

DEARBORN PUBLIC LIBRARY
LIBRARY COMMISSION MEETING
Henry Ford Centennial Library - Room 111
Wednesday, August 13, 2025
APPROVED

Commissioners:

- Chairperson Dr. Cheryl Hawkins - Present
- Vice Chair Ali Dagher - Present
- Secretary/Treasurer Jihan Jawad - Excused
- Adam Abusalah - Excused
- Zeinab Alhashemi - Present
- Gerilyn Biggs - Present
- Amira Haidar - Present
- Dr. Ryan Lazar - Present

Library Administration:

- Library Director Betty Adams - Present
- Assistant Director of Technical Services Mark Hancock - Excused
- Assistant Director of Programs & Services Rebecca Hermen - Present
- Assistant Director of Operations Patty Podzikowski - Present
- Office Assistant III Daniel Smith - Present

Deputy Corporation Counsel Brad Mendelsohn was in attendance on behalf of the City Legal Department.

Councilperson Leslie Herrick was in attendance on behalf of City Council.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Hawkins at 5:04PM

II. Approval of Minutes - June 25, 2025 regular meeting

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Biggs, second by Commissioner Haidar. Minutes approved as submitted.

Chairperson Hawkins made a motion to add discussion of a closed session to Old Business to the meeting agenda.

- Supported by Vice Chair Dagher, seconded by Commissioner Biggs. Motion carried.

III. Department Reports

A. Historical Museum

Item tabled.

B. Library Foundation

Assistant Director Podzikowski reported that new members have been accepted to the board. She reported that the group has been given a wishlist of items to consider funding for the Library.

C. Director's Report

Item tabled.

IV. New Business

A. Agenda Format

Chairperson Hawkins drafted and proposed an amended agenda template to be used for future Library Commission meetings. She explained changes to the current format. A conflict of interest disclosure was added in accordance with the City Charter. An approval of agenda was added. A summative financial report was also suggested.

Vice Chair Dagher noted that a section for public comment should be added. The group agreed that it should appear at the beginning of the meetings. Deputy Corporation Counsel Mendelsohn offered to assist in drafting regulations on public comment to be incorporated into the Commission bylaws.

Chairperson Hawkins will adjust the proposed agenda format based on feedback from the group. Item tabled for the September meeting.

B. Part-time Staff PTO/ESTA

Commissioner Biggs reported that the Commission had communications from concerned staff regarding the implementation of a new PTO policy for part-time employees. Director Adams explained the confusion and frustration among staff due to the change in PTO accrual and the lack of communication from HR. The group discussed the broader implications of the policy change, and its impact on employee morale and retention. Commissioner Biggs suggested that the Commission should advocate for honoring past accruals to maintain fairness and employee trust.

C. Esper Closure Schedule

Director Adams presented a timeline of the Esper Branch renovation project. She requested the building close to the public at the end of business on September 13 to allow for adequate public notice. This will include social media posts, print resources, and press releases in coordination with the City communications department.

The administration discussed plans to sell off materials and equipment, with the assistance of the City's finance department and Friends of the Library-Dearborn. Unsold and unusable equipment will be disposed of.

The renovation is expected to begin October 15. The impact of the closure on students was discussed. Assistant Director Hermen noted that the Library is working with Parks and Recreation to establish an alternate hold pickup location. The group discussed the feasibility of installing additional smart lockers.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Mendelsohn confirmed the Commission's authority to close Library facilities. Hawkins recommended a closure date of September 20. The administration agreed.

- Motion to approve made by Chairperson Hawkins, seconded by Vice Chair Dagher. Motion passed.

D. Vendor List

Director Adams shared a list of library materials vendors, and their budgets for FY26. She noted that the majority of materials would be acquired from Ingram, as opposed to Baker & Taylor in years past. Chairperson Hawkins confirmed that all vendors have been vetted.

- Motion to approve made by Vice Chair Dagher, seconded by Commissioner Alhashemi. Motion passed.

V. Old Business

A. City Retiree Library Cards

Assistant Director Podzikowski proposed to allow City retirees to sign up for library cards, including those who no longer live in Dearborn. She noted that approximately 500 people would be eligible, if approved. The board suggested implementing a pilot program to test the demand and feasibility. The administration will follow up with the Commission in one year.

- Motion to approve made by Commissioner Alhashemi, seconded by Commissioner Biggs. Motion passed.

B. Library 2026 Holiday Closures

The group revisited the Library holiday closure schedule for 2026. Director Adams indicated that the list of closures was derived from the 2025 schedule. The group discussed differences from the City schedule. Director Adams noted that the City schedule assumes a five-day operation, versus the Library's seven in peak times.

The group discussed the traditional closure of the Library on Memorial Day weekend. They considered the impact on access to restrooms and shelter, particularly when Henry Ford Centennial is on the parade route. Commissioner Alhashemi suggested keeping the building open in the years that it is.

Commissioner Lazar emphasized the need for clear communication when closure dates differ from the City's. Director Adams indicated proactive measures taken to publicize closures. The group discussed some overlap between Library and school closure dates.

Director Adams noted that a full-day building closure for an all-staff meeting was removed for 2026. The group discussed the agenda approval process for all-staff meetings, and their role in training and development.

Chairperson Hawkins wrapped the discussion and requested a motion to approve the 2026 closure schedule.

- Motion made by Commissioner Biggs, seconded by Vice Chair Dagher. Motion approved.

C. Rooms Policy & Rates

The motion from the June 25 meeting passed, upon review by Deputy Corporation Counsel Mendelsohn. The group discussed the necessity of approval by City Council. Mendelsohn agreed to look into it and inform the Commission.

D. Closed Session

The group agreed to hold a closed session to discuss privileged legal matters, following the September 10 regular meeting.

Assistant Director Podzikowski noted that a new group photo of the Commission was needed for the website. It will be added to the October meeting agenda.

VI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Dagher, seconded by Commissioner Lazar. The meeting adjourned at 6:20PM