

Idaho Board of Library Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 10 a.m. MDT / 9 a.m. PDT

Zoom with livestream access at

Idaho Commission for Libraries, 325 W. State Street, Boise, ID 83702

Attendees:

- Idaho Board of Library Commissioners: Chair Janet Franklin, Vice-Chair Michael Strickland, Dave Mecham, Dawn Wittman, Norma Staaf
- Idaho Commission for Libraries staff: State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White, Deputy State Librarian Dylan Baker (left at 11:13 a.m.), E-Services Program Supervisor William Lamb, Talking Book Service Program Supervisor LeAnn Gelskey, Development Services Program Supervisor Talela Florko, Public Library Consultant Clay Ritter, and (serving as recorder) Public Information Officer Donna Eggers
- Division of Financial Management: Financial Management Analyst Sr. Katharine Hoehne
- Media: “Idaho Capital Sun” Reporter Laura Guido

I. Call to Order

Franklin called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. MDT.

A. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

B. Agenda Review / Approval – Action Item (Board Document 26-02)

Wittman moved to approve the August 14, 2025, meeting agenda. Mecham seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

C. Announcements

II. Minutes Review / Approval

A. June 12, 2025, Minutes- Action Item (Board Document 26-01)

Wittman moved to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2025, board meeting. Staaf seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

III. Federal Fund

A. Finances – FY2026 Federal Program Budgets – Information Item (Board Document 26-03)

Financial Manager Jamie Smith was on vacation. State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White handled Smith’s reports. The board document is what the ICfL program leads have estimated their program budgets to be for the current fiscal year. Bailey-White noted that the Digital Access for All Idahoans (DAAI) fund has been zeroed out. The focus is on the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding, which was an allotment of \$1.746 million. Bailey-White said that amount of IMLS funding looks good, and the

agency has a responsible budget which should carry through August or September, including personnel, some grant programs, and operating. This includes some funding for the databases, continuing education grants, the Idaho Digital E-Book Alliance (IDEA), Talking Book Service (TBS) operating, and the creative aging grants.

Wittman asked if this goes to September 2026. Bailey-White confirmed it does. Bailey-White said it crosses over the fiscal years.

Bailey-White said staff are waiting to hear what the agency's next federal fiscal appropriation will be. On the Senate appropriation committee side, there is level funding for the Grants to States, as opposed to the Presidential recommendation of \$6 million for an orderly shutdown (of IMLS). It is still undetermined what the House committee will do.

Wittman asked if there was any movement toward regaining any of the Digital Access funds. Baker said unfortunately not. Baker said there is potentially a multi-state lawsuit regarding the cancellation of those funds. Baker noted that at the request of the federal agency that administers the funds, NTIA, the agency did go through the grant close-out process, which should not have an impact if the funding were to be restored later. That process keeps the ICfL in good standing with the NTIA, should future opportunities arise.

B. Program - ICfL CPF Annual Report 2025 - Information Item (Board Document 26-04)

Development Services Program Supervisor Talela Florko said the Capital Projects Fund has been a wonderful program, and it has been exciting to see the photos and hear the feedback about the projects that are now complete. The board document is a draft of the report that will be provided to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which will be due toward the end of September. The ICfL disbursed \$1.148 million to grantees; the funding was used for construction and renovation expenses.

Florko discussed several of the projects, including the Fernwood branch of the Benewah County Free Library District, which serves approximately 1,700 people in the communities of Fernwood, Santa, and Emida. Approximately 66% of the residents are 65 years and older, so telehealth will be an important component of the project. The nearest medical services are in St. Maries, which is about 25 miles away.

Wittman and Mecham said that the report was interesting and that it was fun to see the success the libraries are having. Staaf noted that she has seen some of the libraries and knows what a difference it makes. And she

expressed kudos to staff for thinking through what the libraries would need to be successful and helping them get there.

C. Grants - Continuing Education Grant Awards – Information Item (Board Document 26-05)

Bailey-White said the agency has opened the continuing education (CE) grants and there is a good response from the library community. She said four members of the library community will be receiving grants to attend the annual conference of the Association of Rural and Small Libraries, which is the premier conference for those types of libraries. Some ICfL staff will also be attending this conference.

IV. General (state funds), Miscellaneous Revenue, and Library Services Improvement Fund (LSIF)

A. Finances

i. FY2026 General Fund Program Budgets – Information Item (Board Document 26-06)

Bailey-White noted that the board document outlines the agency plan for spending its state appropriation. The amount is \$4,971,600 for this current fiscal year. A large portion of the funds go for personnel costs, the rent of the building, and SWCAP costs, which are what the agency pays back for services and support from the Attorney General's office, ITS, the Division of Human Resources, etc.

Bailey-White said the agency budgeted a little less than it was appropriated to account for potential holdbacks. Dylan will attend a meeting today with the Division of Financial Management to gather further guidance for the agency's budget planning for this fiscal year and probably next fiscal year, as well. The agency does a quarterly internal budget scrub to see how the quarterly projections look. If something comes in a little lower or a little higher than expected, then adjustments can be made.

ii. FY26 Holdback Plan – Information Item (Board Document 26-07)

Bailey-White said the board document is a plan for a potential 2%, 4%, or 6% holdback. She said the agency has budgeted very conservatively with state and federal funds. The agency cannot transfer federal funds to state funds; that is disallowed under the agency's intent language.

Bailey-White said if there is a 2% or 4% holdback, things would be tight, but staff have budgeted for those scenarios. If the agency experiences a 6% holdback, depending on when it occurs, that would usually involve freezing staff travel. The board tour might be reviewed because it is a spring event.

Bailey-White said the agency will be able to apply salary savings that are accrued from vacancies and retirements. Some salary savings are anticipated for this year. Bailey-White said that then the LiLI databases

would be looked at, but a lot of expenses are locked in by a contract. Some of those are five-year contracts, some are two-year contracts, but a lot of expenses are fixed. So, staff would have to really look at flexible costs, such as travel. A 6% holdback would be challenging.

Franklin asked if this would come out of the legislative session or could it happen before that? Bailey-White said she anticipates hearing something later today and things will likely be refined during the session.

Wittman asked if the 6% holdback scenario would include halting the travel of Public Library Consultant Clay Ritter to libraries. Bailey-White said it is possible, depending on how tight the budget was. She noted that the expenses for in-state travel are not extremely high. Bailey-White said Ritter does travel in the spring, and staff will know what the budget is by then. Other cost-savings options would be more day travel instead of multi-day travel, and/or more Zoom training with boards. Bailey-White said it is hoped that the in-person board training could continue because that face-to-face interaction with board members and library staff is so valuable. Bailey-White said out-of-state travel would likely be cut first. Bailey-White said she would also hate to scale back or postpone the board tour, but it would all just depend on how tight the budget is at that point.

Wittman said that she knows public librarians really value having someone come and do training for their trustees and staff.

iii. LSIF Approval Consideration – Action item (Board Document 26-08)

Bailey-White said this is the annual request for the board to approve Library Services Improvement Fund (LSIF) spending authority for the Bucks for Books (BFB) program. The ICfL has partnered with the Idaho State Lottery Commission on BFB for seven years. This year, the Lottery Commission is contributing \$50,000 for BFB.

The funding is for school library grants that range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 to support school library collections. Bailey-White said it is a great program that agency staff are very grateful for. She noted that the next board document is a report that highlights some Bucks for Books success stories that show the value even small grants can bring to school libraries.

Franklin asked if the libraries have to apply for grant. Bailey-White confirmed they do and that there are some stipulations, such as showing need and not having received the grant two years in a row. Bailey-White said the grants are ranked and there are usually more requests than can be funded, but this grant and the school library access grants (provided with general fund appropriations) go a long way in helping the Idaho school library community.

Whittman moved that, upon receipt of funds from the Idaho Lottery

Commission, expenditures of up to \$50,000 be approved for implementing the Bucks for Books partnership from the Library Services Improvement Fund. Mecham seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

B. Program - Bucks for Books Summary Report 2024-2025 – Information Item

(Board Document 26-09)

Bailey-White said the board document is a summary the Bucks for Books report that School Library Consultant Jeannie Standal prepares for the Idaho Lottery Commission.

Bailey-White said she looks at changes in circulation. Because at least one in four school libraries have an annual book budget of zero, when they get an influx of new books there is an increase in reading interest and circulation. And kids get to have books they enjoy reading. Bailey-White loves to see that there are huge increases in circulation in some of the school libraries, and in excess of 44,000 more books were checked out compared to last school year. Bailey-White said anytime you can get more books into the hands of more kids, and they are reading those titles, it is a success.

Franklin asked if Bucks for Books is restricted to elementary school libraries. Bailey-White confirmed that it is but pointed out that the School Library Access Mini-Grant is open to all grades.

Staaf said it was so great to have books that were written during these kids' lifetimes and how great it is to see increases in circulation.

C. Grants - School Library Access Mini-Grant Awards – Information Item

(Board Document 26-10)

Bailey-White said the board document outlines the elementary and secondary schools that received School Library Access (SLA) Mini-Grants this year. Bailey-White said \$200,000 is allocated for these grants, which are typically competitive. Bailey-White said this grant is focused on increasing the number of books that school libraries have. It was originally set up because many elementary school libraries were not allowing kindergarteners to check out books to take home, and ICfL staff knew how important that was, based on research. ICfL staff have always followed up with schools to be sure that their circulation policies were changed to allow younger students to check out books to take home. This grant supplements the often meager budgets that schools have for their libraries.

Recipients of this grant are required to attend a full-day training conducted by ICfL staff, who travel around the state to provide the training, which includes information about reading motivation and selecting books. Staff

help the grant recipients learn how to stretch their grant funds as far as possible. Bailey-White noted that paraprofessionals who work in school libraries often don't get a lot of training, so the SLA Mini-Grant training is a nice opportunity for them to learn about a variety of areas, such as classroom management, how to operate the library, and how to spend the grant funds in the best way possible.

Franklin asked if it would be too onerous for recipients to track the circulation of the new books purchased with the grant funds. Bailey-White said it would be tricky to track book by book; however, one of the questions on the final SLA Mini-Grant report asks for the library's overall circulation statistics. So, for example, if a school purchased a lot of high-interest nonfiction titles with the funding, and they had a 50% increase in nonfiction circulation this year, then you would see that impact on circulation. Bailey-White will check with Standal to see what questions are on the interim and final reports to determine if that information can be pulled from those reports.

Bailey-White said that over the many years of this grant program, staff have seen definite increases in access to books by lower grades and allowing kids to check out more books to take home, along with increases in circulation for those libraries that get new titles. She is hopeful that school districts can increase budgets. Bailey-White said Mecham had a great example from Firth, where they were able to keep their budget at least level every year and have demonstrated that access to new books is important.

Bailey-White said getting school library staff to advocate at the district level for budgets is still a priority. Mecham said that since most school library staff are not professional librarians, they are afraid to advocate for their programs because they are at-will employees. Mecham said not as many school libraries have as much support from their administration as the school libraries in his community do. He said school libraries are kind of an afterthought for most administrations. Mecham said unless teachers keep the library in front of the principal, they may not budget anything for the school library. Franklin noted that something the board members could do in their own communities is advocate for their school libraries to increase their budgets.

V. Operations Report

A. State Librarian and Management Team Reports – Information Item
(Board Document 26-11)

Stephanie Bailey-White provided her report to the board:

Bailey-White said the State is working on a list of deferred maintenance, which is primarily HVAC systems for aging buildings. The building that houses the Idaho Commission for Libraries and the Secretary of State is on the list. The work was originally going to take place this year with minimal disruption; but now, it will be a bigger project with staff unable to occupy the building for 54 days. Facilities staff wanted to start the work September 15, but Bailey-White pushed back because that timeframe is when ICfL staff have a high volume of mailing that occurs, and there wasn't enough time to secure alternate work spaces. So, then it was pushed to November-December, and ICfL staff worked with staff of the Secretary of State's office to swap building sites to accommodate those who are unable to telework. Then, Facilities workers looked at the building again and became concerned that the pipes would freeze in November and December without heat in the building. So, the project was moved to spring 2026. There are no final dates, yet. ICfL staff meet every two weeks with Facilities about the work to get regular status reports and improve communication. Bailey-White said the work on the building will be a disruption, but spring will be a much better time frame. Bailey-White noted that there may be changes to board meetings and other things, but staff will continue to work through those issues.

In June, Bailey-White attended the Western Council of State Librarians meeting in Kansas City. She said it was a great opportunity to connect with colleagues from the western states, all of whom are in the same boat regarding uncertainties about federal funding. Bailey-White said it was helpful to connect with colleagues who are facing similar situations and talk through how they are making decisions, what areas they are looking to restructure, and how they are going about doing that.

Dylan Baker provided his report to the board:

At the end of June, Baker and Public Library Consultant Clay Ritter visited 18 libraries in northern Idaho. Staaf joined for a day. Ritter conducted board training for the boards of St. Maries Public and Plummer Public. Baker noted that Ritter also does a "field week" in eastern Idaho in the spring and that great engagement comes from this time spent visiting libraries.

Baker announced that Continuing Education Consultant Annie Gaines conducted a refresh of the Alternative Basic Library Education (ABLE) courses that the ICfL has offered since 1998. The updated course material was funded through a Laura Bush grant from IMLS to OCLC/WebJunction. The reimagined courses are known as LiFT, the Library Foundational

Training. Baker said the courses are hosted by WebJunction, which is responsible for maintenance, updates, etc., while utilizing ICfL staff for subject matter expertise and technical support. Baker said the next set of courses are being worked on and that it is a multi-year project.

Baker has been updating the agency's state strategic plan and performance reports. It should be submitted, along with the agency budget, by the end of August.

Wittman appreciated the updates to ABLE. Wittman knows many library staff members who have taken those classes and some who went on to become librarians because the courses were interesting to them.

Staaf noted how much the library staff from the north Idaho libraries appreciated Baker and Ritter being there.

Bailey-White said that since Jamie Smith was on vacation, she would answer any fiscal questions. Bailey-White noted the highlight with the fiscal year 2025 reversion of just 53¢.

William Lamb provided his report to the board:

Lamb is busy with the TBS transition and noted that TBS Program Supervisor LeAnn Gelskey and TBS Program Specialist Rachel Welker will move to the E-Services team, likely on October 1. As part of the TBS transition, the agency will lose access to the internal circulation system that was also used for the Let's Talk About It (LTAI) program. Lamb said they have a new solution, and Gelskey and Youth Services Program Specialist Josie Bradford are getting the LTAI books imported into that system.

Lamb and staff had a great meeting with staff of the Office of Civil Rights from the Department of Education regarding the agency's website audit. Lamb said they had a couple of suggestions, including resolving an accessibility issue with the plug-in used for the library directory. The audit should be finalized in the next month. Lamb said eBranch upgrades are also being done; staff is about halfway through the 94 libraries. The goal is to have all of those migrated to the new ADA template by December 31.

Staaf asked if the website review was a general review across all state agencies or was there a complaint? Lamb said in November 2024, there was a notification regarding a complaint about the ICfL website and a specific Idaho library, which led to the changes to the eBranch sites. Lamb said it was a blanket complaint from someone outside of Idaho. Lamb said the

couple of issues on the ICfL site have mainly been resolved and that it is 99.9% compliant and ADA accessible. Lamb complimented Graphic/Web Designer Haley Westbrook and Library Technology Consultant Doug Baker for their hard work on the project. Lamb said that because the complaint went to the federal Office of Civil Rights, agency staff had to investigate and go through the audit.

Talela Florko provided her report to the board:

Florko said the Youth Services team has been busy ordering books. Florko noted that moving the HVAC project to spring will alleviate some issues, including having to send multiple months' worth of books to libraries in September. Florko said Youth Services Consultant Staci Shaw is preparing for the My First Program, which runs October through May, through which children receive books on a monthly basis. Florko complimented Shaw on the program, including her ability to select relevant titles and producing the Bookworm newsletter. Florko said Idaho Family Reading Week (FRW) is coming up the first week of November, with shipments going out in October, and Bradford is taking over the coordination of FRW. Florko said Bradford and Gelskey are preparing the first shipment of books for LTAI. Florko said the ICfL Marketplace will be paused in the spring when the ICfL office is closed for the HVAC work. Also paused in the spring will be the Library Outreach to Children and Jumpstart Kindergarten programs. Florko said library staff will be notified to get requests in early if they want to participate in those programs.

Florko said the administrative assistance position made available after Tina Schilling's retirement has been filled by Candace Reynolds, who has been a TBS customer service rep since joining the agency in 2018. Florko noted her strong experience working with customers and her problem-solving skills. Reynolds will start in her role at the end of September.

LeAnn Gelskey provided her report to the board:

Gelskey said the TBS team has been doing outreach with the local Lions Club, and they plan to do more in the coming months.

Gelskey is working with the Utah State Library, the National Library Service (NLS), and Keystone to navigate all of the things associated with the TBS transition. Gelskey, Lamb, and Bailey-White have determined the next steps for the Utah partnership to happen by the end of September.

Gelskey said the LTAI application is closed; 20 libraries applied, 17 were chosen. Gelskey said three libraries will present the America250 theme,

which is new this year. Those three libraries are: Coeur d'Alene Public, Bonneville County Library District, and the Pinnacle branch of the Meridian Library District. Gelskey noted the good representation across the state and hopes to do it again next fall if the agency gets funding for it.

Staaf asked if updated materials will be sent to libraries regarding the TBS transition to the Utah State Library. Gelskey said the first round of patron letters have been sent out, and it did go to some libraries. Gelskey will create a direct mailing to the libraries that will include information about the large-print collection that Utah has, which is a great resource. Wittman asked if shipping costs are part of the contract with Utah. Gelskey said that materials are all sent via "free matter for the blind."

B. Personnel Report – Information Item (Board Document 26-12)

Bailey-White noted that Candace Reynolds will stay with the agency. TBS Customer Service Rep Dylan Richmond accepted a position with Ada County. Bailey-White said two more Talking Book staff members are looking for other jobs and have until the end of September to find something.

Eggers has been working with Wittman and Staaf regarding the state librarian recruitment. The posting has gone out locally and nationally via the Chief Officers of State Libraries Listserv, an ad in "Library Journal," plus the employment sites, such as Indeed and LinkedIn. Mecham asked if there had been any responses. Eggers said the posting opened August 11, and there are six applications, so far. It will be open for a month. Eggers noted that the Facebook posting for the position had approximately 1,400 likes, which is significantly more than most ICfL Facebook posts.

C. Other – ICfL Strategic Plan – Information Item (Board Document 26-13)

Bailey-White noted that the agency updates its strategic plan each year, and this year, it has been streamlined. She said some of the strategies and objectives related to digital access and skill-building were removed because of the loss of federal funds to support that. Bailey-White said the ICfL will still focus on improving the technological infrastructure of libraries.

Bailey-White said at the next meeting staff will present the agency performance report that is tied to the strategic plan.

VI. Legislation, Policies, and Guidelines

- A.** Legislation
- B.** Policies
- C.** Guidelines

VII. Old Business

VIII. New Business

Franklin noted that the new McCall Public library is beautiful, and the director had nice things to say about the ICfL and Ritter, in particular.

IX. Strategic Issues – Topics for next board meeting

Mecham said he will be focused on the hiring process and is not looking for much else.

X. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

XI. Meeting Evaluation / Adjournment

Mecham moved to adjourn. Strickland seconded. Franklin adjourned the meeting at 11:17 a.m. MDT.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, October 16, 2025 – 10 a.m. MDT in person at Idaho Commission for Libraries, 325 W. State Street, Boise, Idaho 83702