



**The
Urbana
Free
Library**

Director’s Report

Date: June 4, 2026

To: The Urbana Free Library Board of Trustees

From: Taliah Abdullah, Executive Director

Re: Director’s Report for Board Meeting of June 9, 2026

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Strategic Plan Progress



ENHANCE

We steward our physical and financial resources to serve evolving community needs that support growth and sustainability.

- Volunteers are critical to the Library’s operations, and they help with tasks such as pulling patron holds, delivering to Home Delivery patrons, and assisting with programming. On May 1, the Library hosted a volunteer appreciation celebration that drew about one-half of the nearly 40 volunteers that support the library.



EMBRACE

We learn about and respond to our community in order to create a welcoming environment that cultivates equity, mutual respect, and belonging.

- Continuously, the Library has been gathering patron feedback through questions on the Patron Engagement board in the lobby, near the Green St. entrance. Staff reviewed the patron feedback at a recent all-staff meeting, and we are excited to begin to implement some of the patron ideas and suggestions as well as use the information to communicate and inform services and programs to patrons.

- This month, Sherrie Bowser, Archives Librarian, attended the Midwest Archives Conference Annual Meeting in Columbus, Ohio. The theme for this year’s conference was “Find it Here!” At the conference, Sherrie attended sessions titled “Finding Our Way with AI: Practical Tools for Archival Access and Discovery,” “Finding Your Way Through Large Collections: Strategies for Small Institutions,” “Finding It: The Elusive Gap Between Accessioning and Stacks Management,” and more. Sherrie shared key points and lessons learned with Archives staff to help inform Archives operations moving forward.


EMPOWER

We connect people with tools and resources for learning, knowledge exchange, and personal growth that leads to greater fulfillment.

- The Archives hosted a day-long cemetery restoration workshop. The morning session consisted of lectures by Dawn Cobb from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and John Heider from RIP Ltd., covering responsible techniques for tombstone restoration. Then in the afternoon, a small group gained hands-on experience putting the techniques into practice at Mt. Hope Cemetery. The group reset fallen cemetery markers, reattached broken stones, and leveled uneven bases. The workshop drew patrons from around the community, and from as far away as Iowa and southern Illinois!
- Summer Reading started on May 11 with the theme **Plant a Seed, Read!**. Staff visited 90 classrooms to let kids know about the program. So far, over 600 people have registered. A kickoff event funded by Busey Bank was held and attracted more than 200 community members. Attendees enjoyed face painting, crafts, ice cream, music by the Mariachi Tigres de Urbana. A great tie-in with the **Plant A Seed, Read** theme was that Sola Gratia brought plants and pots for attendees to take home and grow. We are also doing something new this year. People of all ages can collect beads by meeting reading goals or by attending select summer reading events to create a bead necklace. We’ve already seen people of all ages coming to programs to get their bead.



Action Item Details & Additional Information

- Staff request approval of the FY26 budget changes listed below to move funds to the Library’s Building budget line to the Library’s Building Fund for roof repairs:
 - \$115,000.00 decrease to Building (80280805-53200)
 - \$115,000.00 increase to Library Building Costs: Library Roof Repair (82080852-53200-85002)
- To provide end-of-fiscal-year Collections cataloging support, staff request the approval of the following FY26 budget changes:
 - \$3,096.61 decrease to Collections Salary (80280806-50110)
 - \$3,096.61 increase to Community Engagement Salary (80280809-50110)

- To pay the Polaris invoice from Champaign Public Library, staff request the approval of the following FY26 budget changes:
 - \$19,848.25 decrease to Administration Salary (80280800 50110)
 - \$19,848.25 increase to Other Contractual Services (80280801 52999)
- The Hours of Service policy needs updated wording to address years when Memorial Day falls on the fifth Monday of May (which will happen in 2027). Staff recommends passing of this policy.
- Digital Library statistics:
 - Overdrive:
 - eBooks: 4,626 circs / 71,281 titles in collection
 - Audiobooks: 6,229 circs / 39,914 titles in collection
 - Magazines: 2,452 circs / 6,685 titles in collection
 - Total: 13,307
 - Kanopy: 1659 plays
 - Comics Plus: 327 checkouts; 217 users

Communication

Library Newsletters

- TUFL Times, June: https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/a70c0d20-341f-4800-94c1-c9e47f110f6f
- Archives Newsletter, June: https://tufl.moosend.com/show_campaign/cb0f3ce9-4c0b-44c8-acae-7141b7f20268

Library News

- **May 20, 2026** - *ipmnewsroom.org* - Life, death and everything in between: Public dialogues provide space for grief in C-U <https://ipmnewsroom.org/death-life-everything-in-between-death-cafe-hosted-at-urbana-free-library/>
- **May 31, 2026** - *legacy.com* - Patricia Jensen Obituary <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/news-gazette/name/patricia-jensen-obituary?id=61561619>

Budget Information

- Budget and FY26 Financial Reports: <https://urbanafreelibrary.org/about-us/your-right-to-know/financial-reports>

Bank reconciliations for the last day of the month: July 2025 - June 2026						
	July	August	September	October	November	December
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 3,476,560.39	\$ 3,188,594.97	\$ 4,675,169.94	\$ 4,116,589.59	\$ 3,568,902.80	\$ 3,371,285.16
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 152,102.48	\$ 155,474.35	\$ 160,216.59	\$ 163,753.82	\$ 168,142.05	\$ 170,486.63
Total	\$ 3,628,662.87	\$ 3,344,069.32	\$ 4,835,386.53	\$ 4,280,343.41	\$ 3,737,044.85	\$ 3,541,771.79
	January	February	March	April	May	June
Busey Bank Cash accounts	\$ 2,992,594.37	\$ 2,819,575.12	\$ 2,403,558.89	\$ 2,061,086.34		
Busey Bank Credit Card account	\$ 173,685.86	\$ 176,444.52	\$ 180,524.89	\$ 185,225.72		
Total	\$ 3,166,280.23	\$ 2,996,019.64	\$ 2,584,083.78	\$ 2,246,312.06	\$ -	\$ -