

# SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Approved by the Board on February 23, 2026

## January 26, 2026 – Hunter Branch

Board Attendees:	Board Attendees:	Virtual Board Attendees:
Spencer Romney, Chair	Anastasia Morgan, Vice Chair	Jessica Strong
Ann Engar	William (Bill) Scarber	<b>Excused Board Members:</b>
Councilmember Natalie Pinkney	Lindsay Vargo	Kaati Tarr
Steven Sokol		

Other Attendees:		
Joey McNamee	Anneliese Booher	Amy Watson
Brad Kendrick	Carrie Hackworth	Jené Mortensen
Jennifer Fay	Lenora Monge	Luke Rasmussen
Melissa Haslam	Pamela Park	Sara Neal
Shaun Dimick	Steve Van Maren	

Other Virtual Attendees:		
Library Help Desk Tech Support	Robin Chalhoub	Isaac Higham
Alexis Alires	Bonnie Bradford	Erin Rigby
Erin Sanderson	Kathy Christiansen	

Spencer Romney, Board Chair, called the board meeting to order at 12:31 PM

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### WELCOME – Joey McNamee, Library Director

Thank you to the Hunter Branch for hosting, to Lenora Monge for serving in the acting HR role, and to everyone who helped coordinate this meeting. Your efforts make it possible for staff to receive the information they need.

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### APPROVE MINUTES: December 8, 2025 – Spencer Romney, Board Chair

Bill Scarber made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2025 Library Board Meeting. Anastasia Morgan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Member:	Vote:
Councilmember, Natalie Pinkney	Aye
Anastasia Morgan	Aye
Ann Engar	Aye

Bill Scarber	Aye
Jessica Strong	Aye
Kaati Tarr	n/a
Lindsay Vargo	Aye
Spencer Romney	Aye
Steve Sokol	Aye

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## **PUBLIC COMMENTS – Spencer Romney**

A Draper resident, Steve Van Maren, attended and noted his long-standing interest in the Library Board. After reviewing the bylaws, he observed that the Board is responsible for participating in land acquisitions, appointing a new director, and reviewing financials. He commented that it was good to see the topics currently under discussion.

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## **CORRESPONDENCE – Joey McNamee**

Our QR code survey gives patrons an easy way to share feedback about their experiences with us. Recent comments include a Taylorsville patron who described themselves as a superfan and shared how much they love the library, as well as several patrons who thanked staff for their help—even when they worried they might have been a bother. One patron expressed disappointment that the restroom at Granite has only a hand dryer and no paper towels. It was also noted that at the Sandy and Draper branches, paper towels are only available in the family restrooms.

At West Jordan, one staff member helped a patron find a book for their son, while another staff member assisted with a printing issue. Another patron noted that they have used seven different locations, thanked staff for their help, said they loved the makerspace, and shared that they have loved the library system since the bookmobile days. Our goal is to ensure every patron has a great experience with us. Every visit matters, and we truly value the feedback we receive.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE HUNTER BRANCH – Azra Basic, Manager**

The Hunter branch library is a vibrant, high-traffic community space serving an average of ten thousand visitors each month. They consistently have patrons waiting at opening and they become especially busy after school, when families, students, and community members arrive for Kid’s Café, homework help, technology access, and evening preparation.

Hunter is managed by Azra Basic, originally from Bosnia, who has lived in Utah for 17 years. Azra brings nearly 15 years of library experience and supervises a staff of 15, plus the current support from three Taylorsville staff members while that branch is being remodeled. Staff respond to a wide range of requests—from helping reset passwords and recommending books to assisting with printing, faxing, and creative or educational activities such as scavenger hunts and 3D pens. The branch is known for its heavy computer use, wireless sessions, and printing volume. Hunter has been described as a cyber cafeteria (combining computers with Kid’s Café), reflecting its energetic, multipurpose environment.

Feedback from patrons highlights the library’s helpful staff, broad collection, and practical services. Less positive comments are valued as opportunities for improvement. While the space is not quiet, it is purposeful, with patrons coming to learn, work, or connect, and staff are committed to meeting their needs. The branch is also moving forward with physical enhancements, including new carpet and an outdoor canopy to expand program space. In addition to her role as branch manager, Azra serves as the Utah Library Association President Elect, a recognition that brings positive visibility and opportunity to both her and the County Library system.

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## CHAIR NOMINATIONS – Joey McNamee

The board discussed chair nominations, noting that while Spencer Romney has served effectively as president for two years and is willing to continue, he is also open to others stepping into the role. There is no formal succession plan for the chair, and leadership transitions depend on who is willing to serve and who will provide support. Board members expressed appreciation for Spencer's work as chair and Anastasia Morgan's contributions as vice chair, while recognizing that asking someone to continue in these roles for a third year can be a significant commitment. Anastasia Morgan was then elected as the new chair and Steve Sokol was elected as the vice-chair.

*Councilmember Natalie Pinkney made a motion to select Anastasia Morgan as the new Library Board Chair. Bill Scarber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

<b>Board Member:</b>	<b>Vote:</b>
Councilmember, Natalie Pinkney	Aye
Anastasia Morgan	recused
Ann Engar	Aye
Bill Scarber	Aye
Jessica Strong	Aye
Kaati Tarr	n/a
Lindsay Vargo	Aye
Spencer Romney	Aye
Steve Sokol	Aye

*Anastasia Morgan made a motion to select Steve Sokol as the new Library Board Vice-Chair. Lindsay Vargo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

<b>Board Member:</b>	<b>Vote:</b>
Councilmember, Natalie Pinkney	Aye
Anastasia Morgan	Aye
Ann Engar	Aye
Bill Scarber	Aye
Jessica Strong	Aye
Kaati Tarr	n/a
Lindsay Vargo	Aye
Spencer Romney	Aye
Steve Sokol	recused

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## WRITE-OFF POLICY – Joey McNamee, Brad Kendrick, Associate Director

In December, we briefly discussed the county's write-off policy. While Salt Lake County maintains a general policy, it specifies that each agency must establish its own. The library has been tracking outstanding debt for approximately 30 years, and this needs to be addressed. Under the new policy, we will remove debt after three years and when it is sent to the District Attorney's office. The policy also outlines special circumstances, such as bankruptcy or death.

These write-offs do not affect our budget, as they are recorded on our internal ledger and do not change our budgeted figures. We only budget for the revenue we reasonably anticipate receiving.

We have an established process for contacting patrons about recent debt; however, because the debts under discussion are extremely old, we will not be reaching out to those patrons. Newer debts will continue to follow our internal process once they reach \$50. The library's collection agency, which specializes in library accounts, generally takes a gentler approach with patrons. To the best of our knowledge, these accounts typically do not affect patrons' credit reports, although larger balances may. High balances—such as those reaching \$300—can occur when multiple items are involved or when higher-value items, such as those from the Library of Things collection, are lost.

[Bill Scarber made a motion to approve the Patron Accounts Write-Off Policy as written. Ann Engar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.](#)

<b>Board Member:</b>	<b>Vote:</b>
Councilmember, Natalie Pinkney	Aye
Anastasia Morgan	Aye
Ann Engar	Aye
Bill Scarber	Aye
Jessica Strong	Aye
Kaati Tarr	n/a
Lindsay Vargo	Aye
Spencer Romney	Aye
Steve Sokol	Aye

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## **BYLAW UPDATE – Joey McNamee**

A few years ago, the Library Board convened a committee to draft our current bylaws. This year, we are participating in the state library's recertification process. Historically, only smaller libraries were required to complete this process; however, we are pleased to do so and hope to receive a positive review.

Although this is our first-time undergoing recertification, it functions as a renewal process. As part of this effort, we will need to make some updates to our bylaws reflecting [Utah code 52-4-201](#), specifically in relation to electronic meetings. By law, we are required to comply with the applicable codes referenced in our governing documents. District Attorney, Anneliese Booher, agreed to prepare an initial draft of the revised bylaws for approval in a future meeting.

For reference, these efforts are aligned with the [Standards for Utah's Public Libraries](#) and the recertification requirements.

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## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST – Joey McNamee**

Board members received conflict of interest forms and instructions to ensure they were filled out correctly. The library is required to collect this information for board members, which is kept on record to help protect the county as well as the members.

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## **CONSTRUCTION BUDGET REVIEW – Brad Kendrick and Joey McNamee**

We are in the process of preparing for a new group of construction projects. This work is connected to 2022 tax increase, which was largely intended to pay down existing debt and support the library's long-range plan. That plan outlines future construction needs. We are moving forward because it takes time to secure land and coordinate with partners.

Today's discussion focuses on four projects, remodeling the recently purchased warehouse that will soon be the operations center, a new West Valley branch, a new Midvale branch, and remodel work at the Sandy branch.

We expect to present this plan to the County Council in the next few weeks. A number of exciting developments have already occurred, and we now have a funding plan with two primary tracks:

- The Midvale project will use a new market tax-credit model, similar to the Kearns construction project, that will save us about \$3 million. While it involves significant legal and financial work, it is worthwhile. This is expected to be a \$28 million project.
- The remaining projects will be funded through a bond. This includes an estimated \$30 million project for West Valley and a \$4 million remodel at Sandy to replace the roof, upgrade HVAC, and complete additional remodeling to address current issues at that location, and the operations building.

The operations building is already purchased and is currently in design. The purchase price was \$15.9 million, and it will be part of the bond package. Kearns will also be included in the bond. The total bond amount is currently estimated at \$60 million, with a 20-year term.

The countywide general fund tax increase does not affect the library, as the library has a separate fund. One of the key questions we are considering is what a series of smaller tax increases would look like, while honoring the framework from the 2022 tax increase. We cannot change that framework without policymaker approval, and we want to adhere to our prior commitments.

The long-range plan is comprehensive: staffing and technology decisions are mapped out over time to ensure responsible stewardship of public resources. The plan includes many assumptions, and it is important that everyone is aware of them.

Regarding the budget process for new libraries, we have drafted a request for proposal (RFP) and are preparing presentations for the County Council and the debt review process. These are the next key steps. Once approvals are in place, there is a defined bonding timeline that must be followed. The procurement process is well structured to ensure that bidding is fair, transparent, and well documented.

The long-range plan also includes contingencies to account for the global economic outlook and changes in inflation. For construction costs and building materials, we incorporate escalation factors and rely on County Facilities, subject-matter experts, and third-party data. We synthesize that information to reach agreed-upon inflation assumptions and develop the best possible estimates. Historical trends also inform projections for operations and personnel costs.

We will continue reviewing all projects, including those not tied directly to construction, to plan as effectively as possible and adjust as conditions change.

Whitmore was included in the group of projects associated with the 2022 tax increase. However, that project cannot proceed until teams have moved into the new operations building. Because three to four concurrent construction projects are sufficient for our current capacity, we will prioritize those projects before beginning work on Whitmore.

The operations facility is a warehouse in Midvale that was purchased in March. Historically, the library envisioned building an operations center attached to the Midvale branch for a central location. However, the available land in Midvale did not provide enough space—both in acreage and traffic capacity—to accommodate the branch and the operations center together, and the cost to make that work would have been too high. As a result, the Midvale branch will be a separate facility near a park, and the operations center will be housed in the purchased warehouse.

By separating the two, we were able to secure more square footage for the operations center than would have been possible in a new build. We are enthusiastic about this new space. The current estimate for completion is the end of 2027. A budget adjustment for this project will be presented to the council soon. Although there has been some delay, we expect to return to the original timeline and still aim for completion in 2027. We are excited to continue moving forward in tangible ways.

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## LEGISLATIVE SESSION – Joey McNamee

Matt McLain is out today, so we can discuss this more in depth at our next meeting.

We are monitoring relevant legislation, including school-related bills, to understand any potential ripple effects for the library. The county also provides legislative update meetings, and we have a team keeping an eye on developments. Please feel free to send along any proposed laws or bills you come across that you think may be relevant to our work.

Bills mentioned include:

- [HB197](#), which focuses on school libraries and related school amendments, including monitoring of databases.
- [HB151](#), which concerns AP students' access to certain books—such as titles that may otherwise be removed as sensitive materials in high school settings—for use in college-level classes and exams.

## STAFF REPORTS

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Joey McNamee

#### Reading Initiative

The Salt Lake County Library is aligning closely with [Governor Cox's new reading initiative](#), which emphasizes ensuring children are reading at grade level by third grade as a foundation for future academic success. The library is highlighting its unique role in early literacy, recognizing that reading development begins at birth and continues through preschool years, and is working to keep this initiative at the center of its communication and outreach.

A new Early Learning Manager, Tami Austin, has been hired to lead this effort. With seven years of experience in the system and recent visibility as a panelist at a statewide [Literacy and Reading Symposium](#), she brings both expertise and strong community connections. Tami has emphasized that early literacy behaviors—such as babies exploring books physically, toddlers flipping pages while adults read, and preschoolers repeatedly requesting the same book—are all valid and important forms of reading. The library's early learning workgroup is focused on helping caregivers understand that everyday interactions, including speaking many thousands of words to children and revisiting favorite books, significantly support literacy development. Core messages like Talk, Sing, Read, Write, and Play guide this work.

The board is invited to actively support and amplify the reading initiative by helping identify partners and venues for sharing promotional materials, particularly in connection with schools and community organizations. The library aims to refocus public narratives toward their central role in literacy and education. Existing efforts such as the [Books for Baby](#) program, which distributes approximately 8,000 books annually to newborns in the valley, are aligned with broader state goals, including those outlined in [Senate bill 127 from 2022](#). The reading room in the South Main Clinic reflects an approach similar to the [Reach out and Read](#) program by providing books during clinic visits.

The library is also emphasizing how its branches, programs, and collections support sustained reading development beyond early childhood. Azra Basic mentioned how the branches provide tours and help children obtain library cards. Young patrons learn how to use the library, and engage in activities that encourage reading. Summer Reading remains a key strategy for preventing summer slide and reinforcing the library's relevance to families and schools. Collection development work, such as the creation of the Juvenile Junior (JJ) collection—bridging beginning readers and longer chapter books with series like Magic Tree House—supports children who are transitioning to more complex reading.

#### 2025 Highlights

In reflecting on the previous year, the library is recognizing major operational and strategic achievements. These include the development of a new 36,000-square-foot warehouse that expands options for collections and workflow improvements, and the Artemis Moon Tree project at the Holladay branch, which supports STEM-focused programming around a tree grown from a seed that traveled to space with NASA. Programming innovations such as Spy Camp for ages 6–10, modeled after OWL Camp and quickly filled to capacity, demonstrate strong community demand for engaging learning experiences.

Strategic planning efforts have centered staff input and community engagement, ensuring that future directions remain responsive to local needs. The library also completed a land purchase in Midvale after a lengthy process with the city and is moving toward the RFP phase for future development. Sustainability remains a priority, highlighted by the Daybreak branch receiving a sustainability award from the mayor's office for its net-zero certification. Collectively, these initiatives underscore the strength of the library system and the dedication of its staff and board, who are recognized and thanked for their contributions to a successful year and to the ongoing focus on literacy and learning.

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## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS – Sara Neal, Manager

### Statistics

The board report includes November and December statistics as well as year-end numbers. Total visits were 2.8 million, and there were 13.3 million checkouts; we are excited to have surpassed 13 million. Study and meeting rooms were booked 45,000 times, representing an 8% increase. Historical data shows that this increased use is part of a continuing trend. Approximately 28% of the collection consists of digital materials.

### eMagazines

The library previously used a less known app for eMagazines. A few months ago, the eMagazine availability switched to Libby, which is already used for ebooks and eAudiobooks. The previous app had circulation of approximate 22,000 magazines in 2025. In October, November, and December 2025, usage rose to about 40,000 checkouts, just through using the new app.

### Upcoming Programs

The Winter Reading program is similar to the Summer Reading program and begins in February. Participants who sign up can receive a \$5 fine waiver. After reaching a reading goal of 20 reading sessions, they can come in to receive a prize.

Adult Night Out will feature an Ultimate Bingo Night, which is more dynamic than regular bingo, on February 27.

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## WRAP UP AND TOUR – Spencer Romney

*Bill Scarber made a motion to close the Salt Lake County Library Board Meeting. Anastasia Morgan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

<b>Board Member:</b>	<b>Vote:</b>
Councilmember, Natalie Pinkney	Aye
Anastasia Morgan	Aye
Ann Engar	Aye
Bill Scarber	Aye
Jessica Strong	Aye
Kaati Tarr	n/a
Lindsay Vargo	Aye
Spencer Romney	Aye
Steve Sokol	Aye

The meeting ended at 1:49 PM. Azra Basic and Shaun Dimick, Facilities Manager, took interested parties on tour of the Hunter branch.