

Newberg Public Library

# Library Advisory Board

Meeting minutes for February 19, 2026

## Call Meeting To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 PM.

## Roll Call

Library Director Korie Jones Buerkle conducted rollcall. The following board members were confirmed present: Amanda Houston (Chair), Julia Kightly (Vice Chair), Sharee Adkins, Jessica Hopkins-Hubbard, and Leslie Smestad. It was noted that the Student Commissioner position was currently open. Library Director Korie Jones Buerkle confirmed her presence as well.

## Accept Consent Calendar

Sharee Adkins made a motion to accept the consent calendar as presented. The motion was seconded, and a vote was called.

Motion to accept the consent calendar as presented was made by Sharee Adkins and seconded by Julia Kightly. The motion carried unanimously with no opposition.

## Public Comments

No public comments were received.

## Board Comments

### Current Library Narratives

No discussion

## Reports

### Library Foundation report (Korie Buerkle)

Library Director Korie Jones Buerkle reported that the Library Foundation has grown considerably and noted that membership was likely to be capped at its current number. She expressed genuine enthusiasm for the group, describing it as comprised of very engaged individuals who are excited about raising funds for the library.

Buerkle shared that the Foundation is currently working on a community cookbook project. The layout for the book is being done in collaboration with George Fox University, and businesses from throughout Newberg have submitted recipes. Photoshoots are being conducted with contributors, and the cookbook is anticipated to be completed and available in July. The Foundation is also planning to have a presence at Tunes on Tuesday, where they hope to sell the cookbook at a booth, pending the necessary arrangements.

Additionally, Buerkle reported that the Foundation is planning a Story Slam event for the fall. She noted that one Foundation member, Sue Delventhal, has organized similar events in other communities and is drawing on that experience. The group is currently focused on identifying an appropriate venue before settling on a date. The format for the Story Slam would involve participants delivering a five-minute, funny, true story appropriate for all ages — spoken from memory rather than read from a page.

### Library Director's report (Korie Buerkle)

Buerkle opened her director's report with an anecdote about library staff assisting in the rescue of a squirrel that had become trapped in the adjacent Masonic Lodge building. She described how a staff member noticed the squirrel frantically appearing in the window of the brick building visible from the library, and that the squirrel appeared to have been trapped since at least the prior Saturday, as a patron had earlier inquired about who owned the building. Through her community connections, Buerkle was able to quickly identify and contact someone associated with the Masonic Lodge via a neighbor. Several members of the Lodge responded promptly, the squirrel was caught alive and removed, though it had caused considerable damage to the interior of the building in the process — including pictures knocked off walls and papers torn up. Buerkle used the story to highlight the library staff's deep community connections and their ability to reach nearly anyone in Newberg within a few degrees of separation.

Buerkle then provided a substantive update on the restroom remodel, which began on February 9th. She reported that the project is going very well and that the contractor has been fantastic to work with. A particular concern had been the smell from the flooring process — which involves applying and curing multiple layers — potentially affecting library patrons. However, the contractor rigged a well-sealed enclosure with a zippered door to contain the odors. She also noted that a window in the men's restroom opens into a fully gated and secured area housing the HVAC system. A ventilation fan is pulling air out through that window continuously, and because the area is secure, the window can remain open twenty-four hours a day. Buerkle expressed that she could not be more pleased with how the project is going, and confirmed the library remains on schedule with an anticipated completion by the end of March.

Buerkle next reported that the graphic novels and children's collections were relocated to a new, expanded space. She noted that children's graphic novels represent one of the library's highest-circulating collections and that the previous space was insufficient. Staff reorganized the area by swapping the graphic novel section with the location previously occupied by audiobooks and audio CDs. The new arrangement also places graphic novels in close proximity to juvenile fiction, which Buerkle noted is particularly beneficial for series such as *I Survived*, which exist in both chapter book and graphic novel formats — making it easier for patrons to find related titles together. She expressed that staff are very pleased with the outcome and that there is now room to grow the collection.

Buerkle then highlighted that the library created 249 new library cards in January, compared to the typical monthly average of approximately 150. She noted this was unusual, as the last time the library had seen comparable numbers was in July. Jessica Hopkins-Hubbard offered that several people she knows recently obtained library cards for the first time, remarking that it seemed as though people were just discovering that library resources were available for free.

Buerkle credited part of the January spike to a Christmas light voting route event organized by a regular library patron, who reserved the library's meeting room for the event. She explained that the event drew a different population into the library than usual, and that many attendees looked around the space and decided to obtain library cards on the spot. Buerkle expressed that she was hopeful the event organizer would consider doing it again.

### Library Friends report (Korie Buerkle)

Buerkle reported that the Library Friends are doing well overall. She noted that lobby book sales are continuing as usual. She highlighted that Friends volunteers occasionally find donated books not held in the library's own collection that can be sold for significant amounts online — citing an example of a train book that could fetch approximately \$150. She emphasized that all proceeds

from these sales are returned to the library at the end of the year to be used for programs. Buerkle acknowledged the considerable amount of work the Friends undertake, including receiving donated books, processing them, listing them online, and mailing them to buyers. She expressed sincere gratitude for their ongoing contributions.

## Unfinished Business

### Updates on Strategic Plan 2021-2026 objectives

Buerkle provided an update on the library's digitization project, which falls under the 2021–2026 Strategic Plan. She noted that the library has been working with the University of Oregon on the Oregon digitization of local newspapers project, in which microfilm is being converted into PDFs to be made available online. The current grant-funded phase covers digitization of materials up to 1929, with subsequent funding rounds intended to extend the digitization chronologically further forward.

Buerkle also reported that the library is close to beginning scanning of the Newberg Graphic newspaper under a Memorandum of Understanding established in approximately 2019 or 2020. This agreement permits the library to digitize the Newberg Graphic up to 2012. She clarified that issues of the Newberg Graphic from 1989 and earlier, for which copyright was not registered, will be hosted publicly online, while more recent issues will be stored on a drive accessible at the library for in-person use.

Buerkle shared that she had met the previous day with the two remaining members of the Newberg Area Historical Society, which is in the process of dissolving due to insufficient community interest. The Historical Society has approximately \$2,000 remaining, which they are donating to the Library Friends — also a 501(c)(3) organization — with the funds designated for the digitization project. This funding would support another round of work with the University of Oregon. Buerkle expressed that the Historical Society members were pleased with this arrangement, viewing it as a meaningful way to direct their remaining resources toward preserving community history. She also noted that the Historical Society will be bringing several boxes of materials to the library, which staff will eventually scan and determine how best to make available.

Regarding the upcoming Strategic Plan for 2027, Buerkle suggested that she and Sharee Adkins meet to develop ideas and a path forward, then present their proposals at the next board meeting. Adkins indicated that approach worked for her.

## New Business

### Library Resource of the Month

Buerkle introduced the Library Resource of the Month as the Gale Databases, accessible through the library's website under the "Homework Help" section. She noted that the suite includes Gale In Context, geared toward elementary students, as well as separate databases tailored for middle school and high school students. She explained that the databases are particularly valuable for students working on projects and presentations because the resources — including images — are curated and vetted, ensuring reliability. She contrasted this with general internet image searches, noting that users cannot always verify the authenticity of images found through search engines, particularly given the rise of AI-generated content.

This prompted a broader discussion among board members about AI and children's use of the internet. Jessica Hopkins-Hubbard shared concerns about children conducting image searches and inadvertently encountering inappropriate content. Leslie Smestad noted that her ten-year-old daughter is already capable of identifying AI-generated images, observing details like incorrect anatomy that give them away. The group reflected on how rapidly the information landscape has changed.

Hopkins-Hubbard indicated she would share the Gale Databases resource with her school colleagues at an upcoming staff meeting, noting that it would be particularly helpful with state reports coming up and students having previously brought in questionable information sourced from the internet.

Buerkle connected the conversation to an AI policy initiative underway at the library. She explained that she had recently sent out an email inviting interested parties to participate in developing an AI policy, noting that staff have a range of perspectives on the issue — from enthusiastic adoption to strong skepticism — with many in between. She referenced a growing body of library journal articles on the topic. She also cautioned that any policy developed would need to be treated as a living document, likely requiring updates every six months or so given the pace of change, and suggested that framing it this way made the task feel less daunting.

## Outside events impacting library services

Buerkle reported good news regarding the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal grant, which has been secured for states for the period of July 2026 through July 2027. She outlined several ways this funding impacts the Newberg Public Library specifically. First, LSTA funds the Gale Databases, which the Oregon State Library makes available to all public schools and public libraries across Oregon. Second, it is a significant funding source for ODLC, which is the service that underlies Libby by OverDrive — the platform through which patrons access ebooks and eaudiobooks. She noted that while the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library System also contributes funding to Libby by OverDrive, ODLC is the largest single contributor. Third, LSTA funds staffing at the State Library of Oregon, which provides support to public libraries, facilitates inter-library connection, and provides ongoing professional education that Buerkle said she greatly appreciates. She also noted that LSTA funds approximately half of the Oregon Battle of the Books program, which she described as important to the Newberg community.

Buerkle also shared that the library received a mini-LSTA grant, administered by the State of Oregon, in the amount of \$3,000 directed toward the graphic novels collection. She explained that the library had experienced an incident resulting in significant damage to that collection, causing the loss of a portion of its holdings. The grant is helping to rebuild and restore that portion of the collection.

## Library Board Candidate Interviews

Buerkle introduced the board's sole candidate for the open Student Commissioner position: Elisa Semmens, a George Fox University student majoring in pre-law, originally from Alaska, who expressed an interest in serving her community in a civic capacity.

The board proceeded to interview Elisa using a prepared set of questions, which board members took turns asking in rotation.

Buerkle confirmed with Elisa that the board's regular meeting time — the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM — works with her schedule. Board members also asked about Elisa's academic year and discussed how attendance during summer months or periods away from campus could be accommodated via Zoom. Buerkle noted that the library does not hold meetings in July and August and that Elisa may also be out in May, but that Zoom attendance provides flexibility as needed.

Following the interview, Elisa stepped away and the board discussed her candidacy. Members expressed positive impressions of her answers, describing them as thoughtful and genuine.

Motion to recommend Elisa Semmens to the Mayor for appointment as Student Commissioner to the Library Advisory Board for the current term was made by Amanda Houston and seconded by Jessica Hopkins-Hubbard. The motion carried unanimously with no opposition.

Buerkle noted that Elisa would be formally notified of the board's recommendation via email the following day, and that she would still need to formally accept the appointment. Buerkle also

reminded the board that meeting dates for the remainder of 2026 were listed on the back of the candidate materials for reference.

### **Next Meeting/Steps**

The next meeting was confirmed for March 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM.