

Record of Proceedings

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE

BOULDER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

Held: Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Boulder Public Library, 1001 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, Colorado.

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Boulder Public Library District was called and held as shown above in accordance with the statutes of the State of Colorado. The following Trustees, having confirmed their qualifications to serve on the Board, were in attendance:

Doug Hamilton
Benita Duran
Tom Cosgrove
Sylvia Wirba
Cara O'Brien
Andy Sayler
Sam Fuqua

Also present were Courtney Intara from Seter & Vander Wall, P.C.; David Farnan, Director of the Boulder Public Library; Celia Seaton, Executive Assistant of the Boulder Public Library; Louise Fordyce, Digital Navigator Lead; Stacie Ledden, Stacie Ledden Consulting; and Chris Barge, Executive Director of the Boulder Public Library Foundation.

Members of the public present: None.

Person preparing summary: Celia Seaton

Type of Meeting: Regular

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order and Declaration of Quorum

Hamilton called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. noting that enough appointed trustees were present to create a quorum authorized to act on behalf of the District.

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment

None.

Agenda Item 3: Consider Approval of Minutes of February 18, 2025

Following motion from Cosgrove and a second from Wirba, these minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Introduction and Q&A: Stacie Ledden, consultant for the Marketing and Communications Strategy

Ledden previously worked for fifteen years at [Anythink Libraries](#), serving the residents of Adams County in Colorado. “Anythink” was the branding launched by Rangeview Library District after it gained independence from Adams County. Her charge was to “breathe life and voice into the Anythink brand,” working with communications. During her time with the organization, she oversaw the Innovations Department at Anythink (e.g., marketing, public relations, social media, public arts, special events) and worked as Director of Strategic Partnerships at Anythink Foundation. She expressed excitement at building meaningful connections with the community through messaging.

Ledden will conduct the marketing and communications assessment for BPLD during this “transitional” early period of forming a district, while the library is nearing the end of the strategy presented in the [2018 Master Plan](#) and preparing for the next approach.

Her work will involve meeting with specific staff focus groups including the communications team, programming and outreach staff, managers, and directors to gain perspective and gather information on needs to recommend structures that may be helpful both long and short-term. The final report will be provided to Farnan as well as Director of Business and Administration Jennifer Phares and Communications Manager Maria Tormos to guide development of the upcoming Communications Strategy Plan. A survey will be sent to the board to collect relevant feedback which will be synthesized into the report.

Duran asked about the nature of the outcomes that will be presented to Farnan. Ledden plans to provide “high-level philosophical recommendations” as well as some tangible items to “reimagine the way information gets from staff to the Communications team, and then out into the community.” She will examine potential streamlining measures while recommending project management tools and consideration toward outsourcing some of the duties.

Ledden shared a “branding pyramid” which serves as a “philosophical pillar to [her] work.” ([See handouts.](#)) The graphic has a foundation of “features” (books, staff, products, services). Atop features lay “benefits,” which underscore the highest tier of “emotional space” (safety, excitement, sense of belonging, etc.) Transformational experiences, when heard or directly felt, build community support and loyalty.

Farnan: the “branding [for public libraries] is strong.” The challenge to captivate the “mindshare of a busy public.” A strategy for this could be reiterating that key message to remind the public of its preexisting emotional connection.

“[The library] is the community of Boulder” per Cosgrove, during a time when “people are hungry for connection and community.” This resource is strengthened by the addition of new communities that comprise the district.

Ledden thanked the board for its time and welcomed trustees reach out to her for further discussion.

Agenda Item 5: Digital Navigator Presentation

Digital Navigator Lead Louise Fordyce presented on the [Digital Navigator Program](#) which is in the second year of its three-year pilot ([see handouts.](#)) Regarding funding, she indicated that [Serve Colorado](#) operates under an [Americorps](#) contract; the library is partnering with [The Learning Source](#), who holds the grant. Therefore, the library did not have to make a big investment up front to begin exploring and offering this resource to the community. As part of the Public Services department on the Patron Services team, Fordyce and staff had collected years of anecdotal data indicating the public desired one-on-one tech guidance. While the pilot began with drop-in visits, this service model transitioned to an appointment process that allows the navigator enough time to investigate or prepare instruction for future sessions.

The program arose as part of a national effort to “bridge the digital divide” and empower those with less experience or access to navigate these platforms and services. Colorado and Ohio are currently leading the country with this digital navigator programming.

Fordyce noted that some of the provided instruction is basic, providing patrons with competence to manage their devices and software (e.g., archiving emails, setting up Face ID, getting on a Zoom call). Meanwhile, patrons who need longer periods of assistance are given that chance to build a relationship with their navigator. She praised the patience and professionalism of Cheryl Kahikina and Jaime Ramirez, the two digital navigators that currently serve in a bilingual capacity at the library. Appointments are currently fully reserved for the next few weeks, indicating the community demand. The grant holder is currently applying for the third year of this pilot program.

The sessions occur at the library in the public space, to keep meeting or study room reservations open for other patrons or staff. Participants tend to graduate themselves out of the program or continue to return to learn new skills. Interested patrons contact digital navigators directly to arrange their visits. As of the first week in March, the Digital Navigation team has begun circulating their services at other branch locations.

Duran sees “a lot of potential with this program.” She wondered about alternative funding such as a Boulder Library Foundation grant: “in the future, would we want to grow this?” Staff replied yes. Discussing future expansion, Fordyce would like the capacity to regularly offer this program at all library locations to provide more equitable access. She has reached out to staff handling peer programs at libraries in Denver and Loveland to share strategy and insight.

Farnan emphasized that a digital divide remains, mainly impacting lower-income households and older adults. Access to public computing was a “monumental effort,” which he has seen achieved by public library systems in his career. However, he has seen a decline at the public computing

stations. In most cases the occupancy rate is 50%. Farnan: “I don’t know if [public computing] is an area in which we are going to grow any further.” The waitlist is long for the Makerspace laser cutter; he does not see the same demand for public computers.

Fordyce: many areas of the library district, including her own neighborhood up the canyon, have patchy or no internet coverage. The library thus serves as a “crucial hub for access to internet.”

Noting the ever-aging population, Fuqua views the Digital Navigator Program as a highly valuable resource: “I do not see [the need for such a service] going away.” Technology continues to evolve; these skills are necessary to understand how to safely navigate platforms such as online banking and health care portals. Fuqua: “Access may be ubiquitous, but help is not – and you need more as you get older.”

In response to Duran’s question, Farnan clarified that [Tech Drop-In](#) does involve volunteers, but the Digital Navigator Program does not.

Fordyce welcomed any member of the board to reach out to her by email if wishing to further discuss this program.

Agenda Item 6: Director Updates

Farnan reports the schedule for construction work at Gunbarrel library branch building as running “on target” - he welcomed any interested trustees to join him to observe the progress during an upcoming Friday afternoon. Pending permits involve plumbing and electric infrastructure, though trenching and other preparatory demolition work has already occurred. He expects the occupancy permit to be issued by the summer, when staff will enter to assemble shelving and other furniture and arrange the books and other materials. He noted two significant features in the upcoming construction: a fanciful archway greeting visitors to the children’s area and an accompanying reading nook. The space that previously served as a bank vault will also be receiving functional treatment for the new library. At April’s board meeting, Director of Programs and Events Jaime Kopke will provide a more detailed update on the Gunbarrel Library. Farnan expects that the branch building will likely open to the public by late summer/early fall 2025.

The March 14 presidential executive order demands that the Institute for Museum and Library Services be eliminated to the maximum extent allowed by law. Farnan clarified that the cancelled grants are restricted to those not statutorily required, and the State of Colorado’s are required by statute. The library and BLF do not receive any of this funding.

Farnan discussed the recent threat which was received by the library early Saturday morning. When an incident occurs, there is a “very rapid response.” As Farnan noted, this is “comforting” for occupants of a public building. The board suggested staff conduct refresher scenario training for fire drills and other emergency procedures.

Agenda Item 7: Boulder Library Foundation Updates

Barge: at BLF's last meeting, the Foundation approved all the library's grant requests, totaling \$394,000. This includes funding for the two-year pilot program of Boulder Writes. He reported that the new grant request process worked very well this year.

Barge announced "The 2025 Boulder Library Gala: Remarkable Night Creatures," planned for September 18. Shelby Van Pelt, author of *Remarkably Bright Creatures*, will be the featured guest. In honor of the novel, Main Library will be decorated as an aquarium set in the Pacific Northwest. The gala will run with the same format as last year's, with guests able to purchase either individual tickets or sponsorships for tables.

The Foundation is currently in the process of hiring a Director of Annual Giving to focus on major gifts.

Referring to the previous discussion of Item 5, he noted that many foundations fund their library's digital navigator program. He is glad to see the program take hold at the library.

Agenda Item 8: Trustee Matters

a. Consideration of a Motion to Accept the Revisions to Board Bylaws

Wirba referenced the adjustments as discussed at the previous meeting and [as indicated in the packet](#).

Duran made a motion to approve these amendments to the Board Bylaws. Cosgrove seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Staff will post the updated bylaws to the website and relay the signed document to the legal team.

b. Gunbarrel Library Branch Naming Discussion

The board discussed the [recent communication received from library staff member Sam-Amina Bailey](#). Hamilton asked the board to consider reviewing a policy on naming, which currently does not exist for the library.

Wirba noted the importance of process for an employee of the library who wishes to provide input. O'Brien discussed the value of allowing staff access to raise concerns with the board and keeping this "avenue" open. Wirba spoke to the "chain of command." Saylor: "There's nothing that prevents an employee from commenting as a member of the public."

Cosgrove found Bailey's proposal "intriguing" - "we have a chance here to do something new." In his view, "this is a bigger conversation for the community to explore," and he is interested in creating a significant community relationship.

Wirba stressed that the board should respect the decision-making process of the EDI Staff Committee. "As a Native person who has some skepticism about land acknowledgements," Wirba advised that this would be a lengthy process to carefully undertake and would require

consideration toward which other groups to involve in the conversation, while being “mindful that a lot of times land acknowledgements can come across as virtue signaling. ... This is not a priority for tribes.”

Cosgrove agreed that this endeavor would take time. He encouraged the board to consider a process of engagement to build a more meaningful relationship with representatives of Indigenous peoples. He suggested this topic be included in the retreat meeting agenda.

As Sayler noted, this is a broader community concern that shouldn’t be solely placed on the EDI Committee’s plate. Additionally, “we’d want to see a more concerted effort than one person.” He emphasized the importance of considering ways to engage with the matter more “holistically” than just in reference to the name on a wall (e.g., support of Native artists by purchasing pieces for the library’s collection).

Duran recommended developing a naming policy. In this case, she sees the “first stop” being the EDI Committee, followed by engagement with tribes and involving the community as a sort of “task force” in the effort. Fuqua agreed, though he doesn’t see the need for a written policy.

Farnan: consideration of the naming for this branch and development of a land acknowledgement were topics brought to the EDI Committee. Though not dismissing the idea, the committee didn’t feel it had the capacity for necessary research and outreach. Therefore, the committee turned down the consideration of these items.

As Farnan explained, there is reluctance around such naming “without the acknowledgement of the crimes committed and a commitment to reconcile the ownership of the land. ... Consultation involves mutual education and can take a lot of time.”

Sayler: naming occurs so rarely, a policy would only “tie the hands” of the board for future decisions. Duran sees a policy as helpful when naming decisions could be under public scrutiny. Hamilton polled the group on whether the board desires to review a naming policy: Duran and Hamilton indicated yes; Sayler, O’Brien, Wirba, Fuqua, and Cosgrove indicated no.

Hamilton discussed the upcoming evaluation process for the Executive Director. He and O’Brien volunteered to develop, distribute, and compile feedback from a survey on performance; the final review will be discussed and the contract modified, if necessary, during an executive session after the May board meeting.

Wirba asked about the board’s self-evaluation. Hamilton plans to conduct that process in advance of the August board retreat.

Representatives of [Create Boulder](#), a local art organization which serves as one of the funding sources for the NoBo Art District, recently contacted Duran. They requested a letter of support from the board related to pursuing recognition from the State of Colorado for the NoBo Art District. Hamilton asked Duran to relay the information she received to the larger board for further consideration.

Sayler alerted the group to [an upcoming article about the library and resiliency which he expects to be soon published by Boulder Weekly](#); Hamilton also spoke to the reporter for this story.

Agenda Item 9: Legal Counsel Updates

Intara noted that there were no legal updates.

Agenda Item 10: Adjournment

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at about 8:15 p.m.

Sylvia Wirba
Sylvia Wirba (Apr 21, 2025 14:33 MDT)

Attestation







03.18.25 BoT Minutes Regular

Final Audit Report

2025-04-21

Created:	2025-04-16
By:	Celia Seaton (seatonc@boulderlibrary.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAA0PdUgK9ti67CwV7sqnNqPk1ndtGj_WL0

"03.18.25 BoT Minutes Regular" History

-  Document created by Celia Seaton (seatonc@boulderlibrary.org)
2025-04-16 - 4:17:47 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to wirbas@boulderlibrary.org for signature
2025-04-16 - 4:18:12 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by wirbas@boulderlibrary.org
2025-04-21 - 8:33:02 PM GMT
-  Signer wirbas@boulderlibrary.org entered name at signing as Sylvia Wirba
2025-04-21 - 8:33:17 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Sylvia Wirba (wirbas@boulderlibrary.org)
Signature Date: 2025-04-21 - 8:33:19 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2025-04-21 - 8:33:19 PM GMT