

**CITY OF BOULDER
BOULDER, COLORADO
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETING
MINUTES**

Name of Board/ Commission: Library Commission	
Date of Meeting: March 7, 2018 at the Meadows Branch Library, 4800 Baseline Rd.	
Contact information preparing summary: Jennifer Phares, 303-441-3106	
Commission members present: Alicia Gibb, Joni Teter, Tim O'Shea, Juana Gomez	
Commission members absent: Joel Koenig	
<p>Library staff present: David Farnan, Director of Library & Arts Jennifer Phares, Deputy Library Director Monnie Nilsson, Meadows Branch Manager</p> <p>Others present: Robin Gard, former co-lead of Fort Collins library district campaign and Poudre River Library Trustee and Mary Atchison, former co-lead of Fort Collins library district campaign and Poudre River Library Trustee.</p> <p>Members of the public present: None</p>	
Type of Meeting: Regular	
Agenda Item 1: Call to order and approval of agenda	[0:00:25 Audio min.]
The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Two agenda changes: Item 6: Master Plan project update was changed to a break to celebrate Commissioner Gibb's service to the library. Added Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) update under Item 9: Library Commission update.	
Agenda Item 2: Public comment	[0:00:52 Audio min.]
None	
Agenda Item 3: Consent agenda	[0:01:20 Audio min.]
<p>Item 3A, Approval of February 7, 2018 Meeting Minutes Teter submitted one in her comments which are part of the handouts. Gomez asked to include her statement concerning the homeless issue being central. Every demographic reported some concern. The commission talked a lot about they could do about it. She stated that it seemed less of a concern if it is not emphasized in the minutes. She wants to ensure that the Library Commission is addressing people's voiced concerns about the homeless population at the library. Unanimously approved as amended.</p>	
Agenda Item 4: Discussion on forming a library district	[0:04:55 Audio min.]
<p>Guests Robin Gard, former co-lead of Fort Collins library district campaign and Poudre River Library Trustee and Mary Atchison, former co-lead of Fort Collins library district campaign and Poudre River Library Trustee.</p> <p>Farnan introduced the guests. He clarified that the City of Fort Collins opposed the district which was incorrect rather "they folded their arms and said good luck".</p> <p>Atchison reported that it has been 10 years since the Fort Collins public library became Poudre River Public Library District and it has been very successful. At the time she was on the library advisory board, the City of Fort Collins had categorized the city budget into three tiers. The library was included in the third tier, the "nice to have" quality of life programs. Tier three programs had to compete with programs in the other tiers for funding. Library funding went down for years and staff and hours were cut. The library went to voters in the 1990s to build a new library. It was voted down, because it was coupled with funding for a new performing arts center.</p> <p>Over two to three years, the board worked to better position the library by doing a public relations campaign that included public officials. Board members spoke to neighborhood groups to inform the community about forming a district. In 2006, the board formed a campaign group and began consulting with Attorneys Kim Setter and Jacqueline Murphy to draft the ballot measure. City council was not in favor of the ballot initiative. The board pointed out that if the measure were to pass the city would get almost \$4 million back for the city budget. The campaign group leveraged the fact that the public loves the library. They collected signatures for the petition to get the item on the ballot outside the library and distributed</p>	

campaign yard signs. The campaign consolidated support for the library. The measure passed in November and in January 2007 the library began reinstating positions and services that were previously cut, and the library budget almost doubled.

Atchison described the process for forming the new library district board. Prior to the election, the seated advisory board members were interviewed and selected for the district board. The first meeting of the library district board of directors was held in March 2007 and officers were elected. The board appointed a subcommittee to negotiate with City to work out issues around property transfer and how the board would work with city council. The district contracted with the City for finance and Human Resources (HR) services and has since hired its own HR manager. Nothing changed for the staff in their day-to-day roles or their pay and benefits. They were elated to be able restore service levels that were previously cut. Some of the more challenging issues that the district had to negotiate with city were the capital property and what would happen to the impact fees collected for the library. The district received part of the park that the downtown library is located in. The City was building a library at the time, but it did not have the funds to operate it. This was a huge campaign point. The board did a rebrand and selected a new name for the district. The library board had authority to make decisions rather than making recommendations to city council. The benefit for the library and the community was that that the board no longer had to fight for council's attention or for funding.

Gard: There was not really a downside for the library to form a district. The transition is a lot of hard work, but it is straight forward. The board did a careful study of the positions that were cut. There is no better day as board member than the day we got to reinstate staff. They used the cut in storytime hours as leverage for the campaign. They felt it was effective to make the patrons feel the pinch and get them to see there are consequences to not funding the library. The staff concerns with forming a district were related to continuity with pay and benefits and the board met with staff to discuss concerns. The fact that the district chose to contract with the city for payroll and HR was reassuring to them.

Gard: There is a lot of good training available through the American Library Association. The board has the responsibility of hiring, firing, and evaluation of the library director, setting the budget, and making policy. Atchison: It was made clear to the board members that it was not their job to select books or get into operations. They were there to support the director and the library. The process was smooth. Gard: Kim Setter, attorney, helped to establish clear roles for the board. The board was fortunate to get several members with a variety and depth of experience. Atchison: An attorney sat in on the board meetings for the first few years to help address legal issues, questions about transparency, and assist the board with meeting requirements for reporting.

Gard: The negotiation with City took more than a year. Several complex issues had to be worked out. The city held several pockets of money given for different library purposes. The board had to negotiate for that money. The library had three different service models: one shared with a university, one in a retail center, and the old Carnegie Library which was in library park but not used as a library. The negotiations were not adversarial. It was 'new ground' and everyone wanted to be careful. The board presented to council each year on the status of the district.

Gomez: Is the board required to report to city council? Atchison: It wasn't required but it was part of the agreement with the city. The board was accountable only to the voters. Gard: The board hired a communications person because they wanted to communicate about what the library was doing. The only opposition during the campaign was from the Chamber of Commerce and it was strictly a tax issue. The Chamber did not actively oppose the library. One of the first things the board did was reinstate the business librarian position and rebuilt relationship with the Chamber. Atchison: When a district is formed, the board's accountability shifts from the city council to the voters. The board members felt great responsibility to community and did outreach and research to show that they were accountable. Gard: Most residents likely don't know who runs the library. They just want the library to work to be a great place and have lots of resources.

Teter: How were the district boundaries determined? Atchison: They used the school district boundaries. The town of Wellington wanted a library, but the residents didn't want to be taxed for it. The district had to go court to get a decision. Gard: Redfeather had its own district, and Loveland opted out of being part of the district in the beginning. Wellington did not and could not opt out after the district was formed. Atchison: Because the district is not within the city boundaries, at some point in the future when the demographics show it, a library will probably be built in Wellington. It was considered as in the library strategic plan, but the data did not show a need yet. Gard: Staff has put more efforts into outreach to people outside the city limits.

Teter: How many of the board members are from the county and from the city? Atchison: The board is not divided that way. Farnan: Who appoints board members? Atchison: A county commissioner and a city council member interview the applicants and make the appointments. The call for applications goes out to the county.

Farnan: What percentage of the population is outside the city? Atchison: Maybe 15 percent.

O'Shea: What was your budget before the district? Gard: \$3.8 million and after the district passed it raised to \$7.6 million immediately. O'Shea: that's been consistent? Gard: No. The 2018 budget is \$10.8 million.

Gibb: Where did the bridge money come from? Gard: The property taxes were collected immediately. Atchison: The first disbursement was April 15. She did not recall what funds were used between Jan.1 and April 15.

Gomez: The board had to negotiate with city council and the county commissioners? Gard: Just the city. Atchison: Only the city for property. Gomez: Were there other municipalities that the board negotiated with? Gard: Timnath. There was a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) issue with property. They did a storytime in Timnath and the Council Tree Library that opened later is very close to Timnath. Atchison: There are no other formed towns in the district. LaPort is an incorporated town. Residents wanted the district to build a library there. The district declined.

O'Shea: How is funding managed around developing services or expansion of facilities? Atchison: The district conducts strategic planning processes every three years. It looks at demographics and population to ensure services are provided distributed. There is capital plan for facilities. A big remodel was completed for the downtown library built in 1976. Gard: When the district formed, it had money that was not needed immediately so it saved those funds and applied them to the \$4.5 million renovation project. The district did not have to go back to the voters because it had saved the money. Funding for further expansion is a different story.

O'Shea: A campaign takes some time to build. With respect to the voter support, during the campaign process, what were the lessons learned? Atchison: This wasn't the first campaign that we have been involved in. We had relationships with many community members. We talked to the people we know. At the time, the school district had an issue on the ballot and the county also had one. They campaign group decided to move ahead despite the other ballot issues. Gard: We were very fortunate on the timing. Atchison: 2007 is when this started and when the recession started. Lesson learned are building coalitions, making sure that the people who love the library understand how the library has had to cut back, and talk about the benefit the library brings the community. Gard: You have to share your pain a little although it goes against the grain for librarians. They want to make everyone happy. The voters need to know there are consequences.

O'Shea: BPL received a \$5 million gift through the extension of the city's sales tax. It has been vexing that the library is lumped into packages where it is the feel-good item to get votes. We've expanded services. It sounds like you were pulling back services. Atchison: They had to. BPL has a harder sell. One lesson learned from the 1990's library ballot item, the library needs to go on its own. The performing arts center that the library item was bundled with didn't have the support that the library did, and the question didn't pass. It's harder to make a case if the library is expanding. It could be made by projecting the need in the future. You can talk about how successful library districts are throughout CO. O'Shea: You mentioned there was incentivizing around the money returned to city. Was there much resistance in negotiating that money, the property or contract for services? Gard: The city didn't bear ill will, city council was a little nervous. They were involved in selecting the board members. They looked for applicants with particular skill sets. It was complicated to figure out what to do with everything, the property, the money designated for the library, etc. Farnan: Did the district pay cash for any of the assets? Atchison: Not the she recalled. It saved the city money for the board to clean, insure and maintain the facilities. Gard: It is a huge plus to have a group dedicated only to the library not having their attention divided over a complex government. City council was relieved once they realized the library was in good hands.

Gibb: Was the public concerned about not having a city library? Atchison: No. We assured them that the transition would be seamless and promised to restore services.

O'Shea: What was staffing like then compared to now? Gard: We don't know now. Seventeen positions were restored, and a new finance director and communications director were hired. In the past three years, the district hired an HR director, expanded the outreach department, and completed a reorganization.

Farnan: We compared BPL to three other libraries that became districts since 2000 (See [handouts](#)). The overall growth in staffing of those districts increased by 78% and BPL has decreased by 17%. The increase in revenues is close to 250%. BPL has increased and managed to stay almost 1% above inflation, roughly 44%. Teter: The shift is due to the shift in revenue source. The districts are no longer dependent on sales tax revenues. They have a dedicated funding source, and it is property taxes. Atchison: Property tax revenues are very stable. The prior fluctuation in revenue wasn't only due to sales tax, it was also due to city council's changing priorities.

Gibb: Were you involved in setting the mill levy? Atchison: No, we did have the expertise. The library director worked with the city and county finance departments to analyze what kind of revenue each mill would bring. Gard: They projected revenues out from 2007 for ten years. Funding levels were defined as ultra-conservative, conservative, mid-point, optimistic, and ultra-optimistic. Past the ten-year mark district funding is at the optimistic level. Atchison: I urged that the

mill levy should be set higher than needed to make sure the district had the money it needed in the future without having to go back to the voters.

Atchison: What are some of the concerns or questions that are holding you back? Gibb: That we don't set the mill levy high enough and we have go back to the voters within 5 years. Atchison: Agreed with the advice given at the February Library Commission, ask for as much as you think the voters will tolerate.

Farnan: Did anyone on city council ask to refund current mill levies that are going to the city back to the voters to make the cost of the library district be less? Gard: No. They were strapped and wanted the \$4 million back that was going to the library.

Teter: Our political situation is very different. It is not as dire. We have a council that would like to fund the library, but we look at the budget and don't see where that money is going to come from. And, we haven't got to the point yet where we're saying the city really can't fund the library.

Gibb: Did you discuss the logic problem of the city not being able to fund the library and not supporting the formation of the library district. Atchison: We address to their concerns about giving away the library resources and buildings to the district. They are not the property of the City, they belong to the voters. The community paid for those resources and buildings from taxes collected on behalf of the library. Gard: The resources remain in the community; the library district is part of the community.

Gomez: The issue I am concerned about is the design of the district boundaries. There are a lot of county people who don't want to incorporate with the city. Atchison: The district is 100% separate from the city. Gard: We did a lot of outreach to residents outside of the city. We promised to put book drops in outlying places. Discussion ensued about Boulder's population outside of the city, the maps ([See handouts](#)) that may be used to help determine the district boundary.

There was discussion of library users paying their fair share and the issue of annexation brought up by city council being a non-starter. Teter: We have to find a way to work with the City and at the same time distance ourselves so that we can address the concerns of some people outside the city who don't trust the City

Gibb: How do we make sure we have a responsible board that is willing to do even more than a commission? How do you get people who are serious about the work? Atchison: We had early conversations with city council and the library director about the qualities that we wanted in the board. Teter: How many members are on the board. Atchison: Seven. Two library advisory board members were appointed as members of the district. Gibb: When new members were appointed did the library board have any input about the skills needed of the new members? Atchison: It was a collaboration. Part of our responsibility as a campaign was to go around and shake the trees and find people to apply.

Agenda Item 5: Update on Main Library restroom renovation project funding [1:18:30 Audio min.]

The city manager will recommend to council to fund the Main Library restroom renovation (\$650,000) from library reserves in the General Fund. Although it didn't need the commission's favorable recommendation, Farnan asked for it. The commissioners were in favor of the funding plan and getting project started before the end of the year. Discussion ensued about the Library Fund described in the city charter and the library's restricted funds that reside in the General Fund.

Farnan directed the discussion to the library district memo in the packet and considerations for setting a mill rate. Teter: Going back to the city boundary question, would the county enclaves within the city be part of the district? It might change the numbers. We should find out if they be taxed as part of the district. O'Shea: When do we run into another library's turf? Farnan: We don't. There is no interest from those other libraries to join the district. O'Shea: What about the pocket along the Diagonal highway to Niwot? Farnan: The mountain neighborhoods and Niwot don't represent a lot of voters. Niwot is one of the areas the county recommended including. He has not spoken to Niwot yet and doesn't know if there are TIFs on the downtown. Teter: Louisville, Lafayette, Boulder and Superior all have defined growth boundaries. The proposed boundaries don't impede on these areas? Farnan: The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan is the best boundary; all areas in the county agree with the boundary, and it doesn't impede on any other areas. It doesn't include Niwot or the mountains.

Gomez: When do we stop trying to be neutral and come to a decision about forming a library district? Farnan: The commission can do as they choose. We want the Master Plan to be adopted first. The commission can make a recommendation whether to form a library district in the Master Plan. Teter: We need the elevator speech about what is critical for the library in the memo for council. It is a sustainable, dependable revenue source, flexibility with decision making, and the ability to respond quickly to needs of the community. We need to have something we can keep coming back to. The bottom line is we want a wonderful library, and we need those things to have it.

Gibb: Asked the commissioners to consider a few things in their future decision making. If you decide to form a district, set the mill levy for as much as voters will tolerate so the library can continue to grow. Fight for taking the money that was earmarked for the library for the district and remember the voters have approved of spending the money for the library on behalf of the community.

Agenda Item 6: Thank you, Alicia Gibb for serving the community as a Library Commissioner from 2014 to 2018 [1:38:58 Audio min.]

Farnan spoke about meeting Gibb and thanked her for her service. The commission took a break to celebrate Commissioner Gibb's service and review the maps (See **handouts**).

Agenda Item 7: Library Commission Update

[1:42:13 Audio min.]

- a. Matters from the Commission
 - i. Report out on meetings with City Council members
 - ii. Discuss letter to City Council outlining library funding needs
Teter described the draft of the commission letter to city council that was recommended by City Council Member Weaver about the library funding needs for the next two years. Farnan shared how staff would summarize the funding needs for the commission's memo and described how the staff is prioritizing the five year needs into three categories: critical, meet demand, and expansion of services. Farnan will ask the commission to rank the needs via a poll that he will send them via email. Gomez offered to work on the draft of the letter.
- b. Boulder Library Foundation update
BLF is hiring a branding and marketing firm to handle what Jane Sykes Wilson was doing with donation management.
- c. JLF Update
Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) update discussed scaling back the project with the organizers. They were not interested in scaling back rather they want to expand. Convention and Visitors Bureau will not be funding JLF. The City's funding for the project is contingent on the organizers meeting milestones developed from "lessons learned" gleaned through debriefs. One set of milestones address outside funding targets. Another set requires that certain program information be provided to the city on an agreed upon schedule, so that marketing for the festival could begin in the spring. (In past years, program information has not been available until July - about 6 weeks before the festival. This timing has been identified as a major challenge in drawing participants). Most of the milestones have not been met.

Funding gap is between \$60,000 and \$160,000. Discussion ensued about past funding sources and amounts and the cost per attendee. When asked to take a position on whether to support JLF for this year, the Commission decided to that it would be prudent to wait and see the outcome of these contractual discussions. Commission was advised that JLF may go directly to city council to ask for funding. Teter expressed concern with asking for a funding increase for JLF when the library will also be asking for increased funding. Commissioners agreed that, if an email campaign was launched, we would advise Council that funding for JLF is not a priority for the Library Commission. Teter volunteered to carry this message forward and to discuss it with the JLF Executive Director.
- d. City project representative update
 - i. EcoDistricts
- e. Responses to patron emails from the Library Commission

Agenda Item 10: Library and Arts Director's Report

[2:04:30 Audio min.]

- a. Changes to Homebound Delivery Program service model
- b. Q4 2017 Web use statistics
- c. BPL call center statistics

Farnan discussed highlights from the meeting room use, web and call center statistics. Teter: Is there any plan to look at shared daytime use arrangement or partnership for the meeting rooms? Farnan: The staff discussed ideas for a marketing campaign for the use of the meeting room. He would like to revise and relax the policies first. He promotes them twice per week. Gomez: Asked what do you get when you search "really good book"? Farnan encouraged her to try it. Discussion ensued about the results of such a search.

Agenda Item 9: Adjournment	[2:12:35 Audio min.]
There being no further business to come before the commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.	
Date, time, and location of next meeting:	
The next Library Commission meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at the Main Library, Canyon Meeting Room, 1001 Arapahoe Ave.	

Commissioner Teter approved these minutes on May 2, 2018; and Celia Seaton attested to it.