

The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
11:00 a.m. Thursday, October 30, 2025

Washington Mutual Foundation Meeting Room 1, Level 4
1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104

Remote Listen Line:

Dial: 213-282-4570 / Phone conference ID: 349 116 147#

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- To provide public comment in person at the Central Library, sign up in the meeting room.
 - To provide public comment remotely, join meeting with link above and enter your full name in Q&A.
 - To submit public comment in writing, email 24-hours in advance of the meeting: library.board@spl.org.
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Agenda

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. CONSENT

1. Minutes of September 25, 2025 Regular Library Board Meeting
2. August and September 2025 Finance Report

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

1. Chief Librarian Report
2. System Report
 - a. Friends of the Library Update – Angel Sauls, President, Friends of The Seattle Public Library Board
 - b. Library Foundation Update – Sarah Stanley, President, The Seattle Public Library Foundation Board

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2026 Operations Plan Framework
2. Proposed Change to 2026 Annual Wage Increase Implementation Date
3. 2026 Proposed Library Board Meeting Dates
4. Union Report
5. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: Nov. 20, 2025

(For more information, call Laura Gentry, head of the Communications Office, at 206-915-9028.)

Unapproved Board Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

The Seattle Public Library

September 25, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on September 25, 2025. Library Board President W. Tali Hairston called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m. Trustees Carmen Bendixen, Ron Chew, and Faith Pettis were in attendance. Vice President Yazmin Mehdi was unable to attend. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as published; the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was accepted via email, in person at the Central Library, and online in the remote meeting. There was no public comment.

CONSENT

It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda as published; the motion carried unanimously.

CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

Chief Librarian Report

Executive Director/Chief Librarian Tom Fay said he was joining today's meeting remotely from the Washington State Public Library Directors Meeting in Loon Lake, which is part of the Stevens County Library System, about an hour north of Spokane. Mr. Fay said he attended the September 6 grand opening of the Seattle Waterfront, which was well attended. He said Community Engagement and Economic Development Programs Manager Jenny Ku and Douglass-Truth Library Associate II Marshall Bender staffed the table. He said he helped at the table for a couple of hours and they ran out of all giveaways within two hours. He said many people stopped by the booth to talk, and more than 30 people signed up for library cards in the first couple of hours.

Mr. Fay said DeVante' Daniels joined the Library last week as the new Director of Inclusion and Belonging. He said Mr. Daniels brings more than 11 years of experience working across state, local and county government, and for the last four years he has led countywide community engagement efforts centering access, listening to communities that are often left out, and working toward building systems and services that better meet the needs of both government employees and the most vulnerable residents. Mr. Daniels said he previously did community engagement work and equity work at King County, and he is excited to be at the Library. He said he has received a warm welcome and is looking forward to connecting with the Board for deeper conversations and partnership.

Library Board Trustee Ron Chew asked the principal focus of the new office. Mr. Fay said the primary focus in the first year will be internal as well as looking at intersections with public services and programs. He said the Library will look for opportunities to grow the office, potentially with levy funding. He said the work is work of the entire organization to make progress, and the commitment of the E-Team to move the work forward. Library Board Trustee Faith Pettis welcomed Mr. Daniels and

said she looks forward to future reports. Library Board Carmen Bendixen also welcomed Mr. Daniels.

Library Board President Tali Hairston said Mr. Fay has kept he and Board Vice President Yazmin Mehdi well informed about the development of the role and work. Mr. Fay thanked the Foundation and a very generous donor who has helped fund and bridge this funding until the next levy to make it possible to secure this position earlier than otherwise would have been possible.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hairston said someone had arrived at the Central Library to provide public comment after the Chief Librarian Report had begun, and he would now allow reopening of the public comment period. Ms. Carol Iwamoto said she lives next door to the Central Library in the Fifth and Madison Condominiums. She said she wanted to acknowledge the efforts of Director of Administrative Services Rob Gannon, Security Services Supervisor Christopher Hogan, and others for taking time to meet with the residents who appreciate the response to their concern about the conditions of the Library's Fifth Avenue plaza. She said the plaza is now much cleaner. She said the residents know there is more work to do to keep it clean, and they appreciate that the Library is addressing issues of late-night users of the plaza and responding to the neighbor's concerns.

Mr. Hairston thanked Ms. Iwamoto for her comments. He said the Library Board is also concerned about the issue and has followed up with staff as they have managed the issue with the neighbors. He said the Board looks forward to more positive outcomes. Ms. Iwamoto said many of her neighbors could not make it to today's meeting, but would have made the same comments, that they appreciate the efforts the Library is making and the plan to continue to address the needs.

Ms. Pettis said she appreciates Ms. Iwamoto's feedback. She said the Board often only hears one side of an issue and doesn't hear the 'thank you.' She said she appreciated Ms. Iwamoto taking the time to come speak with the Board. Mr. Hairston said the Board is human-centered in its approach to the common good. He said to care for all who are involved in this situation is not just to think of the work as cleaning, but rather to think about how the Library can best support humanity where it is in the building and on the street.

Systems Reports

Library App Update

Mr. Fay said there are great reports for reading in the meeting packet this month. He welcomed Head of Marketing and Online Services Helen Tapping. Ms. Tapping said the meeting packet contains a written report on her team's work on the Library Card Sign-Up Month campaign, and she was joining the meeting to provide more information on the Library app. Ms. Tapping said the app was launched in April 2025 following a phased development approach. She said there are approximately 20,000 downloads to date, with some very active users on both Apple and Android devices.

Ms. Tapping said the process for creating the app was modelled on some of the information learned as part of the website redesign project in 2018. She said the team wanted to focus on discovery and community engagement to bring people along. She said the first phase of the process was to hire Headwater People, a Native-owned and led consultancy that focuses on indigenous principles to make change. She said the consultant led the project's initial focus groups to gather requirements. She said the team also conducted a survey, from which they created a list of functionalities that were important to those who gave input from various communities. She said the team then released an RFP, for which there were four responses. She said team evaluated the four responses, and narrowed them two, testing and input from staff and the core app team. Ms. Tapping said, from the evaluation, the team shortlisted two apps and then hired experts to do design and usability testing. She said Anthro Tech, a human-centered design consultancy with a focus on government agencies, nonprofits

and enterprises, was hired to do a very thorough expert accessibility review and help to conduct demo app testing patrons at the Douglass-Truth and Lake City branches over a couple of days. She said the consultant provided thorough, detailed reports from which the team made final decisions. Ms. Tapping said the team hired app developer Communico to build the app early this year. She said the Marketing team and the core app team worked with the IT team to launch a beta version, which was a fully-functional app that patrons could to review and provide feedback, allowing for final changes during that period.

Ms. Tapping said in July, the Library took the app out of beta, and it is now fully functioning. She said the team is still soliciting patron feedback and has created a road map from the feedback for future development. She said the app is updated monthly with marketing materials, new book lists, and new service promotions, and the team will be looking at adding more functionality, likely in conjunction with the Integrated Library System implementation. She said potential additional areas for more functionality include event calendar and scheduling tools.

Mr. Hairston said the work was well done. Ms. Bendixen said she primarily uses the app to check on holds, while she also discovered the app provides a link to the blog and the ability to reserve a room at branches. She said there are more functions available through the app, even for patrons who predominantly use it the same way. Ms. Tapping said the meeting room booking function is a Communico module that is seamlessly integrated into the app, while the event calendar is a different vendor on the Library website. She said moving forward, the team will continue to integrate functionality to make a tool that works for patrons seamlessly on the web and the app.

Ms. Tapping said once the app went through beta and the interface was translated, the team realized there is more work to do with Communico because they realized that a lot of library apps do not use localized interfaces. She said the SPL team is working as a partner with Communico to ensure the Library gives them best practices they are able to roll out to their other clients. She said Communico was very responsive to accessibility concerns and also understood the importance of localization. She said the SPL team is working not only to improve the SPL app, but to also offer that functionality to other Communico library customers to benefit more patrons. Mr. Hairston and Ms. Pettis thanked Ms. Tapping for the team's good work on the app.

Central Library Plaza Maintenance

Administrative Director Rob Gannon said the work undertaken on the Fifth Avenue plaza at the Central Library is consistent with the earlier public comment. He said over the past several weeks, the Library's Facilities, Security, and Social Services teams have been carefully coordinating their work to address conditions on the Fifth Avenue plaza, and will be looking at improvements to the Fourth Avenue plaza as well. He expressed gratitude to the Facilities team for doing the hard work of maintaining the Fifth Avenue plaza. He said they have increased the frequency of pressure washing from once to twice per week, and they are actively cleaning and scrubbing surfaces. He said the custodial team is picking up trash at least once daily, with additional spot cleanings as necessary. He said both groups are also working to improve the condition of the above-grade features of the plaza such as the cross beams and foundation. He said the team is working on drainage to the plaza and will focus on planting beds that have been misused, creating challenging hygiene and odor conditions. He said the Facilities team is also working to improve the overhead lighting on the plaza area by replacing out-of-date fixtures with modern LED lights and re-timing the lights for greater illumination between sunset and sunrise, which improves safety in that area. Mr. Gannon said some of these same improvements will be carried out on the Fourth Avenue plaza within the next several weeks, and thus far, the efforts have greatly improved the general appearance of the Fifth Avenue plaza, making a difference to patrons, neighbors, and the surrounding community.

Mr. Gannon said the Social Services and Security teams are also doing coordinated work in the area. He said the Security Team continues their regular patrols of the area and interaction with people on the plaza, especially during the early morning hours. He said the Security Team assists with ensuring the plaza is cleaned for the day and that overnight users are not lingering and creating points of access issues. He said the Security team has long-developed relationships with folks who use the plaza overnight. He said the Social Services Team is also engaging directly with overnight users to provide connections to resources in the city, and working with the Unified Care Team to make connections for available housing opportunities for interested parties. He said the Library anticipates more use of the plaza area in the winter months, and is trying to provide as much resource and support as possible. Mr. Gannon said there are other neighborhood branches that would benefit from this level of intensive outreach and support, and the teams are looking at how to balance resources to provide support at additional locations in the coming fall and winter.

Library Board Trustee Ron Chew asked if there were potential structural solutions in addition to patrolling and cleaning the area. Mr. Fay said the Library looked at options following the pandemic, and potential ways to incorporate the space with the inside, to make an inside/outside area that is better able to support programming or other seating during open hours. He said that thinking has been impacted by budget constraints, but the Library will continue to consider opportunities when they arise, ideally with some additional funding resources. He said, taking a long view, there are many opportunities for additional programming on the Fourth Avenue plaza, particularly if it were resourced differently with power and data. Mr. Chew suggested there might be a Foundation naming opportunity to transform the Fifth Avenue space or perhaps to help provide some new programming space or space for public to gather.

Library Board Trustee Carmen Bendixen said she agreed with Mr. Chew and said there aren't a lot of public spaces for programming and people to gather downtown, so it would be wonderful to look for opportunities to activate the space that is currently wasted. She asked Mr. Gannon how sustainable the efforts are to provide increased attention to the plaza for the foreseeable future. Mr. Gannon said this is an ongoing effort, as the Library recognizes that the area needs to be clean and accessible, and that there would be resources required in terms of the services to the plaza and outreach to the patrons using the area. He said the Library will be as consistent as possible in providing these services, especially into the winter. He said part of the success will depend on city resources and the willingness of patrons to take up offers of shelter. Mr. Gannon said he didn't have a current forecast for how long the efforts can be sustained, but he said the Library is receiving good partnership from the Unified Care Team (UCT) in addressing these needs. He said UCT is doing good outreach, and a number of people have accepted offers of interim shelter. He said the Library is making incremental progress. He said there is much more work to be done at the Central Library and other branches with similar challenges, and the Library would continue to do the work, noting that the resources are not currently sustainable long-term.

Ms. Pettis said, as the Library looks into options for the plaza spaces, she would like to suggest adding music as a consideration. She said Benaroya Hall uses music, and there are studies regarding classical music in public places as a deterrent for bad behavior. She said it might be a less expensive option. Mr. Fay said a variety of folks attend live music productions at the Central Library, so even thinking about how some of that programming might be on the plaza could be interesting. He said he understood that she was referring to overnight hours, but wanted to share that the Library has been recently engaged with the Seattle Symphony and the Foundation regarding specifically-purposed funding for classical music for children. He said these talks have opened dialogue about other types of programming as well. Mr. Fay said the Library may be able to forge a new partnership with the Symphony, and there is an interesting combination of things coming together. Ms. Pettis said the light rail station under Benaroya Hall has music piped in consistently, which creates a different ambiance.

NEW BUSINESS

2026 Library Budget Development Process Overview

Mr. Gannon said earlier in the week, Mayor Harrell announced his citywide budget which kicks off the public and formal components of the budget development process. He said there were no notable changes in the process this year, and the Library will proceed with the budget development process alongside the City. He said SPL has submitted its budget adjustments into the Mayor's plan that is now in the hands of the City Council for deliberation. Mr. Gannon said the Finance team will present the general outline of the SPL 2026 Operations Plan at the October 30 Library Board meeting, at which time the Library will indicate intentions and receive early feedback from trustees. He said the Finance team will submit a full, detailed draft of the Operations Plan to the Board at their November 13 meeting for consideration and discussion. He said the Board will be requested to take formal action on the 2026 Operations Plan at their December 11, 2025 meeting. Mr. Gannon said the important mid-range date is November 21, by which the City Council will have reviewed, modified, and approved the budget proposal for the City. Mr. Hairston said he and Library Board Vice President Yazmin Mehdi have a high-level budget meeting scheduled with Mayor Harrell on October 21, after which he will share that discussion with the other trustees.

2025-2026 Biennial Budget Impacts

Mr. Gannon said the City's 2026 general fund support for the Library is a notable and important component of the overall 2026 Operations Plan. He said the budget includes \$102 million in operating budget authority for the Library, with a little more than \$35 million provided by the 2019 levy. He said the City's general fund situation is generally known to be in unstable condition, and the Library was asked to consider ways it could reduce its reliance on the general fund for the 2026 budget year. He said SPL submitted its budget proposal by reducing its general fund allocation by \$5 million and transitioning those dollars to the levy. He said the direct transaction affected by that action would be to potentially delay the seismic retrofit project scheduled for the Columbia Branch within the current levy term. He said the Board will be asked whether they deem the deferral of funding and an offloading of general fund onto the levy as an appropriate budget adjustment for the 2026 budget year. He said because the Library doesn't have a renewed levy beyond 2026, the idea of placing the Columbia Branch seismic retrofit project into a future levy is something that also must be considered. He said the Library's current proposal and intention is to reduce the general fund budget by \$5 million by deferring the Columbia project into the next levy, and then beginning work on that project as soon and urgently as possible.

Mr. Gannon said the good news is that the budget submitted by the Mayor to the City Council has no other notable changes to the Library budget. He said the Library believes it has necessary resources to carry stable operating hours into 2026, as well as largely sustaining and expanding the collection, and keeping pace with the many programming and outreach opportunities that are intertwined into Library services. He said there are no calls for reduction in staffing levels, and no planned or intended layoffs. He said the Library is entering the new budget year with as much stability as it could hope, given the overall challenges of the City's budget and the general fund impact that needs to be planned for.

Ms. Bendixen said every year she receives the same question regarding draw-down from the general fund, and increased reliance on the levy. She asked if the Library anticipates more changes in this area as the budget moves through the Council. Mr. Gannon said the Library's budget as submitted is clearly consistent with what the Mayor's office is presenting to the Council for consideration. He said, though anything is possible, SPL does not anticipate an additional adjustment to the current year budget. He said the amount shifted from the general fund to the levy for 2026 is significant and impacts the Library's budget, so it is unlikely that the Council will require additional adjustments

given the magnitude of what is already presented. He said looking into future years will require a different analysis, but the issue is at the core of what is being developed.

Mr. Gannon said at the August Library Board meeting, the Board approved a resolution directing Library staff to prepare a 2026 Library Levy renewal package for the next seven years. He said the 2027-2028 budget development process will begin in early 2026, and there is not yet indication what that might hold or what role the levy will play. He said those variables will be taken into next year's development process, but 2026 appears to be stable, and the Library does not anticipate a lot of interplay with the general fund and levy in the Council's deliberation.

Ms. Pettis asked if the Columbia Branch seismic retrofit was part of the last levy promise to voters. Mr. Gannon said it was. He said three seismic retrofits were included in the 2019 levy, of which, Green Lake is complete, and University is underway. He said, the Library realized that, for several reasons, including the status of the budget, starting the Columbia project would be impractical, as concluding the project within the levy period would have been very difficult. He said the Library is working to build the Columbia project into a levy renewal package, with appropriate priority. Ms. Pettis said the Library has made this relatively painless for the City by shifting \$5 million for the project to cover a shortfall. She said this was great work on the part of the Library and offered kudos to the staff who developed the work, and she said she would like the City to own some of the responsibility for the funds not being available for the Columbia project. She said she wants the City to understand the implications, and that the more the Library is required to transfer and move funds, the more it risks voters' confidence in its levy promises. Mr. Fay said he appreciated Ms. Pettis' concern and sentiment. He said it was a balancing act. He said the public had to bear the brunt of some of the challenges over the last couple of years when the Library had unstable hours. He said the Library is trying to avoid unstable hours that make services problematic for the public and hard on staff with schedules and uncertainty. Mr. Fay said some of these concerns will be presented in the upcoming meeting with Mr. Hairston and Ms. Mehdi, including the intersection between an operating levy that has major capital components in it that support and preserve buildings for the future. He said it was a difficult decision for the Library, and he hopes that will come to light in the meeting.

Mr. Gannon said he wanted to clarify one more point in his notes. He said the \$5 million reduction in the general fund that the Library will take in 2026 is in addition to a \$2.8 million reduction in the general fund that was already proposed in the approved biennial budget. He said the 2026 impact is more than just the \$5 million, and totals \$7.84 million in adjustments, the bulk of which are being covered by the shift of the Columbia project into a future levy. He said the Library has been as prudent as possible with its budget dollars and resources. He said the Library's reduction is significant. He said the Library is pleased to be contributing as it can to the City's situation, but is also reaching the end of any flexibility, and any future cuts would be very problematic.

Mr. Chew said he would like to address a comment to the City Council, for the record, that delayed earthquake retrofits create a safety issue and potential hazard. Mr. Fay said that is a good point, and while safety issues are certainly of concern, from a business standpoint, longer delays also mean increased construction costs. He said one promising thing for the Columbia Branch is that, despite the postponement, there is funding for air conditioning to be included in the modifications, so the space will be fully air-conditioned with more modern equipment when the project is completed. Mr. Chew agreed that air conditioning will be helpful in the branch.

Union Report

Mr. Fay said President of AFSCME Local 2083 Jessica Lucas was out of office, and the Union's Vice President of Classified staff Katherine Hernandez was attending in her stead. Ms. Hernandez said she didn't have anything to add to the written report in the meeting packet but was happy to

answer questions. Mr. Hairston said the Board is aware and discussing much of what is contained in the report and staying abreast of progress. He said the Board is grateful for the Library's relationship with the union and the way they can work together to accomplish a thriving work environment, which is top of mind for the Board. Ms. Hernandez thanked Mr. Hairston and said union leadership are always willing to meet with Board members at any time to discuss questions or concerns.

Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates

Mr. Fay said four potential new Friends Board members attended the Friends' September Board meeting. He said the candidates are in the interviewing process in preparation for the Friends Annual meeting in November at which the new members would be approved. He said the Friends also took part in the Waterfront grand opening at Overlook Park. He said the Friends were situated above the Aquarium and had a very successful event with more than 300 books sold and 200 tri-branded totes given away in just three hours. He said, year to date, the Friends have given away more than 41,000 books to nonprofits in the community, far exceeding their annual goal of 35,000. He said new nonprofit partners for the Friends include the Port of Seattle, which is stocking four Little Free Libraries inside the airport.

Ms. Bendixen said the Foundation held their board meeting a couple weeks ago. She said they are doing well in terms of fundraising, with \$2.9 million raised for the year, which is about 87% of their total goal. She said the Foundation's fall campaign will kick off with Banned Books Week, October 6-10, in addition to a special event at the Central Library on October 3. She said the event is called History Unveiled and is not strictly a fundraising event and has a goal of spreading information. She said attendees will get a behind-the-scenes look at Special Collections and hear from special guests who use Special Collections frequently, including Knute Berger from Cascade PBS. Ms. Bendixen said the Foundation Board meeting also included a training from the DEI Committee on implicit bias and small group discussions, which she found very interesting. She said the meeting wrapped up with a strategic planning session, including an exercise working with input received during the community listening sessions. She said their consultant, Laura Pierce, is using comments and input to help inform values, and how they want to state them and act on them. She said the Foundation Board will have a day-long retreat next month to continue their focus on the strategic plan, which remember they want to finish this year.

Mr. Hairston said the Friends, Foundation, and Library are partners and collaborators, and share success. He said it is good to have the thriving relationship together. Ms. Pettis said last month she attended the Foundation's Grati-Tuesday fundraiser at a brewery in Ballard. She said the event was very well attended and a lot of fun. Mr. Hairston asked about the HistoryLink fundraiser lunch. Ms. Bendixen said she had attended, along with Mr. Fay, a few Foundation Board members, and key staff. Ms. Bendixen said HistoryLink.org is amazing and is her favorite thing on the Internet. She thanked the Foundation for the opportunity to attend the event.

Mr. Fay said he wanted to highlight an issue for the Board today because the Board often works through policies in front of them, but doesn't often know the impact they might have internally and even nationally. He said the Library has an Intellectual Freedom policy and a stance in making sure it is in the fight against book bans and censorship. He said library colleagues in another state with more challenges to language and terminology and more book bans and censorship challenges reached out and asked to use SPL's Intellectual Freedom policy, as they found it to be well-crafted and well thought out. He said they will use SPL's policy to craft their own and focus it in a way that provides what they need in their communities. Mr. Fay said the work the SPL Board does in this area has potentially national impact in cases like this. He thanked the Board for their work, which is not easy, and said people are watching.

Updates from Library Board Members

Mr. Chew said a prominent local children's author, Ken Mochizuki, best known for his book "Baseball Saved Us" passed away last week. Mr. Chew said Mr. Mochizuki was a native Seattleite from Beacon Hill and often wrote about the Japanese American incarceration. Mr. Chew said he spent a lot of time with Mr. Mochizuki at the end of his life. He said "Baseball Saved Us" was last year's fifth most banned book in America and has sold over a half million copies. Mr. Chew said Mr. Mochizuki will be honored at the International Examiner Community Voices Award on October 23. Mr. Chew said Mr. Mochizuki has a large body of work from the 1960s through the 1980s, including an unfinished manuscript, which he believes was donated to the Wing Luke Museum. He said there are many folks whose materials the Library should perhaps be thinking about acquiring. Mr. Chew said he was very close to Mr. Mochizuki, and he asked the trustees to check out "Baseball Saved Us", if they have not already read it, which he said it's a fabulous children's book.

ADJOURN

Library Board President Tali Hairston adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: October 30, 2025

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees

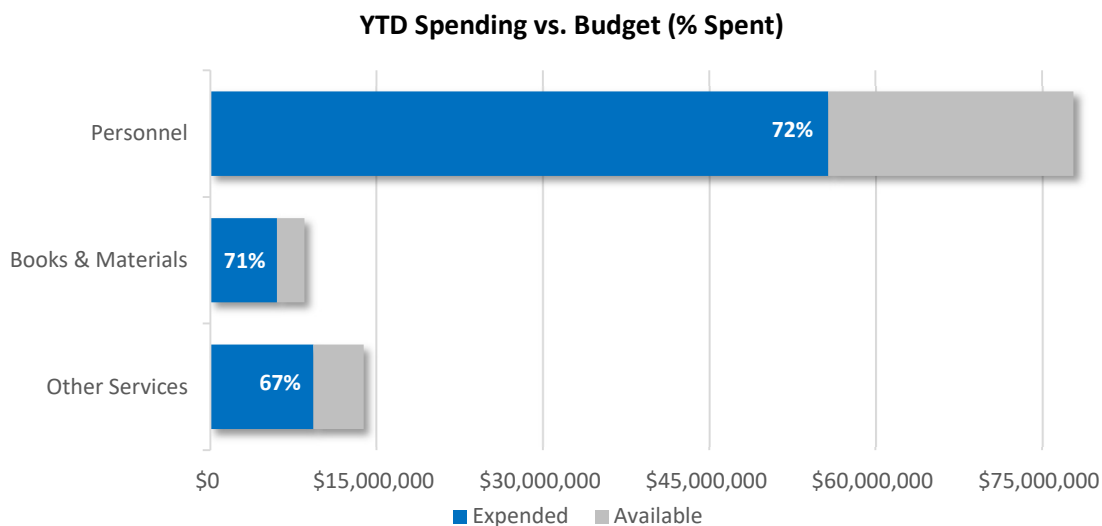
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services
Nicholas Merkner, Head of Finance and Accounting

Subject: **August and September 2025 Financial Reporting**

Overview

Overall, the Library has expended **71%** of its operating budget with **75%** of the year elapsed. This is ahead of the prior year when the Library expended **68%** of the operating budget (excluding retroactive Annual Wage Increase payments). Total expenditures at the end of the month were \$71 million.

The chart below provides a high-level overview of year-to-date spending by budget group and helps to illustrate relative sizes within the Library's operating budget.



Personnel Services

Personnel costs represent the largest category of expenses at the Library and make up 78% of the revised operating budget. As of this report there have been **nineteen pay periods processed**—as such we expect 73% of the personnel budget to be expended. Spending is on target at **72%**.

Non-Personnel Services

The largest individual category of expenditures within the non-personnel budget is related to library books and materials—this category represents 8% of the revised operating budget. Spending is as expected at **71%**.

Other services which represent 14% of the adopted budget—and include equipment, services, and supplies—are **67%** expended. Within this category, there is \$1.3 million associated with prior year grants, contracts, and other ongoing bodies of work that had budget authority continue into 2025. These amounts are reflected as part of the attached Expenditure Control report.

Revenues

Library generated revenues during the month of September were \$63,000, with total year-to-date collections at **\$562,000**—representing a 65% collected rate. Patron copy service and pay for print have exceeded revenue projections year-to-date, however several other Library generated revenue lines are below expectations. We anticipate these differentials will end up offsetting each other as we move through the final portion of the year.

As noted during previous months, the Library has yet to restore access for digital payment acceptance related to lost material fees. Once this functionality for patrons has returned, we are projecting that revenues will realign across this category through the remainder of the year.

Action Requested: Library Board consideration of August and September 2025 Operating Budget financial reporting for approval at October 30, 2025 meeting. Comments or feedback are welcome.

Expenditure Control for September 2025

Amounts in \$1,000s	Revised Budget*	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages	50,740	3,809	36,320	72%	14,420
Benefits	27,105	2,109	19,415	72%	7,690
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$77,845	\$5,918	\$55,735	72%	\$22,110
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,483	734	6,013	71%	2,470
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,483	\$734	\$6,013	71%	\$2,470
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,305	276	2,484	75%	821
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,686	162	820	49%	866
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	302	31	254	84%	48
Operating Supplies	616	33	391	64%	224
Other Expenses	669	73	637	95%	32
Other Maintenance	930	13	610	66%	320
Phone, Wireless & Internet	496	7	228	46%	268
Professional Services	523	21	414	79%	109
Software	934	152	652	70%	282
Staff Training & Travel	242	11	40	17%	202
Vehicle Costs	358	30	250	70%	108
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	2,093	197	1,515	72%	578
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,279	32	613	48%	666
Facilities - Garage Debt Service	404	383	390	96% (A)	14
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$13,837	\$1,421	\$9,299	67%	\$4,539
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$100,166	\$8,073	\$71,046	71%	\$29,119

Footnotes:

* Includes \$1.3M related to prior year encumbrances, grant and legislated carry-forward

(A) Reflects annual Garage Debt Service chargeback by the City

Expenditure Control for August 2025

Amounts in \$1,000s	Revised Budget*	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages	50,740	3,504	32,511	64%	18,229
Benefits	27,105	2,044	17,306	64%	9,799
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$77,845	\$5,548	\$49,817	64%	\$28,029
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,483	604	5,279	62%	3,204
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,483	\$604	\$5,279	62%	\$3,204
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	3,305	276	2,208	67%	1,097
Equipment - IT & Facilities	1,686	75	658	39%	1,028
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	302	25	223	74%	79
Operating Supplies	616	31	359	58%	257
Other Expenses	669	49	564	84%	105
Other Maintenance	930	22	596	64%	333
Phone, Wireless & Internet	496	18	221	45%	275
Professional Services	523	62	393	75%	130
Software	934	(3)	500	54%	434
Staff Training & Travel	242	5	30	12%	213
Vehicle Costs	358	29	220	61%	139
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	2,093	80	1,318	63%	776
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,279	37	581	45%	698
Facilities - Garage Debt Service	404	-	8	2% (A)	397
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$13,837	\$707	\$7,878	57%	\$5,959
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$100,166	\$6,859	\$62,973	63%	\$37,192

Footnotes:

* Includes \$1.3M related to prior year encumbrances, grant and legislated carry-forward

(A) The City will post Garage Debt Service chargeback in September 2025

Revenue Control for September 2025

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	120,000	7,355	59,739	50% (A)
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	377,000	29,592	271,839	72%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	100,000	13,364	110,299	110% (B)
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	177,000	8,277	79,690	45%
Book Sale Consignment	85,000	3,989	38,378	45%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	3,000	219	1,565	52%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES	\$862,000	\$62,797	\$561,511	65%

Footnotes:

- (A) Library lost material fees have not been collectible via electronic payment since the cybersecurity breach in May 2024
- (B) Print and copy revenues exceeded the adopted revenue budget in this area--additional revenue will offset undercollection in other areas for Library Generated Revenue

Revenue Control for August 2025

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	120,000	6,437	52,384	44% (A)
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	377,000	31,609	242,246	64%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	100,000	13,895	96,935	97% (B)
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	177,000	3,890	71,413	40%
Book Sale Consignment	85,000	4,052	34,390	40%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	3,000	50	1,346	45%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES	\$862,000	\$59,933	\$498,714	58%

Footnotes:

(A) Library lost material fees have not been collectible via electronic payment since the cybersecurity breach in May 2024

(B) Print and copy revenues are projected to exceed adopted revenue budget for this line--additional revenue will offset undercollection in other areas of Library Generated Revenue



The Seattle Public Library

Date: October 30, 2025
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Re: October 2025 Chief Librarian's Report

1. The past several weeks have been a busy time for speaking engagements. On September 27, I participated in a King County Library System (KCLS) Friends volunteer appreciation event at the KCLS Service Center in Issaquah. I joined KCLS Executive Director Heidi Daniel and KCLS Foundation Executive Director Lisa Yamasaki on a keynote panel to speak about library advocacy efforts, the importance of libraries in communities, and the important role played by library volunteers.
2. On October 3, I spoke at the Foundation stewardship event, "History Unveiled" at the Central Library. The event partnered with SPL Special Collections to showcase the collections for more than 200 guests, including a discussion on why Special Collections matter to SPL, and how SPL reveals, promotes, and preserves local history. Speakers in the discussion included Special Collections users Washington State Representative Shaun Scott and local historian Knute Berger.
3. On October 6, I spoke at a Banned Books Week program at the Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum entitled "Operating and Supporting Libraries During Turbulent Times." At the event, Seattle Public Schools' Library Services & Instructional Materials Program Manager, Darcy Brixey, Seattle Athenaeum Librarian Lillian Dabney, and I discussed challenges and opportunities that face public and school libraries during times of political discord.
4. On October 12, SPL again collaborated with the Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum to present another Banned Books Week program at the Central Library. In this program, I joined Seattle Athenaeum Librarian Lillian Dabney and Director of the National Library of Ireland, Dr. Audrey Whitty in a panel on the Future of Libraries, where the discussion centered on providing equitable access to information and fostering an informed citizenry to uphold and strengthen democratic societies in a rapidly changing world.
5. On October 14, I participated in the opening panel for a Digital Public Libraries of America forum on AI in Libraries and Archives held at the University of Washington. Cleveland Public Library Director Felton Thomas, Coalition for Networked Information Executive Director Kate Zwaard, and I opened the session with a panel on AI in libraries, moderated by

UW iSchool Assistant Professor Ben Lee. Several SPL staff also joined sessions throughout the two-day forum on the UW campus.

6. On October 17, Institutional and Strategic Advancement Director Rick Sheridan, Administrative Services Director Rob Gannon, and I provided a Library Levy briefing to Mayor Harrell to share a high-level overview of proposed 2026 Library levy planning, laying out a view of needs, challenges, and opportunities for SPL operations and capital investments.
7. On October 20, Community Partnerships and Government Relations Program Manager Kiersten Nelson and I joined Washington State Senator Emily Alvarado and Washington State Representative Julia Reed Meeting in a meeting at the Central Library to discuss legislation mirroring Connecticut's Senate Bill 1234, a first-in-the-nation law aimed at reshaping how public and school libraries license e-books and digital audiobooks.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:

- a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; Friends of the Library monthly Board meeting; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; monthly meeting with Library Board President and Vice President.
- b. Standing Meetings: Compensation Committee; Senior Management Team; E-Team; Monthly Managers meeting; Union/Leadership meetings; Foundation CEO/Chief Librarian bi-monthly meetings.
- c. Library Meetings, Talks, Interviews and Visits: Puget Sound Library Director quarterly meeting; KCLS Friends appreciation event; SPLF History Unveiled event; Folio Banned Books Week programs on Oct. 6 and 12; Digital Public Libraries of America forum; meeting with Sen. Alvarado and Rep Reed.
- d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: Mayor's Cabinet meeting; Deputy Mayor bi-weekly meeting; levy presentation with Mayor Harrell.

Collections and Access Services

Technical Services

October 15, 2025

Kate Sellers, Technical & Collection Services Manager

Impact Areas

Access: Making sure our public has access to all that we offer. This means encouraging everyone to get Library cards, providing great collections that serve every age and making sure patrons have access to our staff, resources, programs and services.

Literacy, Learning, and Achievement: Providing assistance to support the personal pursuit of educational, informational and recreational interests for formative and lifelong learning.

Making comics, manga, and graphic novels more accessible for all

For decades, the Library has used an outdated classification system for graphic novels, manga, and comics. This system catalogs all genres and topics (even fiction) using the Dewey Decimal System, which is otherwise only used for nonfiction items. Dewey gives all comics the same classification number: 741.5973, followed by a unique cutter that is hard to read and make sense of. This resulted in shelves full of materials with labels that were hard to read, even for library staff. It didn't differentiate between fiction and nonfiction like graphic memoirs. This made it difficult for staff to find items when they searched for them to fill patron holds and caused confusion for patrons.



A row of comics with the old call number structure



A row of comics with the new call number structure

In 2018, the Library successfully implemented a new system for children's comics and graphic novels, using the author's last name for fiction titles. It's been a popular change for both patrons and staff. We next wanted to address the adult and teen collections – but they presented unique challenges because of the size of our collections and the very different ways superhero comics in particular are published and presented. These titles often have multiple authors who work on a single series, so sorting them by the author's last name would mean that all the *Superman* books wouldn't be next to each other, for example.

In fall 2024, an interdepartmental team was assembled to tackle this problem. We met several times and hashed out the details, looking at many different books in the process to find the simplest way to help patrons and staff find what they were looking for in

these collections. This included asking patrons how they use these collections, what questions they have, and staff reporting how the most common problems encountered. We needed everyone's point of view to reach the best

solutions, so we included shelving staff, librarians & reference staff, circulation staff, catalogers, selection librarians, and processing staff.

After several months of work, we launched the updated system in January of 2025 and started the big task of re-labelling our collections. Now, superhero comics are all organized by character, manga is in its own section, and other comics and graphic novels are cataloged like our other fiction and nonfiction collections. Initial feedback from patrons has been positive, and staff are very pleased with how it has made their shelving and pull list activities simpler.

Ongoing review and participatory cataloging

The new cataloging process for comics, manga, and graphic novels requires regular maintenance and input from both technical and public services staff. There is increased complexity in this new system, to reflect the complex publishing world around comics, graphic novels, and manga. We have built a Teams channel to discuss questions that come up, where catalogers can ask comics experts about a particular aspect of a title or a shelve can ask about a label to find out if it is a mistake or a purposeful change. This collaboration increases understanding for all staff, helps us learn more about how these collections are used, and lets us quickly solve access issues.

This change management process is now a guide for the future as we make other cataloging and technical services collection changes.

Government Relations & Community Partnerships
October 16, 2025

Kiersten Nelson, Manager Government Relations & Community Partnerships

Access: Making sure the public has access to all that The Seattle Public Library offers.

Equity: Developing an environment where patrons have access to quality programs and services, no matter their demographic background, through public policy development at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

Sustainability: Educating government officials on the need for sustainable funding to ensure the Library will continue to operate and fulfill the needs of our community for today and the future.

Educating public officials about The Seattle Public Library and Building community through partnerships.

Over the past year, Government Relations and Community Partnerships have spent considerable time educating elected officials, pushing for state and federal funding, and expanding partnerships across the City while preparing for a levy package in 2026.

Council Relations

City Council continued its run of upheaval as 2025 saw two members resign and a new member join, with two of those three seats up for election this November. Of the three new members, one is returning former Council President Debora Juarez. With new Councilmember Alexis Mercedes Rinck as the vice-chair of the Library, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee, The Seattle Public Library and Chief Librarian Tom Fay made concerted efforts to be an accessible resource for her and her office.

Councilmember Maritza Rivera continued as the chair of the Library, Education, and Neighborhoods Committee joined by returning members Joy Hollingsworth and Cathy Moore, and new/returning members Alexis Mercedes Rinck, Mark Solomon, and Debora Juarez who replaced Cathy Moore midyear.

The Library continues its close partnership work with Councilmember Rivera, providing information other members found useful and highlighting some of the nontraditional work of library staff. Monthly meetings with Councilmember Rivera began in early spring and served as a crucial time to provide updates to the chairwoman about the status of the Library's ongoing work and responses to emergent issues such as the cybersecurity event. Staff also presented in front of the committee once before the Council's budget work began in late September. Tom Fay presented a general introduction to the Library, the annual Levy update, and a midyear review primarily discussing the cyberattack.

Councilmembers receive weekly emails updating them on various items of interest from the Library from the past week. These emails include upcoming events, awards/grants won, program summaries, extreme weather event responses, Levy reports, and data metrics similar to those provided during Board of Trustee meetings. Councilmember Rinck not only attended but spoke at the reopening of the Green Lake Branch and staff from five other offices attended the event, highlighting the work put into these relationships to have them attend.

Council Concerns

Through our strategic efforts to build strong relationships, council members know to reach out to the Library directly when they or their constituents have concerns regarding SPL. As we move through 2025 and into 2026 these conversations typically revolve around items and issues that will likely arise in the upcoming levy package. Additionally, at the request of the Mayor's Office and City Council, the Library delivered a department presentation at the beginning of the budget cycle, something it has not needed to do for some time. Thus, creating a consistent message and incorporating feedback from councilmembers during the community feedback portion of the levy development is vital to a successful levy campaign.

State and Federal Outreach

Led by Tom Fay and in partnership with The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF) and Friends of The Seattle Public Library (Friends), government relations used 2025 as a year to expand engagement with legislators at the state and federal levels in a more impactful way. This began with participating in the Washington Library Association's lobby day in February. Through this day of advocacy, Tom Fay, members of SPLF, the Friends, and myself met with 13 out of the 18 members or their staff that represent Seattle City districts with a Library presence.

Following conversations with directors of public libraries throughout Washington, SPL led efforts to introduce a study on digital content at the state level. The goal of the study is to better understand the business and use landscape of all forms of digital content used by public libraries including but not limited to e-books and e-audiobooks. As these costs continue to rise exponentially, finding a solution that brings all parties to the table is crucial for long-term success. Several legislators, including Representatives Kristine Reeves, Juila Reed, Shaun Scott, and Joe Timmons, expressed interest in moving this legislation forward. However, due to the state of budget challenges during the session, legislation seeking new funds that did not increase state-level revenue failed. Meanwhile, legislation that passed in Connecticut specifically focused on e-book pricing restrictions. Washington intends to move forward similar legislation in 2026, as it does not require state allocated funds, meanwhile adjusting the push for the study out a year or two until the fiscal outlook improves.

The Library was awarded state funds in 2025 through the Library Capital Improvement Grant program for the University Project. The total amount awarded to the project in the State's capital budget was \$2 million.

At the federal level, the government failed to pass an actual budget for Fiscal Year 2025, instead passing a continuing resolution. As a result, all Community Project Funding was unable to move forward because of the budgetary regulations. Thankfully, nearly all legislators decided to resubmit Fiscal Year 2025 Community Projects for Fiscal Year 2026. This means that the request from Rep. Adam Smith for nearly \$1.5 million in funding for seismic retrofits on the Columbia Branch remains a possibility.

Representative Pramila Jayapal visited the University Branch during the August District Work Period. The Congresswoman secured Fiscal Year 2024 Community Project Funding for the seismic renovation assisting in filling the funding gap on the project.

Community Partnerships

Another year and the Library has seen another increase in the number of organizations participating in the Museum Pass program. We are excited that the Northwest African American Museum returned to the portfolio as well as a new collaboration with Seattle Parks for the Arboretum and Conservatory Park while continuing exciting conversations with institutions both in and outside of the city's boundaries. The Museum Pass was greatly impacted by the cyberattack and the closure of the previous online ticketing platform at the end of 2024, but with restoration of all services, patrons are pleased to be able to reserve passes once more.

Community partnerships are part of the fabric of the work we do. After much work and testing, we launched the new electronic partnership form at the beginning of the year. Once the forms are completed they are uploaded to our Customer Relations Management (CRM) system and allow staff to more easily track and manage partnerships with outside organizations as well as create a searchable and accessible list of all our partners.

The Seattle Public Library Foundation Liaison

The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF) supports many aspects of the Library's work. The Library works closely with SPLF staff to ensure that the Foundation is using the same messaging as the Library and their advocacy priorities align with those of SPL. The Foundation's quarterly meetings with division leaders who receive SPLF grant funds, monthly meetings with Library leadership, weekly meetings between the Communications, Marketing, and Community Partnership teams remain a staple of this highly aligned and functioning relationship. The transparency between the two organizations and increased level of responsiveness serve as a long-term boon to Library patrons and the community.



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: October 30, 2025

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services
Nicholas Merkner, Head of Finance and Accounting

Subject: **2026 Operations Plan Framework**

The development process for the 2026 budget is underway, part of which is bringing forward the framework for the annual Operations Plan for Board review and feedback. The Operations Plan provides the Library Board, staff, and the public with an overview of the Library's financial resources and spending plan for the coming year. The Operations Plan is intended to map out a vision and context for funding decisions, while also documenting changes to the Library's base operating and capital budgets.

The 2026 Operations Plan is expected to include:

- Integration with the Library Strategic Plan and how it directs what is in the Operations Plan
- Information on key changes/reductions/investments
- An overview of funding sources at the Library (including sub-sections on the General Fund, Library levy, library generated revenues, and private funds)

This framework is intended to provide an avenue for soliciting broad brush strokes of feedback on the direction of the Operations Plan. Information included is for illustrative purposes only and is subject to change in the ensuing versions.

Attachment: 2026 Operations Plan Framework

Action Requested: Presented for informational purposes only. Comments or feedback are welcome.



The Seattle Public Library

2026 Operations Plan - Framework

The Seattle Public Library's 2026 Operations Plan describes the second year of planned activity inside the City of Seattle's biennial 2025-2026 budget cycle and the final year of a seven-year, voter-approved, \$219.1 million Library Levy. This plan summarizes planned spending information under the City's 2026 Adopted Budget (General Fund, Library Levy, Library-generated revenue, Real Estate Excise Tax), in addition to private funding resources from Library gift funds and grant awards provided by The Seattle Public Library Foundation and other entities. The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring Library funds appropriated through the City's budget.

The Library Board Policy on Race and Social Justice and the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative—a commitment to eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity—help guide the use of these funds and all aspects of Library operations.

I. Overview

2026 Operations Plan Relative to the Adopted 2025 Budget

Section provides a brief overview of how 2026 compares to the prior year. A summarized view of year-to-year changes will be provided in the attachments.

2025-2026 City Council Budget Actions

Any City Council budget actions will be discussed here.

Economy and Revenue¹

An update on the economy and revenue impacts as it relates to the Library will be discussed here.

II. Strategic Plan

Section to provide insight related to the Library's 2024-2033 Strategic Plan and how it directs what is included in the Operations Plan.

III. Priority Areas within Library Operations

This section will provide an overview of the Library's work on the strategic plan and how that may carry impacts on how the budget is structured in future periods. Additional information as it relates to the Library's priority areas, along with notable investments, will be covered in the proceeding sections.

¹ Information contained in this section will be drawn from the Budget Book as proposed by the Mayor to the Seattle City Council.

A. Hours and Access

Library open hours mean access to technology, collections and resources, programs and knowledgeable staff for information and referral. The Library's largest expenditure is related to personnel, representing \$TBD million, or TBD% of total Library resources. The Library's key investments in this area are:

+**\$TBD** for Items A, B, etc—will include information on alignment with Strategic Plan and funding source

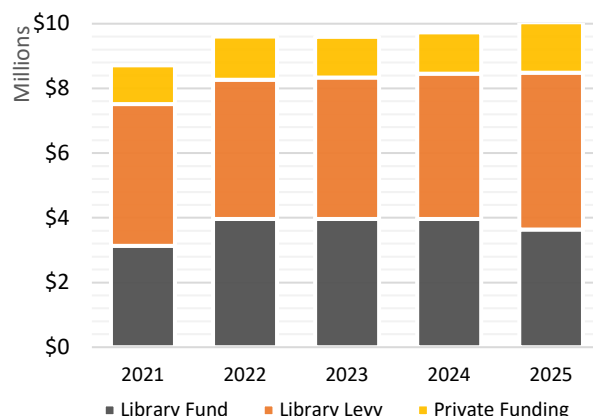
B. Books and Materials

When considering the purchase of materials to be added to the collection, the Collection Services team applies an equity lens that factors in audiences, categories and formats, while also focusing acquisitions on titles that reflect underrepresented voices, including those from people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups. Circulation trends have rebounded, and over TBD million items are circulated per month.

The Library provides \$TBD million to support the purchase of books and materials, with an additional \$TBD used to support the processing and acquisition costs of those materials. These resources are provided via a combination of General Fund, Library Levy and private gifts (a summary of which can be seen in Figure 1). Of note, this section does not include circulating patron Wi-Fi hot spots—which are categorized as “Technology”. Important changes to the books and materials budget include:

+**\$TBD** for Items A, B, etc—will include information on alignment with Strategic Plan and funding source

Figure 1: Materials Budget by Funding Source



C. Technology and Online Services

The digital environment provides increasing opportunities to participate in the information society, although some individuals and families can face serious barriers to access. These barriers, often referred to as the “digital divide,” may include a lack of affordable internet connectivity; lack of internet ready devices; or a lack of skills, knowledge, or means to access digital resources. The Library plays an important role in helping bridge the digital divide by providing access to patrons who lack this capability at home.

According to a survey conducted by the Library, one-third of Seattle residents said they relied on Library computers or Wi-Fi networks to access the internet and other digital resources. The Library provides free access to digital devices (desktop computers, laptops and tablets) that can be used to search online resources, connect to the internet, or use popular software. Our wireless internet access is provided free to patrons and has experienced exponential growth as patron preferences

shift toward mobile access. Additionally, patrons can use their Library card to check out a portable Wi-Fi hot spot. Important changes in this area include:

+\$TBD for Items A, B, etc—will include information on alignment with Strategic Plan and funding source

D. Literacy and Early Learning

Libraries play an important role in fostering literacy, particularly for those who have historically faced barriers to access, such as immigrants and refugees, and those developing literacy skills, such as preschool and elementary students. A key investment in this priority area:

+\$TBD for Items A, B, etc—will include information on alignment with Strategic Plan and funding source

E. Building and Facility Support

As part of the 1998 Library's for All capital campaign, the Library remodeled and replaced a number of our branches. Many of these renovations and buildings are now over 20 years old and in need of ongoing and careful oversight and maintenance to protect the public investment. The Library utilizes an internally developed and actively managed Comprehensive Facilities Plan to surface and direct where investments are needed throughout the system. However, resulting from budget reductions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, several building maintenance projects were deferred to future periods. This is not an optimal approach, as timely and ongoing maintenance is less expensive than emergency repairs and replacements—this is particularly salient when considering the iconic and unique buildings present in the Library property portfolio.

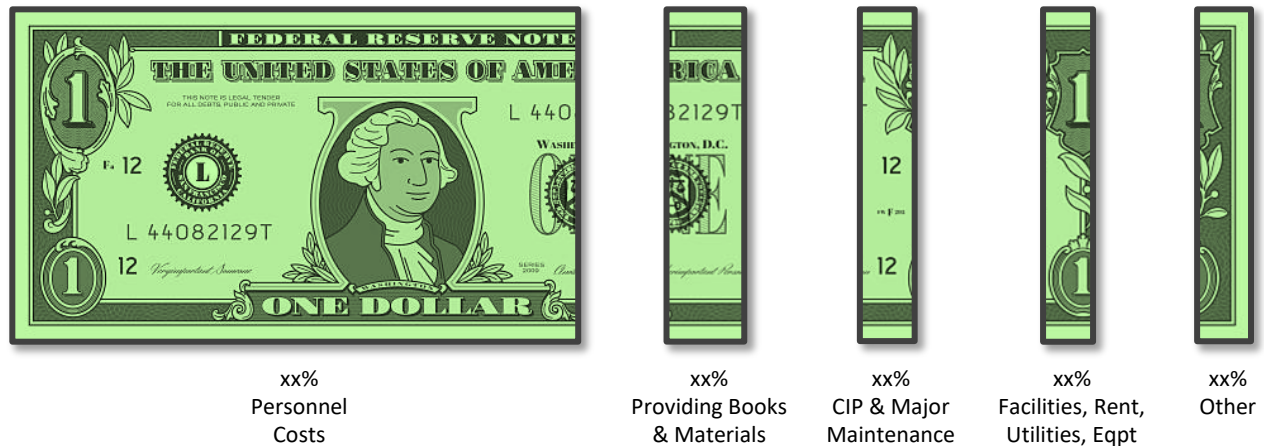
Our buildings provide a forum where patrons can read or study in a comfortable environment, listen to interesting and engaging speakers, participate in meaningful community events, or find daytime respite. \$TBD million, or TBD% of Library resources, support keeping our facilities open, clean, functional, and welcoming to all. An additional \$TBD million is provided as part of the Library's Capital Improvement Program, which helps ensure our facilities remain in good structural condition and for our buildings to continue to exist for future generations.

Building project to be noted here—will include information on alignment with Strategic Plan and funding source

IV. Operations Plan Overview by Personnel, Collections, and Buildings

There is an overarching and larger scale framework within which our priority areas fall, these consist of: 1) Personnel, 2) Books and Materials, and 3) Buildings. Relative investments of Library resources among these categories are shown below, along with an illustration of how \$1.00 is spent at the Library using this lens. Due to the unique nature of Library services and how they are provided to the public, Library work is inherently people-oriented—meaning the majority of our resources are dedicated toward personnel. Additional department level budget information can be seen on Attachment 1.

Figure 2: How \$1.00 is spent at the Library and the Proposed Budget

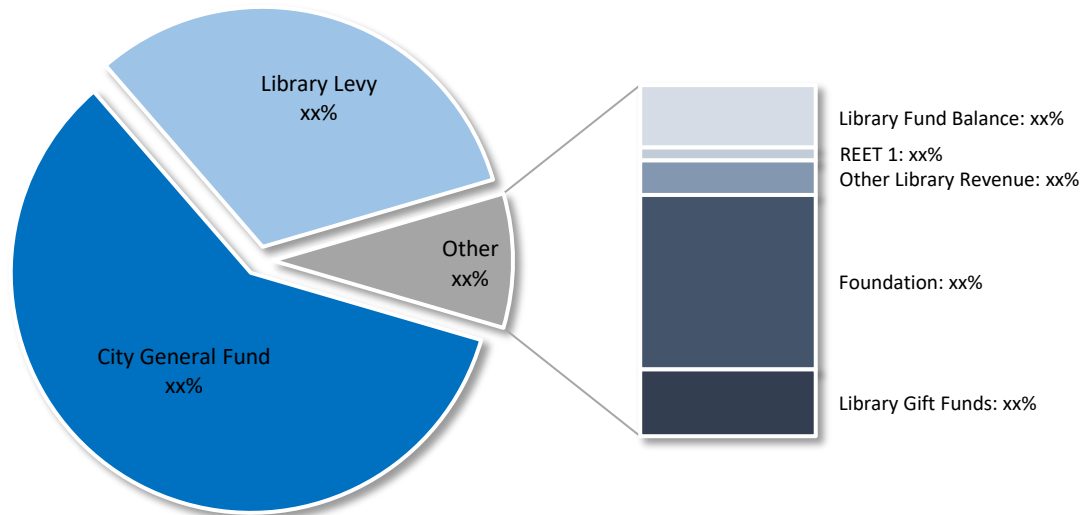


Amounts in \$1,000s	2026 Proposed	%
<i>Personnel</i>		
Public Services, Collections & Access	\$TBD	TBD%
All Other Departments	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>Personnel Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$TBD</i>	<i>TBD%</i>
<i>Providing Books & Materials</i>		
Books & Materials Collection	\$TBD	TBD%
Collection Processing	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>Providing Books & Materials Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$TBD</i>	<i>TBD%</i>
<i>Buildings</i>		
Capital Improvements & Major Maintenance	\$TBD	TBD%
Utilities, Maintenance, Rent, Equipment	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>Other</i>		
Direct Programming Supplies	\$TBD	TBD%
City Central Costs	\$TBD	TBD%
Software	\$TBD	TBD%
Other	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>Other Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$TBD</i>	<i>TBD%</i>
Total	\$TBD	

V. Operations Plan Overview by Funding Source

The design and development of the Library budget occurs against a backdrop of equity impacts associated with the City’s Language Access Plan (Library plan included as Attachment 3), as well as the City’s Race and Social Justice Ordinance and the Library Board policy on Race and Social Justice (Attachment 4). Library operations are supported by three main funding sources: City appropriation of General Fund support, an annual allocation from the seven-year, voter-approved Library Levy, and private gift funds—which include annual grants from The Seattle Public Library Foundation.

Figure 3: Operations Plan by Funding Source



Amounts in \$1,000s	2025 Adopted	2026 Proposed	% Change
<i>Operating Fund</i>			
City General Fund (Operating)	\$68,479	\$TBD	TBD%
2019 Library Levy (Operating)	\$28,894	\$TBD	TBD%
2012 Library Levy (Operating)	\$700		
Other Library Revenue	\$835	\$TBD	TBD%
Interdepartmental Support	\$27	\$TBD	TBD%
Interfund Transfer	\$166	\$TBD	TBD%
Use of Library Fund Balance	(\$166)	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>Operating Fund Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$98,935</i>	<i>\$TBD</i>	<i>TBD%</i>
<i>CIP</i>			
2019 Library Levy (CIP)	\$7,989	\$TBD	TBD%
REET I (CIP)	\$386	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>CIP Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$8,375</i>	<i>\$TBD</i>	<i>TBD%</i>
<i>Gifts and Grants</i>			
Seattle Public Library Foundation*	\$5,200	\$TBD	TBD%
Gift Funds (Balch, Bunn, other)	\$1,990	\$TBD	TBD%
<i>Gifts and Grants Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$7,190</i>	<i>\$TBD</i>	<i>TBD%</i>
Total	\$114,500	\$TBD	TBD%

* Grant awards approved by The Seattle Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

A. General Fund

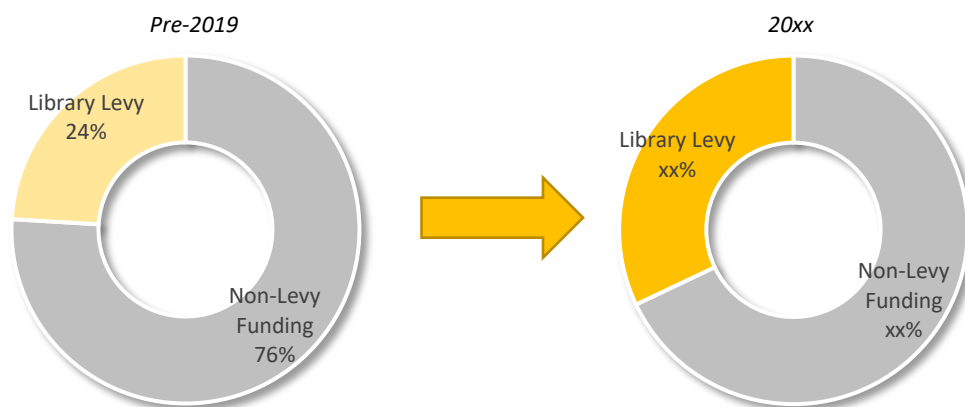
Section to provide information and description of changes related to the General Fund.

Amounts in \$1,000s	2025 Adopted	2026 Proposed	% Change
Hours & Access	\$31,901	\$TBD	TBD%
Providing Books & Materials	\$14,449	\$TBD	TBD%
Technology & Online Services	\$4,878	\$TBD	TBD%
Literacy & Early Learning	\$616	\$TBD	TBD%
Building & Facility Support	\$8,484	\$TBD	TBD%
Administration	\$5,232	\$TBD	TBD%
City Central Costs	\$2,919	\$TBD	TBD%
Total	\$68,479	\$TBD	TBD%

B. 2019 Library Levy

In August 2019, Seattle voters approved a seven-year, \$219.1 million 2019 Library Levy renewal to support, maintain, and expand core Library services, renewing a \$122 million Library Levy that was first passed in 2012. With the passage of the 2019 Library Levy, the Library increased our dependence on time-limited voter-approved funding. Across both operating and capital budgets, the **levy will provide \$TBD million in 2026**, which is **TBD% of the Library's total budget** (up from 24% pre-2019 Library Levy—Figure 4).

Figure 4: Pre-2019 Library Levy Budget % Compared to Current-Year Budget %



Each year, the Library Board of Trustees allocates available levy funds through the Operations Plan. More information on 2019 Library Levy categories, including how they map back to the budget can be found on Attachment 5.

Amounts in \$1,000s	2025 Adopted	2026 Proposed	% Change
Hours & Access	\$16,450	\$TBD	TBD%
Providing Books & Materials	\$6,412	\$TBD	TBD%
Technology & Online Services	\$2,821	\$TBD	TBD%
Literacy & Early Learning	\$454	\$TBD	TBD%
Building & Facility Support	\$2,034	\$TBD	TBD%
Major Maintenance (CIP)	\$7,989	\$TBD	TBD%
Major Maintenance (IT)	\$0	\$TBD	TBD%

Administration	\$723	\$TBD	TBD%
Total	\$36,883	\$TBD	TBD%

Levy – Operating Fund

Section to provide brief overview of levy operating support.

Levy – Capital Improvement Program

Section to provide brief overview of levy capital support.

C. Other Capital Improvement Program Support

Capital improvement projects may carry large fund balances as timelines shift and are influenced by external factors, project complexity, supply chain disruptions and materials shortages (more likely with historically-landmarked buildings), and the availability of qualified contractors in a competitive local construction market (also often related to historically-landmarked buildings). Projects require ample planning and are often multi-year in nature—as a result, the Library may have carryforward resources that span multiple fiscal years. A long-term capital improvement program is submitted to the City Budget Office each year and is included as Attachment 7.

Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) – Capital Improvement Program

Section to provide brief overview of REET capital support.

D. The Seattle Public Library Foundation

The Seattle Public Library Foundation helps the Library equitably enhance its collections, offer activities for all ages, pilot new and innovative initiatives, and enrich our program of service for our community. It supports the Library by securing and managing donations from individuals, businesses and other foundations to enhance levels of Library service beyond what public funding alone is able to provide. The Foundation’s goal is to expand the reach of the Library, not to supplant funding for core Library operations. The Library submits grant requests and provides support where needed, however the final award amount, as well as the efforts funded, is at the discretion of The Seattle Public Library Foundation Board of Directors.

Amounts in \$1,000s	2025 Adopted	2026 Proposed	% Change
Hours & Access	\$1,341	\$TBD	TBD%
Providing Books & Materials	\$2,056	\$TBD	TBD%
Technology & Online Services	\$490	\$TBD	TBD%
Literacy & Early Learning	\$779	\$TBD	TBD%
Major Maintenance (CIP)	\$215	\$TBD	TBD%
Administration	\$319	\$TBD	TBD%
Total	\$5,200	\$TBD	TBD%

E. Library Gift Funds

Section to provide brief overview of Library Gift Funds.

F. Library Enterprise Revenues

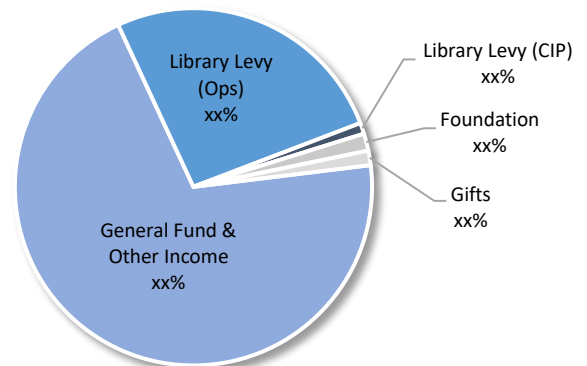
Section to provide brief overview of Library Enterprise Revenues.

VI. Staffing Levels by Funding Source

The 2026 Library budget contains **TBD positions (TBD FTE)**—funded via multiple sources (Figure 5).

Figure 5: FTE by Funding Source

	2025 FTE	2026 FTE	% Change
General Fund & Other Income	428.0	TBD	TBD%
Library Levy (Operations)	159.6	TBD	TBD%
Library Levy (CIP)	6.1	TBD	TBD%
Foundation	9.5	TBD	TBD%
Gift Funds (Bunn & Balch)	8.0	TBD	TBD%
Total	611.2	TBD	TBD%



A. Vacancies

Section to provide brief overview of library vacancies.

B. Accrued Vacation and Sick Leave Payouts for Retirement & Other Separations

Section to provide brief overview of library turnover and separation payouts

	2022		2023		2024	
	Count	Amount	Count	Amount	Count	Amount
Separation Payouts	33	\$137,000	37	\$133,000	TBD	\$TBD
Retirement Payouts	12	\$151,000	17	\$201,000	TBD	\$TBD
Total	45	\$288,000	54	\$334,000	TBD	\$TBD

VII. Closing Summary

Brief overview of 2026 landscape and horizon.

Attachments

1	2026 Operations Plan compared to 2025 Adopted Budget
2	Key Changes in 2026 relative to 2025 Adopted Budget
3	Strategic Plan Insights
4	Library Language Access Plan
5	Library Board Race and Social Justice Policy
6	2019 Library Levy Categories & Budget Cross-walk
7	2026 Capital Improvement Projects
8	Long-Term Capital Improvement Program Plan
9	Library Gift Fund Project Listing
10	Library Organizational Chart



The Seattle Public Library

October 30, 2025

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director/Chief Librarian
Brian Sharkey, Human Resources Director

Re: Proposed Change to 2026 Annual Wage Increase Implementation Date

Board of Trustees Prior Action

In February 2024, the SPL Board of Trustees approved the new terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Local 2083 union. This included annual wage increases (AWIs) for each year of the contract term, 2023-2026. These AWIs were also extended by Board approval to all other non-represented staff, with exception of DPP/APEX program increases as determined by the Chief Librarian, and the Chief Librarian and Executive Director, whose compensation must be separately considered and determined by the Board.

City Announces Change in 2026 AWI Implementation Date

In September 2025, SPL Human Resources (SPL HR) received notice from the City's Seattle Human Resources (SHR) team responsible for implementing AWIs on the Workday payroll system. SHR informed SPL that the 2026 AWI implementation date published in the Local 2083 contract and the rest of the coalition of city unions contracts did not align with a pay period start date as was standard practice. SPL Management and Local 2083 leadership agreed to moving the implementation date from January 10, 2026 (Saturday) to a pay period start date of December 31, 2025 (Wednesday), subject to Board approval.

Impacts of Changing AWI Implementation Date

SPL Finance estimates that moving the implementation date forward by 10 calendar days will result in a cost increase of approximately \$60,000. SPL Finance affirmed that funds are available to cover this one-time cost increase. The Chief Librarian and SPL HR recommend making this adjustment so that SPL employees receive the same pay benefit as the rest of the covered City of Seattle workforce.

Action Requested: Board consideration of new AWI implementation date of December 31, 2025, for represented employees of Washington State Council of County and City Employees, AFSCME, AFL-CIO Local 2083 Bargaining Units; and for non-represented Library employees outside of the DPP/APEX program for approval at October 2025 Board meeting.



The Seattle Public Library

Date: October 30, 2025

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Amy Lawson, Executive Assistant/Library Board Staff Liaison

Subject: Proposed Library Board Meeting Schedule 2026

Listed below are proposed dates for regular Library Board meetings in 2026. Proposed dates assume continuance of meeting the last Thursday of the month, with earlier meeting dates in November and December to accommodate winter holidays.

Trustees will consider special meeting dates separately as needs arise.

Proposed 2026 Regular Meetings of The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees:

Thursday, January 29, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, February 26, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 26, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, April 30, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, May 28, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 25, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, July 30, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, August 27, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, September 24, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 29, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, November 19, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, December 10, 11:00 a.m.

Action Required/Requested: Request Board consideration of proposed 2026 meeting dates for approval at October 2025 meeting.



The Seattle Public Library

Date: October 20th, 2025
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Jessica Lucas, President, AFSCME Local 2083
Re: **October Union Report**

Greetings Library Board of Trustees,

Working for the Library carries many joys. The knowledge that we are helping the public, contributing to a better educated community, and creating space for people to enjoy their lives in a richer way. We also have wonderful benefits, paid time off, sick leave for when we are ill, and a safe working environment as outlined by Labor and Industries, Washington State. I have never imagined that the Library would put staff in danger during planned construction activities.

It was disheartening to learn that a series of errors and disregard of staff concerns could easily create a hazardous workplace. During the summer, our Maintenance and Operations Center had insulation installed. Staff were not notified of the work, were not given the Material Safety Data Sheets, nor counseled on what personal protection might be needed. The contractors showed up with their protection gear and proceeded to install insulation in the open warehouse, with insulation drifting down onto Library workers.

There were many contributing factors that worsened the situation, but the missing basic communication with staff who work at MOC is what led to DOSH complaints, as well as workers feeling left out and in danger of injury.

The Union was involved with workers on site and helped bring Managements attention to their situation. We stood by them until proper shielding was installed, and the site was made safer for staff. We met with Management after the contractors were done and heard from them what measures would be taken in the future to prevent this sort of situation. Union Leadership believed that they were setting processes in place to make sure this didn't happen again.

So I was taken by surprise when staff at Greenwood contacted me and other Union Executive Board Members about physical reactions to fumes during their current reroofing project. I inquired about MSDS forms and if staff knew the possible dangers of exposure to chemicals being used by contractors. The answer staff on site gave was no. Union leaders and Library staff worked together to get the work stopped and to get eyes on the situation by Library

Leadership, who ultimately made the correct decision and closed the branch for the rest of the project.

Once again, MSDS forms were not shared with staff ahead of time. The side effects of the chemicals used could mean long term illness for vulnerable people. Severe headaches, dizziness, and nausea were experienced by many. It took several days of opening and then closing the branch to come to the decision to stop the project until the branch could be closed.

Union Leadership appreciates that Library Leadership was also caught by surprise by how these events unfolded, but this is the second time this year that staff have been put in danger during a Capital Project. We heard a plan after the Fiberglass installation; that plan was not in place for the very next project that came along. Trust has been lost, and staff do not feel safe.

Action required/requested: Informational only.



The Seattle Public Library

NEWS RELEASES

Date	Title
25-Sep-09	Fall 2025 Author and Community Events at The Seattle Public Library
25-Sep-03	27 libraries, 27 postcards: For Library Card Sign-Up Month, The Seattle Public Library launches collectible postcards



The Seattle Public Library

MEDIA COVERAGE

Organization	Date	Headline	Details
West Seattle Blog	30-Sep-25	It's your art show! Southwest Artist Showcase dropoffs start tomorrow	"For more than 30 years, the Southwest Library has hosted the annual Southwest Artist Showcase, a non-juried exhibition in which you can participate just by bringing in art to display."
The Daily Gazette	28-Sep-25	Not too far away to enjoy a perfect day in Seattle	"Everything is painted red on one floor of the Seattle Public Library"
The Seattle Times	25-Sep-25	Rant and Rave: Bagpipe-playing kid puts a smile on reader's face	"RANT AND RAVE Rant to the two masked podcasters filming and harassing the librarians in the West Seattle library. They were too scared to show their faces while making accusations about others to the librarians. Rave to the librarians trying to keep the masked jerks away from library patrons. Apparently they do this frequently and even film people doing personal business on the library computers."
KUOW	24-Sep-25	The best arts, pop culture, and book events to attend in October	"Katie is looking forward to: An author talk with Cory Doctorow about his book called Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It. Doctorow will be at the Seattle Public Library on Oct. 22."
KUOW	21-Sep-25	Bonus: Kim Fu wants writers to get weird	"This is the second of three conversations the KUOW Book Club hosted in partnership with the Seattle Public Library this summer."
Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce	19-Sep-25	Library launches 'Serious Play'	"The program explores the role of play in fostering collaboration and connection across creative, professional and social settings."
The Seattle Times	17-Sep-25	4 dark academia novels to read this fall	"The Seattle Public Library loves to promote books and reading. This column, submitted by the library, is a space to share reading and book trends from a librarian's perspective. You can find these titles at the library by visiting spl.org and searching the catalog."

American Libraries	15-Sep-25	Road to Recovery	Article's lead photo caption: "A sign outside the Columbia branch of Seattle Public Library announcing that 'All library computer systems down,' on Wednesday, May 29, 2024, after the system suffered a ransomware attack." Photo credit: KUOW
The Seattle Lesbian	12-Sep-25	Fall Author and Community Events Calendar at The Seattle Public Library	Library's press release reprinted
Seattle's Child	07-Sep-25	A Postcard for Every Library: Seattle's latest collector challenge	"Local artists illustrate 27 unique SPL branches"
West Seattle Blog	04-Sep-25	From story time to safety meeting, here's what's happening for your West Seattle Thursday	Drop-in chess and toddler story time at Southwest and High Point branches
The Seattle Times	03-Sep-25	Seattle Public Library resources for a great school year	"Here are some of our favorite library resources for channeling back-to-school energy into a journey of learning and discovery for any age."