

**LIBRARY MINUTES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
JOPLIN PUBLIC LIBRARY
18 AUGUST 2026**

The regular meeting of the Joplin Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Board President Mary Gaarder. Board Members Heather Van Otterloo, Mikh Gunderman, Emily Stanley, Andrea Cullers, Jean Coltharp, and Eric Deatherage, and Library Director Jeana Gockley were present.

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Veda Boyd Jones and Jennifer Baldwin.

BOARD EDUCATION: Youth Services Librarian Christina Matekel-Gibson presented a Summer Reading 2026 wrap-up. Numbers were up in all areas. Christina attributed the success to the program's theme ("Unearth a Story" – with an emphasis on dinosaurs), staff excitement, promotion at local schools, and already robust programming. This summer, through a partnership with Joplin schools nutritional department, 500 free meals were provided to children 18 and younger.

MINUTES: Minutes from the July 2026 regular meeting were reviewed. There was a motion by Dr. Coltharp to approve the minutes as presented, with a second by Dr Van Otterloo. Motion passed. **6/0** Minutes from the July 2026 closed session were reviewed. There was a motion by Dr. Gunderman to approve the minutes as presented, with a second by Dr Cullers. Motion passed. **6/0**

VOUCHER: July non-salary expenditures in the amount of \$44,873.90 were approved. (Cullers/Van Otterloo) **6/0**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Coffee Shop Committee (Ad Hoc).** President Gaarder updated the Board that the committee had met again with City officials. She presented a revised RFP containing suggestions from that meeting. Board Members discussed details contained within the RFP and suggested further revisions. There was a motion by Dr. Coltharp to entrust the committee to make changes to the RFP as suggested by the Board and City staff. Second by Dr. Deatherage. Motion passed. **6/0**

Jeana also presented a marketing document that she and Marketing Assistant Lori Crockett had crafted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Electing Board Officers.** Current Board Officers are:
 - a. President: Mary Gaarder
 - b. Vice President: Emily Stanley
 - c. Treasurer: Andrea Cullers
 - d. Secretary: Jean Coltharp

There was a motion by Dr. Van Otterloo to retain the current Treasurer and Secretary. Second by Dr. Gunderman. Motion passed. **6/0**

There was a motion by Dr. Coltharp to retain the current President and Vice President. Second by Dr. Cullers. Motion passed. **6/0**

2. **Committee Appointments.** The Library Board committees are as follows:
- Budget and Finance: Andrea Cullers (chair); Veda Boyd Jones; Heather Van Otterloo
 - Building and Grounds: Jean Coltharp (chair); Mikh Gunderman; Eric Deatherage
 - Personnel: Jennifer Baldwin (chair); Emily Stanley

Veda Boyd Jones will continue to serve as the Library Board liaison to the Friends of the Library Board, and Mary Gaarder will serve as ex officio on all the committees named above.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Tax Levy Hearing.** At .2382 cents, the Library's tax levy is slated to remain unchanged. The City Council will hold a tax levy hearing at its 6 p.m. meeting on Aug. 24. There was a motion by Ms. Stanley to set the Library's levy at .2382 cents. Seconded by Dr. Coltharp. Motion passed. **6/0**

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Jeana reported that:

Media Engagement

- On July 31, [KSN](#) aired a story about Patty Crane's retirement.
- Writers' Faire
 - On August 2, [KZRG](#) shared about the Library accepting applications for the 2026 Writers' Faire.
 - August 4, [The Joplin Globe](#) published an announcement about applications being accepted for the Writers' Faire.
- On August 4, I co-hosted Living Well on KSN.
 - [Show Opening](#)
 - [The Joplin Public Library's Summer Report -](#) I shared about the Writers' Faire and the ending statistics for Summer Reading on KSN's Living Well.
 - [Baxter Springs Rodeo](#)
 - [Artist Trading Cards at Spiva](#)
 - [August Cars & Coffee for Bright Futures](#)

Programs

- The Summer Reading Program wrapped up on July 19. Here are some of the statistics from the eight week program.
 - Participants: 1,808
 - Gameboard completions: 1,059
 - Minutes read: 7948,808
 - SR Cards Issued: 936
 - Program attendees: 3,665
 - The overall increase for most categories was 25 percent!

- Summer Meals, a partnership with the Joplin School District's Nutritional Services department, ended on August 7, with 500 children being served meals.

Outreach

- KCU student volunteers were on-site August 7 as part of their annual Day of Service. They helped library staff complete several projects. One noticeable project included the movement of the three new book shelves, for a more bookstore-like setup. Thanks to Administrative Assistant Lisa Brown for coordinating this visit.
- On August 6, Sarah Grace and Rae Laws represented the Library at an Incoming Student Resource Fair for Dental Students at the KCU campus.

Building & Grounds

- Library IT and Facilities Manager Justin Kelly submitted a claim to Mediacom to recoup the expenses the Library paid to fix irrigation and landscaping.
- AAA Window Cleaning has begun their annual outdoor window cleaning on the building.

Personnel

- Alison Cox was hired as a new Youth Services assistant. Her first day was August 10.
- Liz Doman was hired as a new Circulation assistant. Her first day was August 10.

STATISTICS: The Board discussed door count, meeting and study room usage, and Makerspace numbers.

STAFF COMMENTS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS: Dr. Deatherage read a report from Jennifer Baldwin, who stepped in for Veda Boyd Jones at the August Friends of the Library Board meeting:

- July book sales were record breaking at over \$1,400.
- The Friends paid \$9,500 to repaint the red sculpture outside the building. A rededication ceremony that will also honor Library landscaping and building vendors will be held Sept. 8 at 2 p.m.
- Discussion of how to grow the homebound delivery program.
- Trivia night is Sept. 26.
- The annual membership meeting is Oct. 15. The guest presenter will be the owner of the Joplin Carnegie Library building. Elections for two Board positions will be also be held.
- There will be a members-only event in early November, a private tour of the Carnegie.
- T-shirts bearing the slogan Read, Return, Repeat are in the works.
- The Friends will sponsor the Writers Faire on Oct. 3.
- Discussion of grant writing options.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no Public Comments.

The meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Written by

Administrative Assistant

Approved by

Library Director

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Joplin Public Library will be held at 4 p.m. Tuesday, September 15, 2026.