

EMERGENCY SUCCESSION POLICY FLATHEAD COUNTY LIBRARY

The Board of Directors at Flathead County Library recognizes that this is a plan for contingencies due to the disability, death or departure of the Director. If the organization is faced with the unlikely event of an untimely vacancy, the Library has in place the following emergency succession plan to facilitate the transition to both interim and longer-term leadership.

The Board has reviewed the job description of the Director. The Board has a clear understanding of the Director's role in organizational leadership, program development, program administration, operations, board relationships, financial operations, resource development and community presence.

TEMPORARY, UNPLANNED ABSENCE

A temporary short-term absence is one of less than three months in which it is expected that the Director will return to her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved. An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave, such as a vacation or a sabbatical. The Board will implement the terms of this emergency plan in the event of the unplanned absence of the Director.

In the event of an unplanned absence of the Director, The Public Services Librarian will immediately inform the Board Chair (or highest-ranking volunteer board member) of the absence. As soon as it is feasible, the Chair should convene a meeting of the Board to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan or to make modifications as the Board deems appropriate.

At the time that this plan was approved, the position of the Acting Director would be filled by: **Tony Edmundson.**

Should the standing appointee to the position of Acting Director be unable or not willing to serve, the first and second back-up appointee for the position of Acting Director would be: **Rebecca Johnson.**

To ensure continuity of essential administrative functions and to provide operational support to the Interim Director, the role of Library Office Coordinator will be reclassified to Library Office Administrator for the length of the absence.

At the time of approval of this succession plan, the position of Library Office Coordinator is held by: **Rhonda Hawkins.**

The Board may also decide to split the Director's duties among the designated employees.

A temporary long-term absence is one that is expected to last more than three months. The procedures and conditions to be followed should be the same as for a short-term absence with one addition:

The Board will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Acting Director, to **temporarily** filling the Librarian (or other management) position left vacant. This is in recognition of the fact that for a term of more than 3 months, it may not be reasonable to expect the Acting Director to carry out the duties of both positions. The position description of a temporary manager should focus on covering the priority areas in which the Acting Director needs assistance.

AUTHORITY AND COMPENSATION OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR

The person appointed as Acting Director shall have the same authority for decision-making and independent action as the regular Director. Per Flathead County Personnel Policy, the Acting Director shall be compensated according to the "Temporary Pay in Acting Position" policy.

BOARD OVERSIGHT

The Personnel Committee is responsible for monitoring the work of the Acting Director and will be sensitive to the special support needs of the Acting Director in this temporary leadership role.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

Immediately upon transferring the responsibilities to the Acting Director, the Board will notify the Flathead County Human Resources Department, Library staff members, and the Library Foundation Director of the delegation of authority.

As soon as possible after the Acting Director has begun covering the unplanned absence, Board members and the Acting Director shall communicate the temporary leadership structure to the following external supporters of the Library: County Commissioners, County Administrator and Department Heads, Library Foundation Board, Friends of the Library, Montana State Library and others.

COMPLETION OF EMERGENCY SUCCESSION PLAN PERIOD

The decision about when the absent Director returns to the Library should be determined by the Director and the Board. A transitional return-to-work plan with the ultimate goal of returning to a full-time schedule may be approved by the Board.

PERMANENT CHANGE IN DIRECTOR

A permanent change is one in which it is determined that the Director will not be returning to the position. The procedures and conditions should be the same as for a long-term temporary absence with one addition:

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Transition and Search Committee within 30 days to plan and carry out the transition to a new permanent Director. The Board will also consider the need for consulting assistance to plan and manage the transition and search. The Board will also determine the need for an Interim Director, and plan for the recruitment and selection of an Interim Director and/or permanent Director.

Adopted: 3/26/26, revised 4/23/26
Flathead County Library Board of Trustee
David Ingram, Board Chair