

## MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 16, 2025 GERING PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

Present:

Board Members: Jeff Kelley, Suzanne Myers, Mary Robinson, Kim Walker

Library Director: Christie Clarke

Foundation Liaison: Jay Skiles

Absent:

Board Member: Kirstee Moore-Schutte

City Council Liaison: Tamera Frye

Kelley called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm

Attention was called to the posting of The Open Meetings Act - NEB.REV.STAT. CHAPTER 84, ARTICLE 14.

As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Board President. As required by State Law, additions may not be made to this agenda less than 24 hours before the beginning of the meeting unless they are considered under this section of the agenda and the Library Board determines that the matter requires emergency action.

Board members reviewed the November 18, 2025 board meeting minutes. Kelley asked for a motion to approve. Robinson moved to approve the minutes and Walker seconded it. The vote was called. "Ayes": Kelley, Myers, Robinson, Walker. "Nays": none. "Abstaining": none. "Absent": Moore-Schutte. The vote passed.

The statistical and financial reports for November were reviewed. Kelley called for a motion to approve. Myers moved and Kelley seconded the motion. "Ayes": Kelley, Myers, Robinson, Walker. "Nays": none. "Abstaining": none. "Absent": Moore-Schutte. The vote passed.

Board members reviewed the November bills. Kelley called for a motion to approve. Robinson moved and Walker seconded to approve the bills. The vote was called. "Ayes": Kelley, Myers, Robinson, Walker. "Nays": none. "Abstaining": none. "Absent": Moore-Schutte. The vote passed.

## Director Clarke's Report

1. Our Pints & Plot Twists true crime book discussion group that meets at the local Scott Free Brewery has grown so much in popularity that we've had to split the group and hold it on two separate nights. Denise will lead one group and Sherry will lead the other.
2. Crafternoons have seen increased attendance as word has started to get out about these monthly crafting drop-ins. On Saturday there were 14 people who dropped in for cookie decorating. Crafternoon is held the second Saturday of each month and is led by Denise McVicker with support from Hayley Grams. This is open to any age.
3. Tai Chi is also very popular and there are plans to continue this program. The next version will be Tai Chi for energy. Currently the program is for balance and flexibility. Just as before you will need to call to register once it has been officially announced to the public.
4. Teen D & D has continuing and growing interest with new members joining each meeting. Hayley Grams and Jeff Fiet see 8-12 tweens each time. Jeff attended fall parent/teacher conferences at the middle school this year. He had a table with brochures and information on all Teen/Tween programming. Interest in the D & D program was high and the team saw increased attendance due to this. Jeff plans to make his presence at fall conferences a regular occurrence. Hayley and Jeff are talking about adding their presence at the high school conferences as well.
5. In a follow up to the wildly popular 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten reading incentive program, Hayley Grams and Jeff Fiet implemented Reading Dragons. Created by Dover Public Library, this reading incentive program is for kids Kindergarten through High School. Kids receive a reading tracker and when they read for 30 minutes four times in a week they can receive a Reading Dragon game card. They can collect up to four cards per month and even play simple games with them. Next month Clarke will include statistics from 1,000 Books and Reading Dragons on the statistical report.
6. Jeff Fiet and Hayley Grams will hold a Peanuts Party this Saturday for kids in kindergarten through 5th grade. Holiday activities with a Peanuts and Charlie Brown theme will be available for this drop-in program from 1 to 3 pm.
7. Hayley Grams and Jeff Fiet will also visit Lincoln Elementary this Thursday evening, December 18, 2025 to do "Stories @Lincoln". The school will have Santa on site and asked our Youth Services team if they be one of the activity stations for the kids waiting to see Santa. Jeff and Hayley will trade off reading books at their station.
8. Tech News
  - a. In early October, Andrew "Sherm" Sherman, Library Technology Support Specialist from the Nebraska Library Commission, visited our library at Clarke's invitation to perform a tech audit on our building. His report findings showed that everything was good except our WiFi network. He stated, "The library has multiple Public WiFi (no password) networks throughout the building offering

much slower performance than the Staff WiFi network (requires password).” He further explained, “Based on the multiple WiFi networks (names/SSIDs) and performance present, I believe different ages and brands of WAPs are in use so a unified “mesh” WiFi network cannot be established. A “mesh” network allows people to move throughout the library without having to manually switch from WiFi network to network as the connection strength and/or speed diminishes. This was likely done as it was cheaper and easier to do over time.” He recommended getting a quote from Intralinks on purchasing and installing single brand WAPs to create a “mesh” network. Clarke expressed to him that we would not be able to do that this fiscal year as it was not budgeted for and Sherm replied that he has access to grant funds to purchase the hardware. Clarke moved forward with the project and GPL now has a “mesh” WiFi network.

- b. Recently we have had major internet issues with most problems culminating on the Friday of the Mingle & Jingle. Intralinks has worked earnestly on the problem and finally narrowed it down to a faulty switch. They put a “loaner” in and sent a quote for over \$600 which had not been budgeted for. Clarke reached out to Sherm again and inquired about those tech grant funds he used to purchase our WiFi access points in October. He started an investigation with Intralinks they found that the faulty switch still had about a month left on its warranty and they will pursue getting it replaced under that.
- c. Last month Clarke received an email informing Useful customers that although their products will still be viable their IT services will expire at the end of December 2026. Clarke was shocked to learn this and quickly followed up with the salesperson for confirmation. This means that we will only have Useful for the public computers with IT support for the calendar year. Jeff Fiet and Clarke have already begun researching other companies and have found some that are worthwhile to pursue. Fortunately, we have a year to sort it out. In the meantime, Jeff Feit has been diligently working with Useful to get the new system up and running. There have been significant delays due to out of the box problems that Useful admitted to never seeing before. Jeff now has three computers running on Useful and hopes to finish up within a week or two.

## 9. Safety Update

- a. In September we formed a Library Safety Committee whose members are:
  - i. Chair-Tammie Gitschel
  - ii. Sherry Preston
  - iii. Denise McVicker
  - iv. Hayley Grams
- b. The safety committee was formed to provide staff safety training specific to the library in order to help fulfill LARM (League Association of Risk Management)

requirements. LARM provides coverage and risk management services to cities, villages and other governmental agencies in Nebraska. They oversee property/liability coverages and worker's compensation.

- c. The committee has started staff training on Standard Response Protocol. SRP is a crisis response framework originally created for schools but has expanded to include municipalities. We have also purchased walkie talkies which are vital to the SRP and will have staff training on their use. We will also have drills on SRP. Discussion was held about camera use and monitoring of those cameras.
- d. Also, safety related, Clarke purchased smoke detectors for our building as we have never had any. She consulted with Gering Fire Chief, Nathan Flowers, on what to purchase and Jeff Fiet and Tammie Gitschel will install and set up the app.
- e. Other safety news, we had our annual fire inspection which revealed a bent sprinkler head and a need for pipe maintenance. Clarke received a quote for the service and Pat Heath approved it. This type of service is required/recommended every five years. Gitschel checks safety equipment monthly.

#### 10. Other Info

- a. The Friends annual Mingle & Jingle was a success with 182 attendees compared to last year's attendance of 90. Clarke talked to many people about the renderings and building access project and was met with nothing but positivity. People were generally excited about the prospect and all felt it is greatly needed.
- b. Please visit the Library Foundation's Christmas tree at Legacy of the Plains and vote for us! Half of the proceeds will go to the Foundation. The ornaments were made by attendees of youth and adult programs at the library.
- c. Total sales through 12/9/25 for the Quilt Raffle is \$501.00 and for the quilted bookmarks is \$184.75.
- d. During the month of November, the library cash receipts were \$448.30.

**Gering City Council Liaison: none**

#### **The Gering Library Foundation Board Liaison Report: Jay Skile**

- 1. Foundation is fired up and campaign kick-off has been postponed
- 2. Krystal Holthus has been named chair of the Capital Campaign
- 3. Tina Worthman created a new logo for the Foundation
- 4. Floor plans will be added to the renderings
- 5. RMD's have been gathered recently for the Foundation.

**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Closed Session:** None

**Open Comment:** None

Kelley called for a motion to adjourn. Myers moved and Robinson seconded. Ayes”: Kelley, Myers, Robinson, Walker. “Nays”: none. “Abstaining”: none. “Absent”: Moore-Schutte. The vote passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:53

Suzanne Myers

Secretary