

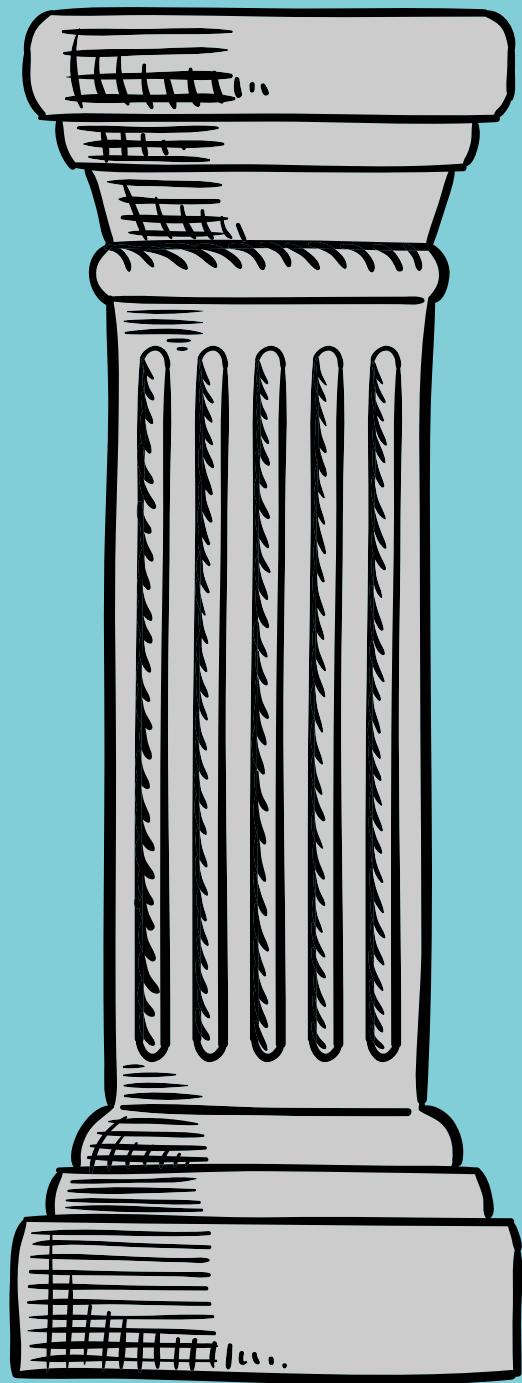


BRCL STRATEGIC PLAN

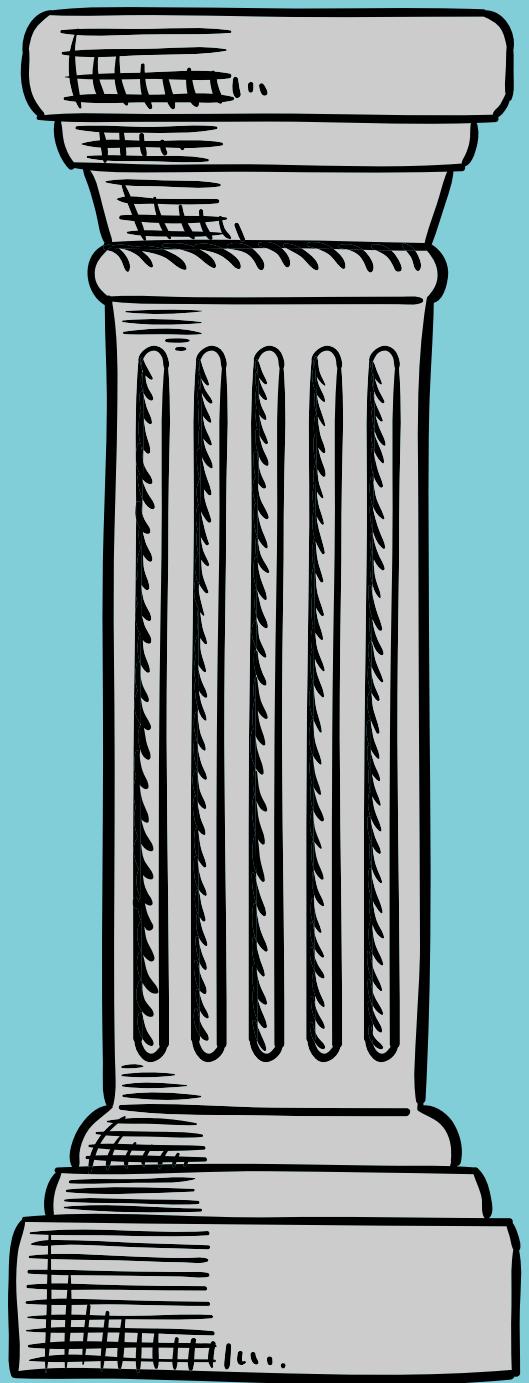
2021-2026

THREE PILLARS

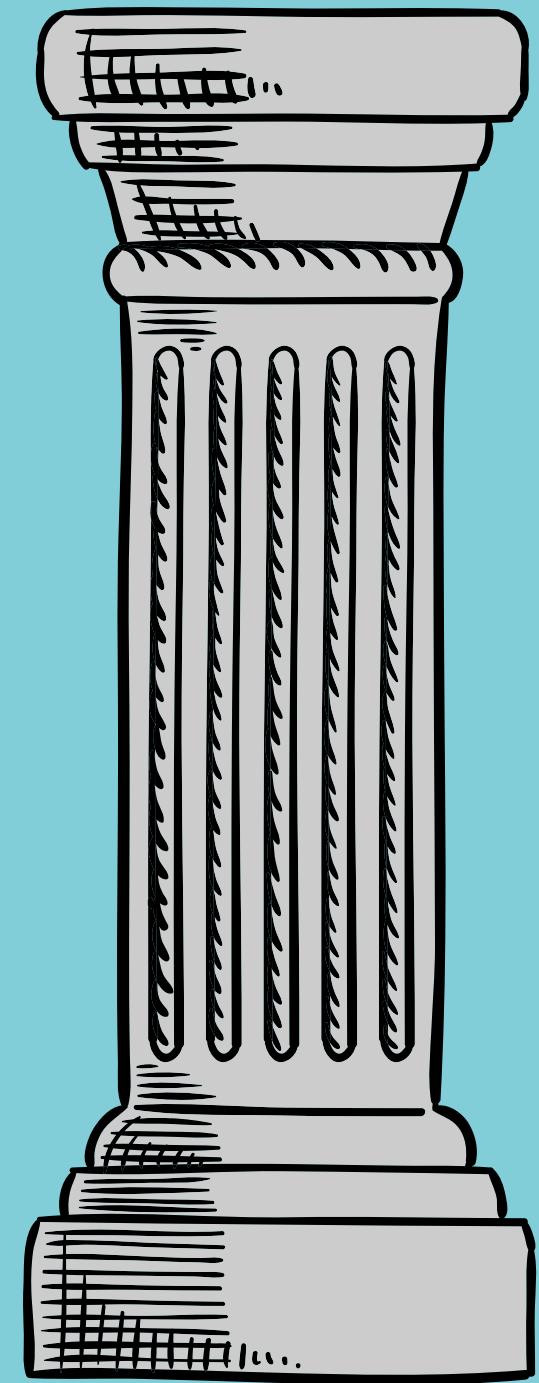
BIG RAPIDS COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Early
Childhood
Literacy &
Education

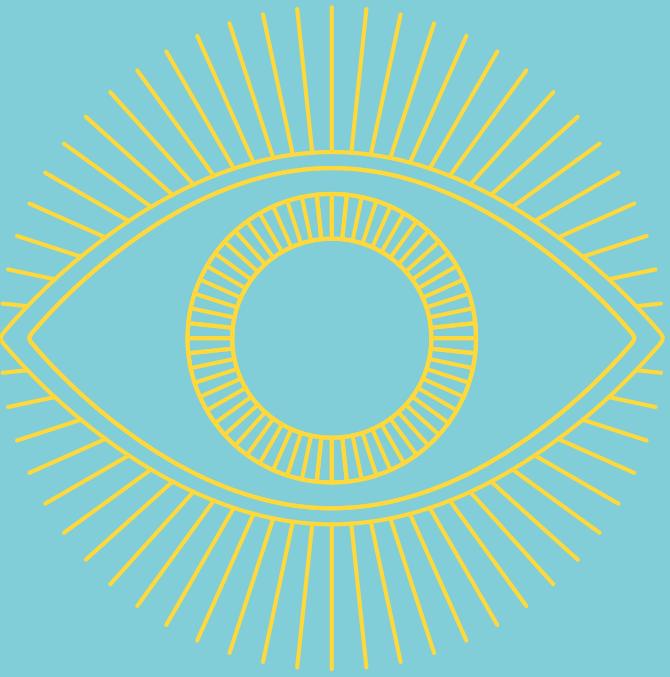


Community
Connection



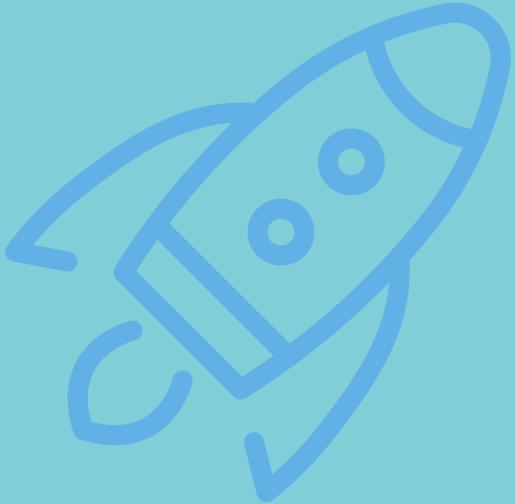
Access to
Technology

VISION



The Big Rapids Community Library aims to be the leading local resource for the community to discover, learn, and connect.

MISSION



The Big Rapids Community Library
values literacy
by sharing valuable resources to
encourage curiosity, education, and
growth in our community.

CORE VALUES

access

exploration

community

intellectual

freedom

service

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Grow Young Readers
2. Connect the Community
3. Curate Meaningful Educational Experiences
4. Expand Access to Technology

Grow Young Readers

Desired Community Outcomes:

- Children enter Kindergarten ready to read and write.
- Children continue to read at grade level.
- Children are successful in school.

Because:

- Reading is an essential skill for learning and a successful life.
- 90% of a human's brain development occurs between birth and age three.
- Children maintain grade-level reading when they read as few as five books over the summer.

Connect the Community

Desired Community Outcomes:

- The library becomes the social and cultural infrastructure of the community.
- People feel connected to and value the community and the library.
- The library participates in community partnerships in areas of shared strategic focus.

Curate Meaningful Educational Experiences

Desired Community Outcomes:

- Positive associations with libraries and books.
- Programs drive library usage
- Attract and retain non-traditional library users

Expand Access to Technology

Desired Community Outcomes:

- All community members have convenient access to the internet
- Remote work, learning, and access to digital collections are supported for all.
- Free WiFi is available 24/7

7 Elements of a Strategic Plan

BY DAN MCCARTHY

Updated November 02, 2018

A strategic plan is a document that establishes the direction of a company or work unit. It can be a single page or fill up a binder, depending on the size and complexity of the business and work.

Most managers would benefit from having their own strategic plan. The process of developing a plan helps the manager (and the team) step back and examine where they are, where they want to go, and how to get there. In the absence of a plan, work still gets done on a day-to-day basis but often lacks a sense of purpose and priority.

Here is a template for a basic, simplified strategic plan that any manager can fill out, providing both long-term purpose and direction and tactical operating plans.

While a manager could certainly complete the template alone, I recommend a more [collaborative approach](#).

Vision Statement

A vision statement is an aspirational statement of where you want your unit to be in the future. “Future” is usually defined as the next three to five years, but it could be more. A vision should set the overall direction for the unit and team and should be bold and inspirational. A vision describes the “what” and the “why” for everything you do.

Here is an example vision statement from Zappos: *“One day, 30 percent of all retail transactions in the US will be online. People will buy from the company with the best service and the best selection.”*

Zappos.com will be that online store. Our hope is that our focus on service will allow us to wow our customers, our employees, our vendors, and our investors. We want Zappos.com to be known as a service company that happens to sell shoes, handbags, and anything and everything.”

Mission Statement

While a vision describes where you want to be in the future, [a mission statement](#) describes what you do today. It often describes what you do, for who, and how. Focusing on your mission each day should enable you to reach your vision. A mission statement could broaden your choices, and/or narrow them.

Here is an example of a mission statement from Harley-Davidson: *“We fulfill dreams through the experience of motorcycling, by providing motorcyclists and the general public with an expanding line of motorcycles and branded products and services in selected market segments.”*

A vision and mission can also be combined in the same statement. Here is an example from Walt Disney Company: *“The mission of The Walt Disney Company is to be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information. Using our portfolio of brands to differentiate our content, services, and consumer products, we seek to develop the most creative, innovative, and profitable entertainment experiences and related products in the world.”*

Note that the statement is both aspirational (“to be one of the...”) and descriptive of what they do and how they do it.

Core Values

[Core values](#) describe your beliefs and behaviors. They are the things that you believe in that will enable you to achieve your vision and mission.

Here is an example of core values from the Coca-Cola Company:

Leadership: The courage to shape a better future

Collaboration: Leverage collective genius

Integrity: Be real

Accountability: If it is to be, it's up to me

Passion: Committed in heart and mind

Diversity: As inclusive as our brands

Quality: What we do, we do well

SWOT Analysis

SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A SWOT analysis sums up where you are now and provides ideas on what you need to focus on.

Long-Term Goals

Long-term goals are three to five statements that drill down a level below the vision and describe how you plan to achieve your vision.

Yearly Objectives

Each long-term goal should have a few (three to five) one year objectives that advance your goals. Each objective should be as “**SMART**” as possible: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-based.

Action Plans

Each objective should have a plan that details how the objective will be achieved. The amount of detail depends on the complexity of the objective.

The strategic plan starts at the highest level (vision) and then gets more specific, short-term, and specific. Both are important.

It's been said that “*A vision without a plan is just a dream. A plan without a vision is just drudgery. But a vision with a plan can change the world.*”

Big Rapids Community Library

Areas for Improvement (2025–2030)

Early Childhood Literacy & Education

- Strengthen Kindergarten Readiness: Expand partnerships with preschools, pediatricians, and early childhood centers to reach more families before school entry.
- Address Summer Learning Loss: Scale up summer outreach (bookmobiles, pop-up libraries, daycare visits) to ensure more children read 5+ books in summer.
- Support Parents as First Teachers: Provide more parent-focused literacy workshops, take-home kits, and bilingual resources.

Community Connection

- Deepen Inclusivity: Ensure programming and collections reflect cultural diversity, multilingual needs, and accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Expand Civic Engagement: Host town halls, voter education forums, and intergenerational conversations to position the library as civic infrastructure.
- Measure Belonging: Regularly survey patrons and non-users to assess whether residents feel welcomed, connected, and represented by the library.

Meaningful Educational Experiences

- Broaden Adult & Teen Programming: Increase workshops on workforce skills, hobbies, digital literacy, and wellness.
- Reach Non-Traditional Users: Pilot more programming outside the library (parks, schools, assisted living facilities, farmers' market).
- Collect and Share Impact Stories: Use patron feedback and testimonials to demonstrate how library programs change lives.

Access to Technology

- Close the Digital Divide: Grow device lending (hotspots, tablets, laptops) through grants and donations.
- Promote Digital Collections: Increase awareness of e-books, audiobooks, and streaming services with clear tutorials.
- Support Remote Work & Learning: Create coworking-style spaces with strong WiFi, printers, and quiet rooms.

Governance & Sustainability

- Diversify Funding Sources: Reduce reliance on millage by seeking sponsorships, grant funding, and stronger Friends of the Library fundraising.
- Board Development: Provide ongoing trustee training in governance, advocacy, and emerging library trends.
- Staff Capacity & Retention: Invest in training, succession planning, and staff recognition to sustain morale.

Community-Wide Challenges

- Demographic Shifts: Address needs of an aging population (homebound services, large print, health literacy) while also serving growing student populations.
- Food & Health Access: Leverage the community garden, seed library, and nutrition programs to respond to local health inequities.
- Resilience & Crisis Readiness: Prepare for future disruptions (pandemics, natural disasters, technology outages) with flexible service models.

Board Reflection Notes:

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Does our current mission reflect the library's role in the Big Rapids community?

Does our vision still capture the library's aspirations?

Are our core values guiding decision-making effectively?

Grow Young Readers (Early Childhood Literacy & Education)

How effectively are we preparing children for kindergarten readiness and grade-level reading?

Are our summer reading programs preventing 'summer slide' for school-age children?

What additional partnerships could strengthen our early learning initiatives?

Connect the Community

In what ways does the library serve as the social and cultural infrastructure of Big Rapids?

Do residents feel connected to both the community and the library?

How can the library strengthen partnerships in shared areas of focus?

Curate Meaningful Educational Experiences

Which library programs currently attract non-traditional users?

Are our programs helping to create positive associations with books, learning, and the library?

How can we reach more people who don't already see themselves as 'library users'?

Expand Access to Technology

Do all community members have adequate access to internet, devices, and digital resources?

Are we supporting remote work and learning effectively?

How can we increase awareness and usage of our 24/7 WiFi and digital collections?

Governance, Resources, and Sustainability

How well are board, staff, and Friends aligned in advancing the four strategic priorities?

Are current funding sources adequate to sustain strategic goals?

What professional development does the board need to strengthen its governance role?

Looking Ahead

What do you see as the top three priorities for the library over the next five years?

What is the biggest risk or challenge facing BRCL, and how should we prepare?

What would 'success' look like if we fully achieved the goals of this strategic plan?

Section 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Does our current mission ("valuing literacy by sharing resources to encourage curiosity, education, and growth") still reflect the library's role in the Big Rapids community?

Action Item: Consider whether literacy, curiosity, and growth are the most important values to highlight for the next five years.

Does our vision ("to be the leading local resource to discover, learn, and connect") still capture the library's aspirations?

Action Item: Identify opportunities to strengthen our identity as the community hub.

Are our core values (access, intellectual freedom, service) guiding decision-making effectively?

Action Item: Review how these values are embedded in policies, staff training, and partnerships.

Section 2: Grow Young Readers (Early Childhood Literacy & Education)

How effectively are we preparing children for kindergarten readiness and grade-level reading?

Action Item: Assess current early literacy programs (e.g., storytimes, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten) for impact and gaps.

Are our summer reading programs preventing “summer slide” for school-age children?

Action Item: Explore expanding outreach to schools, daycare centers, and families not currently using the library.

What additional partnerships (schools, pediatricians, childcare providers) could strengthen our early learning initiatives?

Action Item: Build formal partnerships that integrate library literacy tools into classrooms and clinics.

Section 3: Connect the Community

In what ways does the library serve as the social and cultural infrastructure of Big Rapids?

Action Item: Identify 2–3 new cultural or civic programs that bring diverse groups together (e.g., intergenerational book clubs, multicultural events).

Do residents feel connected to both the community and the library?

Action Item: Develop a survey or focus group process to measure perceptions of library belonging and trust.

How can the library strengthen partnerships in shared areas of focus (education, wellness, civic engagement)?

Action Item: Create a partnership map of current and potential collaborators.

Section 4: Curate Meaningful Educational Experiences

Which library programs currently attract non-traditional users (e.g., adult learners, hobbyists, professionals)?

Action Item: Expand hands-on workshops and lifelong learning programs tailored to adults and teens.

Are our programs helping to create positive associations with books, learning, and the library?

Action Item: Collect participant feedback and stories that illustrate program impact.

How can we reach more people who don't already see themselves as "library users"?

Action Item: Pilot pop-up library events in parks, assisted living facilities, and downtown spaces.

Section 5: Expand Access to Technology

Do all community members have adequate access to internet, devices, and digital resources?

Action Item: Explore grant opportunities to expand device lending (hotspots, tablets, e-readers).

Are we supporting remote work and learning effectively?

Action Item: Assess demand for coworking space, quiet study rooms, and digital training workshops.

How can we increase awareness and usage of our 24/7 WiFi and digital collections?

Action Item: Launch a communications campaign highlighting library tech access and support.

Section 6: Governance, Resources, and Sustainability

How well are board, staff, and Friends aligned in advancing the four strategic priorities?

Action Item: Establish quarterly joint meetings to coordinate goals.

Are current funding sources adequate to sustain strategic goals?

Action Item: Identify 1–2 new funding streams (grants, sponsorships, donations) to reduce reliance on millage alone.

What professional development does the board need to strengthen its governance role?

Action Item: Plan annual board training on emerging library trends and fiduciary responsibilities.

Section 7: Looking Ahead

What do you see as the top three priorities for the library over the next five years?

What is the biggest risk or challenge facing BRCL, and how should we prepare?

What would “success” look like if we fully achieved the goals of this strategic plan?

1. Early Literacy & Kindergarten Readiness

Why impactful: Research shows children in communities with strong early literacy programs are more likely to enter school ready to read, and summer reading participation prevents “summer slide.”

- **Programs:**
 - *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten*
 - Storytimes that include caregivers (dialogic reading, sing/talk/read/play)
 - Outreach to childcare centers & pediatricians with take-home literacy kits
- **Evidence:** Even reading 5 books over the summer helps maintain grade-level skills.

2. Summer & Out-of-School Learning

Why is this impactful? Rural and small-town children face the steepest summer learning loss. Supplemental education programs are linked to improved test scores and higher graduation rates.

- **Programs:**
 - Summer Reading Challenge with outreach to schools
 - -SPECIFICALLY, creating Beanstack competitions for schools to compete internally and externally.
 - STEM maker workshops and science clubs
 - Teen volunteering and leadership opportunities

3. Workforce Development & Adult Learning

Why impactful: In rural towns with higher unemployment or underemployment, adult learning programs correlate with improved economic resilience.

- **Programs:**

- Resume & job search support
- Digital literacy classes (email, online safety, Zoom use, Microsoft Office/Google Workspace)
- GED/ESL tutoring in partnership with adult education providers

4. Digital Equity & Technology Access

Why impactful: The FCC and ALA both report small-town libraries are a primary access point for broadband. Expanding device lending improves educational outcomes and job placement.

- **Programs:**
 - Hotspot lending, Chromebook/iPad checkouts
 - Public WiFi marketing (24/7)
 - Tech help drop-in sessions (“Book-a-Librarian”)

5. Senior Engagement & Homebound Services

Why impactful: With an aging population in Mecosta County, libraries that extend services into assisted living facilities increase quality of life and reduce isolation.

- **Programs:**
 - Homebound delivery and rotating collections
 - Large-print and audiobook clubs
 - Memory cafés and reminiscence programs (reduce dementia-related isolation)

6. Health, Nutrition, and Community Well-Being

Why impactful: Programs addressing food insecurity, social isolation, and mental health show measurable community health outcomes.

- **Programs:**

- Seed library, community garden, greenhouse workshops
- Nutrition and cooking classes (in partnership with MSU Extension)
- Wellness programs: yoga, walking book clubs, stress-reduction workshops

7. Civic & Cultural Connection

Why impactful: Public libraries in small towns act as a “third place,” reducing isolation and strengthening civic engagement. Communities with strong library programming report higher levels of trust and connectedness.

- **Programs:**
 - Intergenerational programs (teen tech tutors for seniors, family game nights)
 - Local history preservation and storytelling
 - Partnerships with Ferris State for cultural events, exhibits, and lectures

Most statistically impactful combination for Big Rapids:

- Early literacy programs (birth–3rd grade)
- Digital equity & workforce training (young adults, job seekers)
- Senior/homebound outreach (aging residents)
- Health & wellness programs (nutrition, garden, mental health)

Together, these directly address **Big Rapids’ demographics (students + seniors), economic needs (lower incomes, workforce), and gaps in access (tech, transportation, health).**

Big Rapids Community Library

Program Impact Matrix (2025–2030)

Program Area	Examples	Impact	Feasibility
Early Literacy & Kindergarten Readiness	1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, storytimes, literacy kits	High	High
Summer & Out-of-School Learning	Summer Reading Challenge, STEM maker clubs, teen volunteers	High	Medium
Workforce Development & Adult Learning	Job search support, digital literacy, GED/ESL tutoring	High	Medium
Digital Equity & Technology Access	Hotspot lending, Chromebook/iPad checkouts, tech help sessions	High	High
Senior Engagement & Homebound Services	Homebound delivery, large-print/audiobook clubs, memory cafés	High	Medium
Health, Nutrition & Community Well-Being	Seed library, community garden, nutrition/cooking classes, wellness workshops	Medium	Medium
Civic & Cultural Connection	Intergenerational programs, local history, Ferris partnerships	Medium	High

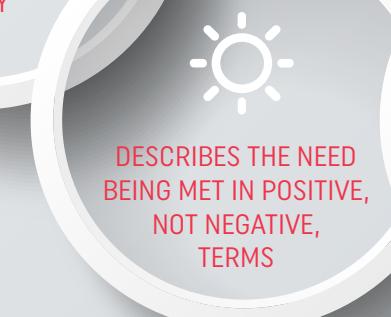
Board Reflection Notes:

9 Characteristics of a **MISSION STATEMENT**

CAN BE ADAPTED FOR
BOTH MARKETING
AND DEVELOPMENT



SUMMARIZES THE
END RESULTS
SUCCINCTLY



DESCRIBES THE NEED
BEING MET IN POSITIVE,
NOT NEGATIVE,
TERMS

BOLD, CLEAR,
AND MEMORABLE
LANGUAGE

CONVEYS THE
ORGANIZATION'S
VALUES



EMOTIONAL AND A
RATIONAL IMPACT



USES VERBS THAT
ARE ACTIVE, NOT
PASSIVE



COMBINES A "WHY"
STATEMENT WITH A
"WHAT" STATEMENT

A NONPROFIT'S MISSION STATEMENT COMMUNICATES THE OVERARCHING ASPIRATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION; it describes the social sector need that is being met and what the organization is doing to meet that need. A mission statement also should set the stage to develop programs, fundraising strategies, and to help sustain the public's support and confidence.

Board members (and staff) should periodically assess the organization's mission statement and update it as necessary to ensure alignment. It should inspire, compel, and encourage those you serve, engage your community and motivate your board and staff.

BoardSource recommends keeping in mind these nine characteristics of compelling mission statements when creating or revising your mission statement. Make sure yours is a 'mission to remember.'

WHAT DOES BOARD SERVICE ENTAIL?

How the three main roles of the board relate to the 10 basic responsibilities of nonprofit board members:



The three legal duties of a nonprofit board member:

Care

Pay attention to the organization's activities and operations.

Loyalty

Put the interests of the organization before personal and professional interests.

Obedience

Comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws; adhere to the organization's bylaws; and remain the guardians of the mission.

How current boards rate themselves on the ten basic responsibilities:

Responsibility	CEO	Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mission	A-	A-
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Financial Oversight	B+	B+
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal/Ethical Oversight	B+	B+
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CEO Support	B	B+
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy	B-	B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CEO Evaluation	B-	B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitors Performance	B-	B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Relations	C+	C+
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Composition	C	C+
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	C	C

Sources: [Board Fundamentals](#), [Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards](#), [Leading with Intent](#), [Legal Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards](#)

CHECKLIST

of Board Roles and Responsibilities

Basic board roles and responsibilities are the foundation for a successful board. BoardSource has designed this checklist so you can quickly remind yourself of your key responsibilities. It's also a great board orientation tool! Can you check all the boxes?

SET DIRECTION AND STRATEGY

- Has the board affirmed or revised the mission and determined the organization's vision?
- Does the board ensure that the mission, vision, and values are reflected in the organization's strategic plan?
- Is the board confident that it has authorized voice from the community it serves?
- Is the board considering purpose when determining organizational strategy?

ENSURING THE NECESSARY RESOURCES

- Does the board's composition reflect the strategic needs of the organization?
- Is the board confident that the chief executive's skills and other qualities are a good match for the organization's strategic needs?
- Has the board adopted policies related to funds to be pursued and/or accepted in support of the mission?
- Does the board expect all its members to be active participants in financially supporting the organization?
- Does it have the right committee to support its fundraising efforts?
- Does the board seek and review information related to the organization's reputation?

PROVIDING OVERSIGHT

- Does the board contract with an outside auditor for the annual audit?
- Does the organization have up-to-date risk management policies and plans and appropriate insurance?
- Does the board monitor progress toward achievement of goals related to the organization's programs?
- Does the board have a clear understanding of the organization's financial health?
- Does the board have a positive working relationship with the CEO?
- Does the chief executive receive an annual performance review by the board and are all board members familiar with the chief executive's compensation package? Is it aligned with IRS rules and similar organizations in your community?

BOARD OPERATIONS

- Is there a board governance committee stewarding board development and process?
- Does the board regularly assess its own performance?
- Are organizational and board policies regularly reviewed?
- Do committees and task forces actively engage board members in the work of the board?
- Do board meeting agendas focus the board's attention on issues of strategic importance?
- Do board members have easy access to information needed for effective decision making?

[Source: Nonprofit Board Fundamentals](#)



CRISIS

COMMUNICATIONS

Four Things Your
Board Needs to Know

1 EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.

It's not enjoyable to focus on the negative things that could happen to your organization, but it is the responsible thing for board leaders to do.

- A devastating storm could destroy its facilities, property, and community infrastructure.
- Mismanagement or, worse, criminal action by a staff member could tarnish its reputation.
- The loss of major funding could threaten programs and services that your community depends on.

Events like these happen and should prompt all board members to ask: What unexpected event could happen to us? What will we do if it does?

The board's fundamental task in a crisis is to ensure that the organization operates legally and ethically. It also may be called on to perform nontraditional and unexpected duties. In an extraordinary situation, the board even might have to step in temporarily to help manage a crisis if the staff can't or shouldn't handle it. Additionally, in any crisis, board members should work to convey consistent messages to their network of contacts in the community, letting them know that the issue is being well managed, promising updates on the situation, and inviting feedback to convey to the chief executive and staff.

Organizational crises are usually sensitive matters that involve a careful balance between appropriate transparency and not over-communicating before the organization has taken action to address the situation.

2 THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CRISES: EMERGENCIES & CONTROVERSIES

Emergencies are unpredictable events that can create havoc for an organization or the people it serves and harm its ability to deliver on its mission. Losing a major source of funding can be considered an emergency. The responsibility for handling emergencies rests primarily with the staff, with board members providing support where and when appropriate. Emergencies sometimes can be dealt with in a single communication campaign,

but more often they require updates, additional information, status reports, and monitoring until the emergency is under control.

Controversies are crises that threaten the organization's reputation. They blindside even the most prudent organization. Responding to a controversy usually requires board involvement. A communications plan enables the board to prepare for this involvement.

3 PLANNING IS KEY TO SUCCESSFUL CRISIS COMMUNICATION.

Crises and controversies are rarely one-day stories. Events happen, people ask questions, more information becomes available, differing perspectives begin to emerge, and subsequent events shape perceptions of the original triggering event. It happens all the time. It is impossible to know what sequence of events will occur, but having a crisis communications plan in place will help ensure that priority stakeholders are kept informed, that all factual information is stored in a critical location, and that there is a single spokesperson who can communicate on behalf of the organization in a convincing and reassuring manner.

A good starting point in crisis communication planning is a board discussion centered on the following questions:

- What are the emergencies and controversies that could affect our organization?
- What are our greatest vulnerabilities?
- What questions from the press would we least like to face?
- How can we prevent worse-case scenarios from occurring?

4 A CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN ADDRESSES FIVE SETS OF QUESTIONS.

1. Who speaks for the organization?
2. Who is responsible for managing the crisis, and what are their duties?
3. Where should the command center be for responding to the crisis? What resources will be needed?

4. What are the responsibilities of the crisis control team and who should be a part of it?
5. What information is appropriate to give to the public?

Potential members for a crisis control team include a human resources specialist, a financial officer, and a legal authority for the organization. Above all, the team should include trusted people who can remain focused under pressure. A collaborative approach to crisis planning and management will ensure that both staff and board perspectives are involved. The composition of the crisis control team also may need to change based on the nature of the crisis and should be evaluated on an occasional basis as the organization evolves.

Crisis communication planning is a three-step process.

The first step is the hypothetical planning to prepare for the unexpected; there is no problem yet.

The second step is revisiting the plan when a crisis does occur to review the earlier assumptions against what has actually happened. The plan may need some tweaking to address the current situation.

The third step is evaluating the plan post-crisis to determine how it might need to be changed to better address future crises.

A plan should clearly define the roles for the board and staff to avoid confusion. Be sure to include all the information needed for dealing with a crisis, such as

- contact information for crisis control team members, updated annually
- contact information for key stakeholders (donors, members, government, media, policymakers, partnering organizations, etc.)
- a media strategy, including a press kit with facts about the organization
- essential policy statements
- talking points to frequently asked questions
- logistics for establishing a command center
- logistics for convening an emergency board meeting
- a communication tree

As part of the planning process, every organization should designate a spokesperson, usually the chief executive or the board chair as well as a second and third option.

Staff should be trained annually on this and all applicable agency policies. New board members should be informed of this policy and the full board should review it periodically.



Short Takes for Trustees

Board Self Evaluation

Resource Guide

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United for Libraries
859 W. Lancaster Ave
Unit 2-1
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Toll Free: (800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
Direct Dial: (312) 280-2161
Fax: (484) 383-3407
Web site: www.ala.org/united
E-mail: united@ala.org

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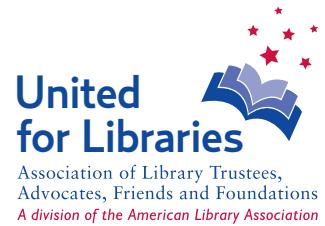
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Trustee Tip Sheet #9: Trustee Competencies	1
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For an in-depth guide to board self-evaluation, join United for Libraries and get free access to *A Library Board's Practical Guide to Board Self-Evaluation*, an annual self-evaluation tool to assist Trustees in assessing the competencies essential to their performance as Board members. For more information on joining United for Libraries, visit www.ala.org/united.

tip sheet #9

Tools for Trustees



TRUSTEE COMPETENCIES

1. **General knowledge** – Knowing the role of the Trustee and director, the library's mission in the community, current library issues, and state and national laws governing libraries.
2. **Board operations** – Familiarity with the agenda and order of business, making motions, voting, minutes approval, resolutions, ordinances, executive session requirements, and state Open Meeting Act requirements for the library board.
3. **Advocacy** – Participating in community events and promoting the library to local, state, and national elected officials. Attending political events to promote library issues and to gain support from these officials.
4. **Decision making** – Using up-to-date information for decision analysis, being prepared for all meetings, and participating fully in board actions.
5. **Strategic planning** – Working with the director to develop a long range plan for the library with input from staff and citizens, as well involvement from community-based leaders.
6. **Finance** – Knowing and understanding the board's role in keeping the public trust. Understanding the budget process, being informed about finances, having adequate information and time for making decisions and knowing the impact on services, and being able to defend budgetary decisions to the citizenry through verbal and written communications.
7. **Fundraising** – Working with the Friends of the Library group, developing partnerships in the community, creating and supporting a Foundation for the library, and promoting these activities through available media outlets.
8. **Policy making** – Working with the director and staff to develop policies that become the basis for guiding the practices and decision making of the library administration and staff, and ensuring the rights and responsibilities of library users.
9. **Lobbying** – Continuously informing local, state, and national legislators about the needs of your local library and libraries in general. Knowing the decision makers, press members, local leaders/gatekeepers and telling them how they can help libraries.

continued on reverse

Keeping contact information current. Sharing knowledge about the library's services and contributions to the community, the state and the nation as a whole. Explaining the Intricate issues involving libraries. Visiting groups in the community to stress your point of view.

10. **Professional development** – Participating in the orientation of new board members. Knowing the mission of the library and how the library functions to meet this mission. Understanding the role of governing, advising, supporting, and promoting the library. Joining regional, state, and national library associations and developing budgetary appropriations allowing Trustees to attend meetings and conferences at all levels, if at all possible, and if it will not impact staff development activities. Reading library journals and professional publications, and attending webinars to further educate Trustees in current and future trends of the library world.

updated 5/13

United for Libraries

Sally Gardner Reed, Executive Director
109 S. 13th St., Suite 117B
Philadelphia, PA 19107

(800) 545-2433, ext. 2161
fax (215) 545-3821
www.ala.org/united

Article I - Name and Purpose

The Library Board is established in accordance with the 2012 City Charter of the City of Big Rapids, chapter XV.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Big Rapids Community Library is to provide quality information and assure equal access to all materials using appropriate technologies.

Big Rapids Community Library Board Adopted February 14, 2013

Article II - Membership

1. The Library Board shall consist of five directors, appointed by the mayor, subject to approval by the City Commission. No person shall receive compensation for serving as a Library Board director. Members of the Board shall be residents of the City of Big Rapids.
2. The term of office, beginning on the first Monday in May, shall be 5 years. One director shall be appointed each year to a five-year term, unless it is necessary to appoint more to fill vacancies. The term of office for directors may be changed by ordinance to not less than two years or more than five years. Directors of the Library Board serving at the time of this Charter becomes effective shall continue to serve until their terms expire.
3. No director shall serve more than two consecutive terms, and no chairperson shall serve more than five consecutive years. Board members shall have at least a one-year hiatus before being considered for another term. However, a person appointed to fill a vacancy of which less than one-half term remains may be appointed to two consecutive full terms. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the Mayor and commissioners shall proceed to fill the position in accordance with Section 3.5(e) of the Charter. The City Clerk shall publicize all vacancies and solicit applicants through available media prior to a person's being nominated to fill such vacancy.

Article III - Organization and Officers

On the first meeting in September each year, the Library Board shall elect one of its directors to be chair, one to be vice-chair, and other officers as the Board deems necessary. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by ballot at the next regular meeting of the Board after the vacancy occurs.

1. The chair shall preside at all Board meetings, appoint all committees, if needed, and generally perform all duties associated with that office.
2. The vice-chair, in the event of absence or disability of the chair or a vacancy in that office, shall assume and perform the duties and functions of the chair.
3. In the absence of the chair and vice-chair from a Board meeting, the membership shall select a temporary chair for that meeting.
4. The Library Director, or the Library Director's designee shall take minutes of the Library Board meeting and file the minutes with the City Clerk. The Library Director shall issue notices of regular and special meetings, shall have custody of the minutes and records of the Board, shall notify the appointing body of any vacancies on the Board and shall generally perform such duties associated with that position.

Article IV - Management

1. The Library Board shall be responsible for the governance of the Big Rapids Community Library. The Board shall make and adopt bylaws and regulations for governing the Library. The Board shall select and appoint a Library Director and other employees as it deems necessary, subject to the budgetary approval of the City Commission.
2. The Board shall deal with administrative matters solely through the Library Director or his or her designees, and any dictation, suggestion or interference herein prohibited on the part of any member of the Board shall constitute official misconduct; provided, however, that nothing herein contained shall restrict the Board's powers of hearing and inquiry.

Article V - Library Fund

All money donated or granted to the Library shall be deposited with the City Treasurer and credited to the Library Fund. The Library Board shall have exclusive control and supervision over the expenditure of money received for the Library Fund, and of the rooms and building provided for the Library purposes—subject to the restrictions provided by law, donors, or grantors. The Board shall also have the right to refuse donations and contributions in compliance with the Library gift policy. The City Treasurer shall release funds from the Library Fund only upon the properly authenticated vouchers of the Library Board.

Article VI - Donations

Any person making donations, money, personal property, or real estate for the benefit of the Big Rapids Community Library may vest the title of the donated property in the Library Board. When the Library Board accepts the property, it shall hold and manage the property according to its power granted by the state law and the terms of the deed, gift, devise or bequests. The Board shall also have the right to refuse the collection, property, etc., in compliance with the Library gift policy.

Article VII - Annual Report

The Library Board shall present to the City Manager its estimate of the amount of money that should be appropriated during the next fiscal year to operate the Library. The Library Board shall report to the Commission each year on the finances, activities, and programs of the Library.

Article VIII - Meetings

1. At the first meeting in September, the Library Board shall adopt a schedule of its regular meetings for the next year, with at least nine meetings each year. The Library Board shall adopt by-laws with rules of procedure for transacting its business.
2. The order of business for the regular meetings shall be included, but not limited to, the following items which shall be covered in the sequence shown as far as circumstances permit:
 - A. Call to order
 - B. Reading and approval of minutes

- C. Correspondence and communications
- D. Public comment
- E. Financial report
- F. Report of the Library Director
- G. Old (unfinished) business
- H. New business
- I. Unscheduled business (discretion of the Chair)
- J. Public comment
- K. Adjournment

3. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson or upon the written request of three members for the transaction of business as is stated in the call or other business as may properly come before the board. Notice in writing stating the time and place of any special meeting and the purpose for which it is called shall be given to each Board member at least three days, excluding Sundays and holidays, in advance of such meetings. Public notice of special meetings will comply with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.
4. Three members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at any regular or special meeting. Voting by proxy is prohibited.
5. A current Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the parliamentary procedures of the Board.
6. Meetings will comply with the Michigan Open Meetings Act, including the provisions for closed meetings.
7. Regarding public input, each person wishing to speak on items that are within the Board's jurisdiction shall be permitted to be heard once for up to five minutes. If it appears that an item may elicit considerable public comment, the presiding officer may, at his or her sole discretion, ask those who desire to speak to sign up on a sheet provided by the Board Secretary. Speakers will be called for comment in the order in which they signed the sheet. Members of the public who do not elect to sign or do not wish to give their name may give comment after those who did sign have had an opportunity to comment.

Article IX - Committees

1. The Chair shall appoint committees of one or more members for such specific purposes as the functions of the Board may require from time to time. The committee shall be discharged upon the completion of the purpose for which it was appointed and after the final report is made to the Board.
2. All committees shall make a progress report at each Board meeting.
3. No committee shall have other than advisory powers unless, by suitable action of the Board, it is granted specific powers to act.

Article X - Library Director

1. The Library Director appointed by the Library Board, shall be the executive and administrative officer of the Big Rapids Community Library, and shall represent the Library at the City Departmental meetings.

2. The Library Director shall carry out policies adopted by the Board. The Director shall be responsible for the employment and direction of staff and for the care and maintenance of the building and equipment, for adherence to financial conditions set forth in the annual budget.
3. The Director shall attend all Library Board Meetings and shall present a Director's report at each regular meeting.
4. The Library Director shall meet with new trustees to tour the Library facilities and review services and shall present to new trustees a packet, which includes the Library Policy and other procedural material, a list of trustees and committees, minutes and financial reports for the previous 12 months, and other pertinent information.

Article XI - Removal from Office

The Mayor, with the consent of the City Commission, may remove any member of the Library Board for misconduct or neglect of duty. The Mayor and City Commission shall remove from office any member of the Board who is absent from three consecutive meetings, unless the Board excuses the absences and enters the reasons for absences in the Board's official minutes.

Article XII - Amendments

The Bylaws of the Library Board may be amended at any meeting of the Board with a quorum present, provided the amendment was stated in the call for the meeting. The amended Bylaws must be signed and dated by the Chair of the Board and the Library Director.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE BIG RAPIDS COMMUNITY LIBRARY BOARD. APPROVED: April 19, 1995

REVISION APPROVED AND ADOPTED February 14, 2013



Big Rapids Community Library

MONTHLY REPORT FOR AUGUST 2025

CHECKOUTS

Our checkout numbers for **AUGUST** are slightly down from last year at **5,310**.



PATRON VISITS

For **AUGUST** 2025, we had **2,813** patron visits. This month, we added **63** new library cards to the system and renewed **80**.



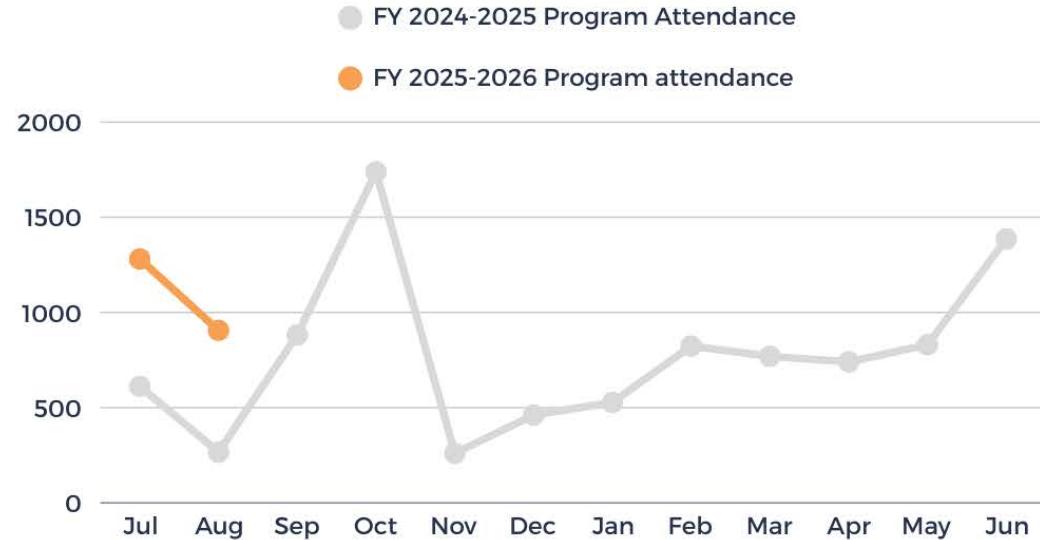
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In **August 2025** we held **29**

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Special programs included: Summer Reading Program,



TAKEAWAYS

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Public computer sessions

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New library cards

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renewed library cards

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR CITY OF BIG RAPIDS

Balance As of 08/31/2025

% Fiscal Year Completed: 16.99

*NOTE: Available Balance / Pct Budget does not reflect amounts encumbered.

GL Number	Description	25-26	YTD Balance	Activity For	Available Balance	% Bdgt Used		
		Amended Budget	08/31/2025	08/31/2025	08/31/2025			
Fund: 271 LIBRARY FUND								
Account Category: Revenues								
Department: 000 SUBTOTAL								
271-000-402.000	PROPERTY TAX-CURRENT ALLOCATED	206,800.00	197,905.13	(3,120.64)	8,894.87	95.70		
271-000-412.000	PROPERTY TAX-PRIOR YEARS	0.00	13.96	0.00	(13.96)	100.00		
271-000-567.000	STATE AID	17,000.00	0.00	0.00	17,000.00	0.00		
271-000-642.000	SALES & SERVICES/GENERAL	1,000.00	249.25	201.28	750.75	24.93		
271-000-642.300	SALES & SERVICE/NON-RESIDENT FEE	7,500.00	1,725.00	450.00	5,775.00	23.00		
271-000-642.400	SALES & SERVICE/PHOTOCOPY	2,500.00	559.94	348.25	1,940.06	22.40		
271-000-642.600	SALES & SERVICE/CCA	1,700.00	1,700.00	0.00	0.00	100.00		
271-000-643.007	BIG RAPIDS TWP- 2/10 MILLAGE	35,000.00	0.00	0.00	35,000.00	0.00		
271-000-658.100	COURT PENAL FINES	40,000.00	22,819.22	22,819.22	17,180.78	57.05		
271-000-658.200	LIBRARY FINES	1,000.00	26.00	26.00	974.00	2.60		
271-000-674.017	LIBRARY GRANTS	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00		
271-000-679.019	DONATIONS	3,000.00	59.87	42.40	2,940.13	2.00		
271-000-679.600	DONATIONS-INCOME TAX	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00		
271-000-680.000	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00		
271-000-687.000	INSURANCE REFUNDS	200.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00		
Total Dept 000 - SUBTOTAL		321,800.00	225,058.37	20,766.51	96,741.63	69.94		
Department: 008 INTEREST & RENTS								
271-008-665.000	INTEREST EARNED	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00		
Total Dept 008 - INTEREST & RENTS		1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00		
Department: 931 TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS-IN								
271-931-699.101	CONTRIBUTION FROM GENERAL	224,900.00	0.00	0.00	224,900.00	0.00		
Total Dept 931 - TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS-IN		224,900.00	0.00	0.00	224,900.00	0.00		
Revenues		547,700.00	225,058.37	20,766.51	322,641.63	41.09		
Account Category: Expenditures								
Department: 265 PUBLIC BUILDINGS								
271-265-705.000	SALARIES-SEASONAL	200.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00		
271-265-710.000	DPW SERVICES	10,000.00	1,666.66	833.33	8,333.34	16.67		
271-265-715.000	EMPLOYER FICA	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00		
271-265-732.000	OPERATIONAL SUPPLIES	2,000.00	20.48	20.48	1,979.52	1.02		
271-265-801.000	CONTRACTED SERVICES	3,200.00	215.05	150.28	2,984.95	6.72		
271-265-801.012	CONTRACTED SERVICES ELEVATOR	3,200.00	219.45	0.00	2,980.55	6.86		
271-265-920.000	PUBLIC UTILITIES	18,500.00	3,118.28	1,475.66	15,381.72	16.86		
271-265-930.000	OPERATIONAL REPAIRS & MAINT.	15,300.00	3,415.45	3,415.45	11,884.55	22.32		
271-265-943.000	EQUIPMENT RENTAL	2,000.00	81.17	0.00	1,918.83	4.06		
271-265-977.000	EQUIPMENT	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00		
Total Dept 265 - PUBLIC BUILDINGS		56,500.00	8,736.54	5,895.20	47,763.46	15.46		
Department: 790 COMMUNITY LIBRARY								
271-790-702.000	SALARIES	129,200.00	18,683.65	14,531.90	110,516.35	14.46		
271-790-703.000	SALARIES/PART-TIME	85,000.00	17,756.69	14,041.84	67,243.31	20.89		
271-790-715.000	EMPLOYER FICA	17,000.00	2,857.75	2,136.11	14,142.25	16.81		
271-790-717.000	EMPLOYER HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS	38,400.00	4,943.56	2,471.78	33,456.44	12.87		
271-790-718.000	INSURANCE-UNEMPLOYMENT COMP.	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00		
271-790-719.000	INSURANCE-WORKERS COMP.	600.00	0.00	0.00	600.00	0.00		

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Fund: 271 LIBRARY FUND							
Account Category: Expenditures							
Department: 790 COMMUNITY LIBRARY							
271-790-720.000	DB MERS RETIREMENT	28,900.00	5,542.94	2,771.47	23,357.06	19.18	
271-790-720.300	DC MERS EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS	12,900.00	1,849.86	1,438.80	11,050.14	14.34	
271-790-732.000	OPERATIONAL SUPPLIES	8,000.00	18.97	18.97	7,981.03	0.24	
271-790-732.013	FREE LIBRARY SUPPLIES/MATERIALS	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	0.00	
271-790-801.000	CONTRACTED SERVICES	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	
271-790-808.000	INDEPENDENT AUDIT FEES	300.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	0.00	
271-790-814.000	INSURANCE COVERAGES	2,900.00	0.00	0.00	2,900.00	0.00	
271-790-822.200	LTD/LIFE/ADD	700.00	104.34	52.17	595.66	14.91	
271-790-860.000	TRAVEL EXPENSES	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	
271-790-870.100	TRAINING	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	
271-790-881.000	MARKETING	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00	
271-790-957.000	SUBSCRIPTIONS	9,000.00	0.00	0.00	9,000.00	0.00	
271-790-958.000	MEMBERSHIPS	21,000.00	800.00	800.00	20,200.00	3.81	
271-790-980.000	OFFICE EQUIPMENT & FURNITURE	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00	0.00	
271-790-982.000	BOOKS	28,000.00	34.95	34.95	27,965.05	0.12	
271-790-982.300	AUDIO VISUAL	15,000.00	669.02	669.02	14,330.98	4.46	
271-790-982.400	CHILDREN'S STORYTIME	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00	
271-790-982.600	SUMMER READING PROGRAM	3,000.00	1,695.00	1,000.00	1,305.00	56.50	
271-790-982.700	ADULT PROGRAMMING	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00	
271-790-982.900	E BOOKS	24,000.00	24,000.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	
Total Dept 790 - COMMUNITY LIBRARY		436,500.00	78,956.73	39,967.01	357,543.27	18.09	
Department: 966 TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS-OUT							
271-966-995.101	CONTRIBUTION TO GENERAL	54,700.00	0.00	0.00	54,700.00	0.00	
Total Dept 966 - TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS-OUT		54,700.00	0.00	0.00	54,700.00	0.00	
Expenditures							
		547,700.00	87,693.27	45,862.21	460,006.73	16.01	
Fund 271 - LIBRARY FUND:							
TOTAL REVENUES		547,700.00	225,058.37	20,766.51	322,641.63	41.09	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		547,700.00	87,693.27	45,862.21	460,006.73	16.01	
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES:		0.00	137,365.10	(25,095.70)	(137,365.10)		



Big Rapids Community Library

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In **August 2025** we held **29** programs, with **906** attendees.

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Big Rapids Community Library - Library Board Meeting

Held in the Community Room at the Big Rapids Community Library

August 14, 2025, at 5:30 PM

1. Call to Order

- The Library Board Meeting was called to order by Sarah Lucas at 5:36 pm.
- Board Members in attendance: **Chair** Sarah Lucas, Sandra Braden-Worth, Ralph Crew, Laura Herrell, and Mike Ryan
- Quorum present: yes
- Library staff in attendance: Lauren Perkins (Library Director)

2. Reading and Approval Minutes

- The June 2025 Meeting Minutes were reviewed.
- Mike Ryan motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Sandra Braden-Worth seconded. All members in favor. Motion carried.

3. Correspondence and Communication

- none

4. Public Comment

- none

5. Report of the Library Director

- Monthly Report reviewed
- Financial Report reviewed

6. Old/Unfinished Business

7. New Business

- Strategic Plan – Discussion on how to proceed for 2026-2030.

8. Unscheduled Business

- none

9. Public Comment

- none

10. Next Meeting

- The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 5:30 pm.

11. Adjournment

- Sarah Lucas adjourned the meeting at 6:43 pm.