

City of Milton-Freewater

Library Board Meeting Minutes 1.22.2026

The Library Board of the City of Milton-Freewater met Thursday, January 22 at 4:00 p.m. in the Monahan Room of the Library, 8 SW 8th Avenue, Milton-Freewater, Oregon.

The following members were present: Jennifer LeBlanc, Laurel Estes, and Randy Reese

Absent were: Tricia Perez

Staff members present were: Library Director Lili Schmidt

Citizens present were: Margo Piver

No press members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Minutes from 8.28.2025 meeting were approved with a motion from Randy Reese, seconded by Jennifer LeBlanc. All were in favor. Motion passed.

UPDATES:

Board discussed that Margo Piver will no longer be a board member, as she has moved to the Planning Board. Margo plans to attend Library Board meetings as a citizen and did attend this meeting.

Library Director Schmidt provided updates:

Summer Reading theme is “Plant a seed, Read” and plans for Summer 2026 are beginning. Connie (Children’s Services staff) is prepping for the program, but it is still in the beginning stages. Performer “Bridge City Theater Company” has already been booked for June 30th at 2pm. The Friends of the Library has paid the \$535 fee for the performer.

Board members were updated that the Milton-Freewater City Manager Chad Morris was terminated in October 2025 and Tim Johnson of Portland started in his role as Interim City Manager effective December 1. Library Director Schmidt told the Board that Mr. Johnson is very knowledgeable about City Government (particularly in Oregon), and is very supportive of the Library. Mr. Johnson is doing a great job of encouraging department head cooperation, team work, and is helping the City with outreach to the community to foster better City/community relationships.

The Library should be receiving a check from the Valley Giving guide for \$3525.73 in donations. Schmidt plans to spend some money on books to give away to children and use some funding to supplement the camera project (to be discussed later in the meeting).

Board members were given information about the Library Fee Schedule. It needs updated in several areas, most specifically is the non-resident fee. Patrons of Umatilla Co can receive a library card from any District library for free. However, Milton-Freewater borders Washington state so there are patrons who come to the MF Library from College Place and Walla Walla. We have been charging \$35 per year to non-residents for 23+ years. After some research, Director Schmidt determined the average property owner in Milton-Freewater is paying approximately \$127 in taxes specifically to the Umatilla County Special Library District. While that number is likely unaffordable for most community members, Director Schmidt told the board the \$35 fee should be increased and recommended \$60 or \$65 instead. After some discussion, Board Member Jennifer LeBlanc suggested MFPL charges \$35 for 6 months or \$70 per year. This can break up the cost for families who are unable to pay the whole amount at one time. Board Members Randy Reese and Laurel Estes both agreed. Citizen Margo Piver said these seem to reasonable rate requests. They were all in agreement and Director Schmidt said she would present that as the preferred fee schedule change.

Board Members were sent a copy of the most recent (nearly final) Draft of the Strategic Plan. Interim CM Johnson has seen the draft and would like to have it presented and approved to the City Council at the March 9, 2026 meeting. The Board reacted positively to the draft and said it was well done and they approved this draft as-is. Interim CM Johnson recommended an addition to the library Mission Statement. The statement currently is “The Library is the center of the community and provides a welcoming space, helpful staff, and programming opportunities for everyone.” Johnson suggested including the word innovation and LeBlanc suggested including words about the resources the library offers. Schmidt will create a more encompassing Mission statement and email the Board for input.

Schmidt told the Board about the potential camera project. Working with the buildings supervisor, Hermiston IT and Schmidt, a plan has been formulated to install six total surveillance cameras in the library that will be integrated with the Police Department server. The purpose of those cameras are so that front desk staff can view the entire library from the front desk monitor. It's impractical to go up and down the stairs to monitor a group of teens, for example. This way staff can see what is happening and determine if intervention is needed. Having the cameras record audio and visual can also be essential if a crime committed or if an incident occurs that needs to be verified. Schmidt said audio will NOT be on for staff to hear, and we will respect people's privacy in all instances except when a crime is committed or an incident occurs that we need to verify (for example, if a child complains they are being bullied, pulling up the footage can verify). All members of the meeting we excited about the project and fully support it.

Action ITEMS:

Approval for dates for meetings in 2026. Dates for 2026: January 22, March 26, May 28, July 23, and Sept 24.

Recommendations:

Board ANNOUNCEMENTS:

None

There being no further action or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm

Minutes completed by Lili Schmidt 1.23.2026

Approved March 26, 2026

Board Members