Yakima Valley Libraries
Board of Trustees
Budget Study Session
Monday, October 27, 2025– 3:30 p.m.
Yakima Central Library Boardroom

I. OPENING OF MEETING:

Board Member Present: President Bradley Liebrecht, Vice-President Jameson Watkins, Trustee Judith Panagakos, Trustee Noemi Yaneli Sanchez

Staff Present: Executive Director- Candelaria Mendoza**,** Executive Assistant- Michael Huff, Public Library Services Director- Francisco Garcia-Ortiz, Regional Library Manager, Region 1- Kristine Tardiff, Regional Library Manager, Region 2- Heather Campbell, Community Engagement & Impact Manager- Sully Gama, IT Manager- Melissa Vickers, Facilities Manager- Susan Miller, Public Services Manager- Rondi Downs, Technical Services & NWRR Manager -Sherrie Prentice, Human Resources Manager- Maria Hernandez, Accounting Assistant Manager- Lucía Nesta-Espinoza, Collection Development & Circulation Manager- LeNee Gatton

Absent: Secretary Mary MacKintosh

Visitors: Community members in person and online, and a reporter from the Yakima Herald.

Call to Order

Trustee Liebrecht called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

a. Determination of quorum
Trustee Liebrecht determined a quorum of the Trustees was present.

b. Recognition of visitors:
Visitors were recognized.

c. Approval of the agenda

MOTION: Trustee Panagakos moved to approve the agenda as presented. Trustee Watkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Budget Study Session: Potential 2026 Initiatives

Mendoza presented a draft of the 2026 budget. It included Deferred Maintenance, the Services and Facilities Assessment, Technology Improvements, Early Literacy, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. She said the final numbers provided by the Yakima County Assessor's Office were received the day of the board meeting.

a. **Deferred Maintenanc:** Discussion

Mendoza began with the 2026 Tax Base (Pages 3 and 4 of the budget packet): As of the estimated state assessed and personal property amounts received from the County Assessor as of 09/17/2025, the current tax base is $31,812,977,631.00; the estimated 2026 max lawful is $9,151,201.79; and the estimated 2026 state maximum is $15,906,488.82. Yakima Valley Regional Library is requesting the 1% increase as follows: the previous amount levied was $9,081,211.25; (new construction) allowed increase is $85,480.05; the 1% increase of the previous amount is $90,812.11 for a total estimated amount to be included in the resolution of $9,257,503.41. Mendoza said those numbers align with what will be presented at next month's budget hearing. She added that YVL's tax rate this year was $0.28, which goes down from year to year. Property Tax Rebate (Page 5 of the budget packet): YVL is expecting $73,147.95 for the 2026 tax year refund levy (RCW 84.69.180) from the Yakima County Treasurer.

Mendoza then communicated the current estimated 2026 budget information. The 2026 budget projections assume the following: approval of both collective bargaining agreements; approval of the new 2025 pay plans; the cities of Mabton and Granger to approve the new contracts while Tieton and the Town of Naches have not; and finally, the YVL investment fund is to accrue $156,000 in interest in 2026.

2026 Estimated Budget Revenue (Page 8 of the budget packet): Mendoza explained the differences between 2025 and 2026. She said what isn't reflected is the 1% increase, as well as the funds carried forward from the LCIP grant. Additionally, the anticipated funds from the contract cities are pending, and therefore, they are not currently reflected in the estimated 2026 budget.

2026 Estimated Expenditures (Page 9 of the budget packet): Salaries and wages are the greatest expense for next year. In 2025, the total salary and wages were $4,301,758, and in 2026, they are expected to be $4,574,165, representing a 6.3% increase. Mendoza added that the 2026 amount includes a 2.5% performance merit and 2.5% COLA. She then addressed benefits. In 2025, they totaled $1,814,785, and in 2026, they will be $1,806,755, representing a decrease of less than 1%. Additionally, a 12.5% increase in medical benefits will be implemented, and the PERS contribution will be adjusted from 9.11% to 5.58% for the 2025-2027 biennium. She stated that the PERS rates are normally established every two years and are subject to change by the Legislature.

Deferred Maintenance:
In 2025, with Trustee approval, YVL continues to allocate funds for Deferred Maintenance and Technology, placing 1% of total revenue into deferred maintenance and 0.5% into technology. Mendoza stated that for 2026, it is recommended that YVL maintain the same allocation of 1.5% of total revenue (approximately $155,918), with 1% designated to Deferred Maintenance (approximately $103,945) and 0.5% to technology (approximately $51,973). It is also recommended to continue to provide a $20,000 critical infrastructure line item for facilities; YVL will carry forward a balance and fill the gap from the current deferred maintenance account. Trustee Liebrecht asked about the funds needed for vehicle replacement. It was agreed that the topic would be added to November's budget hearing.

b. **Services and Facilities Assessment** Discussion

Library Capital Improvement Program Carry Forward: Mendoza shared that YVL is working with vendors to gather quotes for the projects at the Yakima Central Library through the LCIP grant. The projects include replacing the elevator, performing abatement and painting, and replacing the sump pump, at a total cost of $1,221,000. YVL is working to ensure that all of the quote information is accurate, and the tentative timeframe is the spring of 2026. Mendoza then shared the additional capital improvement projects. LED lighting at the West Valley Library: The cost is $34,656, but after applying the Pacific Power Incentive of approximately $25,000, the total cost to YVL is approximately $ 9,656.10. LED lighting at the Selah Library: The cost is $14,512.20; however, after applying the Pacific Power Incentive of approximately $8,600, the total cost to YVL is approximately $5,912.20. Lastly, Yakima Central needs to upgrade its surveillance camera, which is projected to cost $20,000.

c. **Technology Improvements** Discussion

Mendoza communicated that YVL will research and select a third-party application to support YVL's strategic goals, focusing on increasing community engagement, circulation, program attendance, and general awareness. She said the initiative will include an app that will have YVL's catalog, program calendar, Beanstack, and Libby. She then presented an estimated timeline of the app production in 2026. The estimated cost will be $50,000.
January: The RFP will be completed.
February: The RFP will be released.
March: Submittals will be due, and proposals will be evaluated.
April: Interviews will be conducted, the consultant(s) will be selected, and the contract will be completed.
June: The project work begins.
September: The capabilities will be shared with the Board and Staff.
October: The App goes live.
2026 Technology Improvements and Facility Projects:
Mendoza communicated that YVL will research and assess other potential technology innovations and facility projects for the Trustees to consider in 2026. In addition, the LCIP grant will open the application period for another round of funding in the near future, so she recommended having those two items on the agenda for the 2026 Board Retreat.

d. **Early Literacy** Discussion

Mendoza reiterated that YVL's strategic mission is for youth to "consistently engage in fun and enriching learning opportunities outside of school." She recommended that the way to ensure YVL is being more effective at meeting this top strategic priority is for staff to focus more on early literacy across the district and to implement the following initiatives: implement the Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) curriculum; training and support for all staff who implement early literacy initiatives; invest in a professional staff collection of books, tools, and other resources; and have 60 to 70% of all initiatives across the organization be focused on early literacy. She then presented an estimated timeline of the 2025-2026 initiative. The estimated cost will be $35,000; however, it may be closer to $10,000.

2025
November: Complete the research.
December: Branch and department goals are released.
2026
January: Training goals are released, and orders for professional collections are made.
February: Training and marketing campaign begin.
April: The first evaluation is completed.
May: ECRR curriculum is implemented in some library locations.
June: The ECRR curriculum will be implemented throughout the district.

e. **Collective Bargaining Agreement** Discussion

Mendoza shared an overview of the collective bargaining process:

- YVL has been negotiating two collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) with AFSCME Union and staff reps since the beginning of 2025.
- The focus was on the following:
  - Finding mutual ground by building from YVL's current Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual
  - Using the insights from the McGrath Classification and Compensation Study
  - Negotiating an agreement that aligns with the market as well as ensuring fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Mendoza stated that, if approved at the Regular Meeting, except for a few items with specific dates outlined in the CBA, the CBAs will take effect on November 1, which is the first full pay period following approval from both parties. She then communicated that the outcomes of the CBAs would include the following:

- YVL will have two separate bargaining units
  - Non-Supervisory
  - Supervisory
- There is more structure and updates to the following areas:
  - Hours of work, overtime, hiring, promoting, seniority, discipline, performance appraisals, transfer of Sick Leave Program, and layoffs
- Added bilingual incentive for Summer 2026
- Updated pay plans based on the McGrath Classification and Compensation Study
  - Non-supervisory and supervisory
  - Implementing pay plans all at once vs phased in as McGrath had originally recommended
- One-time payments for eligible employees
  - Part-time employees (22): They would receive $1,000. The total gross one-time payment YVL would pay is $22,000; the total taxes and benefits would be $1,828.20; the total YVL payout would be $23,828.20.
  - Full-time employees (43): They would receive $2,000. The total gross one-time payment YVL would pay is $86,000; the total taxes and benefits would be $7,146.60; the total YVL payout would be $93,146.60.
    - The total gross one-time payment is $108,000.00, the total taxes and benefits is $8,974.80, and the total YVL payout would be $116,974.80.

Mendoza added that the payments will be reflected on the November 25th paychecks, as well as the wage increases, and went on to share about the additional outcomes.

- Holidays remain the same, but YVL will now close all locations at 3 pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
- Vacation Tiers were adjusted to allow for more accruals and reduce the time within each tier, as shown below:

Previous			New		
Consecutive Years	Hours Per Month	Annual Vacation	Consecutive Years	Hours Per Month	Annual Vacation
0-6	6.66 hours	80 hours (10 days)	0-2	6.66 hours	80 hours (10 days)
7-14	10 hours	120 hours (15 days)	3-5	8 hours	96 hours (12 days)
15-17	11.33 hours	136 hours (17 days)	6-9	10 hours	120 hours (15 days)
18+	13.33 hours	160 hours (20 days)	10-14	13.33 hours	160 hours (20 days)
			15+	16 hours	192 hours (24 days)

Mendoza then provided information for non-union employees. The following adjustments have been made.

- 2025 pay plan
- Vacation Accruals: per the Policies and Procedures Manual
- One-time payments for non-union staff
  - Part-time employees (2): They would receive $1,000. The total gross one-time payment YVL would pay is $2,000; the total taxes and benefits would be $166.20; the total YVL payout would be $2,166.20.
  - Full-time employees (1): They would receive $2,000, the total gross one-time payment YVL would pay is $2,000, the total taxes and benefits would be $166.20, the total YVL payout would be $2,166.20.
  - Salary-exempt employees (12): They would receive $2,000. The total gross one-time payment YVL would pay is $24,000; the total taxes and benefits would be $1,994.40, and the total YVL payout would be $25,994.40.
    - The total gross one-time payment YVL would pay is $28,000, the total taxes and benefits would be $2,326.80, and the total YVL payout would be $30,326.80.

2025 Budget

Mendoza shared three categories where YVL saved money in 2025: branch hour changes and restructuring in Wapato, Toppenish, and Yakima Central; restructuring the Business Services Department; and a few smaller restructures, as well as not filling a few vacancies, resulting in approximately 3.5 full-time employee positions not being filled. An additional item that impacted the budget was the state legislature's decrease of the PERS contribution from 9.11% to 5.58%.

Mendoza stated that YVL can absorb the updated 2025 pay plans and one-time payments of $116,974.90 for supervisory and non-supervisory employees, and $30,326.80 for non-union eligible employees, without having to draw from reserves now or in the future.

Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual:

Mendoza communicated that to ensure there is alignment between the CBAs and YVL's personnel policies, YVL had to create a new Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual (The Manual). The Manual reflects all the staff within YVL and covers many areas of business, including the mission of the Library, staff expectations, personnel files, leaves, employment, holidays, travel, classifications, benefits, hours of work, training, staff development, discipline, retirement, grievance process, anti-harassment, etc.

Trustee Liebrecht expressed concern about the quick turnaround for implementation and requested for it to be noted so that additional time will be given in future CBA negotiations.

Trustee Liebrecht ended the meeting ahead of schedule and had everyone reconvene at 4:30 for the regular meeting.

II. Adjournment

Trustee Liebrecht adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary MacKintosh

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Secretary