



MEMO

To: Montana State Library Commission
From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian
Subject: Public Comments Received for the March 26, 2025 Business Meeting
Date: March 24, 2025

The following comment was submitted to the State Library Commission.

I have been following the last several State Library Commissioners meetings. I have developed some concerns. I realize that the Commissioners' goals are to strengthen and oversee the Libraries across the state.

I wonder however if the Commission really understands how Libraries work and our job descriptions beyond what is on paper and what is needed to perform our jobs. I don't think they really understand the different levels of education needed for different size Libraries. For example, the education needed for say the Director of the Billings' Library is vastly different than what is needed for me to accomplish my daily work.

Discussions with other Directors have made it clear that we have a better idea of what training we need to perform our jobs and possibly what our Boards feel they need to do their jobs. It is extremely difficult to fill empty Board positions at my Library and I hear the same from other small Libraries. There needs to be a balance on what is required from these volunteers who, in small communities, are providing a service that in some ways they hesitate to volunteer for because they just don't have the time or energy. Making the voluntary trustee certification mandatory, because that is what they appear to want to do, will not help us in anyway as trustees want to be local and not be bothered with anything else if we can even get them to volunteer.

I fear the Commissioners could possibly harm Libraries including staff and Library Boards with some of their proposals/ideas. I am not sure the Commissioners understand the vast difference between the larger and small Library's' capabilities/abilities, resources and access.

I also wonder if the Commission understand the lack of hours the State Library staff have? I can definitely see that the Commissioners do not realize that not all the Libraries in the state are following the 'socially progressive themes' in our Libraries.

Submitted by:
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