

**CITY OF BOULDER
BOULDER, COLORADO
BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS MEETING MINUTES**

Name of Board/ Commission: Library Commission	
Date of Meeting: June 7, 2023	
Contact information preparing summary: Celia Seaton	
Commission members present: Steven Frost, Scott Steinbrecher, Benita Duran, Sylvia Wirba, Miriam Gilbert	
Commission members not present: None	
<p>Library staff present: David Farnan, Library Director Jennifer Phares, Deputy Library Director Celia Seaton, Board Secretary Jaime Kopke, Programs & Events Manager BLDG61:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam Watts, Creative Technologist • Sammie Crowder, Creative Technologist • Robby Holb, Master Woodworker <p>Antonia Gaona, Public Services Manager</p> <p>City staff present: None</p> <p>Members of the public present: None</p>	
Type of Meeting: Regular	
<p>Agenda Item 1: Reminder: Commissioners please log monthly volunteer hours Count Me In Boulder [0:00:08 Audio min.] The Commission logged their service.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 2: Approval of agenda [0:00:49 Audio min.] The meeting was called to order and Frost asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There was a nod of approval from the commission for the agenda as presented in the packet.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 3: Public comment [0:01:25 Audio min.] None.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 4: Consent agenda [0:01:35 Audio min.] a. Approval of May 2023 Meeting Minutes: Wirba moved to approve these minutes, Steinbrecher seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 5: Presentation of BLDG61 Tour and Updates [0:02:28 Audio min.] Kopke, Watts, Crowder, and Holb provided a walking tour of the busy Makerspace during the Open Studio hours. Patrons engaged in sundry activities including woodworking, airbrushing, screen printing, laser cutting, sewing, and 3-D printing. Frost observed the energy of enterprise: “so impressive.”</p> <p>Maker Made, the annual celebration of work produced from “the collective energy and ambition of a community of inventors, designers, engineers, artists, craftspeople, and tinkerers,” will run from July 16-30. Kopke invited all to attend the gallery opening, scheduled for the evening of June 17 in the Canyon Gallery at Main Library.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 6: Presentation of North Boulder Library progress [0:05:30 Audio min.] Gaona presented updates on the north Boulder library building, reviewing design, layout, space, finishes, and engagement events planned for the end of the summer, alongside current images of the progress and future renderings (see handouts.)</p> <p>She referenced the extensive development review process which lasted about 18 months. April’s celebratory groundbreaking ceremony was well-attended, despite the snow. Some construction delays occurred due to unexpected site conditions and a very rainy season. Construction should wrap up by the end of March 2024. By April 2024, the space will be outfitted with materials and personnel. Staff tentatively plans a May or June 2024 opening to the public.</p> <p>Images indicate the cement footings which outline the perimeter and foundation of the new library building. Workers have laid rebar structures and wall forms. On Friday, June 16, the actual concrete foundation will be poured. Weekly drone recording and photography will be archived in Carnegie’s collection.</p>	

Boulder Meadows mobile home park sits adjacent to the new library. A planned pedestrian path connects the two and will “open up the entire corridor to that community.” Staff worked closely with Boulder Meadows property owners who requested a path that would lead straight to the library. As Gaona emphasized: “access [for the community] is pivotal.”

Gaona noted that the north Boulder library Makerspace will showcase high ceilings and garage door access; however, the space is still currently planned as unfinished beyond the outlets, temperature control, and appropriate lighting. This allows for a variety of utilizations and flexibility with how the Makerspace can further develop.

The plan to create a smaller “tech footprint” involves three permanent computers alongside a fleet of devices for patron check-out.

Proactively planning for various levels of public restroom access, optional keycard locking mechanisms that allow for restricted admittance will be installed.

The new building will offer the largest free community room space in north Boulder. Frost wondered about occupancy; Gaona explained that staff must wait for the official certification to determine actual capacity numbers. Responding to Duran’s inquiry, staff relayed that the new community room outsizes the Main Library’s Boulder Creek Room which currently holds a maximum occupancy of 80 people with 10 tables and 48 chairs, or 72 chairs without tables.

The collection development plan for the new library building will align with the present NoBo Corner Library branch’s focus on multilingual items and childhood literacy, though on a much larger scale. Resources will include a large percentage of Spanish language materials, early reader and children picture books, as well as current new adult materials.

The library’s [BoulderReads](#) adult literacy program will move offices from Main to the new north Boulder library location.

Responding to Steinbrecher’s inquiry, staff estimates the new building to encompass 12,000 square feet, which is 2,000 more than the George Reynolds branch.

As required by code, the parking lot will hold 23 spaces with four electric charging stations. Long and short-term bicycle parking will also be available.

Potential for collaboration with the Boulder Farmer’s Market still exists for the outdoor plaza space.

[Daily tous les jours](#), an award-winning art and design studio based in Montréal experienced with creating large scale interactive public art installations that celebrate “collective human experiences,” will design and construct the musical ramp leading to a library entrance. Frost, responding to Gilbert and Steinbrecher expressing concern over Daily tous les jour’s Canadian base, clarified the competitive international selection process involved a committee made up entirely of local artists and community members. Gaona noted that among the engagement activities planned for summer 2023, community feedback will be sought for input on sounds and musical notes to integrate into the finished project.

Gaona will guide the final engagement sessions to gather concluding feedback from the public alongside the landscape architect team, Boulder Library Foundation, [Colorado Health Foundation](#), and the support of three [community connectors](#) skilled in multilingual interpretation. Responding to Frost’s inquiry, commission members would be welcome to join and support at any of the engagement activities.

Gilbert asked about project impacts due to expansive soils in the land survey. As Gaona explained, construction workers had to dig deeper than expected on the east end of the lot. She reported that new hospitable soil was brought, and deeper footings were seated to prevent future issues.

Frost wondered about artist exhibitions. Though this piece hasn’t yet been finalized, Gaona agreed that public art should be showcased on the open wall space. Staff plans to hold a public process soliciting submissions of work from artists; the chosen pieces would get displayed on a rotational schedule. In this way, the library may serve as a dynamic community gallery space. The call for artists may begin as early as August 2023.

Responding to Frost’s inquiry, the number of full-time employees is set to match that at the branches, save for the additional Makerspace staff.

Steinbrecher urged staff to prepare for potential public pushback in relation to the branches at the south and east sides of the city not having all the features and amenities of the new north Boulder library. Steinbrecher believes some community perception might be that “downtown has two libraries.” Frost emphasized that the north Boulder community, where they

live, has not had such a facility for decades. Gaona acknowledged that this is “a conversation to be had,” and will be aided by updated strategic planning afforded by the district including a comprehensive facilities study of all library spaces around the city. She explained that the upcoming engagement sessions are funded by Colorado Health Foundation, whose focus will be on the surrounding outdoor spaces around the new building. The recent refresh of George Reynolds Branch Library interior seems to have been a revitalizing “shot in the arm” for the south Boulder neighborhood; she has never seen the space so activated with patrons.

Wirba noted that the new library building is just the “start of the journey,” (Duran added, “with more security and stability”) and not the end of growth.

Agenda Item 7: Library Policy Review – Request for Reconsideration

[0:59:15 Audio min.]

- a. Commission discussion and input on staff recommended changes to the Request for Reconsideration – a staff team draft was presented to library leadership who provided review and input; this document was then further refined by the City Attorney’s Office. Phares welcomed further revisions or suggestions from commission:

- 1. What questions or edits do the commissioners recommend to the new draft policies or the changes to the Collection Development Policy?*
- 2. Does the commission approve the new Program, Exhibition and Display Policy as written or with its recommended changes?*
- 3. Does the commission approve the new Request for Reconsideration Policy and Form as written or with its recommended changes?*
- 4. Does the commission approve the staff recommended changes to the Collection Development Policy as written or with its recommended changes?*

Gilbert questioned the linking of the two challenge items which she views as separate issues. She wondered about the decision to combine the forms and whether this was common among peer library systems. Phares explained that staff believes a single process that covers various patron concerns will streamline the method of response.

Gilbert considered the description of steps and timeline too “vague.” Staff clarified that after the form is submitted, a librarian or library manager will reach out to the concerned party to discuss the issue. Occasionally, the matter goes no further and is settled in conversation. Otherwise, the form goes along to the director who appoints a staff committee to review the materials and concerns. There is no further appeal after the director’s final decision.

Gilbert suggested researching peer library policies and following American Library Association guidance. While currently travelling, she can provide a closer review and submit her suggested edits to staff upon return. She agrees that getting the form and policies finalized is “of critical importance.”

Gilbert suggested adding more specificity to the “Title” request (e.g., “of program,” “of book”).

Wirba wondered why the verbiage of “reconsideration” is used in place of request for removal. Phares recalled staff discussion regarding accessibility of that term; ultimately, the commonness in library parlance motivated staff to retain the term, alongside clarification. Gilbert indicated that it is indeed the proper language as per the association: www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/selectionpolicytoolkit/formalreconsideration

Steinbrecher would like more time for review, though he understands the urgency and importance of this policy update. He referenced an article he sent to staff concerning “librarian neutrality” which he found pertinent when discussing the language in Attachment A’s Program, Exhibition and Display Selection Policy (see [handouts](#).) The policy states: “BPL seeks to provide programs, exhibitions and displays that balance viewpoints across a broad spectrum of subject matter and opinion that are suitable for a variety of learning and recreational interests.” However, he believes “anything from the right or conservative point of view will be squelched by the librarian because of a lack of neutrality.” He observes biases and need for recusal of interest as “librarians have a stake in some of these issues.” In response, Wirba noted that only one request for reconsideration has occurred while she has served on commission and the patron’s concern appeared to be coming from “the left.” Wirba remembered and Phares confirmed that the request was denied – not because of where the concern fell on the political spectrum, but rather led the principle of whether to remove the item. Frost noted that “there’s plenty of right-wing materials purchased by library staff” – they emphasized that the library “staff are professionally trained people with Master’s in Library Science that are able to understand neutrality in this context.” Phares clarified that the librarians are against censorship, “first and foremost.”

For the committee, Gilbert suggested including one or two people from outside the library staff. Frost submitted that library staff is the most qualified and neutral party to review these issues and recommended leaving the composition of the committee in the library director's purview.

Gilbert recommended "add[ing] a question about whether the 'challenger' has read the books or materials" as she imagines instances of the opponent not consuming the material to which they are objecting. Frost agrees in principle, but they are unsure how this requirement could be reasonably enforced. Steinbrecher suggested that the person submitting the form could be asked to state the version, page number, or some other marker to define the concern. Phares noted that the form provides unlimited space for the patron to insert and clarify comments.

Duran emphasized that the meaning of some words can be "very weighted," such as "eligible." Frost clarified that the term is defined on the second page. Responding to commission's feedback to make the process user-friendly, staff will insert the definition as a hyperlink. Wirba observed that it is a small group working as a "machine" that appears to be responsible for the influx of these reconsideration forms to libraries nationwide. Commission agreed that this guideline works well to filter out an outside group's interference by preventing those from outside this area who have not engaged with this community from submitting the form. Frost approved of the strength in defining the submitter as an "individual."

In response to Steinbrecher's understanding that the complainant must be a cardholder and a resident, Phares pointed out that a patron might attend a program or peruse the library stacks and not be a cardholder.

The commission recommended inserting the word "own" into the phrase "their minor children" as this adjustment clarifies and solidifies the intended meaning. The definition for "eligible" will be hyperlinked in the form, and language will be aligned to reference "individual" instead of "person."

Wirba confirmed that the existing policy is actively in place; staff clarified that this draft aims to encompass more library materials and programs than the current guidelines.

Duran made a motion to approve Attachment A's Draft Program, Exhibition and Display Selection Policy with the requested changes as noted during the discussion. Wirba seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Gilbert clarified that the form, available online, currently must be submitted in person. As most forms available online are submitted online, she wondered about allowing this option. Duran recommending allowing online or physical mail delivery of the form as long as the submitting individual attests to meeting the eligibility guidelines. Phares agreed that this adjustment to process is possible if staff can verify the individual and address. Commission agreed that the permissible methods of transmission should be emphasized in the instruction, whether electronic or in person.

Wirba suggested changing the term "person in charge" to "any library personnel."

Staff clarified the difference between "library programs" and "library sponsored programs." If rent is waived in the Canyon Theater, library staff add the event to the Library Calendar, and staff support is offered, this indicates sponsorship. A library program may involve either staff or performers contracted by the library for a program.

The group discussed Attachment B's Draft Request for Reconsideration Policy. Commission agreed on the listed items, with the adjustment of "person" to "individual" to maintain language consistency.

Duran commented that a response "within 30 business days" seemed a large window of time. Staff explained that this flexibility is necessary in some cases (e.g., a 400–500-page book that needs review, written assessment, and then review of that assessment). Duran recommended clarifying that the response will be given 30 days upon acceptance of form, and that the form "will be acknowledged when received." Phares noted that a staff member generally contacts the person to discuss the process and that this preliminary conversation can sometimes resolve the concern and end the process. Commission suggested clearly stating this step of acknowledgement by a library staff member in the language.

Duran suggested an appeal process whereby the issue could rise to another governing body, such as commission or the board of trustees. Wirba noted that this method would require an entirely separate process for consideration by the trustees.

Staff will clarify the types of allowable delivery, as suggested by commission.

Duran confirmed that any director decisions in this process are issued to commission in meeting packet materials.

Duran moved that commission approve Attachment B with the requested changes noted during the discussion. Wirba seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commission provided input next on Attachment C's fillable PDF form for Request for Reconsideration.

Duran recommended that the form emphasize its ensuing publication along with the decision and other meeting materials as part of the record at the conclusion of the formal process. Steinbrecher suggested a bold font to highlight this piece of the process.

Miriam pointed to language from other Colorado library districts such as Jefferson County and Pikes Peak ([handouts](#)).

Duran made a motion to approve Attachment C's fillable PDF form for Request for Reconsideration with the requested changes. Steinbrecher seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

The group reviewed Attachment D's Changes to the Collection Development Policy. Staff will edit the language to carry over the previously discussed changes such as "library personnel" replacing "person in charge," and use of the term "individual."

Steinbrecher made a motion to approve Attachment D with the requested changes as per the discussion. Gilbert seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Staff indicated that though the library district board of trustees will have a large batch of policies to consider, this one may rise in priority to the top of its agenda.

Agenda Item 8: Library and Arts Director's Report

[2:20:12 Audio min.]

- a. Staff Program Summit – Late Opening of Library Facilities: commission provided a nod of approval for this adjustment to schedule.

Agenda Item 9: Items from Library Commission

[2:21:57 Audio min.]

- a. Updates from commissioners representing the Commission in other venues (verbal)
- b. Boulder Library Foundation (BLF) update (Frost/Wirba) – governance committee recently approved a new method for minutes and electronic voting in bulk in efforts to improve meeting efficiency. The board plans its retreat this fall. As three members have recently resigned, Executive Director Chris Barge would invite any recruit suggestions from commissioners.
- c. Update on emails and phone calls to Library Commission
- d. Library District Trustees Update – the newly elected body is busy establishing and serving on subcommittees to strategically construct the IGA. Farnan plans to serve dual roles as City Library Director along with the new trustee-elected district library director during this transitional time. This proposal is currently going through the relevant city processes to ensure exemption from the city's conflict of interest policy. The trustees will hold a public meeting with library staff on June 15 to provide a timeline overview and respond to questions.

Steinbrecher requested notification of upcoming meetings to himself and fellow commissioners as well as to past members of the Library District Advisory Committee and the Boulder Library Foundation to facilitate sharing of feedback and useful information. Duran welcomed Steinbrecher to attend a trustee meeting and be the first public participant. She noted that the meetings currently run weekly on Tuesday evenings in the Canyon Meeting Room. Upcoming meetings and agenda materials are published here: <https://boulderlibrary.org/about/board/>

- e. Commission recommendations for sessions/events that Commissioner Gilbert might attend at the American Library Association conference, June 22-25 – Frost requested that Gilbert report back on her experiences at the sessions she is able to attend.

Agenda Item 11: Adjournment

[2:38:47 Audio min.]

There being no further business to come before the commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned.

Date, time, and location of next meeting:

The next Library Commission meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, in the Canyon Meeting Room at the Main Library, 1001 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80302.

Commissioner Frost approved these minutes on August 2, 2023; and Celia Seaton attested to it.