

City of Mesa

Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: May 20th, 2025
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: 64 E 1ST St
Mesa, AZ 85201

Members Present

Ralph Wilson, *Chair*
Lonica Rowley, *Vice Chair*
James Martherus
Kristin Ricklefs-Johnson
Christal Cline
Karina Wilhelm

Staff Present

Polly Bonnett
Jesse Simms
Zach Gomez-Robinson
Tony Garvey
Megan Guderian
Anna Mathews
Stacey Akahoshi
Erin Jones
Brandon Williams

Members Absent

Mark Powell
Jo Wilson
Ellen Bachman

Guests Present

JR Clanton
Lee Swanson

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION
Call to Order	Chair Ralph Wilson, called the meeting for the City of Mesa Library Advisory Board to order at 5:30pm. on May, 20 th 2025
Approval of March Meeting Minutes	The March 18th meeting minutes were moved by Christal Cline and seconded by James Martherus. Upon the tabulation of votes for the meeting minutes, the results showed: AYES – R.Wilson, Ricklefs-Johnson, Rowley, Cline, Wilhelm, Martherus NAYS – None
Public Comments	No Public Comments
Introductions, Recognitions, and Announcements	All staff and board members present introduced themselves.
Master Plan Update	JR Clanton from BerryDunn presented the Library Master Plan, which outlines the community's needs for library services and facilities and serves as a foundation for strategic recommendations. He shared demographic data showing that 28% of Mesa residents are not within a 10-minute drive of a library, and 22% of Mesa Express Library users travel more than five miles to their branch. Peer comparisons revealed that, although Mesa has the third-largest service population among Arizona libraries, its funding is lower than that of comparable systems. Programming saw a dip in 2024 due to staffing vacancy impacts, though Storytime remains core, craft and STEAM programs are growing, and health and writing programs are emerging. Community engagement yielded 174,468 connections with community members, helping to shape a 20-year strategic framework that includes expanding self-service hours, aligning services with evolving needs, and modernizing infrastructure. Lee Swanson detailed the facilities analysis, which included building evaluations, on-site visits, staff interviews, and collaborative data collection. Recommendations fall into three categories: maintenance and system repairs, facility enhancements, and additional projects identified by staff and the community. Service gaps were identified in Central-West, North, and East Mesa. A phased expansion plan includes recommendations of building a full-service branch in Central-West Mesa, a branch in the East zone, and a second Central-West branch, all dependent on funding. Temporary branch services using shipping containers are also being explored. The Master Plan is a living document to guide future decisions. During Q&A, Polly shared that a co-shared space with Mesa Public Schools is being discussed for the Central Corridor. Lee noted that population growth hotspots were considered in site planning, and JR emphasized that physical books remain a top priority for library users.

AGENDA ITEM**DISCUSSION****MPL Budget Presentation**

Library Director Polly Bonnett shared highlights from the library's budget presentation, noting that City Management requested all departments identify 2% reduction options within their budgets in part due to the \$20 million loss in City revenue from the state legislature eliminated rental tax. She reported that Gateway Library staff is coming online, construction is expected to be completed in August, and the opening is anticipated in October. Tony provided budget details, explaining that the library's finances are broken out into Library resources and Library programs/services. Last year's numbers were higher due to Gateway carryover funds, with \$3.4 million in one-time costs for FY 24/25. This year's projected spending is \$10.6 million, with \$2.5 million to be moved into next year's budget for staffing, books, and shelving related to Gateway. The ongoing operational budget is \$11.9 million. Tony noted that the library provides residents with \$2.8 million in annual savings through its services. Polly reviewed the approved budget reductions for the library system, which totaled \$94,240—just under 1%—after City Management's review. Reductions for the library system included items such as security overages, the Press Reader subscription, two vacant library page positions, VR headset licensing, Google Ad Grant, and Gateway Library supplies and equipment. Polly concluded the presentation by promoting Summer Reading 2025.

Directors Update

Library Director, Polly Bonnett gave an update on a few topics. In August, the Red Mountain Library is having their 30th anniversary. She shared that there will be a celebration for this milestone. Polly also shared that the Gateway library is having a library card design contest for Gateway. Teens can fill out a form by submitting an email or bring it to any service desk.

Identify items for future agenda

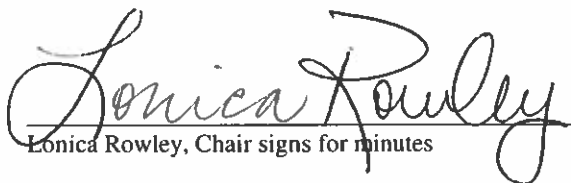
Ralph asked a question about how ordering works for Gateway. Brandon Williams shares that currently 3 staff members have been in charge of ordering "carts" of books for Gateway. He shares that this process is called opening day collection and shares that we don't pay shipping.

Next Meeting Dates

September 16th, 2025 – Main Library 2nd floor boardroom

Adjournment

Board member Karina Wilhelm moved, and James Martherus seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:43pm. Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:
AYES – R. Wilson, Ricklefs-Johnson, Rowley, Cline, Wilhelm, Martherus
NAYS – None
The next meeting will be held on the 16th of September 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor boardroom of the Main Library.



Lonica Rowley, Chair signs for minutes