# El Rito Public Library

## Board Meeting Minutes

## Saturday, October 17, 2026

### Meeting Opening

- The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm.
- Present at the meeting were Directors Lynne Gudes, Sid Gudes, and Kira Washington (via Zoom). Carole Smith attended as head librarian and Gabe Lopez as Facilities Team Leader.
- Three out of four voting members of the Board being in attendance, a quorum of the voting members of the Board was established.
- Motion was made and passed unanimously to accept the minutes of the September meeting.

### Financial, Compliance, and Risk Report

#### Financial Status

- Cash at the end of September was $99,970, down from $101,700 at the end of August.
- Revenue during September included $6,014 in patron donations and $202 in interest earned.
- Total expenditures for September were $7,538, with payroll the largest expense at $5,911, and renewal of the movie license at $475, which permits the library to present films to the public.

#### Grant Status

- The outdoor recreation grant totaled $27,000, of which $4,300 had been spent as of the end of September, leaving $22,700 unspent.
- An incoming G.O. Bond allocation of $14,700 is expected to be available in the next two weeks.
- New Mexico State Library grants totaling $27,000 are anticipated, split between a $10,000 grants-in-aid allocation and a $17,000 rural library program grant, with 50% expected in November or December and the remaining 50% in January.

#### Compliance

- Nothing to report.

#### Risk

- Testing of the circulation room subfloor showed erosion in multiple locations, posing a risk to patron safety. Lee Romero was engaged to enter the crawlspace beneath the library and reinforce the floor to prevent potential collapse.
- Gabe raised the question of whether state funding could help with repair costs given the safety risk involved. Sid pointed out that under the New Mexico Constitution's anti-donation clause, the state is prohibited from providing funds for construction-related projects to private entities.
- Federal funding for construction is theoretically available but involves a multi-year grant process, making it unsuitable for immediate floor needs.
- Funds from an unrestricted bequest received from Carol Martin-Davis two years prior were designated as the reserve for covering construction expenses.

### Library Team Leader Report

#### Library Operations and Programming (Carole)

- Activity at the library is expected to slow down slightly at the start of November before picking up again toward the end of the month and into December.
- A new desk librarian named Celeste was hired to work Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

- Carole confirmed she would continue working the front desk on Thursdays and performing librarian duties on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with plans to be available alongside Celeste for the first two weeks to assist with onboarding.
- Weeding, cleaning, and reorganizing of the children's library shelves is ongoing, with Spanish fiction and part of the nonfiction section already completed.

### Faciltiies and grounds (Gabe)

- Starting to sand all the outdoor benches and re oil them.
- Decorating, getting the library ready for the Halloween theme.
- Cleaning indoors and maintaining the grounds outdoors.

### Community Services (Carole/CeCe/Jill/Mary)

- Zach Hively's workshop attracted six attendees and was well received.
- The Death by Chocolate event was successful, attracting many attendees and generating a profit when combined with contributions from the quilters.
- An animatronic puppet show is scheduled for the Christmas party, with the performer donating both his time and puppets, and expressing willingness to visit the library twice a year.
- Flyers for Trunk or Treat, Zach's poetry reading, and the Medicare open house were distributed to post offices in Vallecitos, La Madera, and Ojo, as well as Century Bank in Española.
- Flyers were submitted to the Abiquiú News but were sent to the wrong contact due to a recent change in ownership, resulting in them missing the current issue.
- Trunk or Treat
    - Steve, a volunteer guitar player, is scheduled to attend Trunk or Treat but will not perform live music, rather will bring a boom box with Halloween recordings.
    - The food permit for Trunk or Treat is active, and volunteers are lined up for face painting and pumpkin painting activities.
    - Gabe volunteered to run the haunted house, with Judah assisting in scaring attendees.
    - The nonfiction room will be used for the haunted house due to its two exits, with the large TV to be used for movie screenings in the fiction room.
    - Sid raised the need to test the large TV ahead of the event, as it had not been turned on in some time; Gabe confirmed he would check it.
    - Sourcing approximately 30 small pumpkins for the pumpkin painting activity was identified as a need, with Trader Joe's unable to donate due to budget issues, and Walmart identified as a potential alternative.
    - A suggestion was made to approach a local pumpkin stand near the hospital in Española for last-minute donations, though the risk of insufficient supply on the day was acknowledged.
    - Gabe proposed organizing a full haunted house event at the library the following Halloween as a standalone fundraiser, initially suggesting a paid entry fee.
    - Sid clarified that charging a mandatory entry fee would create tax complications for the library as a nonprofit, and suggested a voluntary donation model as a compliant alternative.
    - The use of glow-in-the-dark paint activated by black light was discussed as a decorative element for the haunted house, with the team noting that a black light was not currently available but could be ordered or substituted with existing flashlights.
- After School and Toddler programs
    - The After School and Toddler programs are progressing well, with children's artwork displayed in the hallway.

- Plans are underway to have the artwork printed on fabric, with the Quilters offering to create a quilt from the images.
- The Extension Office conducted two weaving classes with the After School group, with most children completing potholders to take home.
- Cooking classes are scheduled for three times in November with the After School group.
- Gabe mentioned a connection with a woman named Sola who runs a children-focused nonprofit and expressed interest in collaborating with the library, with a potential link-up with Mary suggested as a follow-up.

### Fundraising and outreach (Jill)

- Two site visits took place during the period and were reported to have gone well, with visitors expressing positive feedback about the library.
- We are awaiting decisions on two $10,000 grants, one from United Way and one from the Santa Fe Community Foundation.
- A Congressionally directed grant for a new roof and HVAC system remained pending, with Congress potentially voting on it within the coming months, though the timeline is uncertain.
- Sid is preparing to submit an application to the New Mexico Library Foundation for a STEM education grant of between $3,000 and $5,000, due by October 31st, with the intent to tie it to the existing After School, toddler, and Summer programs.
- Even with the anticipated United Way and Santa Fe Community Foundation grants, the library is projected to have about a $30,000 deficit for the year.
- Reserves from the Carol Martin-Davis bequest are available to cover the shortfall, though the board acknowledged that relying on reserves is not a sustainable long-term strategy.
- Achieving a balanced budget in the current or following year was identified as critical to the library's continued operation.
- The 100-for-$100 fund drive had raised $1,150 through the end of September, and another $200 through this meeting, though limited active promotion of the fund was noted.
- Crowfunding
  - Kira raised the possibility of using GoFundMe or similar platforms for future library needs.
  - Research indicated that crowdfunding works well for specific, tangible projects but is ineffective for general operating expenses.
  - New flooring in the main library room was identified as a potential candidate for a crowdfunding campaign, as the current carpet poses a trip hazard.
  - Gabe proposed creating an online resale page for donated books to generate additional revenue for the library.
  - Sid noted that selling items has to be done carefully, to avoid gross receipts tax and unrelated business taxable income.
  - Tax issues were flagged as requiring further clarification before any decision could be made.
  - Kira suggested pausing the resale discussion to allow the Board to better understand the tax implications and reconvene with a clearer shared understanding.

**Kids Webpage**

- Kira proposed adding a dedicated For Kids webpage to the library website, featuring recommended resources, upcoming programs, and activities relevant to children and parents.
- Sid supported the idea and suggested approaching Dave to build the page, noting that updates would be straightforward given the current non-HTML platform.

**Fundraising Capacity**

- A gap in fundraising capacity was identified, with Jill being too occupied with other projects to take on new grant applications in a timely manner.
- The need for a dedicated fundraising role, whether volunteer or part-time, was discussed as increasingly important given the volume of grant opportunities being missed.
- Braen was identified as a potential candidate for a fundraising support role, with Carole agreeing to speak with her about availability.
- Diane from the Santa Fe Community Foundation was suggested as a contact who might be able to recommend a qualified fundraiser.
- Kira offered to post a recruitment flyer at her campus, noting that students with relevant experience or those seeking practical project work for certifications could be a viable source.
- The possibility of a student taking on grant writing as part of a thesis or academic project was raised as another avenue worth exploring.

**Library Internet Connectivity and Computer Performance**

- Concerns were raised about slow computer performance in the main library and an unstable internet connection experienced during the meeting.
- The wireless router's placement on a shelf behind thick adobe walls was identified as a likely cause of poor signal distribution throughout the building.
- Installing additional routers connected by cabling was discussed, though the difficulty of running wires through adobe walls without significant construction work was acknowledged.
- A suggestion was made to route cabling through the ceiling during the planned roof replacement, dropping connections into rooms to avoid cutting through walls.
- Distinguishing between internet speed issues and native computer processing speed was identified as a necessary first step before determining whether new equipment was needed.
- Speed tests were proposed as the appropriate diagnostic tool, with clarification that web-based speed tests measure internet connectivity rather than machine performance.
- The computers in the main library were noted as being very old, making hardware limitations a plausible contributing factor to slow performance.

**Meeting Closing**

- The next Board meeting was set for Saturday, November 14, 2026, at 2:00 pm.
- The Board voted to adjourn the meeting.
- The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.

## Next Steps

- Pursue a New Mexico Library Foundation STEM grant due October 31st.
- Outreach to Diane at the Santa Fe Community Foundation to explore recommendations for a part-time or volunteer fundraising resource.
- Develop a recruitment flyer for a fundraiser to distribute at campuses and via networking.
- Test the large TV before the Trunk or Treat to confirm it is operational.
- Source pumpkins for the pumpkin painting activity.
- Contact Lee to confirm a timeline for the crawlspace subfloor reinforcement work.
- Perform speed and performance tests on the library computers to determine whether slow performance was due to internet connectivity or aging hardware.
- Commission a For Kids webpage with Dave, develop and expand content over time.
- Carole will send the log sheet electronically to Lynne for review and editing.