

Idaho Board of Library Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 12, 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 Dave Mecham, Vice-Chair Janet Franklin, Michael Strickland, Dawn Wittman, and Norma Staaf
- Idaho Commission for Libraries staff: State Librarian Stephanie Bailey-White, Deputy State Librarian Dylan Baker, Financial Manager Jamie Smith, E-Services Program Supervisor William Lamb, Development Services Program Supervisor Talela Florko, Talking Book Service Program Supervisor LeAnn Gelskey, Public Information Officer Donna Eggers, Youth Services Consultant Staci Shaw, Office Specialist Linda Cash, Customer Service Representative Dylan Richmond, Talking Book Service Program Specialist Rachel Welker, and (serving as recorder) Management Assistant Masha Velichko
- Division of Financial Management: Financial Management Analyst Sr. Katharine Hoehne
- Media: Idaho Press Statehouse Reporter Laura Guido, Idaho Education News Reporter Carly Flandro, Boise State Public Radio News Reporter James Dawson

I. Call to Order

Mecham called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. MDT.

A. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

B. Agenda Review / Approval – Action Item (Board Document 25-61)

Franklin moved to approve the June 12, 2025, meeting agenda. Wittman seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

C. Announcements

II. Minutes Review / Approval

A. April 25, 2025, Minutes – Action Item (Board Document 25-60)

Franklin moved to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2025, board meeting. Staaf seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

III. Federal Fund

A. Finances – Update on Federal Funds – Information Item (Board Document 25-62)

Baker spoke about the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) cancellation of Idaho's \$6.3 million State Digital Equity (DE) Capacity Grant award, which occurred on May 9, 2025. It was for implementing the Digital Access for All Idahoans (DAAI) plan.

The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) was on the cusp of awarding the subgrants. It is disappointing the funding is no longer available to benefit nearly 200,000 Idahoans via subgrants that were ready to be dispersed. The ICfL continues to provide digital resources, including the Idaho Digital Skills site.

Mecham and Staaf both asked if there was hope the grant award would ever be continued. Baker responded that it's soon to tell, but it looks like a few states, territories, and organizations may be investigating a path forward.

Bailey-White added that the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has given the full allotment for the next fiscal year. There has been good bipartisan support for the past 60 years, so, although there is uncertainty, there is some hope about what will happen in the future.

B. Program – Partnership with Utah State Library – Information Item (Board document 25-63)

The ICfL is restructuring the Idaho Talking Booking Service (TBS) and entering a contracted partnership with the Utah State Library (USL). The USL will provide audiobooks, large print books, and braille materials to Idaho TBS patrons. They will also take care of most customer service aspects. The USL provides this service for other states, including Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska.

Four of the six Talking Book staff will be laid off at the end of September 2025 and two staff will remain to provide more support for TBS promotion and outreach. The current TBS supervisor's position will be reclassified as she will not be supervising staff. This was a very hard decision. The current TBS staff have provided excellent customer service for many years. The advance notice will allow for the ICfL to provide support and resources for the four staff who will be let go, have some immediate cost savings benefits, and it will help the budget in case of future federal and state cuts.

Wittman asked if there will no longer be local recording from the ICfL's recording studio. Bailey-White said that the ICfL will be looking into it for the next year while it scales back since Utah has eight recording studios. The ICfL's studio will operate at least once a week. After the partnership with the Utah State Library takes effect and determining if targets are being met, then more adjustments may be made.

Wittman also asked about the funding source for the program. Idaho staff and related operating costs are funded with Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the IMLS. The National Library Service provides the majority of audio books and all the equipment. They are funded with an appropriation from Congress and are a division under the Library of Congress.

Staaf asked how long the contract would be with the USL, and how the state's intent language will impact the transition. Bailey-White replied that it is a yearly

contract with Utah. The intent language specifies that the ICfL can't transfer federally funded programs to state funding without legislative approval. Bailey-White thinks the legislature is more likely to support moving the funding to state funds if the agency could support the contract within its existing budget. She believes the decision to partner with the USL would help the program continue in the short and long term. It is unlikely that the ICfL will return to six full-time staff for TBS in the future.

Staaf asked about the stability of the USL's program. Bailey-White said they receive state funding for most of their Talking Book Service in addition to the fees that states pay for full service or braille services. The large print collection is primarily funded with Library Services and Technology Act funds from the IMLS.

The commissioners expressed their concerns about the changes, but they understood and supported the decision as being the most logical choice and best solution.

C. Grants - Continuing Education Grant Awards – Information Item (Board Document 25-64)

Since the last board meeting, no awards have been approved. Spending will continue to be frozen until the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, 2025.

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

A. Finances- FY2027 Budget Requests- Information Item (Board Document 25-65)

Bailey-White noted that there are no requested line items this year because state agencies are not allowed to request line items or replacement funds for FY26. It is likely to happen again next year. The ICfL is looking into all budget areas and cutting back on in-person meetings and events.

Every agency has also been asked to prepare 2%, 4%, and 6% hold back plans, and the ICfL is working on those plans. The state's revenue projection is \$100 million behind original estimates.

Smith also added that the state will start to track vacancies that have been empty for more than a year, and the two positions (1.75 FTE) in digital skills will be reverted.

B. Program

C. Grants

V. Operations Report

A. State Librarian and Management Team Reports – Information Item (Board Document 25-66)

Bailey-White provided her report to the board:

- Bailey-White noted the successful open house that was planned by

Eggers. Staff from three congressional offices and Senator Woodward attended, and the levels of engagement were high. Bailey-White and Baker discussed how the ICfL uses federal funds to serve Idahoans, and the ICfL staff were able to demonstrate various programs. Dirk Mendive, with Congressman Fulcher's office, met two weeks later with Bailey-White and Baker since he was unable to attend the open house.

- Bailey-White attended the National Digital Inclusion Conference (NDIC) with three other staff. It was an engaging conference, and there was solidarity as many other participants had similar issues as the ICfL is currently experiencing.
 - Staaf asked if there were any vendors or representatives who were willing to share resources or services in the face of the federal budget cuts? Stephanie-White said that they were present but didn't promise anything.

Baker provided his report to the board:

- Allison Maier has been hired as the ICfL's new Public Library Program Specialist and started earlier this week. In the past, the ICfL had three public library consultants, so it is exciting to fill this vacancy and provide more support for the existing Public Library Consultant.
- Baker and Ritter will be traveling to 20 northern Idaho libraries and meeting with staff and directors.
 - Both Staaf and Wittman expressed interest in participating in the trip, and Baker said he would share the trip's itinerary with them.
- Baker is updating the ICfL strategic plan and should be able to report on it at the next board meeting.

Smith provided her report to the board:

- Smith reported that this is the time of the year when the fiscal team is closing out FY25, preparing for FY26, and planning for FY27. It is going much smoother this year than last year when Luma was introduced.

Lamb provided his report to the board:

- Lamb said that he is working on internal budgets. Lamb and Baker are working on a pilot project that has been approved by the management team. For context, in 2020 there were 49 libraries that were awarded new network and Wi-Fi equipment, and that contract will end in 2026. Those libraries, mostly rural, will have the E-rate funding going forward, and they can't support those rates. The pilot project will support 10 of those libraries in the first year, and it will not require the libraries to have a yearly subscription rate.
- Digital Skills Library Consultant Chelsea Summerlin ran a successful digital skills workshop. This is the first of a multi-part "Techspecations" workshop.
- The E-services team is on track to change 94 library websites to be ADA compliant.

- Next month, Lamb will meet with the Office of Civil Rights to go over and finalize the ADA accessibility audit investigation.

Florko provided her report to the board:

- Florko is assisting in a single audit by the Legislative Services Office (LSO) covering the U.S. Department of the Treasury of the Capital Projects Fund. They are looking at FY24 activities. There are two auditors on site for part of each week. The audit is going well.
- The YS team is working hard on book orders and programs. Redford was able to ship out materials to 127 libraries this summer thanks, in part, to the donation from the Scottish Rite Foundation.

Gelskey provided her report to the board:

- The TBS staff have been prepping summer reading and working with the National Library Service (NLS) to host programs and provide reading lists.
- The “All May Read” grant reports will be due at the first part of September, and some libraries have already turned their grant reports in.
- Gelskey noted the Idaho Humanities Council has secured some funds, to support the Let’s Talk About It program. They will be able to support a new theme this year that ties in with the America 250 celebration. The ICfL is waiting to find out how many libraries can be funded.
- Gelskey congratulated Welker on the success of the April Volunteer Luncheon.
 - Staaf was present at the luncheon and concurred that the event was a win, especially the interactive and educational project participants worked on.

B. Personnel Report – Information Item (Board Document 25-67)

The Board reviewed Board Document 25-67, covered in the management team reports.

Eggers will work with Wittman and Staaf on a subcommittee to strategize on filling the state librarian position. This will include advertising and working on a timeline.

VI. Legislation, Policies, and Guidelines

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

VII. Old Business

A. Board Appointment Update – Information Item

- VIII.** Bailey-White and Mecham both said they hadn’t received word about Mecham’s reappointment from the Governor’s office, but Bailey-White will

inquire about the matter soon.

IX.

X. New Business

A. Election of Officers – Action Item

- XI.** Wittman moved to elect Franklin as Chair of the Board of Commissioners. Staaf seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Staaf moved to elect Strickland as Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners. Franklin seconded. *Motion carried unanimously.*

XII. Strategic Issues – Topics for next board meeting

- XIII.** Bailey-White said the ICfL staff are happy to review any topic or present on anything the board of commissioners might be interested in.

XIV. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

XV.

XVI. Meeting Evaluation / Adjournment

The board of commissioners acknowledged that this is a tough time for the ICfL, particularly regarding the restructuring of the TBS and the future layoffs. Wittman and Mecham both shared that they are appreciative of all the informative documentation sent to the board ahead of the board meeting. Staaf said that she appreciated Mecham’s leadership in her first year as a board member.

Strickland moved to adjourn. Franklin seconded. Mecham adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m. MDT.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, August 14, 2025 – 10 a.m. MDT / 9 a.m. PDT – Zoom