

Tamarack Federation
Spring Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 28, 2023 at 3:15 p.m. at Missoula Public Library

Chair Elijah Carey opened the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Attendance (* is voting trustee)

Bitterroot Public Library - *Carmela Bowns, Mark Wetherington
Darby Community Public Library - *Juli Winthers, Stacie Rennaker
Imaginelf - *Heidi Roedel, David Ingram, Jane Wheeler, Carmen Cuthbertson, Ashley Cummins
Lincoln County Libraries – *Barb Hvizdak, Alyssa Ramirez
Mineral County Public Library - Guna Chaberek (Zoom)
Missoula Public Library - *Lisa Mecklenberg Jackson (Zoom), Slaven Lee
North Lake County Public Library District - *Brooke Wegner, Abbi Dooley
North Valley Public Library – Denise Ard
Plains Public Library District - *Tiffany Ayers, Nikki Ericksen
Preston Hot Springs Town-County Library - *Matt Pavelich (Zoom), Starla Rice
Ronan Library District – *Elijah Carey, Michelle Fenger
St. Ignatius School-Community Library - *Janis Heffern (Zoom), Amanda Richter
Thompson Falls Public Library - *Karen Dwyer, Kate Baxter (Zoom), Kelly Wheeler (Zoom)
Whitefish Community Library - *Deb Bond, Mary Drew Powers

State Library Attendees

Tracy Cook, Montana State Library
Pam Henley, Montana State Library

Each library shared highlights of their Joys & Concerns during roll call. Submitted copies attached to these minutes.

Minutes

- The minutes of the Fall 2022 online meeting were emailed to directors and trustees in advance. Karen Dwyer moved and Brooke Wegner seconded the *motion to approve the minutes of the Fall 2022 meeting as corrected*. **Motion passed.**

Unfinished Business

- Abbi reminded everyone that FY2023 funds must be spent on qualifying items/services by June 30th and expenses entered into Aspen by August 15th. She demonstrated how to enter expenses into the Google form through Aspen.

New Business

- The Coordinator's Report was emailed to Directors and Trustees and is attached to these minutes.
- The FY2024 Plan of Service was presented. Carmela Bowns moved and Brooke Wegner seconded the *motion to approve the FY2024 Plan of Service as presented*. **Motion passed.**
 - Ideas for collaborative purchases in the event the Montana State Library Commission approves an additional \$4,000 in cooperative funds included packets for new trustees,

newsletter with training highlights, book club kits, special summer reading program, game/incentive for travel to all libraries, author visit, and a traveling exhibit. It was noted that the State Library already has resources and plans for several of these items including the packet, newsletter and incentive for visiting libraries.

- State Library Report: Tracy Cook gave the State Library Report. The written report is attached to these minutes. She gave additional updates on the following:
 - Legislative Update
 - Included updates on HB91, HB2, open meeting laws, permanent mill levies, and the obscenity law. See legislative website for final information on these topics.
 - Federation Task Force Recommendations
 - Responses from the Tamarack Federation fall meeting were presented to the task force. The task force identified that regional federations work, they are helpful to support and encourage their libraries, and more education about federations and the trustees' roles should be provided. The task force also recommended requesting additional funds from the Montana State Library Commission specifically for collaborative events, like the Tamarack's spring retreat, and simplifying the rules.
 - Proposal to help libraries with tech support
 - Libraries would be interested in support for networks, general IT, upgrades to equipment, cybersecurity, and website development.
- Nominations & Election for Vice-Chair: Current vice chair Heidi Roedel will become Chair at the fall meeting. Tiffany Ayers nominated herself as vice chair. Juli Winthers seconded the *motion to elect Tiffany Ayers as vice chair*. **Motion passed.**

Other Business: None.

Future Meeting Dates

- Fall Online Meeting 2023: Thursday, October 19th at 6 p.m. via Zoom
- Spring Retreat & Meeting 2024: based on the poll distributed during the break, the consensus was to host the spring retreat April 26 and 27, 2024 in Polson.

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

JOYS AND CONCERNS
BITTERROOT PUBLIC LIBRARY
TAMARACK FEDERATION, SPRING MEETING 2023

JOYS

- Our Youth Services Librarian and Youth Services Assistant attended the Montana Library Association conference in Billings. They attended many great sessions/workshops and we look forward to implementing what they learned at our library.
- Lisa Stodd Gump, Public Relations Library Assistant, was honored with the 2023 Outstanding Support Staff Award by the Montana Library Association. We are grateful for her excellent work promoting everything our library has to offer!
- We have been working with the consulting firm Library Strategies to have a Facilities Needs Assessment for our library. Our library is at less than half of the recommended square footage per capita and our community continues to grow, so we want to be able to plan proactively for our future spatial needs. We hope to have a completed document to guide us in mid-May. We received over 700 surveys from library users and community members, with almost 30 focus group attendees to provide additional depth and insight to library/community needs, and many in-depth one-on-one interviews to get as much feedback as possible.

CONCERNS

- General anti-library sentiment nationally and across the state. The pushback against long-accepted core principles of librarianship and funding for libraries is very concerning. We appreciate the work done by the Montana Library Association and their lobbyists to advocate for libraries in the state legislature.
- Keeping up with inflation and rising operating costs. The last few years our revenue has kept pace as newly taxable properties were added to the tax rolls, but it seems like at some point that will level out and we will be challenged to maintain our current funding levels.
- Our aging and inadequately sized facility is a long-term concern. We are hopeful that the City will be willing to continue exploring options for us to use the adjacent city-owned building (Fire Hall, set to be vacant in the next 1-2 years when the new Fire Hall is completed) for a possible expansion.

Darby Community Public Library

Joys and Concerns spring 2023

Joys

We are gearing up for a children's room expansion and remodel

We had 148 children participate in our Easter Egg Hunt, we partnered with 6 community entities, each child received a free book and we gave away 10 bikes.

We have 2 new amazing board members (this year)

Friends group purchased new artwork for above the fireplace

Participated in the town Christmas parade (gave away books to children)

No major building issues this year!!

Concerns

Money is always a concern

Fundraising for the children's room

Lincoln County Libraries

Current Joys and Concerns:

Joys:

#1 Expert leadership from our Director, who in turn fosters positive relationships with and among staff.

- Staff and Board have a healthy, positive relationship.
- The sheer amount of energy & excitement I sense in library employees!
- For the first time in almost a year all facilities are fully-staffed and patrons will see the difference as programs and services grow.

Concerns:

#1 Decreased support from county commissioners, specifically one individual.

- Increasingly stressful work environment in the county offices.
- TLOC setback - initial funding request (Zinke) didn't advance

Mineral County Library Joys and Concerns – April, 2023

During the past year, we have had the researchers and historians who worked on the book, Taft, speak to patrons (in concert with the Historical Society); several authors; a panel of 3 local writers talked about writing, and Annie Oakley paid us a visit.

A representative from the Area 6 Agency on Aging now comes in regularly to help people with Medicare and other questions – in all three locations.

We have held a party for Dr. Seuss' birthday with local people coming in to read to the children, and a Christmas party with Santa.

We have begun a Mothers' group, so young mothers can network and socialize without their children, and we also read to nursing home residents twice a week.

We have also begun a children's reading circle on Saturday mornings (besides the ongoing Parents as Teachers group Wednesday mornings).

Our little food bank is used far more than we expected – we wanted someplace more private so people could, without embarrassment, take what they need. Community members donate food, pet food, and toiletries, and we also accept these items instead of fines.

In the past year, we have developed several kits for checkout, with each kit containing books, DVDs, and other items on a certain theme. We have kits for dinosaurs, stamping, lego, astronomy (aimed at juveniles), the human body, and rocks & minerals. The response has been good enough, that we have added kits for adults – memory (dementia), and civics & the constitution. At present, we are working on kits about Native Americans, local history, and beginning early reading. (The local history kit will be aimed at both juveniles and adults).

The local historical museum has donated a large number of pictures to the library. They need to be researched, prompts written, and then will be hung throughout the library. Local community members will be asked if they have pictures of the doctors, nurses, or librarians who were instrumental in the change from the old hospital to the library building. Two of the pictures will be auctioned off.

Our concerns, as always, are a lack of room. Also, the hot spots have been much in demand, we are not sure how to continue offering them if the State Library retracts the program.



Joys and Concerns

North Lake County Public Library District

Spring 2023

Joys:

- Our renovation project is coming along. Demolition begins on May 1st! Our Foundation has been working hard and doing well with our Capital Campaign; “The Next Chapter”.
- We partnered with the First United Methodist Church in Polson to keep the Library running during renovation. They have been gracious hosts, and our Patrons are learning to lean on the Partnership more, as we have a limited collection with us.
- Our Community has stepped up in helping us move & clear our building for renovation. We have had help from the Boy Scouts, 4-H, several school groups and numerous volunteers!
- We shared furniture, shelving, and technology items with other libraries, schools and individuals who will put these things to good use. Our Public Surplus Sale was very well attended and got us off to a good start for our move.
- We had a successful return of our “Grinchmas Party” in December. We had 117 people in attendance. It was a great family event!
- We started a monthly live acoustic music series that was popular with our Patrons. Local talent came in each month to perform. This program grew from a handful in the audience for the first few to filling our meeting room!
- We partnered with a local therapy dog; Riley and his handler Sally to create “Pawsitive Reading Partners”. Transportation was the reason for low attendance. Luckily, we “gifted” this great program to the local Boys and Girls Club, so Sally and Riley are getting more children reading there!
- We added an AARP Safe Driver Class that has been presented by an AARP representative. Patrons can be eligible for an auto insurance discount after completion of the course.

Concerns:

- Our technology Librarian left us in March. She had a wonderful opportunity present itself. We decided to wait until our renovation is closer to being complete to open that position.
- Our traffic numbers have been lower than anticipated with the move. We hope that with Summer Reading, the numbers will increase and Patrons will be more comfortable coming to our temporary location.

Joys and Concerns
North Valley Public Library (NVPL)
Spring Tamarack Meeting 2023

Joys

We are coming to the completion of our Preliminary Architecture Report and I am hopeful that we are one step close to a healthy building.

We are fully staffed at the moment and now have three weekly children programs, two weekly teen programs, and weekly adult programs that are much appreciated by the community.

Concerns

It is a long way to go before we have a new facility; a feasibility study appears to be the next step and I hope that the Library finds there is enough support for a new building within the community and that major gifts can be found. The price of a new building was much more than anticipated at a construction cost of \$5 million – \$8 million if we were able to build as of today but with a projected inflation cost of 8% a year. That cost does not include land or furniture.

Although fully staffed for all positions, we run a tight ship and could really use some more personnel hours so we are not in crisis mode when someone is sick, or on vacation.

I am worried about our internet transition from one CenturyLink circuit to another. Last time we had a change, CenturyLink tried to double bill us and I had to get the Attorney General Office of Consumer Protection and the Montana Public Service Commission involved.



Plains Public Library

Connecting People with Information

The library is not just a collection of books, but a collection of services.

Our Joys:

We have a healthy group of weekly programming events that have really increased traffic in our library. We have at least one program happening each day and include children, teen, adult and general.

Able to increase hours and days of the week. Having a great staff that is trained and ready to work independently gives us the opportunity to increase our days of operation from 4 to 6. We hope to make this change in June.

Our Concerns:

Relations with County. We continue to run into friction with county government. We have scheduled a training specifically about and for library boards. We will invite the Sanders County Board of Commissioners to attend along with other area libraries and their boards. Dan Clark and Tracy Cook will provide this training on May 19.

We are in need of an electrician. The city has not yet been able to contract with an electrician for over 2 years. We are in need of an upgrade to replace our very aged wiring and to increase the number of outlets to avoid dangerous overcrowding. More immediately concerning is the fact that a new air conditioner was installed last fall but requires an electrician to wire it in. With warmer weather coming, a lack of air conditioning becomes more of a concern.



Ronan Library District
203 Main Street SW, Ronan, MT 59864

Joys and Concerns

Fall 2022

We are excited to see many new faces coming through the doors, especially those with young children. We are very proud of our children's section, and it is so much fun to see children discovering what the library has to offer. We are hosting an all-day Halloween party. The plan is to have multiple independent hands-on stations of crafts, games, and other activities, so families can come in any time during the day for safe Halloween activities for all ages. We have also set up a "Treat your Library" Tree, on which we have hung tags of items we would like to have in the Library, but aren't really budgeted for, such as a cork board, vinyl covered cushions for kids to sit upon (easily cleaned), and more. Patrons can "treat" us by donating money for a specific item. People can donate small or large amounts and "take ownership" in the cool things they have helped provide for the community.

Our main concern at the moment is our leaking ceiling from the apartments above the Library and from heavy rains. Many ceiling tiles have been destroyed and need replacing, however, The City of Ronan and Ronan Housing authority just toss us from one to another without anything ever being resolved. We are approaching the City and asking them to turn the issue over to their insurance. As always, we wish we had more funding to provide more and better services, but we do the best with what we have. Our second main concern is the loss of hotspots. We had 10 of them, which are super popular, however, we have 1 broken and 7 that have never been returned, leaving us only 2, which causes problems keeping up with demand.

Joys and Concerns for Tamarack Federation Spring meeting April 2023

JOYS: We're looking forward to offering more programming for our patrons, and more engagement in general. We've got our new Youth Services Librarian on board, and after doing my first budget as director, we find we can hire another staff person as well.

It looks like we're finally going to get consistent IT help by partnering with the City of Whitefish. Their IT personnel have stated they have the capacity to do our IT, and it appears that we have already been paying for their services through the administrative fee we pay the city.

CONCERNS: My biggest concern after barely four months as director is how not to burn myself out. There are some times when everything needs to be done at once. I need to remind myself to take advantage of those times when staff can take care of things and I can let them do so...after we get the new ones trained.... 😊

Mary Drew Powers
Whitefish Community Library.

Coordinator's Report
Tamarack Federation
Abbi Dooley, Coordinator

I hope FY23 has been a good one for your library! I look forward to seeing everyone either in person or via Zoom for our spring retreat.

It is important that you spend your full Tamarack distribution in the fiscal year that it is given (by June 30th each year). You no longer have to designate in advance what program you will use, but all expenses must fit into one of the designated programs for the approved Plan of Service. If you have any questions about whether or not an expense fits into a program, please let me know. All expenses must be entered into Aspen no later than August 15th so as to allow time for the State Coordinator to prepare a report for the State Library Commission. You can combine expenses for the same purpose and enter only once in Aspen (i.e. Courier service, ILL postage, etc.). If you have an entry error, please let me know and I will get it corrected. This year, Rebekah created a Google Form for entry. Hopefully this will be a bit easier for everyone. Please let me know if you need any help.

There has been talk of asking the State Library Commission to give the federations additional funds. On our agenda, you will see an item to discuss the potential uses of an additional \$4,000. Only two federations hold in-person retreats. The hope is for the others to possibly use additional funds for that purpose. Since we already budget for a retreat, we would need to come up with another idea for a collaborative effort. Is there something that each of our libraries does or pays for that we could work together on for a lower cost and/or efficiency? Be thinking about this for our discussion during the meeting.

You will see in the Plan of Service for FY24 that I have reduced the annual meeting budget from \$6,000 to \$5,000. Holding our meetings at a Public Library saves money on conference room rentals, so I wanted to pass that savings onto each library. Whatever is left is sent to Montana Library2Go (unless the membership chooses to change this).

I ask each meeting, but please let me know what kinds of trainings you want at our spring retreat (or don't want). Without your feedback it is difficult to know what the training needs are for each library.

Thank you for your participation in the Tamarack Federation!

Federation Plan of Service and Budget Request FY 24 July 2023 – June 2024

Federation Name: Tamarack

Revenue available: \$53,058.02

Budget Summary

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Program 0 – Administrative Expenses | \$ 1,393.67 |
| Program 1 – Annual Meetings | \$ 5,000.00 |
| Total amount that will be granted to individual libraries | \$46,664.35 |
| Total expenditures | \$53,058.02 |

PROGRAM SUMMARIES

Program 1 - Annual Meetings

Money for this program goes towards meeting room costs, trainer costs, meals, and any supplies or communication costs needed to run the federation's annual meetings.

Program 2 - Continuing Education

Funds for this program are used to support the costs associated with professional development for librarians, library staff, and trustees. Examples of acceptable costs include, but are not limited to registration fees, course fees, travel costs, and purchase of materials needed for continuing education.

Program 3 - Resource Sharing and Technology

Funds in this program are used to support resource sharing programs such as interlibrary loan, courier, and book club kits as well as covering technology needs a library may have such as specific software and/or hardware. Examples of ways to use funds include, but are not limited to OCLC, MSC, Courier costs, postage, book club kits, Internet, hardware, peripherals, and software.

Program 4 - Community Outreach

Funds for this program are used to support outreach and marketing to the community with the hope of increasing awareness of libraries and their value. Examples of acceptable spending in this category include but are not

limited to: costs associated with summer reading programs, homebound services, books by mail, and any promotional materials.

Program 5 - Building Planning

Funds used in this program support the costs of planning for the best use of space directly related to federation-wide activities. Costs may include but are not limited to: consultant fees and travel, design models, wireless feasibility studies and cost analysis for designing areas.

Program 6 - Admin Costs

Several administrative functions are centralized at the State Library, but Federation members may want to authorize a stipend (of not more than \$1,000) to the federation coordinator. Federations may also allocate funds to pay for communication costs, travel, and supplies.

Amount each library in the federation will receive

| Library | Amount |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Bitterroot Public Library | 3,333.17 |
| Darby Community Library | 3,333.17 |
| ImagineIF Libraries | 3,333.17 |
| Lincoln County Library | 3,333.17 |
| Mineral County Public Library | 3,333.17 |
| Missoula Public Library | 3,333.17 |
| North Lake County Public Library | 9,726.81 |
| North Valley Public Library | 3,333.17 |
| Plains Public Library District | 3,333.17 |
| Preston Hot Springs Town-County | 3,333.17 |
| Ronan Library District | 3,333.17 |
| St. Ignatius School-Community Library | 3,333.17 |
| Thompson Falls Public Library | 3,333.17 |
| Whitefish Community Library | 3,333.17 |

Date Plan of Service was approved by Federation members: 04-28-2023



Spring 2023 Federation Report

General Information

[MSL Newsletters](#) – Please subscribe to receive timely and important information.

Library Consulting

[Public library standards](#) – this is the first year of complying with the recently updated public library standards. Please contact your State Library Consultant if you have any questions about the new standards. If you need assistance meeting the board training or strategic planning standards, the State Library Consultants can facilitate or lead a training or planning session at your library.

Staff will be conducting limited administrative rules review after the legislative session is over. HB91 is currently working its way through the system. It covers state aid per capita for libraries and includes tribal libraries. We would need to update the rules to include funding for tribal libraries. At the same time, we would like to clarify a few items.

Continuing Education

[MSL Learn Webinar Series](#) – Check ASPeN for links. New webinars every 2nd and last Tuesday of each month. 30-minute sessions.

[MSL Learn Courses](#) – Enroll in our introductory course “Montana State Library: A Greater State of Knowledge.” New courses will be added in the coming months.

[CE and Certification Draft Recommendations](#) – Check out the draft recommendations from the Continuing Education and Certification Task Force. Comments or questions? Email [Colet Bartow](#).

Save the Date – [MSL Fall Workshop](#) in Great Falls, September 18-19, 2023. Details will be added later this spring. The theme is “Libraries are Forever!”

[MSL YouTube Channel](#) – Please subscribe! Access recordings of meetings and continuing education events plus a whole lot more!

Data Coordination

[Public Libraries Survey](#) (PLS) – National 2020 data is now available via the [PLS dashboard](#), and Montana’s FY 2022 data is currently being vetted by the American Institute of Research (AIR). Once reviewed, data from 2022 will be added to the dashboard for use by all public libraries.

PLS Software Contract – Montana State Library’s PLS contract with Baker & Taylor for Bibliostat CollectConnect concluded January 2023. With guidance from the [Public Libraries Statistics Task Force](#), MSL will use this opportunity to assess product needs. Public libraries can expect additional information this spring with training opportunities to follow.



Lifelong Learning

MSL Trunk Program – The State Library has 5 trunks that public libraries can borrow and use, with all shipping costs paid by the State Library. The available trunks are the Giant Map of Montana, Bat Week Celebration, Montana’s Aquatic Life: Past and Present, NASA: Sun-Earth-Moon Connections, and NASA: Be A NASA Detective. We are also adding a Bear Trunk soon! Exact addition date TBD, but hopefully by end of March.

MLN Virtual Programs – The MLN Virtual Programming Series has been very successful, and many libraries have appreciated cohosting them to fulfill their virtual programming standards. We are always looking for co-hosts, and there are multiple ways for you to participate. Upcoming virtual programs include Thunderous with Mandy Smoker Broaddus and Natalie Peeterse on 3/9, from 6 to 7:30 pm, and Foraging for Wild Mushrooms with Dr. Cathy Cripps on 4/20, from 6:30 to 8 pm.

2023 Summer Reading – We are holding monthly summer reading brainstorm webinars, which anyone is welcome to attend. Additionally, all the CSLP planning materials are now available for 2023, so please reach out to Amelea Kim to get the access code and directions.

Montana History Portal

[Name Change](#) – It is official. We have changed our name from the Montana Memory Project to the Montana History Portal. Our page design has been updated as of March 2 and the changes include an improved menu system.

[Digital Exhibits](#) – We now have 32 digital exhibits for our users to explore and we continue to work on more. Thirteen of these exhibits were created during our Teacher Workshop last summer. These are great way to learn about a specific topic in Montana History. We have also designed several geocaching walking tours that can be done with a free phone app called Adventure Labs. These tours focus on a walkable area and show then-and-now comparisons of points of interest.

[Contests](#) – We are offering/have offered our spring contests: the Historical Picture Prompt Writing contest and the Montana Meme-ory Contest with prizes for the winning entries.

Montana Shared Catalog

The MSC staff are still working on the rollout of the new products included in our new contract with SirsiDynix. Those products include SMS text messaging for patron notices, a simplified "kids catalog" interface for the online card catalog as well as several others. Member librarians will be notified when each product is ready to launch.

The Enterprise online card catalog has been upgraded to the most current version, resolving several bugs that had fixes applied.



Billings Public School Libraries will be going live in the MSC this summer! Harlowton Public Library is also preparing for migration into the MSC in the near future.

Great Falls Public Library and Meagher County Public Library both recently went live in the Partners Sharing Group that allows patrons of those libraries access to the entire group's collection.

The Montana Shared Catalog has a dedicated newsletter for system news and updates. Please use this link to sign up: [MSC System Updates](#)

Statewide Projects

Hot Spot Program – Pending legislative action, a funding request to sustain the hot spot program for the next biennium (fiscal years 2024 – 2025) is moving forward as part of the Montana State Library budget as of late February. The State Library will request input from participating libraries to streamline the program and reduce the administrative burden on both MSL staff and on library staff.

The Palace Project – The Palace Project is a nonprofit, library-centered platform and e-reader app that provides all-in-one e-content management and lending. The Montana State Library is hosting this app for all Montana libraries. The platform is free for you to use. Your only cost is the subscription e-content (ebooks and audiobooks) that you choose to add. There is also the option to add public domain content. Please contact Cara Orban for more information.

Courier – Melody Karle and Cara Orban are conducting a small-scale pilot on the use of Apple Airtags for tracking courier shipments. They will report their findings and recommendations later this spring. Meagher County Library is the newest addition to both the Partners Sharing Group and the Montana Courier Network. If you are interested in bringing courier service to your library, please contact Cara.

MontanaLibrary2Go – The membership's budget meeting is scheduled online for March 16; please check ASPeN for details. OverDrive Extras (The Great Courses, Method Test Prep, Universal Class) are available through 2023 via the Libby app or interface.



Federation Task Force Recommendations

Background information about task force

[Federation Task Force](#) – Charge of the task force was to review the federation structure to determine if it still met library needs and to make recommendations on any needed changes.

Value of library federations and library needs addressed

The role of federations is to provide regional training and networking opportunities. The funding that comes with federations is critical for library success. Federations address the library need for stable funding and well-informed library board members, directors, and staff.

Need for education about federations, the role of trustees, budgeting, and reporting processes

The task force recognized that some of the challenges of federations may be due to a lack of knowledge about the purpose of federations, the role of board members, and the processes for budgeting and reporting.

They recommend State Library staff and/or federation coordinators lead the following educational efforts for library directors, board members, and staff:

- Share a federation history video that explains the history and role of federations.
- Create a short one-page document that describes federations and their purpose.
- Lead a session at federation meetings about the power federation members have in determining use of federation funds and how the budgeting/reporting process works.
- Educate board members about running meetings and becoming involved in federations.

Funding recommendations for federations

The federation task force recommended the following:

- Request an additional \$4,000 be awarded to each federation for federation members to use for collaborative efforts such as annual retreats or projects that benefit most federation members.
- Request federations consider asking the State Library or the Montana Library Association to ask for more funding for federations through a legislative process. The members of the federation should discuss whether they need more funding, how they would use the funding, how it would benefit Montanans, and whether they want to pursue more funding by going through a legislative process.

Recommendations for ARM changes for federations

The federation task force recommended making the following changes to the Administrative Rules of Montana:

- Simplify the language in ARM 10.102.5102 – Allocation of funding between federations and grant programs.



- Replace the “board of trustees” language in ARM 10.102.5105 – Joining library federations - with language that focuses on the voting authority and importance of public library board members and adopting bylaws for federations.
- Update ARM 10.102.5106 to remove the references to grant funds no longer available and to reflect the current way federation funds can be used.

Recommendations for possible changes to federation bylaws

The federation task force believes it is important for federations to adopt bylaws that reflect their unique situation. The task force recommends reviewing federation bylaws with a goal of encouraging everyone (especially board members) to participate.

Suggestions for updates to the bylaws include removal of the reference to a smaller board of trustees that is no longer used by federations, consider making it optional for a board member to chair a federation meeting, make sure that board members have voting power and are a part of the planning, voting, and reporting process.

Next steps

State Library staff members will present these recommendations at upcoming federation meetings. Once the State Library has collected public comment and feedback, they will share the information with the task force and make changes to the recommendations, if needed.

The goal is to request additional funding and permission to initiate an Administrative Rules process at the June Montana State Library Commission meeting. If the Commission says yes, staff will lead the ARM process over the summer and fall.

Questions for the library community

The federation task force has the following questions:

- What concerns, comments, or questions do you have about the recommendations?
- Do you agree that additional education about federations would help? What other ideas do you have for improving federations?
- The federation discussed the value of including interested tribal college libraries in the funding for federations. They recommend seeking additional funding so current libraries remain whole. What do you think of this idea?
- Do you think federations need more funding? If no, why not? If yes, what funding is needed and how would it benefit Montanans?
- The task force spent a fair amount of time talking about the role of public library board members. They believe active public library board members enrich the federation experience. What do you think about the idea of increasing involvement of public library board members? What are the challenges? What are the opportunities? What would help improve the experience of public library board members?