

City of Mesa

Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Date: March 18th, 2025
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: Dobson Ranch Library
2425 S Dobson Rd.
Mesa, AZ 85202

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Mark Powell

Staff Present

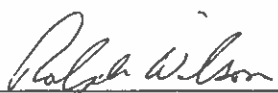
Polly Bonnett
Jesse Simms
Zach Gomez-Robinson
Tony Garvey
Megan Guderian
Anna Mathews
Stacey Akahoshi
Erin Jones

Guests Present

Sarah Tolar
Charlotte McDermott

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION
Call to Order	Co-Chair, Lonica Rowley, called the meeting for the City of Mesa Library Advisory Board to order at 5:33pm. on March 18th, 2025.
Approval of November 19th meeting minutes	The January 21st meeting minutes were moved by Karina Wilhelm and seconded by Christal Cline. Upon the tabulation of votes for the meeting minutes, the results showed: AYES – J. Wilson, Ricklefs-Johnson, Rowley, Bachman, Cline, Wilhelm, Martherus NAYS – None
Public Comments	Citizen Bill Maynard gave a proposal for the Red Mountain Library to host an Amateur Radio Club. Bill has been an operator since 1958 and belongs to several amateur radio clubs. He explained that opening an amateur radio station at the Red Mountain Library would be simple and would just need a certified staff member, a transceiver, an antenna, and a cable that runs into the radio room. He expressed that this would be a great opportunity for the community. He closed out his proposal by mentioning it would be possible for his group to furnish the room if needed.
Introductions, Recognitions, and Announcements	All staff and board members present introduced themselves.
Education and Workforce Round Table Update Read On Mesa Family Resource Center	Sarah Tolar, Education and Workforce Administrator, gave a presentation on the efforts of the Mesa Education and Workforce Office. She began by introducing The Roundtable, which is a formal advisory board to the City Council, consisting of 17 members who are various leaders in Mesa working to connect education and workforce initiatives. In 2022, the members collaborated to identify common priorities, including early learning, eliminating barriers, and linking education and industry. Additionally, The Roundtable has also developed a dashboard that provides metrics on these identified priorities in the City of Mesa to help track progress. Lonica asked for examples of leaders involved in the Roundtable, to which Sarah responded with K-12 district superintendents, the MCC president, ASU representatives, and the president of the Chamber of Commerce. Sarah also discussed the Mesa Family Resource Center, located at the Main Library, in partnership with First Things First. The center teaches parents how to interact with their children and apply those skills at home while also offering parenting classes. Additionally, she highlighted "Read On Mesa," a collaborative mission that emerged from the Roundtable. She also introduced the AARP Foundation, a community-based volunteer program that empowers people over 50 to serve as tutors, helping students become proficient readers by the end of third grade. Sarah also shared information on the Mesa Counts on College program, noting that Mesa College Promise enrollment has increased. As of December, the City of Mesa entered into an agreement with Mesa Community College to allow two billboards to assist in funding the Mesa College Promise Program.

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Capital Improvement Project Presentation	Jesse Simms, Assistant Library Director, gave a presentation on the library's Capital Improvement Projects. He mentioned the current CIP projects for the library include installing heat in the basement of the Main Library, the Gateway Library project, Dobson Ranch structural repair design, and the Dobson Ranch meeting room renovations. Jesse shared that the Master Plan has shown a strong interest in children's spaces which led to the introduction of a possible Red Mountain children's room expansion. He then introduced Storybook Park and noted that funding is already available for its design. The park will be located north of the Main Library, with an entrance from the children's room leading into the park. Jesse also discussed the Master Plan's findings regarding distance barriers for Mesa Residents and proposed expanding book lockers to two city-owned parks to assist in lowering these barriers. Lastly, he presented plans to repaint the exterior of the Main Library and to request funding for new signage for the building.
Library Performance Measures	Tony Garvey, Management Assistant II, gave a presentation on the library's current performance measures. He shared that the library is projecting over 34,000 new cardholders for this fiscal year, attributing the growth to the partnership with Mesa Public Schools, which has positively impacted library card registrations. Tony mentioned that circulation has seen a slight decline, with projections showing over 2.5 million checkouts for this fiscal year. He noted that this will be an area of focus in the next fiscal year. In 2024, the library saved residents over \$23 million based on the market value of borrowed items. Jo asked if circulation is tracked by location. Tony shared that Red Mountain has seen a slight decrease, possibly due to librarian vacancies. Christal asked if census data is used to assist with library demographics. Jesse noted a decline in children's print items, while Polly explained that surveys are used to supplement census data gaps, along with community assessments. Lonica suggested that circulation could be down because some books may be difficult to obtain. Tony reported that the library is projected to have over 675,000 visitors for the last fiscal year. He added that in-person visits are the slowest-recovering statistic.
Directors Update	Polly Bonnett, Library Director, thanked everyone she has met with so far and shared that she is working on the feedback provided, and responses will be given shortly. The beam signing took place at the future Gateway Library, with over 850 people signing the beam in February. The project remains on track for a fall opening, possibly in mid-October. The Read Runner will launch at Celebrate Mesa on April 12th, with 12 stops planned throughout Mesa after the launch. Polly mentioned that the library's budget presentation to the City Council will take place on April 24th, and she will provide more in-depth budget information at the May meeting. Polly discussed current legislation, including AZ Bill 1090 and 1099. Bill 1099 applies to city employees and states that exposing minors to sexually explicit material could be classified as a Class 5 felony. Additionally, SB1090 concerns libraries, prohibiting minors from being referred to sexually explicit material. The concern for libraries is that staff would either need to review every item in the collection or restrict certain areas of the library, which would shift responsibility from parents and guardians to the library itself, making operations more challenging. Polly was asked how the IMLS supports libraries. She explained that funding is received in the form of LSTA grants, which support various library programs.
Identify items for future agenda	Jo Wilson noted more discussion on the Education and Workforce Dashboard, Karina Wilhem mentioned more discussion on IMLS Defunding, and The Board would like further discussion on the State bills shared by Polly.
Next Meeting Dates	May 20th, 2025 – Main Library 2nd floor boardroom
Adjournment	Board member Jo Wilson moved, and Christal Cline seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm. Upon tabulation of votes, it showed: AYES – R. Wilson, J. Wilson, Ricklefs-Johnson, Rowley, Bachman, Cline, Wilhelm, Martherus NAYS – None The next meeting will be held on the 20th of May 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor boardroom of the Main Library.



 Ralph Wilson, Chair signs for minutes