

Ames Public Library Board of Trustees
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
January 15, 2026

The Ames Public Library (APL) Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, January 15, 2026, in the Dale H. Ross Board Room with Dennis, Gibson, Johnson, Myers, Reger, and Thorbs-Weber in attendance. Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused. Director Schofer and Sagan, Sustainability Coordinator, were also in attendance.

Call to Order: President Gibson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Consent Agenda:

Moved by Thorbs-Weber, seconded by Johnson, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- A. Motion approving minutes of the regular meeting December 18, 2025
- B. Motion approving payment of claims 12/1/25 – 12/31/25

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused).
Approved unanimously.

Public Forum: None.

Activity Reports:

1. Assistant City Manager: Sagan, Sustainability Coordinator, gave a report to the Board.
 - The Recycling RFP (Request for Proposal) is due tomorrow, January 16. Services will be for all city facilities and residential addresses with four units or less. They are expecting to be able to make recommendations to City Council in February. They are anticipating a cost of \$6-\$8 per unit. More information is available on the City of Ames website.
 - The second round of Community Climate Grants have been awarded funding four more projects. There were a lot more funds requested than available. The purpose of the Climate Action Grant Program is to support community involvement in Climate Action Plan implementation. The City of Ames provides funding for programs and activities that align with the City's community sustainability goals, including the Climate Action Plan and EcoSmart Programs. Projects must also include an education or engagement component. The Sustainability Coordinator plans to request additional funding from City Council in March.
 - The City of Ames is excited to partner with Green Iowa AmeriCorps to provide no-cost energy audits and weatherization services. This program can help save money on your utility bills and maintain a more comfortable home and is available for all Ames residents. Interested Ames residents can fill out

the application on the City of Ames website at <https://www.cityofames.org/Resident-Services/Sustainability/Green-Iowa-AmeriCorps>.

- On January 16, Storybook STEM will feature an environmental sustainability book and activity at the library with DiMaucia Phanfil, Engagement Coordinator for Green Iowa AmeriCorps member serving with the City of Ames.
2. Administrative Staff Report: Schofer gave a report to the Board.
- The Library wrapped up the year with some fun programming including the popular NOON Year's Eve Dance party. It was a big hit with families with over 150 in attendance. The Ames Tribune covered it and posted several fun photos.
 - Adult Services added a new offering to our Conversation Circles with American Sign Language starting this month.
 - Popular children's author Lindsay Currie came for a visit this past Monday, January 12. She is one of our Battle of the Books selections for this spring's competition.
 - The second Wednesday of each month there will be an adult program called "That's Fun" geared to adults who want to gather and meet new folks. This month was a puzzle competition and next month is a 90's trivia night.
 - The next Repair Café is January 17, 2026.
 - Adult Services is starting a new Dementia Caregiver Support Group with Dementia Friendly Iowa on the fourth Thursday of each month. January 22 will be the first meeting.
 - The Library is partnering with the League of Women voters to host a screening of the Free For All: The Public Library documentary with a panel discussion to follow on February 5, 2026, at 6:30 pm.
 - As discussed in November, we are expecting the \$10,000 gift from the Carnegie Foundation to arrive this month. We'll likely stick to the original spirit of the gift and use it for a larger building project, which we have two in the works.
 - We are currently in the Request for Proposal phase for the design services for the additional study room in adult services. The RFP closes on January 23, 2026.
 - We are also getting some quotes to convert the southwest alley staff door to a handicap accessible automatic opening door. Depending on the costs, that project may also need to go out for bid.
 - Ames Public Library is also the Library of Congress, Iowa, Center for the Book Affiliate. You may have seen our card catalog on display downstairs that is from the Library of Congress. We will be working on another project as The Iowa Center for the Book called "PBS American Stories a Reading Road Trip". We'll talk to producers later this month with a likely air date in March. The PBS episode will highlight contemporary and historical authors, literary locations, maybe special libraries or independent bookstores. We feed them a lot of options and they ultimately produce it. We'll get a chance

to briefly highlight our Center for the Book Programs but a lot of it will end up focusing on the authors.

- We have a higher-level IT check-in meeting scheduled for tomorrow, but an impromptu opportunity came up, and I invited them to speak at our Leadership Team meeting this afternoon. Schofer is planning for them to come and present at Staff Day on February 16 and then work on a switch over to our upgraded Microsoft accounts that align with the city. They are in the process of switching over our R-Drive as we will now be on the city's servers. It's a big project but they did a good job of outlining the process, answering questions, and are emphasizing their desire to prioritize customer service and meeting our needs.

There are still some logistics to clarify, with timelines and communication when planning, but all told I think it's going smoothly thus far and am hopeful for these next steps. We may need to decide on whether or not to change our email to align more with the city's formula

Sheila.schofer@amespubliclibrary.org for now we'll have an alias so we'll receive mail address to either, but our sent mail will go out as Sheila.schofer@amespubliclibrary.org

- The budget meeting with the City Manager went well. We'll go over that at a future agenda item.

3. Ames Public Library Friends Foundation (APLFF) Report: Schofer gave a report to the Board.

- The Holiday campaign is doing well. It is about 80% on target.
- Carlson is getting more plaques for the donor wall.

4. Budget and Finance Committee Report: Johnson gave a report to the Board.

- The budget is sitting very close to expected expenses for December (50%). Variance is expected as some costs come at different times, but overall, the budget is in great shape.

Moved by Myers, seconded by Dennis, to approve the finance report as presented.

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused). Approved unanimously.

5. Art Committee Report: Reger gave a report to the Board.

- The Art Committee met and reviewed the artwork that staff and the Director had already sorted through. The committee was thankful for the preparation work.
- The Committee recommends that the Board accept a statue of two children on a bicycle, depending on the artist choosing the Library as the recipient. The piece would possibly be installed in the Literary Grounds area.
- The Committee recommends that the Board agree to authorize library staff to deaccess several pieces of art, based on relevance, condition, and

duplication. The committee was impressed by efforts involving many steps to find a home for the deaccessioned art.

Moved by Thorbs-Weber, seconded by Myers, to authorize the Director, on behalf of the Art Committee, to accept a statue of two children on a tricycle subject to the donor choosing the library as the recipient.

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution 2026-L001 adopted.

Moved by Johnson, seconded by Myers, to authorize staff to deaccession several pieces of art as recommended by the Art Committee and Director.

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution 2026-L002 adopted.

Board Education: Schofer presented information about the accreditation process. The application is due by February 28, 2026, and is submitted every three years. To maintain a tier 1 rating, the Library must meet a minimum of 29 standards including things such as the Board of Trustees and Director attending county-wide training, reviewing policies routinely, providing services free to the public during a minimum amount of time and days, just to name a few. More information about the accreditation process is available on the State Library of Iowa website <https://statelibraryofiaowa.gov/programs/accreditation-standards>.

Policy Review:

1. Internet Use Policy and Guidelines: This policy was brought to the Board last month for discussion and reviewed by staff. Recommended changes include taking the first sentence from the second paragraph and moving it to the first sentence of the first paragraph, under Library Practices changing the sentence “some information about checkout of Library devices and use of Library computers” to “retains name and library card number of those using a Library computer or device” and add “entered during the session” in the same sentence, and adding “However, the Library does employ limited, security-based filtering designed solely to block websites containing malicious software or content that could compromise network security or user safety.” And deleting the next word “However” in the following paragraph as the second to last sentence. The Board discussed the policy.

Moved by Myers, seconded by Dennis, to approve the revisions to the Internet Use Policy and Guidelines as presented.

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution 2026-L003 adopted.

2. Conduct in the Library: Schofer introduced the policy. The Board discussed the policy. Myers pointed out a lot of the policy can't be changed because it is State Code. The Board would like the Person in Charge team to review the policy. They discussed charging e-bikes and similar devices inside or outside the library. They also considered language not to allow them in the building or allow charging them. They discussed keeping the email address in the Appeals section, or making people aware that it might have to change depending on changes made from switching to the City's IT support. This policy will be reviewed by staff and brought back next month for action.

New Business:

Fiscal Year 2026/27 Proposed Budget: Schofer introduced the budget summary. The City Manager requested city departments to submit adjustments to the current year's budget (fiscal year 2025/26 or FY26) and initial requests for next year (FY27) by November 12, 2025. Schofer, Klein-Hewett and Johannes met with the City Budget Manager, Assistant City Manager, and Lehman on Thursday, November 20, to review the initial entries and make adjustments per their recommendations. On January 8, 2026, Schofer and Johannes met with the City Manager, City Finance Director, Assistant City Manager Goldbeck, and Lehman to review budget requests.

Notes:

- The Library Administration budget reflects salary and benefit expenses shifting to internal expenses with the transfer of 2 FTEs to the City Information Technology Division in the Finance Department.
- After reviewing current IT services and considering best practices, the Library and City IT divisions are integrating to offer a more connected and secure environment that will improve functionality and maximize overall effectiveness.
- The increase in commodities is for tables and chairs for the auditorium which will be paid for with Ames Public Library Friends Foundation funding.
- Capital funding in the FY 2025/26 adjusted budget has been included to purchase a graphic quality copier (\$29,300), to alter the west employee entrance for accessibility (\$25,000), and to convert existing space into two study rooms (\$18,000). The cost of the study rooms will be covered out of the Library Future Needs Fund.
- The demand for downloadable electronic books and audio outpaces the increasing costs of providing these services. The Library continues to adjust funding from physical collections to electronic collections, which are more costly. This funding increase is reflected in the collection materials expenditure category.
- The Library's primary book vendor suddenly went out of business, and staff quickly pivoted to alternative suppliers to meet purchasing needs. Additional funds were added to the FY 2025/26 commodities budget for processing supplies to cover costs while negotiating with new vendors and exploring alternative options.

- The Youth Services Manager works closely with the Ames Public Library Friends Foundation Development Director to identify grant opportunities to support youth initiatives such as STEM Programming and Summer Meals. The Friends Foundation will contribute.
- \$130,428 in FY 2025/26 and \$131,018 in FY 2026/27 to the Library for youth programming and collections.
- As part of the adjusted FY 2025/26 budget, the Adult Services area will receive a furniture refresh, with funding of \$50,000 from the Ames Public Library Friends Foundation (APLFF).
- The commodities budget has increased due to additional funding provided by the Friends Foundation for adult program support and additional adult reading incentives.
- The Customer Accounts Services personal services budget reflects a change in health insurance selection among permanent staff, as well as an increase in Library Aid part-time staff hours to better reflect actual expenditures in this category.
- With the reduction in State support for the Interlibrary Loan Program, postage costs reflected in the contractual budget have been increased for FY 2026/27.
- In the FY 2026/27 contractual budget, funding is included for two staff members to attend a conference to explore desired features for a replacement bookmobile in the next five years.

Moved by Johnson, seconded by Reger, to approve the adjustments to the operating budget for fiscal year 2025/26 and requests for fiscal year 2026/27 as presented.

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused). Approved unanimously. Resolution 2026-L004 adopted.

Schofer invited the Board to the City Council meeting on February 3, 2026, at 5:00pm when she and Klein-Hewett present the budget.

Trustee Comments:

- Myers – is glad to be in a positive space, supportive of the community. She's proud to be a Board Member.
- Dennis - talked to a teen about the reading challenge, who was very excited to participate in the challenge.
- Thorbs-Weber - in February, Reynolds and she will be presenting the Slate of Officers. Before then they will be asking members to serve on the Executive committee. Please consider serving when asked.
- Johnson - It was impressive to see the list of the Board trainings. He suggests adding a list of topics and materials created to a binder. The new board members could learn a lot by reviewing that information.
- Reger – thank you for letting me participate online and Happy New Year.
- Gibson – thank you to the whole Board. See you all in February.

Adjournment:


Moved by Myers, seconded by Thorbs-Weber, to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

Vote on Motion: 5-0 (Gibson abstained; Arora, Gordillo, and Reynolds were excused).
Approved unanimously.

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Dale H. Ross Board Room.



Melissa Johannes, Library Secretary



Richard Johnson, Board Secretary