

Marion County Library Board Meeting
Thursday, January 8, 2026 – 4:30 pm
Marion County Public Library

In attendance:

Seleta Rogers, Chair
Debby Ford, Secretary
Roger Presnell, Treasurer
Larry Bryant, Jr.
Cindy Haulk
Patricia Henson
Jessica Rodriguez

Also: Alan Harkness, Director, CVL
Katie Burnett, Assist. Director of Public Services, CVL Bailey
Carter, MCPL Branch Manager
Lizette Cruz, Administrative Specialist

- I. Call to Order
Chair Rogers called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM
- II. Public Comment
There was no Public Comment
- III. **Approval of October 9, 2025, meeting minutes.**
Chair Rogers asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 9, 2025. The motion was made by Ford to accept the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Haulk. Passed unanimously by Rogers, Ford, Presnell, Bryant, Haulk, Henson, and Rodriguez.
- IV. Treasurer's Report
Manager Carter covered the 2nd Quarterly Financial Review for 2025-2026. All budget items are on track for the 2nd quarter. The city has already made two-thirds of its yearly contribution to the library budget. Manager Carter asked the board to note the expenditures in the maintenance line. The amount includes updates to the fire panel and the new fire extinguishers. Manager Carter thanked Treasurer Presnell for setting up online banking, which makes it much easier to work with all around. The library has received a 50% reimbursement from the state for expenses related to the roof, fire panel repair, concrete repair, and handrails totaling over \$10,000.00. \$9,191. 62 of these funds must be used to fulfill grant-related upgrades. Manager Carter will go over those proposed upgrades under New Business on the agenda.
- V. Director's Report
Director Alan Harkness presented the director's report. Director Harkness went over the new CVL Winter Guide. Featuring CVL's 2026 program *Food & the Soul America*, in honor of the USA's 250 anniversary. Running from January through the end of March, the CVL will be hosting events throughout all seven library branches, including award winning culinary authors, historians, and chefs, along with food demonstrations, and activities around historical American food, for all ages.

The Columbus Children's Book Festival featuring award winning children's authors and/or illustrators, Louis Sachar, Sandra Markle, C.G. Esperanza, and John Patrick Green will take place on May 9th at the Columbus Public Library. All local events to the MCPL are listed the Marion County Public Library Events section of the guide, including the *Food & the Soul of the America* events, programs by the Pastoral Institute and the Mercer School of Medicine Teddy Bear Clinic program.

Director Harkness asked board members if they ever encounter State Senator Harbison or local state representative Cheokas, to make sure to thank them as their vote assisted the MCPL in receiving the reimbursement grant. As for the requests for capital money this year, the Stewart County Library Board has decided to postpone their renovation request for at least another year until they can decide on a plan to raise the matching funds needed for that request. At some point, the CVL plans to request funds for a new North Columbus Branch. Director Harkness expressed some minor concern on the laws coming up again for a vote this year concerning the liability held by librarians when it comes to books check out by minors.

Director Harkness reminded everyone about the system-wide library board training on January 31st and thanked those who have already RSVP'd.

VI. Local Library Report

Manager Carter gave her local library report. Coordinator Harp has been assisting the MCPL with setting up the new safety plan, updating all the fire safety equipment, installation of AED and safety maps, and medical emergency response kits.

Manager Carter went over the provided stats reports for MCPL. The MCLP has around 500 active card holders, over 4,300 items were circulated in the 2nd quarter. Visitors are slowly ticking up, with programs well attended. Winter Reading is going very well. The goal this year was thirty entries with 9,000 minutes read, and MCPL has already surpassed the 30 entries with more than 12,322 minutes read.

Manager Carter then went over all the outreach events attended by the MCPL staff, including book clubs at the high school, programs at Head start, different holiday festivals and events, and participating with the local senior care center. She also highlighted several upcoming programs including the Storytime with the Mercer School of Medicine Teddy Bear Clinic, an Art Lab with the Columbus Museum, the Garden Club Floral Workshop, and the extremely popular Pollinator Palooza Program.

VII. Unfinished Business

There was no Unfinished Business

VIII. New Business

i. Welcome new Board members.

Chair Roger welcomed new board members, Patricia Henson and Larry Bryant, Jr. to the Marion County Public Library Board.

ii. Elect a New Vice Chair

After some discussion, Presnell made a motion to elect Patricia Henson as the new vice chair. Motion was seconded by Haulk. Motion passed unanimously by Rogers,

Ford, Presnell, Bryant, Haulk, Henson, and Rodriguez.

iii. Vote to approve the receipt of ARSL grant funds of \$7,000.00.

Haulk made a motion to approve the receipt of ARSL funds. Motion was seconded by Henson. Motion passed unanimously by Rogers, Ford, Presnell, Bryant, Haulk, Henson, and Rodriguez.

iv. Vote to approve the expenditure of up to \$7,000.00 of the ARSL grant funds on the listed items:

a. New fire panel and field devices - \$5,00.00

b. Knox box - \$1,200.00

c. New Window - \$800.00

Ford made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARSL funds as listed. Motion was seconded by Haulk. Motion passed unanimously by Rogers, Ford, Presnell, Bryant, Haulk, Henson, and Rodriguez.

v. Vote to approve receipt/ expenditure of the ALA LTC grant reimbursement from the state/ MR&R budget (up to \$10,000.00) on further facility improvements within grant parameters.

Henson made a motion to approve the receipt and expenditure of the ALA LTC grant reimbursement funds as discussed. Motion was seconded by Haulk. Motion passed unanimously by Rogers, Ford, Presnell, Bryant, Haulk, Henson, and Rodriguez.

IX. Chair Report

Chair Rogers thanked the new board members for being willing to serve on the board.

X. Board Education – None

XI. Next Meeting Date - April 9, 2026.

XII. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM

DRAFT