

**Lower Umpqua Library District  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
03/10/2026  
Lower Umpqua Library and Zoom**

**LULD Board Members:** Five present: Ron Eberlein, President, Lee Bridge, Vice President, Gary Goorhuis, Treasurer, Melissa Lilly, Secretary, Dale Harris. Absent: None.

**Staff Present:** Alex Kuestner (Director), Debb Montclair, Jonathan Moore.

**Community Members:** Terry Moore attended in-person, Colleen Eberlein via Zoom.

1. **Start Zoom.**
2. **Call to Order:** Ron Eberlein called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Ron Eberlein led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **Public Comments:**
5. **Review of the meeting agenda:** Lilly moved, Bridge seconded, and the motion passed 4-0. (Goorhuis entered the meeting.
6. **Review of the Minutes for February 10, 2026:** Bridge moved to accept the minutes as presented, Harris seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.
7. **Finances:**
  - a. Motion to pay the bills:
  - b. Lilly moved to pay the bills as presented by Kuestner: bills over \$1,000 totaling \$13,445.85 (for payroll to Cardinal Services) and bills under \$1,000 totaling to \$5,791.79 for a total amount approved of \$19,237.64. Bridge seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.
8. **Library Report:** Kuestner
  - a. Library Statistics Report: Since the removal of the self-checkout station in January, the number of patrons borrowing through Koha each month has been higher than in 2025—137 in February vs. 124 the year prior. However, the overall number of checkouts was lower than in February 2025, driven by lower borrowing of DVDs and periodicals. (Two prolific families of DVD borrowing patrons did not visit the library during February.) However, these numbers are in line with DVD checkouts in December 2025 and January 2026. The number of volunteers was higher in February 2026 than the year prior, but volunteer hours were down by about half, possibly due to fewer volunteers test-watching DVDs. 134 patrons used the meeting room in February, up from 88 the year prior.
  - b. Display: In February, the main display in front of the circulation desk featured Classics to help promote the Classics bingo card. For March, this display was changed to promote the art books donated by Art Resource Transfer in New York City and the accompanying bingo card. The display in front of the juvenile section featured soundbooks in February, and continued to do so in March due to its popularity.
  - c. Library events: Enthusiasm for Library Bingo has been high among some patrons, several of whom are close to completing an entire card. LULD is exploring the possibility of having an Oregon authors fair at the library, involving multiple authors with ties to Oregon coming to speak about their books. Further research is needed to ensure that the event has a decent turnout from patrons.
9. **Action Items Follow-up and Report:** Kuestner
  - a. Budget for 2026-2027 fiscal year:
    - i. Clarifications ahead of budget meeting: Kuestner and Montclair have been working on the budget and it is partially completed, but Kuestner requested clarification from the board about proposed changes in next year's budget before finishing it:
    - ii. Proposed changes to line items: 1) Two separate sources for Summer Reading Program (SRP) funding are listed on the LB-30 and LB-20 (from taxes and the Ready-to-Read grant, respectively). Kuestner proposed that the latter be combined with other grants under the Grants line item. Harris asked for clarification regarding the status and use of the Ready-to-Read grant, and then Harris and Ron Eberlein concurred.

2): Since the library is now hosting other reading programs throughout the year, in addition to the SRP, Kuestner suggested that the SRP budget line item be renamed to simply “Reading Programs” to reflect this. This would have no impact on the Ready-to-Read grant funding. Bridge and the board agreed.

3): Kuestner suggested that an Employer Liabilities/Benefits line item be created to cover personnel-related fees that are the employer’s responsibility and not the employees’ (i.e. employer taxes and the 3% employer match for funding employee retirement accounts). Bridge, Ron Eberlein, and the board approved.

4) Kuestner suggested that, in the future, legal advertising be funded from the Accounting/Review/Legal line item, opening up the Advertising/Publishing funds to advertise actual library programs. Harris asked for examples of what advertising the library would purchase (such as advertising a library event in local newspapers), and then Ron Eberlein and the board agreed.

5) Kuestner proposed moving the charges for landscaping services from the Maintenance line item to Contracted Services, allowing Maintenance to be primarily focused on repairs and replacements rather than ongoing services. The board concurred.

6) Kuestner suggested that the Dues/Travel/Conference line item be split up, merging the Travel/Conference part with Staff Development (since these are closely related in purpose) and splitting Dues off into its own line item (for paying annual fees, such as for Amazon Prime). The board agreed.

7) Kuestner suggested giving Cybrarian and Wix each their own line item, to be consistent with other items for individual services (e.g. ILS for Koha, Interlibrary Loan for OCLC, and Library2Go/Overdrive). The board agreed with Kuestner’s suggestion.

8) Kuestner suggested that Quickbooks be moved from the Office Supplies line item to the Accounting/Legal/Review line item, where it would be more appropriate, and the board agreed. (Quickbooks now costs \$80 per year instead of \$1,300, due to using Quickbooks Online through Tech Soup instead of QuickBooks Desktop.)

iii. Proposed use of additional funds besides incoming taxes: Aside from grants, the library’s budget has been designed to include only money projected to be received from taxes levied during the fiscal year. Additional resources are accounted for in the LB-20—such as back taxes received from prior years, interest, general donations, charges for services, and the cash carryover of money unspent in the previous year’s budget—but have not been used to fund expenditures within the actual budget. Instead, these funds merely flow into the library’s checking account, earning persistently low interest. Kuestner presented various suggestions for how these additional resources could be utilized. His initial suggestion was to include \$21,000 from this current fiscal year’s cash carryover in next fiscal year’s budget, as a means of allocating the \$21,158 in total back taxes projected to be received by LULD by the end of this fiscal year. The cash carryover would still replenish at the end of next fiscal year from categories that were not fully spent. Having these additional funds available would provide for a total personnel budget of \$235,700, allowing LULD to pay all staff a living wage (competitive with other local businesses) and encourage qualified employees to stay, while still providing for raises, COLAs, plus a 10% buffer.

1. Staff retention proposals: The library has had difficulty retaining staff, primarily because LULD does not pay people enough to pay their bills in today’s economy, making it difficult for anyone to afford to work for LULD long-term, which in turn makes it difficult for LULD to retain institutional knowledge. Kuestner presented multiple suggestions for mitigating this: 1) Having additional money in the budget (as discussed under 9.a.iii) would allow LULD to pay employees a competitive rate. 2) Instead of hiring new part-time employees as people leave, LULD could combine multiple part-time positions into an additional full-time salaried position. For example, one 40-hour staff member could complete all the duties of two 20-hour staff members, and be considerably more likely to stay (due to being paid a living wage, with more hours and health insurance). Montclair further put forth that in the current economy, a person needs \$2,500 per month to survive. No employee can survive independently on what they make; they are relying on parents, scholarships, food stamps, etc. This is why employees keep leaving. Montclair and Kuestner presented figures showing how the currently lowest-paid

employee could be raised to the point of receiving a living wage, and other employees could be raised proportionally.

Harris raised concerns that Kuestner's proposals would involve spending a large amount of LULD's tax income on personnel, relative to last year's personnel budget. Kuestner responded that the difference would be made up by the allocation of the other funding streams that he discussed (in 9.a.iii), and that the proposed amount also includes a 10% buffer (there was very little buffer in this year's or last year's budget). Bridge stated that the board can reprogram; he believes they are allowed a 10% variance without reconvening the budget committee. Bridge requested a numerical breakdown of the proposed personnel budget changes, and their associated costs and benefits. He said the board would need to see a study of hours and costs before coming to a decision. Harris agreed and requested that these materials be sent out before the next meeting, so that board members can come and discuss them with Kuestner. He also questioned what other libraries in the area are doing in these regards. Goorhuis and Bridge were interested to see the percentage of their budget that other libraries dedicate to staffing.

Kuestner asked, if the \$21,000 proposal (for using back taxes in the budget) isn't approved, whether the library can at least include the other incoming revenues (described in 9.a.iii) in the 2026-27 fiscal year budget. One of his suggestions was to have revenue from General Donations replace some of the tax revenue currently being allocated to Collection Development. Harris stated that he would be comfortable if the amount already collected in back taxes this year were applied to the budget allocations for next fiscal year.

- iv. Budget committee: All members of the prior budget committee will be returning.
  - b. John Warden collection development funds for 2025-2026 fiscal year: During the April 2025 budget meeting, it was decided that the Collection Development line item would be lowered from \$8,000 to \$6,000, but that once the \$6,000 ran out, \$2,000 could be transferred in from the John Warden Reserve Fund (which could then be replenished from cash carryover at the end of the fiscal year). Harris made a motion to transfer \$2,000 from the John Warden Reserve Fund to the Collection Development line item in the General Fund, adding that discussion about replenishing the John Warden Reserve Fund can come in the April 2026 budget meeting. Harris made a motion, Goorhuis seconded, and the motion passed 5-0.
  - c. Updated policies/procedures: Kuestner presented a procedure for using the microfilm machine. Staff spent a considerable amount of time on budget matters this month and will refocus on policies in the future. Harris requested that new policies be written and sent to the board ahead of the April board/budget meeting.
    - i. Friends of the Library and general donation funds: Kuestner, Harris, and Montclair discussed the treatment of money donated to the library and to the Friends of the Library. Kuestner requested that money in General Donations be available for use for collection development, since this might make patrons more enthusiastic about donating. Harris believed that channeling donations through the Friends would show robust support for the Friends (painting a stronger picture for grant applications), as well as allowing the library to use the money more flexibly than if it were in the General Fund. But, he stated that general donations made to the library could be used by the library for collection development, whereas money put in the grey box as payment for books (or otherwise designated for the Friends) would go to the Friends. The library could then request book sale money from the Friends as grants. Ron Eberlein agreed.
  - d. Koha and shelving reorganization/weeding project: Volunteers have been attaching labels to Juvenile books, and will move on to the Young Adult section once that is completed.
10. Conferences: Kuestner plans to attend a budget training session in Albany, OR. Kuestner reminded the board that he will be attending the joint Oregon Library Association / Pacific Northwest Library Association conference in Portland on April 22nd through 24th. This conference was discussed in more depth during earlier board meetings. There is an SDAO regional training summit in Newport on October 13th-14th. The portion on the 13th is the relevant section, and Kuestner proposed attending only that day (eliminating the need for lodging expenses). The board agreed to reschedule the October board meeting so that Kuestner could attend this conference.

- a. Director Checklist: Employee evaluations are current, and staff meetings continue to be held on the Thursday after the board meeting. Cleaning 101 seems to be doing a good job with landscaping and cleaning.
- b. Grants: Montclair and Jonathan Moore applied for the Dollar General literacy grant for \$3,000. Kuestner applied for the Better World Books grant for \$2,500. Both grants are for funds that support early literacy programs and materials.
- c. Summer Reading Program (SRP): The library is planning to have the SRP kickoff event on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend to coincide with other events happening at that time. Kuestner and Montclair have been attending planning meetings for Memorial Day events, to coordinate
- d. Neighborhood Libraries (NLs): The NL in Gardiner is finally operational and stocked with books. Lynette at Lower Umpqua Hospital told Montclair that the bookcase in their lobby can be stocked with books and used as a NL.

**11. New Business:** Kuestner

- a. Expansion idea: The former law office across the parking lot is currently for sale. If the library is ever going to expand, this might be the best chance. It would be advantageous as a staff work area, archival storage, and law library (if the law books there are included with the property). A law library might be useful for patrons attending the court down the street at the county annex building (the nearest publicly accessible law libraries are in Coquille, Eugene, and Roseburg). The property also comes with 12 parking spaces. The current list price is \$295,000, but Kuestner highly doubts it will sell for that price.
- b. Bequest: Someone sent the library a letter in the mail, seemingly leaving the library all the personal belongings from her apartment and her storage unit. (The letter included a key to the storage unit.) The letter was addressed to "Karen and the Reedsport Library", but staff do not know the identity of Karen. Kuestner thought that perhaps it was Karen Plagmann, who used to work at Reedsport High School's library. The donor has not responded to attempts to contact her. Jonathan Moore visited the donor's apartment. Moore and Kuestner met Plagmann at the storage unit, and she said that any donations that come to her could pass to LULD. Kuestner and Moore took the letter to the police station to report the situation to them. Moore later talked with the storage unit's owner, who claimed she talked with the donor's son, who said that the donor is currently in California. Goorhuis said that he knows Kathleen Miller (the owner of the law office, see 11.a) from the Reedsport Rotary Club and that he would ask her about both the building and the bequest.

**12. Executive Session ORS 192.660 Personnel:** Eberlein took the meeting into Executive Session at 7:39.

**13. Comments from Board Members:** Regarding the proposed personnel budget changes (9.a.iii), Harris believes that gathering the necessary information and making a decision will be a multi-month project, and will not be ready for the budget meeting in April. However, if changes to the budget need to be made during the year, the budget committee can always be reconvened. Goorhuis requested, if Kuestner wants to make significant changes to budget line items, that he send a brief explanation of them to the board before the meeting. Goorhuis and Bridge will come to the library to activate their new Microsoft email addresses. Harris asked how the reciprocity agreement with the Drain library is progressing. Kuestner reported no new developments.

**14. Next Meeting** will be held on April 14, 2026, preceded by the Budget Committee meeting.

**15. Meeting Adjournment**

Submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: April 9, 2026

Jonathan Moore - Library Technician

Accepted as written or amended on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lower Umpqua Library District**  
**Board of Directors Executive Session Minutes**  
**3/10/2026**  
Lower Umpqua Library

**LULD Board Members Present:** Ron Eberlein, President, Lee Bridge, VP, Melissa Lily, Secretary, Gary Goorhuis, Treasurer, Dale Harris

**Staff Present:** Alex Kuestner (Library Director/District Manager)

The Regular session of the public meeting was recessed at 7:40pm, and the Zoom connection was closed. Executive Session (ORS 192.660 Personnel Issues) commenced at 7:44 to discuss confidential personal information that bears on staffing levels in the near future. The Executive Session concluded at 8:11 pm and the Board returned to regular session.

Submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/10/2026  
Dale Harris MD, Board member

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Lilly, Secretary

**Lower Umpqua Library District**  
**Board of Directors Regular Session Minutes (conclusion)**  
**3/10/2026**  
Lower Umpqua Library

**LULD Board Members Present:** Ron Eberlein, President, Lee Bridge, VP, Melissa Lily, Secretary, Gary Goorhuis, Treasurer, Dale Harris

**Staff Present:** Alex Kuestner (Library Director/District Manager)

Regular session was reconvened at 8:11pm. The board noted that the director would make temporary accommodations to assist a valued employee who has a relative with a terminal illness. He has drawn up a list of tasks that can be accomplished remotely. The employee will track hours spent not to exceed the hours for onsite work. The director will monitor the work accomplished and report back to the board in April including further information on the planned duration of the absence. To cover gaps in staffing, the current employees may be offered extra hours not to exceed their part-time status. If absolutely necessary, the director may consider hiring a temporary employee from the pool of applicants he retains from the recent staff hiring.

**Next Meeting:** April 14<sup>th</sup>, following the first meeting of the 2026-27 LULD Budget Meeting.

Submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/10/26  
Dale Harris MD, Board member

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Lilly, Secretary