

**Custer County Library Board
Minutes**

Sept 16, 2025

Custer County Library

The Custer County Library Board of Trustees met at 12:58 p.m. on Tuesday September 16th, 2025, at the Hermosa Branch. The people in attendance were Library Director Sarah Myers, Cheryl Dillon, Hermosa Branch Director Bert Philip, Susan Swindal, Leo Van Sambeek, and Kibbon Rittberger. Attending via video call was Katie Wiederholt.

AGENDA CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

None.

MINUTES

- ❖ **July 16th, 2025 Board Minutes:** *No changes to the July meeting minutes. Kibbon made a motion to approve the July Board minutes. Susan seconded the motion. The motion carried.*

TREASURER REPORT: *The Board reviewed the July and August financials for the Library's General checking account. The Board also reviewed the July and August financials for the County Ledgers. Sarah mentioned the balances of the county ledgers being corrected to reflect correct amounts. Leo motioned to accept the financials, Kibbon seconded, and the motion carried.*

- ❖ **GENERAL CHECKING:** Balance of \$25,828.04 as of September 12th
- ❖ **COUNTY SPREAD SHEET:** Balance \$126,883.25 as of August 31st, 38.49 % of budget

LIBRARIAN REPORT: *The Librarian Report is attached to and is part of this month's minutes.*

- ❖ Director Meeting Updates
- ❖ Programming Updates
- ❖ Strategic Plan Updates

OLD BUSINESS:

- ❖ None

NEW BUSINESS:

- ❖ **2025 Summer Reading Program Statistics-** *Sarah shared the numbers from the 2025 summer reading program for both Hermosa and Custer. Notes attached.*
- ❖ **Hermosa Student Cards Grades 6-8 Discussion-** *Sarah presented the request from the Custer School District to add student cards to Hermosa students grade 6-8. Kibbon made the motion to approve access for Doris Ann Mertz to KOHA to mirror what is done for Custer students. An updated authorization form to be updated to reflect Hermosa. Susan seconded the motion and the motion carried.*
- ❖ **Chapter Six- SDSL Trustee Manual Discussion- Strategic Planning-** *Trustees held a discussion on Chapter Six from the trustee manual provided from the State Library on the topic of Strategic Planning. Discussion lasted 9 minutes*
- ❖ **Technology Plan 2023-2025 Drafting and Discussion-** *This item has been tabled until the October meeting giving trustees ample time to review this plan as well as allowing time for Sarah to present on the 2023-2025 plan.*

- ❖ Trustee Terms ending in 2025- *Discussion was held regarding two trustee positions coming up for renewal at the end of this year. No commitments were requested at this time, only notice for them to be considered.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ❖ Hermosa Building Initiative 9/16 after the board meeting in Hermosa
- ❖ Foundation Meeting- 9/18 1pm at the Custer County Library
- ❖ South Dakota One Book Discussion- 9/20 at 1pm
- ❖ Library Closure 10/13 for Native Americans Day
- ❖ Updates for Hermosa- *The book sale at the Custer County Fair was very successful, bringing in over \$1,000 over the three days. Big thanks to the Rittberger family for aiding in the moving of books. Hermosa will be resuming Crafterdays and Story Time for fall, winter, and spring programming. Another watercolor class will be offered for both beginners and those wanting the next level. The Hermosa branch will be celebrating 20 years open in December. Bert will be planning some sort of celebratory event. Details to come.*

NEXT MEETING: *October 15th – 1:00PM at the Custer County Library.*

ADJOURNMENT: *Susan made the motion to adjourn with Leo as second. The meeting adjourned at 2:07 pm.*



Sarah Myers
Secretary/Treasurer

September Director Report

Jul/Aug/Sept Director Meetings Updates

- ***Commission Mtgs-*** 8/6- I requested for an additional employee as planned. We are still in the middle of the budget process, and they did not want to commit to any new employees at this time. I more got the impression that we need to tighten up the budget as a whole for the county. A positive of this ask was being able to inform the commission of library needs even if they cannot be met at this moment. They will not know how things are unless we let them know. It was also brought up to consider that Custer City does not contribute anything to the library budget, but their constituents can all benefit from it. Does this solve our problem? No, but it is a perspective we need to keep in mind and consider what needs done to make that ask.
- ***Friends of the Library 8/23*** – We had 26 people together at the informational meeting. Good reception from attendees. We plan to have an organizational meeting the end of September. The Foundation Meeting will be on the 18th. More details to come.
- ***SDLA Chamberlain mtg-*** I was able to go to Chamberlain to strategic plan and get a foot up on legislative issues. This will be one of many meetings and there will be Zoom options for the upcoming ones. Main takeaways. We need to have engagement. You are only as strong as your volunteer force. We need to have more outreach. What voices can we add to the cause.
- ***Public Library Collect and Connect-*** Topics of discussion, 250 Anniversary of America, what are other libraries doing to celebrate in 2026. Establishing Friends of the Library groups. Budget season. Grant County is one of the other county libraries in our state. The director was asked for the circulation statistics for all three branches. From this, 2 out of the 3 branches are being closed. We need to discuss how to prevent this from happening to us. It was a common topic at this meeting of tightening up budgets and library is an easy place to start.

Programming Updates

- *See talking points printout.*

Strategic Plan Updates

- Update of the Strategic Planning Spreadsheet. Hopefully will provide some more clarity to the status as well as to what action items have been taken.
- See July/Aug/Sept items on the list

Summer Reading 2025 Talking Points

1. Participation & Reading Outcomes

- **335 participants** registered, a small increase over 2024.
- **281,256 minutes read**, narrowly surpassing 2024's total.
- **Completion rate** dipped slightly (53% vs. 57.5% in 2024).
- **Adults and teens grew significantly** in both participation and minutes, while **6–11 and 0–5 groups saw declines in completion**.

Forward Look 2026:

- Revisit age-based goals, especially for **0–5** where 100 minutes/week may be too ambitious for parents.
- Explore tiered milestones (e.g., 300 minutes for younger ages).
- Define success with **multiple metrics**—not just minutes read (e.g. program engagement, family participation).

2. Programming Growth

- **44 events in 2025**, up from 30 in 2024.
- **Attendance nearly doubled**: 1,228 vs. 661.
- **Teen and adult programming surged**; general audience events were well-attended.
- **Passive program participation jumped 313%**—time-intensive to set up, but with long-lasting reach.

Forward Look 2026:

- Maintain **dedicated days** for kids and teens to build routines.
- Add more scalable **passive programming challenges** (e.g., scavenger hunts, bingo).
- Evaluate which events yield the best return on time invested.

3. Partnerships & External Variables

- YMCA participation was impacted by scheduling disruptions, lowering reading minutes.
- Partnerships amplify reach but can also reduce consistency when external factors shift.

Forward Look 2026:

- Formalize lighter **summer expectations** with partners.
- Add at least one **independent family/community-wide reading push** to balance reliance on partners.

4. Hermosa Branch Impact

- Registrations increased from **15 in 2024 to 36 in 2025**.
- Minutes read grew from **5,100 to 22,565**.
- Shift from **take-and-makes to in-person programs** correlated with higher reading engagement.
- Staffing (12-hour relief position) proved inefficient for both library and staff member.

Forward Look 2026:

- Gather **participant age data** to refine program design.

5. Resources & Capacity

- **Expanding programming and new focus areas stretched staff capacity.**
- **Growth in adult and teen engagement** required shifting energy away from some children's groups.
- We did have a **summer aide (12 hrs/week)** in 2025, designed to cover Custer and Hermosa. This model was not effective:
 - Hours were too limited to make a real impact.
 - Travel to Hermosa reduced what could be accomplished in Custer.
 - The aide's time could have been better used to support programming and outreach.

Forward Look 2026:

- Reshape the summer aide into a **Custer-based outreach and support role**, with flexible outreach to Hermosa as needed.
- Increase use of **volunteers and Friends of the Library** to help with program support and passive prep.
- Consider **internships or seasonal help** to expand summer capacity.
- Continue to **balance programming focus**—rotating emphasis between age groups year to year so we don't overstretch staff.

6. Advocacy & Storytelling

- **Wins to celebrate:** record program attendance, strong adult/teen engagement, Hermosa turnaround, and passive program growth.
- **Challenges to acknowledge:** slight dip in completion rate, reliance on partner schedules, and younger reader struggles.

Forward Look 2026:

- Frame success as **broad community impact**, not just raw reading numbers.
- Use data to highlight **return on investment**: more events, greater attendance, and deeper community engagement with the same or limited resources.

Board Takeaway:

The 2025 Summer Reading Program was our most ambitious yet—expanding programming, strengthening teen and adult participation, and revitalizing Hermosa. As we plan for 2026, we'll refine goals for younger readers, balance programming focus, and ensure staffing and partnerships align with capacity so we can sustain growth without overextension.