



**Scappoose Public Library Board of Directors
Regular Business Meeting
December 18, 2025
Library Meeting Room also broadcast on Zoom
7 PM
Agenda**

1.0 Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM. Attending were President Jolene Jonas, Vice President Elaine Nussbaum, Board Members Liza Gerardo, Lisa Lewis and Johanna Myers and Library Director Jeff Weiss. Jolene led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.0 Public Input

Karen Kessi and Joel Haugen attended the meeting for their presentation to the board below.

3.0 Approval of Minutes: November 20, 2025

Jolene asked if there were corrections or discussions of the November minutes. There was none. Jolene asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Johanna made the motion. Liza seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Voting: Lewis yea, Jonas yea, Nussbaum yea, Myers yea, Gerardo yea.

4.0 Consent Agenda

4.1 Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Jeff presented the financial report and the bills. He directed the board to the year-to-date spending in the financial report, which is nearly all the money spent in the first half of the fiscal year. In the first half of the year, the library has spent less than half the fiscal year budget. He noted that the library has a large annual insurance bill coming up in January. The only large bill in December was for the second half of the annual audit for \$4,200. Jeff has provided the board with a print copy of the completed audit and will discuss it under new business.

4.2 Presentation of Bills

5.0 Old Business

5.1 Submitted and Approved Grants Progress

The Columbia County Cultural Coalition informed us that they will not be giving us a grant to partially pay for Movies in the Park. Jeff asked them for a reason why they are not funding us, but they have not replied.

5.2 Discussion of Potential Ballot Measure

5.2.1 Karen Kessi presentation to Board

Karen Kessi and Joel Haugen presented a report on progress on the levy for the May ballot. Her report is attached. She discussed the current committee members and their experience with ballot measures. She

also reported on progress with the Friends of Scappoose Library funding the initiative. She asked the library board to empower the committee to make decisions about messaging and the ballot title. The board asked if elected officials could endorse the levy. Joel replied that any elected official could endorse or not endorse the levy as could members of the public. They also discussed a proposed schedule of informational events leading up to the election. There will also be a campaign to get residents to post arguments in favor in the voter's pamphlet. The Friends of Scappoose Public Library will send out post cards to registered voters to advocate for passage. Estimated campaign costs were presented to the board.

Karen said that the board should expect a report from the Ballot Committee at every meeting leading up to the election. She asked for a resolution from the board to allow the committee to make decisions about how to pursue and promote the measure. Johanna asked about how this would affect a resident's property taxes. Jeff said that he asked the auditor what the average assessed property value was last year and he thought it was \$368,000 which would mean the levy if passed would be \$36.80. (In reviewing the email from Andrea Jurkiewicz after the meeting, the figure is \$265,000). The county does not track the median property value, so this figure was arrived at by dividing the total assessed value by the number of properties in the library taxing district. Johanna was concerned that the increased retail value of property in Scappoose would create an undue burden on taxpayers. Karen said that this was one of the issues that needs to be clarified, that people believe their assessed value is equal to their retail value.

Proposition 50 has created a wide gap between assessed values and retail value since its passage nearly 30 years ago. There was discussion about the Proposition 50 effects. Jeff was asked if properties are ever reassessed. Jeff said he didn't think they were. The law allows for a maximum of a 3 percent raise in assessed value per year. He said that on his own personal property, a 1968 midcentury modern, his assessment is hundreds of thousands below retail, and his taxes are thousands less than his neighbors because the house is the oldest in the immediate neighborhood. Johanna expressed concern for residents on a fixed income. Liza said that her assessment is well above the average, but she feels that she is receiving a good return on her investment with the taxes she pays to the library. Jolene asked if the board could discuss the requested resolution to support the Levy Committee. Liza asked about the legality of the support statement. Jolene said it is not a legal matter, but an endorsement for the board's confidence in the committee because the committee does not want others to control the message and it empowers the committee to make decisions about the best way to pursue the levy. Karen said that if the board would want to approve every decision the committee made, that would need to be done at a public meeting with a quorum of board members attending. Liza made a motion to endorse the Levy Committee to make decisions in the levy informational campaign. Elaine seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jolene said that the board would need to approve the ballot title and ballot language, but the language had just gone through the initial legal review process, and the committee had questions with the lawyer about the language. Jolene went through the current language of the ballot which was distributed to the board. Jeff presented the ballot title and explained that the language and length of the sections of the ballot title were regulated by state law. By law, levy ballots must include language that the levy could "increase taxes by more than 3%" even if that is not the case. The title must also include an estimate of the total to be collected and cannot include the name of the organization in the title. Jeff said the highlighted phrases in the handout were wording the lawyer was checking on. Specifically, the committee asked if we could include a disclaimer about the 3% phrase and the committee were debating how to phrase the assessment, whether in cents or fractions of a dollar. The board debated the psychological impact of these terms. Liza preferred using the fractions of a dollar over cents. Karen said she preferred stating the permanent rate as "about 25 cents". Jeff said he didn't think that was legal. Liza asked if the activities listed in the ballot title were the most well attended. Jeff said that was why they were selected and the explanation expands that section, but we have a limit of 175 words in the title. Jolene asked if the board would approve the ballot title with the suggested board changes and if the lawyer signs off on the language. Liza asked if the board could approve vote via email. Jeff said that they could not because all votes must take place at a public meeting. Jolene called for a motion. Johanna made a motion to accept the ballot title with the board recommendation for corrections to the language. Liza seconded the motion. Voting: Lewis yea, Jonas yea, Nussbaum yea, Myers yea, Gerardo yea.

The proposed ballot explanation was also discussed. Jeff said that he and the staff want to keep the ballot explanation below the 500-word limit because they believe that voters don't read a lengthy ballot explanation. Liza said that she did not like starting a sentence with a large number, like the sentence about summer reading was constructed. Jeff asked what would be better. Liza said the reverse the syntax. Jolene said that the board could add text to the explanation because there were still about 80 words left in the overall limit. Joel asked if we were going to list endorsements in the explanation. Jeff said he thought they could, but they don't have any endorsements now. Jolene said she would prefer a statement of support from endorsers in the voter's pamphlet. Endorsements also count against the word count in the voter's pamphlet. Karen said that the filing deadline wasn't until February 27, so the library board should know about endorsements from the school board and city council by then. Jeff said he thought there was a gap between when the ballot title was filed and the explanation statement was filed with the explanation being filed 3 weeks after the title. March 19 is the deadline for filing other documents. Jolene suggested that we discuss and finalize the ballot explanation at the January board meeting, but we should finalize it at that meeting. The committee has asked the School Board for an endorsement and will ask City Council for an endorsement at the January 5th meeting. Joel said the City Council could approve the endorsement at that meeting. Liza asked about asking Sauvie Island School for an endorsement. Jeff said the school is outside our district, so he didn't think they could endorse the measure. Karen thought the endorsement could be helpful because some local families have children attending the school. Liza said she would investigate. Jeff said he thought we pursue an endorsement from the South County Family School which is the local charter school. There was discussion about the local homeschool group and who to approach about an endorsement. Liza thought we should try to get an endorsement from the Scappoose Parent Teacher organization.

There was discussion about the final paragraph of the explanatory statement. Liza suggested that it needed to be re-worded to be clearer. Several suggestions were made about the re-wording with no final agreement. The board agreed to work on re-wording and come back with a suggested paragraph to replace the current one at the January board meeting. Jolene said our goal is to approve the statement at the next board meeting. Liza asked if we wanted to vote on the explanatory statement. Jolene said it was not ready to be voted on. Joel thought we should get an endorsement from Business Oregon. Jolene asked all present to think of possible endorsers and email their list and the committee would assign volunteers to ask for the endorsement.

5.3 Strategic Plan Review and Planning/Customer Survey questionnaire finalization

Liza presented a final version of the customer survey. Jeff asked if the phrase "programming" could be changed to "programs". Jolene thought there should be a "n/a" column for services that the person replying did not use. This would be for the second set of questions. Jeff said he also thought one line of the survey got left off possibly due to a formatting error. Liza said that she was unable to incorporate all the board suggestions from November. The form was incapable of shadowing some parts in grey. Separating one question out into different formats would require reducing font size again which could render the form unreadable, so Liza recommends not doing that. The Friends of Scappoose Public Library has donated a \$100 Fred Meyer gift card as a raffle prize for filling out the survey. Jeff asked if after those changes are made, can we test the survey? Liza thought we should pilot the paper copy in the library and get feedback from customers and wait until we get feedback to roll out the digital survey.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Librarian's report

Jeff presented his report. Elisa is starting two new book clubs. One for mystery. One for romance. These will meet on Mondays in the library starting in January. The library has received nearly all its property tax money for the year. We have about \$34,000 still left to be collected along with \$15,000 - \$20,000 in past due tax. Jeff distributed printed copies of the annual audit. It is a clean audit. The auditors have the same general concerns to make the board aware of as in previous years. One is that the library contract bookkeeper uses QuickBooks. Another is that there is no adequate staff to separate ordering and

receiving duties. The third is that the contract bookkeeper miscoded one grant check as tax receipts. The board has to acknowledge that it received these concerns and submit a letter to the Oregon Secretary of State with a response. As in years past, the board agreed to stating that they are aware of and OK with the first two issues. Jeff recommended stating that administration was unaware of the miscoded check because the deposit slip when submitted to the bookkeeper was coded with the correct account and as the library does not have access to the accounting software as recommended by previous audits, tracing coding mistakes is very difficult, but we would try to find them. He submitted a letter to the board for submission to the Secretary of State. Jeff also reviewed building issues and how they have been resolved. Jeff also noted that someone turned the library's American flag upside down either Sunday night or Monday and that staff has zip tied the rope to the flagpole to make this harder to do in the future. Jeff asked the board to review and approve the letter to the Secretary of State. Jolene made a motion to approve the letter to the Secretary of State. Lisa seconded. The letter was approved unanimously and signed by Jolene as Board President. Voting: Lewis yea, Jonas yea, Nussbaum yea, Myers yea, Gerardo yea.

7.0 Other Business

8.0 Future Agenda Suggestions

Lisa asked what we needed to do to progress on the Strategic Plan. Jeff said that we needed to complete the customer survey and that would be the basis for the plan. Lisa said that the board needs to consider the director's employment review for the year. Lisa said that she would like the board to independently fill out an evaluation form for Jeff and return them to her electronically. Liza asked if Jeff had any input on his evaluation. Jeff said he has not in the past. He has staff who report to him complete a self-evaluation every year. Liza asked if he would like to do a self-evaluation for the board. Jeff was non-committal. The board said they would discuss it again at the January meeting. Liza suggested that Jeff could do a summary of activities for the past year.

9.0 Board Comments

10.0 Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Library Board update – Dec. 18, 2025

Introduction

Hi there. I am Karen Kessi, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve the Library District by making this report tonight. I am here to provide a campaign update. After my report, I will also answer any questions I am capable of answering. I have organized my remarks in an FAQ style, so perhaps I have anticipated some of your questions. I also apologize in advance if I tell you something you have already heard before.

Perhaps this has already been answered for you, but I'd like to start with the geographical boundaries of the Library District? In other words, who will have the opportunity to vote on this ballot measure?

The Library District includes all of Scappoose plus a little more.

Any registered voter who lives in the Library District will have the opportunity to vote on this ballot measure. Jolene estimates that there are 9,975 registered voters in the Library District, but it is highly unlikely that all of them will vote in this election.

We should be able to sort the voter data by “frequent voters” (how many are likely to vote in this upcoming May election). We are not inclined to sort by party affiliation because of our hope that the library matters to people of all political affiliations.

To pass, the levy would need at least 50% + 1 of all votes cast.

Will there be a campaign effort to pass this ballot measure?

Yes. Actually, there will be **two campaign efforts** happening at the same time.

1. Information Only

- The chief officer, in this case – Jeff, cannot advocate for the levy at any time.

- Staff members cannot legally advocate for the levy during work hours; they can only provide information neutrally.
- This campaign effort will feature the Library's chief officer Jeff Weiss and the Library staff (during work hours).
- The Information Only campaign can receive campaign advice from members of the Advocacy Steering Committee (see below) as long as it is in service to the neutral Information Only effort.

2. Advocacy

- These are the VOTE YES! people. They rely on the information provided by the Information Only campaign, AND they also encourage voters to vote for the levy.
- This effort is usually run by a group, like a Political Action Committee (PAC) or another steering committee of supporters.
- Other volunteers and supporters can also help with the Advocacy campaign.
- Any staff member except for the chief officer can help with the Advocacy campaign outside of their work hours.
- Board members can participate in the Advocacy campaign too.

Has a PAC or Steering Committee already been formed to run the Advocacy campaign?

A Campaign Steering Committee is nearly formed.

At some point, the decision was made by the Library Board to try for the levy in this May's election. Some of us have been meeting fairly regularly since early September. We will have a few meetings this month by the time it's over, and we will start meeting weekly in January until the pieces of the campaign are all in place.

In my opinion, the Steering Committee should include representatives from stakeholder groups and community members with campaign experience – all who want to see this levy pass. At the same time, the Committee should remain relatively small so that it is easier to meet and make decisions.

Because of public meetings laws and the number of Library Board members (5), the Steering Committee can only have two Library Board members on it, as you are aware.

These people have volunteered to be on the Campaign Steering Committee so far:

- Jolene Jonas, outgoing President of the Library Board
- Lisa Lewis, incoming President of the Library Board
- Joel Haugen, Scappoose City Council
- Tina Miller, Friends of the Library member
- Karen Kessi, community member
- Virginia Fenstermaker, community member
- Jeff Weiss, Executive Director of the Library, will attend Steering Committee meetings in an Information Only capacity.
- We can welcome another Steering Committee member if the Board has someone to suggest immediately. Otherwise, I'd like to be settled with who is participating.

Jolene reached out to me a year ago about helping with this. Now would be a good time to tell you a little about my background. I have lived in Scappoose for about 33 years. I raised my two daughters here and have been involved in a range of community projects over the years. As for campaigning, I will admit that I am not an expert nor am I a professional, but I do have some experience. Locally, I was the chair of the Advocacy campaign effort for Measure 5-188, the Scappoose School Bond, which passed narrowly in 2008, a terrible recession year. I have also helped over a dozen Scappoose School Board members with their successful campaigns, and I also helped some of these with their re-elections. Additionally, I am the current alternate member of the Library District's Budget Committee.

Virginia Fenstermaker is the mother of two school-aged daughters who is also involved in this community in a number of ways. She has a past life as a media relations and PR professional in the Phoenix area and I have seen her in action around here. She has helped me with my most recent School Board campaign efforts, and she was very involved with the last Scappoose School Bond effort. Though it did not pass, her experience with this tax increase

effort will prove valuable to us as her experience is much more recent than mine. She is skillful in ways that I am not, and frankly, we need her.

Though I recommend a relatively small Steering Committee, the Advocacy campaign will need other key communicators and volunteers to step forward to help. All Board members can participate in this way!

Speaking of communicators and volunteers, all those involved with communicating the campaigns' key messages will need to be trained to stay on message. One of the easiest ways to derail a campaign is to lack clarity in messaging. Once the key messages are developed, those who communicate them must agree to stick to them like superglue. Development of the key messages is in the works. We have already made headway by developing the levy ballot title and explanatory statement, the legal review of which should be complete by this Monday.

Recruitment of volunteers can begin in earnest in January or early February once we are clear about what we would like them to do.

What else have we accomplished? Besides the development of our levy ballot title and explanatory statement, we have discussed campaign strategy, built the Steering Committee, reached out to the Friends of the Library, the School Board, and the City Council for endorsements, secured funding for the Advocacy campaign from the Friends of the Library, developed a tentative campaign plan, budget, and calendar, made some headway with examining the voter data, and more. This has been the front-loading phase, and now we will be moving into the phase where we develop messages and materials.

It is my sincere hope that the Library Board will support the Steering Committee by empowering it to make all decisions regarding the Advocacy campaign. And of course, I also hope that the Library Board will empower Jeff to make all final decisions regarding the Information Only campaign. It would be great if you could take action on this tonight.

The Library Board should receive reports on the progress of the campaign at each monthly board meeting through the election. Of course, your questions are welcome!

What is the *tentative* campaign plan?

What **Information Only** will likely do:

- Pay lawyer to review ballot title and explanatory statement **\$** - this is already in the works.
- County Elections filings & fees **\$**
- Voters Pamphlet statement?
- Website informational message
- Press releases to Spotlight & KOHI (and any interviews, questionnaires, etc.)
- Informational handouts, signage for the Library, etc.
- Social media posts
- Brief presentation prepared for whenever it might be needed
- Answer any questions about the levy
- Mailer inviting voters to four info sessions (with overage for handouts?) **\$\$\$\$**
- Four info sessions with handouts, refreshments, etc. in Library meeting room
- Informational message in City Newsletter included in April water bills
- An “Ask Me About the Library Levy” table at special events in the community
 - e.g. Annual Town Meeting, Earth Day, etc.

What **Advocacy** will likely do:

- Obtain endorsements from key entities and individuals – this is already in the works.
- Obtain Voters Pamphlet “Arguments in Favor” **\$\$**
- Obtain “Letters to the Editor” of the Spotlight (hopefully at least 9)
- Send a VOTE YES mailer after taxes are paid & when ballots are mailed **\$\$\$\$**
- Send a smaller-run VOTE YES mailer half-way through the election period **\$\$\$**
- Communicate to all contacts in the Library District through personal text, email, conversation, etc.

A simple campaign with high quality messaging that is launched at the right time can be very impactful.

What are the *estimated* campaign costs?

This figure has not been determined yet, but considering the cost of a mailer and other printed materials, the Information Only campaign may cost around \$3000 and the Advocacy campaign may cost around \$5000.

As you know, the Library has already budgeted for the Information Only campaign costs.

The Friends of the Library have generously agreed to fund the Advocacy campaign.

We are working on obtaining endorsements from the Friends of the Library, the Scappoose School District, and the Scappoose City Council.

Should the Library Board vote to approve the levy ballot title and explanatory statement?

Yes, definitely, and as soon as you are able to do so. The legal review of these documents should be complete by Monday.

Thanks for your time and attention tonight. You should expect a briefer brief at each of your monthly meetings given by me or another member of the Steering Committee.

Are there any questions I might be able to answer?