

Meeting Minutes

Library Board Regular Meeting

January 20, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.
Chandler Basha Library
5990 S. Val Vista Dr. Chandler, AZ 85249



Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Alexis Merritt at 6:31 p.m.

Roll Call

Library Board Attendance

Board Chair Alexis Merritt
Board Vice-Chair Jennifer Pawlik
Board Member Arman Sidhu
Board Member Michael McElhany
Board Member Faith Risolo (via phone @ 6:45pm)

Library Board Members Absent

Board Member Parker McCarthy
Board Member Leanna DeKing

Library Board Attendance

Rachelle Kuzyk, Library Manager
Courtney Allen, Management Analyst
Christopher McGinley, Basha Branch Manager

Others Present

None

Consent Agenda

1. December 2, 2025 Library and Parks and Recreation Board Special Meeting Minutes.
Motion to approve the minutes was made by Board Member McElhany, Board Vice-Chair Pawlik seconded. Motion passed 4-0.
2. November 18, 2025 Library Board Meeting Minutes
Motion to approve the minutes was made by Board Vice-Chair Pawlik, Board Member Sidhu seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Briefing

3. Library Manager's Report – Rachelle Kuzyk

The Library Manager's Report was provided to the Library Board in advance of the meeting for Board Member's review.

Basha Branch Manager Chris McGinley provided a brief overview of recent highlights at the branch. He shared that the Basha staff are in a positive place with school administration. While there have been some ongoing parking and general school-related challenges, he feels the partnership is strong and operating in a good flow.

In programming, Basha continues to lead the way. The branch spearheaded the grant-funded Writer in Residence program. Haley Alcaraz served as the first Writer in Residence and will be presenting at the Local Author Book Fair this Saturday. She also has a new book coming out with Penguin. The current Writer in Residence is Valerie Ipson. The branch intentionally selects authors with diverse specialties. Additionally, a former Writer in Residence, now a well-known local historian and frequent NPR contributor, will also be presenting a program this Saturday.

Basha has also become known as the Puzzling Barons. The branch's puzzle swap is scheduled for January 31, and the annual puzzling tournament will be launching soon. What began at Basha has grown across the East Valley, expanding to Mesa, Tempe, and now Scottsdale. This growth highlights the collaborative spirit of the libraries and their ability to build community-driven initiatives from the ground up.

Although there have recently been several position changes at Basha, the branch has retained most of its core staff. Many team members are exploring new roles while maintaining the strong culture that defines the branch. The staff's ability to connect with and serve the children and teens in this area remains a distinctive strength.

Library Manager Rachelle Kuzyk informed the Board that Sue Van Horne has officially retired. Joel Miller has stepped into the role of Assistant Library Manager and is also currently serving as Downtown Library Manager. The leadership team is exploring a restructuring plan and is awaiting completion of internal HR processes. A question was raised about whether the Downtown position will remain combined with the Assistant Library Manager role or be separated. Rachelle shared that the goal is to divide roles into two dedicated positions. Previously, Sue served in both capacities; however, the Downtown Branch is a large and busy location, which limited the time available for assistant manager level responsibilities. Pending HR approval, the plan is to return to a structure with a dedicated Assistant Library Manager and a dedicated Downtown Branch Manager.

Board Member McElhany asked whether the Discovery Library is considered a fifth branch or part of Outreach. Rachelle explained that it is being designated as a branch. It also serves as the hub for the library's major outreach events, so the terms "Outreach" and "Discovery Library" are sometimes used interchangeably. The Discovery Library is classified as a branch because it is a mobile library that brings services directly into the community. However, it does not operate exactly like a traditional branch, as its collection is a dedicated, secure collection housed on the vehicle. The vehicle is booked for events over the coming weekends and regularly visits Tumbleweed Park. It will also be stationed in front of the Downtown Library on Thursday morning for the Library and Recreation Master Plan consultants, allowing it to be included as one of the branches they visit.

The Discovery Library continues to gain visibility and momentum in the community. Staff attended the Multicultural Festival this past weekend and, despite the challenges of counting attendance due to foot traffic in and out of the vehicle, recorded at least 325 individuals who visited the vehicle or engaged directly outside with materials and handouts. It was a strong turnout and a successful event.

Board Chair Merritt inquired if the schedule is online for the open stops for the Discovery Library. Rachelle responded that the open stops are not online yet, but they will be on the website soon. Closed stops will not be publicly advertised. The Discovery Library will have its own page within the branch pages, and it will also have events on the calendar, so it will live on two of the website pages. Once it's populated with all the open stops, you will be able to go to the calendar and narrow that down to the Discovery Library.

Board Chair Merritt also asked how she should direct people who want to know the location and how much capacity there is for additional open requests. Rachelle explained that the Discovery Library is currently focused on attending city events and is not accepting many additional open requests while operations are still being finalized and processes are being refined.

Rachelle provided the Board with a brief update on the Hamilton renovation project. Construction has reached substantial completion, though the contractor is still working through a punch list. While it may not be the final list, the project is nearing full completion. All soft seating, such as lounge chairs, ottomans, and laptop tables have been ordered. Furniture for the new huddle spaces is also on order, along with office furniture and workstations for the new circulation workroom. The team is now assessing the remaining project budget to determine what may be available for additional shelving that they hope to add to the library. Furniture delivery is expected to begin in the first or second week of March. If the timeline holds, most of the furnishings may be in place by the time of the next Board meeting, which will be held at the Hamilton branch in March.

4. Library Board Ordinance No. 1628

Board Chair Merritt shared that she was unsure where to locate the Library Board Ordinance, noting that it serves as the guiding document for the Commissioning Board. It was clarified that the ordinance is available on both the library's website and the City of Chandler's Boards and Commissions page, and is provided to all Board Members once they are appointed.

<https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/boards-and-commissions/library-board>

Board Chair Merritt also asked about the length of her term as Chair. According to the ordinance, the Chair may serve two consecutive one-year terms. Based on that provision, her current term will expire in November 2026.

The Board also asked whether the ordinance could be modified regarding terms of office. Courtney followed up with the City Clerk's Office and confirmed that the ordinance is governed by City Code and aligns with the structure used for all other Boards and Commissions. Members serve three-year terms, and officers may serve up to two consecutive one-year terms in the same role.

Board Members further inquired about vacancies and attendance requirements. It was explained that a Board Member may be removed after three unexcused absences. Vacancies are filled as they occur, while new appointments and reappointments are processed annually in May.

Members Comments / Announcements

Board Member Sidhu shared that he recently attended the Phoenix Public Library fundraising event, "Raise the Stacks," held at Burton Barr Central Library. The 21-and-over, ticketed event provided after-hours access to the library and was designed to bring the community together in support of library programs.

The evening featured appetizers, drinks, complimentary valet parking, and a cocktail-style atmosphere, along with live music and a dessert reception. Guests were welcomed by the library's bookmobile, which is operated by the Phoenix Public Library Foundation.

The entire floor was closed to allow guests to mingle among the stacks while enjoying food and beverages. The event incorporated multiple revenue-generating components, including both a live auction with an auctioneer and an online-style silent auction. Additional creative fundraising efforts included "mystery boxes" pairing books with wine or beer. Tickets were priced at \$75 per person, with approximately 250 attendees. It was structured as an adults-only, after-hours experience, which appeared to be a strong draw.

Board Member Sidhu noted that the event created meaningful engagement opportunities for the Mayor, City Council, and community members who may not regularly visit the physical library. It also provided an effective platform to highlight library programs and make a compelling case for support, particularly for initiatives that are not funded through the general budget.

It was discussed that if a similar event were considered locally, much of the initiative and oversight would likely need to come from the Friends of the Library particularly due to liability considerations. Overall, Board Member Sidhu commented that an “after dark” library event could be a memorable and impactful way to engage the community and reinforce support for library services, especially during funding discussions.

Unscheduled Public Appearances

None

Calendar

7. The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hamilton Library Meeting Room, 3700 S. Arizona Ave. Chandler, AZ 85248.

8. The next Friends of the Library Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 1:00 p.m., at the Hamilton Library, 3700 S. Arizona Ave. Chandler, AZ 85248.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Board Member Sidhu, Board Member McElhany seconded. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:07p.m.

Courtney Allen, Board Liaison

Alexis Merritt, Board Chair