflicts with the board's bylaws. Library Director Bishop stated that there was no conflict. [From St. Helens Public Library Bylaws: The library board shall meet as often as deemed appropriate by the board but not less than once every other calendar month or as otherwise directed by the city council.]

Motion: Upon Vice Chair Martin's motion and Member Knutson's second, the Library Board unanimously approved an every-other-month meeting schedule starting with the May 2026 board meeting. [Yeas: Chair Salas, Vice Chair Martin, Member Dunn, Member Jacobson, Member Knutson, Member Mann, Member Pettit, Member Wheeldon; Nays: none]

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Bishop stated that the Thursday closures started last week. All four full-time staff were present during the closure and reported productive planning time. Staffing reductions have already occurred, as the three library assistants were laid off, their last day will be June 21. There is the possibility of an additional reduction in hours, depending on library service requirements. Staff will review tasks and produce a list of services that can be maintained with reduced staffing. Any decisions will be implemented over the next few weeks. We have had some folks express concerns and a lot of people noticed the press release and how it was covered in the Spotlight. We have about 15 active volunteers with an additional 8 volunteers supporting the makerspace. Some of the volunteers provide specialized skills, for example, computer repair and 3D printing. Losing volunteer capacity would significantly reduce makerspace services. Friends of the Library are providing funding and volunteer labor as well, enabling programs that the operating budget cannot cover. We will explore deeper engagement of volunteer skill sets to preserve core services. Youth and makerspace programs will remain a high priority. We intend to keep those as robust as possible going forward. Several staff will attend the Oregon Library Association joint conference in Portland. Circulation is about 62,000 items per year right now, and we have been adding new materials to the shelves, with our volunteers wrapping after cataloging is done. Some of our digital database subscriptions and some online services will be reduced. Our makerspace budget was \$7,000 two years ago, but now it is \$4,500. Our budget for purchasing materials has been cut by 20% this year. We will consult as a staff to make some decisions

on how to readjust services and supplies and materials that we can manage. Some of the projects and programs this year were cut in half, and the only reason we were able to keep some of them is because of the generous help of the Friends. We have a great team, and we will figure it out. We appreciate your help. Mayor Massey wanted to commend Library Director Bishop for her passion. Member Wheeldon asked if it is assumed that the fee passes, will that alleviate any of the cuts that have already happened, or is it just to prevent future cuts. Library Director Bishop stated that to help balance the current fiscal year, assuming the \$24 fee passes and the 20 hours of furlough each week for full-time staff takes effect, the city should just have a positive balance for this fiscal year. The first goal is to take the reserves back to 20% from the budgeted 4%. Mayor Massey stated that other City funds are healthy, it is the tax base that funds the General Services Fund bringing in \$2.17 million that is covering costs of \$13 million. Director Bishop stated that if the measure doesn't pass there will be a significant city deficit going into the next fiscal year. Chair Salas asked what sort of information is being shared with the community? Mayor Massey stated that one of the things that she wished would have been explained better is the allocation of the funds from the measure. What percentage goes to which department, recreation, library, administration, or the police. Member Wheeldon stated that she thought that the flyer the city made was very helpful and really opened her eyes to how little is being paid in St. Helens compared to other communities. Chair Salas stated that an initial step might be to reach out to our personal contact to share information. Mayor Massey stated that if it doesn't pass in May, we need to keep moving to get more information out there.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

I really appreciate the positivity. Hopefully we can turn a corner, and I value each one of you and appreciate everything that you're doing for the youth and adults in our community.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business.

SUMMARIZE ACTION ITEMS

Chair Salas stated that perhaps we can follow up as a board and come up with a loose plan of how to share information prepared by the library to the community.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Salas adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Dan Dieter
Library Board Secretary