

City of Mesa

Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: September 23rd, 2025
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: 64 E 1ST St
Mesa, AZ 85201

Members Present

Lonica Rowley, *Chair*
Kristin Ricklefs-Johnson, *Vice Chair*
James Martherus
Karina Wilhelm
Mark Powell
Ellen Bachman
Christal Cline
Megan Sterling

Members Absent

Jo Wilson

Staff Present

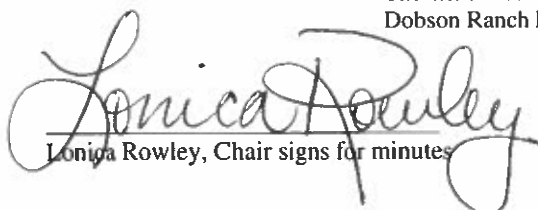
Polly Bonnett
Jesse Simms
Brandon Williams
Stacey Akahoshi
Jenn Lopez
Anna Mathews
Sara Lipich
Megan Guderian
Zach Gomez-Robinson

Guests Present

Charlotte McDermott
John Sheffer
Candace Cannistraro

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION
Call to Order	Chair, Lonica Rowley, called the meeting for the City of Mesa Library Advisory Board to order at 5:35pm. on September 23 rd . 2025.
Approval of May Meeting Minutes	The May 20th minutes were moved by Kristin Ricklefs-Johnson and seconded by James Martherus. The minutes were unanimously approved by all board members present. AYES – Rowley, Ricklefs-Johnson, Martherus, Wilhelm, Powell, Cline NAYS – None
Public Comments	No Public Comments
Introductions, Recognitions, and Announcements	All staff and board members present introduced themselves. They also did an ice breaker and expressed where they like to travel.
Election of the Vice Chair	James Martherus motioned to nominate Kristin Ricklefs-Johnson as Vice Chair, Christal Cline seconded. Kristin Ricklefs-Johnson is elected Vice Chair with no opposition AYES – Rowley, Martherus, Wilhelm, Powell, Cline, Bachman, Sterling NAYS – None
Hear an Overview of library services that include library programs, Mesa Public Library's strategic plan, support staff, and library budget.	Polly Bonnett, Library Director, gave an overview of library services. She presented City leadership and how decisions and priorities are made within the City of Mesa. She mentioned we have a new mayor. Polly then presented City Council strategic priorities. Polly shared our mission, that we are supporting lifelong learning. Polly mentioned that we currently have 87 full-time employees and 35 part-time employees. Polly shared that when she started in 2000, we had 170 staff, and five years later, we had 74 staff members in total. This year was the first year since (blank) that we surpassed 100 staff members. Polly shared the City's new structure and organizational chart. She shared that the new City Manager, Scott Butler, redid the city organizational chart. She shared that he wanted to align departments under certain strategic priorities. She explained how the library is now included with other departments like Parks and Recreation and is under Thriving Community. She mentioned that Ken Cost is now under Safe Community. Jobs and Prosperity are under Brent Stoddard. Brandon Williams, Library Tech Administrator talked about systemwide services. CSS has 8 staff members currently; they select books, process invoices, and order about 45,000 items annually. He mentioned how staff have doubled that this year to support Gateway. The Outreach Team has 6 staff members that saw 16,000 people and gave out 1,700 new library cards. They also provide services at 8 Bookmobile stops throughout Mesa twice a month. Volunteer Services has 2 staff members that oversee

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	371 volunteers with 25,932 hours given last year. The bookstore had 67,000-plus books donated which Volunteer Services, also oversees Tech Support Services has 3 staff members that support all library technology; they have had about 2,000 support tickets since 2022, averaging 55 tickets monthly. More hold lockers and new 3D printers are coming. Jesse Simms, Assistant Library Director, talked about our current strategic plan. He shared that library visitors totaled 690,000 for fiscal year 24/25. Library checkouts totaled over 2.5 million checkouts in FY 24/25. He talked about Library Joy and shared that the Library keeps a list of all the good things that happen. Twice a year, staff who enter items into the tracking sheet can be entered into a raffle. He talked about The Power of Moments, which is a way to create a memorable experience for staff and patrons. He showed an example of The Birthday Buttons and first library card stickers. Jesse also talked about our Shared Values and our Shared Value Card program. Staff can write notes to each other, and staff are entered into a raffle based on how many they receive. Polly talked about our Library budget, and for FY 25-26 we have an 8.5 million personnel budget and a \$2.7 million operations budget. In total, we are at \$11.2 million. She shared that out of 8 other neighboring systems, we are 7th per capita for spending. Lonica talked about how, at her school, they were really pushing library cards, especially to 6th graders.
Hear a presentation on co-location opportunities with Mesa Public Schools	Deputy Director of Development Services, John Sheffer provided an overview of the partnership between MPS and MPL, focusing on opportunities to co-locate libraries within schools experiencing enrollment declines. He noted considerations such as underserved areas, independent access, parking, separate entrances, and 10,000–15,000 square feet of space for collections, staff, and community use. Case studies from Basha and Hamilton High Schools highlighted heavy student use after school hours, with potential impacts on public access. The MPS Director of Community Partnerships expressed strong interest in pursuing this collaboration, citing alignment with existing programs like Bezos Academy and Polaris Academy. Taylor Junior High was identified as a potential site, with preliminary cost estimates from Mesa Engineering ranging from \$1–3 million, plus operational costs. Sheffer concluded that co-location is feasible and could expand library services. Next steps include stakeholder engagement, continued discussions with MPS, exploring alternative sites, and conducting a formal feasibility study. Ellen asked about the location of Taylor Junior High, and they explained it is close to Val Vista near Countryside Park. Candace shared that the coworking location has been paused due to funding not being available for operational costs. Discussion occurred among board members. Lonica asked if students would have access to the Library during school hours. Students would need to go through the public entrance to access the Library. Mark asked what other schools have been looked at besides Taylor Junior High. Lonica asked what the timeline would be to roll something like this out. Funding would need to be approved. At the earliest, it would be FY 27/28 if there was support for it.
Directors Update	Polly shared that the Red Mountain Library's 30-year celebration recently took place. The library, which originally cost \$5 million to build, hosted an event attended by over 100 people, featuring a performance by Zuill Bailey and several programs. She announced that the Gateway Library is scheduled to open on November 15, with a VIP preview on November 10. Noting that these dates are subject to change. Polly also discussed the Community Read selection, The Midnight Library, which aims to encourage community-wide conversations around a shared title.
Identify items for future agenda	Karina would like an in depth presentation on library staff salaries. She would like a report how MPL's Salaries compare to others in the valley.
Next Meeting Dates	November 18th, 2025 – THINKspot at the Dobson Ranch Library
Adjournment	Board member Christal Cline moved, and Ellen Bachman seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm. Upon tabulation of votes, it showed: AYES – Ricklefs-Johnson, Rowley, Bachman, Cline, Wilhelm, Martherus, Sterling, Powell NAYS – None The next meeting will be held on the 18th of November, 2025 in the THINKspot at the Dobson Ranch Library.


 Lonica Rowley, Chair signs for minutes