

# AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

May 12, 2025; 4:30 pm

Chair Stephanie Postma called the regular meeting of the Austin Public Library Board to order at 4:30 p.m., on Monday, May 12, 2025, at the Austin Public Library.

**PRESENT:** Gema Alvarado-Guerrero, Kristi Beckman, Jwokamer Debock, Sue Grove, Ted Hinchcliffe, Nitaya Jandragholica, Stephanie Postma, Valerie Sheedy

**ALSO PRESENT:** Julie Clinefelter, Sara Steinhoff, Jeff Austin

**ABSENT WITH NOTICE:** Tim Rietz

**AGENDA:** Kristi Beckman moved to approve the agenda; Gema Alvarado-Guerrero seconded. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** A motion was made by Ted Hinchcliffe, seconded by Jwokamer Debock, to approve the April 14, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Carried.

## **EXPENSES AND FINANCE REPORTS:**

Stephanie Postma noted the high percentage spent year-to-date for 2025 funds in the expense categories of “audiovisual materials” and “software subscriptions.” Director Clinefelter noted these categories are primarily purchases through vendors on a prepay or annual basis, most of which occur in the early part of the year, with little additional activity beyond the second quarter.

A motion was made by Ted Hinchcliffe to approve expenditures and accept the finance reports for April 2025. Valerie Sheedy seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

## **GIFTS AND GRANTS:**

Kristi Beckman moved to accept the March-April 2025 gifts and grant awards to the Austin Public Library. Valerie Sheedy seconded. Motion carried.

**SELCO REPORT:** No meeting reports or other updates from SELCO Board.

**LIAISON REPORTS:** None.

## **OPERATIONAL REPORT:**

Julie Clinefelter provided a written report prior to the board meeting, and reviewed the following items:

### **Thank You:**

Director Clinefelter expressed appreciation to Val Sheedy for bringing cookies for staff during the regional ILS migration, noting the process was imperfect and some data did not transfer, but for the most part, patron service was mostly unaffected.

### **Events and Programs Updates:**

Julie advised the Library received a \$500 grant from Freeborn-Mower Electric Coop, which will be used to fund an original musical composition by a local musician/songwriter related to the Milly the Mill Pond Monster project. Julie reported she has also been notified that SELCO has approved the grant request for funding the signage, student recognitions, program materials and installation of Milly. Work is continuing on development of the project and building of the sculpture.

Clinefelter noted the Austin Page Turners event went well and the author was a wonderful presenter. She also noted in general, library author event attendance continues to decline slightly each year – likely due to the increase in author events in town over the last several years. In addition, Julie advised the Floral Club fundraiser luncheon went well and had over 80 attendees. She reported the Floral Club will donate \$1500 from the event for new books to the library.

Julie reported the calendars for the Summer Reading Program have been released, with the kickoff event scheduled on June 2 and featuring a foam party.

## **Facilities**

Clinefelter described circumstances of a recent library internet outage caused by the fiber line being severed during aeration of the lawn and repaired with a temporary over-ground line, which was then also severed by getting pulled into the lawnmower by the “caution” strips attached to flag the line. She noted the fiber-optic cable has now been reburied in hopes that it was deep enough to avoid such problems in the future. She stated SELCO suggested the library may consider applying for eRate coverage funds to add protective conduit in 2026.

## **Administration and Networking**

The board was provided with and reviewed together the infographic summarizing the 2025 Annual Report of the Austin Public Library.

Julie reported on a meeting with the Hormel Foundation committee on digital equity, noting the library is currently the only partner involved. She advised the biggest issues seem to be affordability of internet service subscriptions and the general digital literacy piece, rather than access to the actual tech devices themselves. She stated the discussion included how to get other community stakeholder organizations to become involved in coming up with solutions to the equity issue. Noting that Technology Coordinator Eric Christians has gotten a good response from services provided at the Senior Center, Julie advised the committee explored similar ways of meeting community needs in regards to digital literacy.

Gema Alvarado-Guerrero inquired as to whether the Austin Area Adult Literacy group and North Star digital resources were involved. Julie responded she has talked to them, but they are also struggling to find the right approach. Stephanie Postma noted that the library alone cannot be the only community entity working on making progress on these issues.

## **2026 Budget Cycle**

Clinefelter reported Mower County has moved up its deadline for the MC libraries presentation for the 2026 budgetary request to June (previously in late July or August) to get a jump start on crafting the budget and setting the county tax levy for 2026. Nitaya noted the new County Administrator had been hired, Matt Verdick.

## **Resolution in Support of Minitex**

Julie made note of some recent headlines relating to libraries, including the court order pausing dissolution of the IMLS, firing of the Library of Congress librarian, and threats to the Digital Equity by the current administration

Nitaya Jandragholica moved to approve the Resolution in Support of Minitex for signature by the board chair. Sue Grove seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**CITIZEN’S COMMENTS:** None.

**BOARD COMMENTS:** Stephanie Postma and Gema Alvarado-Guerrero advised they will be absent for the June board meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Kristi Beckman moved to adjourn at 5:10 p.m.; Jwokamer Debock seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Steinhoff, Secretary

**NEXT BOARD MEETING – Monday, June 9, 2025, 4:30 p.m.**