

ST. HELENS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Monday, May 12, 2025, at 7:15 PM
Virtually over Zoom

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present

Chair Aaron Martin
Member Jay Echternach
Member Ellen Jacobson
Member Jana Mann
Member Lynne Pettit
Member Erin Wheeldon
Member Diana Wiener

Members Absent

Member Robert Dunn
Vice Chair Fatima Salas

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 7:15 p.m. by Chair Martin.

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

No visitor comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes from the special board meeting, April 14, 2025, were reviewed.
2. Minutes from the regular board meeting, April 14, 2025, were reviewed.

Motion: Upon Member Pettit's motion and Member Echternach's second, the Library Board unanimously approved both the special board meeting minutes dated April 14, 2025, and the regular board meeting minutes dated April 14, 2025. [Yeas: Chair Martin, Member Echternach, Member Jacobson, Member Mann, Member Pettit, Member Wheeldon, Member Wiener; Nays: none]

OLD BUSINESS

3. STRATEGIC PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Chair Martin stated that the subcommittee did not meet prior to this meeting and there will be an update at the next regular board meeting.

4. MAKERSPACE FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Member Echternach stated that he met with the Elks about funding for the Makerspace and two different groups offered funds. One was \$750.00 and one was \$250.00. The Elks were also planning to direct a donation from a future Spaghetti Night fundraiser. Member Echternach stated that he and his wife were going to add to that donation with an additional \$500.00 as well, so the total would be \$1,500.00. The group discussed how funding should be accepted and that it could go directly to the City, or it could go to the Friends. Director Bishop also stated that former board member Colleen Ohler is also working on in-kind donations that would cover items like plumbing and electrical services.

NEW BUSINESS

5. BOARD TERMS: Director Bishop stated that the three members who have terms expiring at the end of June are Member Dunn, Member Mann and Member Wiener. All three are eligible to continue for another term if they choose to do so. Member Wiener stated that she has decided not to continue. Member Mann stated that she would like to continue. We will look for a response from Member Dunn at the next board meeting.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Bishop thanked Member Wiener for her support of the library and her presence on the board. The Budget Committee will be meeting this week, Thursday, to continue the discussion about the City's budget. There is a substantial budget deficit that needs to be made up and some of the things that the City is looking at are timber sales, across-the-board budget reductions for every department, and an option of a \$10.00 to \$42.00 monthly general services fee that would apply to anyone who pays property tax. Also under discussion are options to reduce or eliminate cost of living adjustment (COLA) for employees as well as an option for an eight-hour per employee per month furlough. The employee furlough option would mean significant reductions in services for library patrons and programs, including a reduction in hours. This would mean a reduction of open hours by up to two half days per week. This would mean a cutback of programming, including at least three youth programs and several Makerspace programs. We talked about reducing the number of certification 101 classes and, unfortunately, Head Start and some of the other outreach programs so we can maintain our popular and necessary bread-and-butter programs. If our part-time staff were reduced, then we would reduce our ability to complete essential projects. If the building isn't open then this would have an impact on our hallway users, which includes people meeting for WorkSource mentoring, tutoring, teen meetups, as well as members of our vulnerable community who are just looking for a place to be safe. Member Wiener asked if the Budget Committee acknowledged that during hard economic times the library is even more valuable than at other times. Member Jacobson asked about the impact on staff morale and if they might be potential retention issues. Eight hours a month would have a substantial effect on part-time staff. The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding for the State Library was received. Fiscal year 2026 is still up in the air. We received about \$4,500 this year for the teen internship program and our summer library challenge. I'm cautiously optimistic at least for the end of this fiscal year. Again, lots of questions. The City Council has decided that like the Planning Commission and the Parks and Trails Commission the Library Board will have joint meetings with the City Council twice a year. Our first joint meeting is August 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. It will be a hybrid meeting held in council chambers. The one after that will be February 25, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. We have many Summer Library Challenge programs lined up for adults and children this year. We are asking for volunteers for some of them, just to help with backup. We would be grateful for any board members who can help. There is a signup sheet at the front desk. Member Pettit talked about the recent Friends of the St Helens Public Library sale. The sale went well, and the Friends

are now trying to get a Square for electronic payments, which should improve sales even more. The Seed Library is going gangbusters. We've had many people come in to get seeds, and the Master Gardeners are meeting once a week to replenish the packets. I attended the Oregon Library Association conference at the end of last month. It was a great opportunity to check in with other library directors and get support for our library programs. Our Makerspace is growing. We have shelving going in for the local history collection, some of which will take a bit of work to put into the catalog. We would like to name the local history reading room and we are looking for suggestions. We have a few ideas, like the Loowit Room, but we are looking for a few other options so feel free to forward any that you would like to be considered. Member Wheeldon volunteered to work with Brenda on this project.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

N/A

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business.

SUMMARIZE ACTION ITEMS

Chair Martin described the action items: The board was asked to submit some names for consideration for the local history collection room, the strategic plan subcommittee will report on their progress at the next meeting, and Member Wheeldon will work with Brenda on naming ideas.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Dan Dieter
Library Board Secretary