JACKSON COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT (JCLD)
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Medford Branch Library
Large Meeting Room
205 S Central Ave, Medford, OR
May 6, 2026, 3:30 p.m.

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Present at the meeting: Budget Committee members Susan Kiefer (President), Kevin Keating (Vice President), Patty Jensen, Marta Tarantsey, Marissa Shepherd, Dave Kanner, David Mathieu, and Doug Townsend, Alicia Van Riggs.

Absent: Cathy de Wolfe

Additional attendees: Heather Scott (Finance Manager), Joan Vigil (Assistant Director, Public Services), Brynn Fogerty (HR Manager), Kelda Vath (Assistant Director, Support Services), Josh Letsinger (Community Engagement Manager), and Yoli Diaz (Executive Assistant)

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

President Kiefer called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and the Land Acknowledgement read.

INTRODUCTIONS

Finance Manager Heather Scott introduced the staff involved in the budget process, including herself as Finance Manager and Budget Officer; Frank Phillips, Interim Library Director; Joan Vigil, Assistant Director of Public Services; Kelda Vath, Assistant Director of Support Services; Brynn Fogerty, Human Resources Manager; and Josh Letsinger, Community Engagement Manager and Yoli Diaz, Executive Assistant.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

Director Jensen moved to appoint Director Kiefer as chairperson for the meeting, and Budget Committee Member Doug Townsend seconded the motion. All were in favor.

BUDGET MESSAGE

Finance Manager and Budget Officer Heather Scott, along with the leadership team, introduced the FY27 Budget and presented its objectives. Scott outlined the objectives for the Budget Committee Meeting, the purpose of the FY27 Budget, and the entire process. Josh Letsinger- Community Engagement Manager, shared accomplishments from the current fiscal year, including the expansion of the Spanish Language Access Program; the Rogue Reads event featuring New York Times bestselling author Shelby Van Pelt, which drew the largest program attendance in library history with more than 500 people at Medford’s Craterian Theater; the launch of the Rural Entrepreneur in Residence program in the Applegate; and continued growth in social media engagement across all platforms. Vath shared statistical highlights as of the end of March. Library usage remained strong, with 974,154 physical items borrowed and 63,000 public computer sessions, holding steady compared to the previous fiscal year. She also reported that digital borrowing increased 19.3% from the previous fiscal year to 441,867 items; branch visits rose 6.7% to 586,360, and new cardholders increased 9.7% from the previous fiscal year to 9,179.

Scott presented the expense projections for FY27. Using the District's historical data and reviewing Jackson County’s revenue proposal. Projection is based on a 4.37% increase in assessed value and a 94% collection rate, consistent with historical performance and the county. This results in approximately $16.3M in current-year property tax revenue, with an additional $1.221M expected from prior-year collections, interest income, service charges such as printing and copying, and e-rate internet cost reimbursements. The district also anticipates transferring $208,000 in interest earnings from the Capital Improvement Reserve Fund and Grant Fund back into the General Fund, continuing a practice of reallocating interest for operational use. On the expenditure side, the total operating budget is approximately $17.4M, with personnel services representing $11.365M, or 63% of expenses, driven by a 2.5% COLA, a 1.5% step increase, and a 9% health insurance premium increase. Materials and services account for $6.095M, including $1.57M for library materials, and the budget also includes $500,000 contingency and a $250,000 transfer to the Capital Improvement Fund, with overall adjustments made to maintain a balanced budget.

Brynn Fogerty-HR Manager shared that the COLA and step increase recommendations are based on comparable library systems and a board-approved methodology designed to maintain competitive wages while managing within budget. For FY27, a 2.5% COLA was adopted at prior board meeting, it is slightly below the 2.6% peer average, along with a 1.5% step increase based on average 3.23% wage growth in comparable organizations. Together, these adjustments place overall compensation of 0.79% below peers, balancing fiscal responsibilities with the goal of fair competitive pay that supports recruitment and retention.

Joan Vigil, Assistant Director - Public Services, discussed FTE over the years. The chart that was presented shows changes in FTE over the past five years, reflecting the strategic plan to increase library access by expanding operating hours in response to public demand. These changes were implemented in two phases, December 1, 2022, in Ashland and systemwide on April 10, 2023, with a detailed analysis of operating hours later confirming that staffing and service levels had increased more than planned, at 37% above the original baseline compared to a proposed 33% increase over the FY 2022 baseline. To maintain long-term sustainability and balance the current budget, it was necessary to reduce weekly service hours by 15 hours and adjust personnel costs back down to approximately 65% of the General Fund budget.

Kelda Vath- Assistant Director of Support Services, discussed several operational contract and expenses included in the FY27 budget. Janitorial services remain the Library Districts largest contract at approximately $680,000 through Pathway Enterprises, which provides overnight cleaning, porter services, and specialty cleaning at branches. Costs decreased about 8% due to anticipated operating hour adjustments and minor service reductions. Security services at the Medford branch continue to improve the experience for patrons and staff, with projected costs slightly reduced to about $270,000. Vath also noted rising utility expenses and clarified that the district maintains a separate landscaping contract outside of Jackson County Facilities and Maintenance. Planned FY27 projects include carpet replacements, roof work at the Medford and Phoenix branches, and Phoenix parking lot improvements.

Scott reviewed the miscellaneous grant fund, which supports restricted funding from donations, the State ready to Read grant, and the Hulbert Trust. Scott concluded the budget message by noting that the districts expect to begin FY27 with strong reserve balances including approximately $7M in the general fund, and that projections show reserves remaining above policy targets over the next five years. She emphasized that long-term financial forecasting has allowed the district to make proactive budget adjustments and maintain overall financial stability.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION
The Committee discussed the proposed budget, including a reclassification of the library materials and processing fees to better track physical and digital collections separately. Staff explained that reductions in professional development funding reflect lower actual spending and uncertainty during the transitions to a new strategic plan and library director search. Committee members also discussed the adjustment of branch hours, particularly Medford and Ashland based on usage data and long-term financial sustainability. Questions were raised about landscaping contracts, facility furnishing replacements focused on safety and

worn public furniture, consultant fees, and staffing impacts. Staff clarified that a reported reduction of 12 FTEs does not necessarily mean layoffs, noting the district's low turnover rate may allow staffing reductions through attritions and vacancy management. Director Kiefer emphasized that staff carefully reviewed many options to create a sustainable five year budget for the 15 branch library district. Committee members further discussed increased network costs tied to districtwide technology upgrades, noting most expenses are reimbursed through federal e-rate funding. Staff explained the budget is balanced without using contingency funds and that larger adjustments now are intended to avoid ongoing small cuts in future years. Members also noted that reducing the library hours creates additional savings in security, janitorial and utility costs and that phased reductions were considered but would not achieve enough savings.

MOTION: Budget Committee Member Dave Kanner moved that the Jackson County Library District Budget Committee approve the fiscal year 2026-2027 Budget as presented and the permanent tax rate levy of .60 per $1,000 for the funding of the library district in Jackson County. Director Keating seconded the motion.

Director Kiefer called for a roll call vote.

Kiefer – Yes

Keating – Yes

Jensen – Yes

Tarantsey – Yes

Shepherd – Yes

Kanner – Yes

Mathieu – Yes

Van Riggs – Yes

Townsend – Yes

The motion passed.

PUBLIC INPUT

Director Kiefer invited comments from the public, in which there were two JCLD employees that shared their concerns. Megan Thompson, librarian and union bargaining team member, raised concerns about budget priorities and suggested alternative cost reductions. Erica, Library Associate at Talent Library, emphasized employee impact of budget decisions and requested more equitable distribution of cuts.

Scott announced the next meeting will be the Budget Hearing held on Wednesday, May 20th, at 4:00PM. Director Keating thanked the Citizen Committee Members and Board Members for their thoughtful deliberation and for taking the time to be part of the JCLD Budget Process. Director Kiefer thanked the JCLD staff who helped with the budget preparation.

The meeting ended with discussion on approving the budget and Director Keating thanking the citizens members for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

President Kiefer adjourned the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

/s/
Recording Secretary
Yoli Diaz