

Mid-Michigan Library League
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
August 7, 2025, 10 a.m.
Benzonia Public Library, Benzonia, MI

Call to Order: Lois Langenburg, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Call to Order: Mary Peterson (Group 1); Amanda McLaren (Group 2); Tracy Logan-Walker (Group 3); Eric Smith (Group 5); Lois Langenburg (Group 6); Valerie Church-McHugh (Group 7)

Members Absent: Diane Eisenga (Group 4); Jean Gaskil (Group 8); Justin Peterson (Group 9)

Also Present: Jennifer Balcom, Director, MMLL

Approval of Agenda: M/S Church-McHugh/M. Peterson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes: M/S Smith/Langenburg to approve the minutes from May 13, 2025 Board Meeting as presented. Motion passed.

Public Participation and Communications: Advisory Council Co-Chair Logan-Walker mentioned that Michelle Bradley of the Library of Michigan spoke at the July meeting to speak about services to libraries. A representative from Transparent Languages will attend a future meeting.

Financial Report: M/S Smith/Logan-Walker to approve the expenditures from 5/25, 6/25 and 7/25.

M. Peterson- M. Peterson-Aye; McLaren- Aye; Logan-Walker-Aye; Smith-Aye; Langenburg-Aye; Church-McHugh- Aye. The motion passed.

M/S Church-McHugh/M. Peterson to accept the Financial Reports for 5/25, 6/25 and 7/25. The motion passed.

Director's Report: The Director informed the board that state budget work is still underway. The Library of Michigan has received confirmation that federal funds will come in at nearly 100% as promised but the distribution of those funds must be included in the state budget for them to be accessed.

Michigan Library Association: Debbie Mikula has retired from MLA. Dillon Geshel of the Superiorland Library Cooperative is serving as Interim Director. MLA was awarded a \$600,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to support the MI Right to Read initiative.

Director Balcom will attend the Library Cooperatives of Michigan annual retreat on August 20-22 in Mount Pleasant. She will present a 90 minute session on the Working Genius framework. The LCM is also working on a website to help patrons identify their local library.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Committee meet to discuss the draft budget on July 17 in Ludington

Personnel: No meeting/report

Old Business:

Annual Meeting- The Annual Meeting will be held on September 11, from 11 am to 3 pm at Fox Hill Event Center in Cadillac Michigan. A buffet will be provided with time during the meal for library staff to talk and network amongst themselves. Dillion Geshel, interim Director of the Michigan Library Association will speak as well as Angela Semifero and possibly Shawna Swantek of the Marshall District Library. Angela and Shawna will to talk about positive and practical efforts in public libraries. Invites for the event will be sent directly to library board members this year to encourage their attendance.

Firewall- The new firewall has been installed at the MMLL offices. Everything went according to plan. In the future, the Director will gather quotes for data back ups. This raised a conversation about AI and the board discussed potential training on the topic.

The Director also mentioned that the co-op directors were considering an onboarding document for future co-op directors.

New Business:

Huntington- Despite an agreed upon interest rate in writing, Huntington has reduced the interest on the league's money market account. When the Director reached out to them, they refused to honor the agreed upon rate but offered a different account called the Huntington Insured Cash Suite (FDIC) for a better rate, with a guarantee that it would not be reduced lower than a certain interest rate. The Huntington Insured Cash Suite operates similarly to the Money Market with the same level of funds accessibility.

M/S Logan-Walker/Church-McHugh to move MMLL funds from the Huntington Money Market to the Huntington Insured Cash Suite.

M. Peterson- M. Peterson-Aye; McLaren- Aye; Logan-Walker-Aye; Smith-Aye; Langenburg-Aye; Church-McHugh- Aye. The motion passed.

Niche Academy- The Director has been exploring a subscription for the league to Niche Academy Trainings. It provides self paced learning modules on a variety of topics of interest to member libraries like customer service and security and is used by the Library of Michigan. The Cadillac Wexford Public Library already subscribes to Niche and so the quotes she has received for the service specifically exclude Cadillac. She would like to negotiate a contract that would allow Cadillac to join when their current subscription is done.

Budget Adjustments- Budget adjustments will be necessary this year.

Plan of Service- The director has been concerned about the usability of Library Law hours benefit for members. This money is intended to encourage member libraries to seek out professional council for policy work and other needs. However, because the expense with Foster, Swift, and Collins is so great, member libraries are only guaranteed one hour a year which is hardly enough to meet any real need. The benefit has not been heavily used, however, possibly because of the gap between the needs and the costs. Director Balcolm also expressed concerns about the workload of the Library Law Specialist at Foster, Swift, and Collins and the wait some libraries experience when they reach out for assistance. The director suggested two possible remedies. 1. Is there another law office with experts in municipal law who might be more affordable and more responsive? 2. Should the league move the money from law

office hours to mini-grants and make the legal assistance grants one of the items libraries can apply for? The grants would not have to be specific to Foster, Swift, and Collins and could include amounts up to \$500 or \$ 1,000 depending on the Board's thoughts. After much discussion, it was decided that the matter would be discussed at the Advisory Council Meeting to get feedback on what the membership prefers.

Board Vacancy- Jean Gaskill, Surry Township Library director and representative for Group 8 has resigned from the MMLL Board. This group include Surry, Barrington, and Big Rapids. All of these libraries struggle with staffing issues. The Director hopes that a board member from the Surry Township board might be interested in filling the Group 8 vacancy.

Public Comment: None.

Advisory Council Comments: See Above.

Board Member Comments: None

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:45 a.m.