

Paonia Friends of the Library

Board Meeting

March 6, 2026

Members Present: Pam Stephens, Laura Major, David Weber, Janice Thorup

Absent: Teresa Shishim, Judy Livingston, Jon Schulz, Marjorie True

Guest: Jake Hartter, Cassandra Shenk, LaDonna Gunn, Lesandre Barley

I. Call Meeting to Order

Stephens called the meeting to order at 12:00. We didn't have a quorum, so couldn't make any decisions, but we could still have a meeting.

II. Changes to Agenda

We need to elect officers

III. Introduce Guests

Jake Hartter and Cassandra Shenk from Landscape Restoration. LaDonna Gunn, District Manager. Ben Lehman, Paonia Library representative (no manager yet), Lesandre Barley, Paonia's representative on the District Board

IV. Minutes from January 30, 2026

No quorum, so couldn't approve/change.

V. Landscape

Landscape restoration. Hartter and Shenk work mainly with the ditch companies to help them restore the areas after the ditches have been concreted in and/or covered, so they're most familiar with riverine corridors. Although the library is considered "upland", it is fairly close to the river and could profit from the same approach. They stressed that a phased approach is best and to put in new plants gradually to see what takes. Start small with shrubs and then move on to trees. They emphasized the importance of an upper canopy as well as undergrowth, with an emphasis on hardy native shrubs and trees. They suggest narrow leaf cottonwoods. Major asked about the short life span of cottonwoods: apparently the Fremont cottonwood has a fairly long life for a poplar, up to 130 years. (Note: although we didn't talk about this in the meeting, I'm providing a link to info on cottonwoods.

[https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-](https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Cottonwood_Management_QuickGuide_26June2015.pdf)

[content/uploads/2015/06/Cottonwood_Management_QuickGuide_26June2015.pdf](https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Cottonwood_Management_QuickGuide_26June2015.pdf)) We should pay attention to the importance of micro-habitats: Shenk was especially emphatic about providing areas for the cuckoo (an endangered species that nests in this area). The Western Slope Conservation Center has grants available for pollinator environments and micro-environments. Hartter recommended plants from the Bird Story Nursery.

They asked about the plan (long in the works) to provide a bridge across the river and a path from the elementary school to the library. Hartter said this would be a great place to provide a cottonwood corridor. However, since that plan has been in the works for the last 15 years, it won't happen in the near future.

Thorup suggested that we think of having shrubs on or near the city property and trees up closer to the library, but what we really need is a plan rather than just go about it haphazardly. Hartter said he could help and suggested that Wind Clearwater might also be interested. The District must be involved in any plan and if we're going to extend planting onto city property we need their buy-in also. Stephens said she would like it to be educational, Weber would rather not have cottonwoods,

since they aren't exactly xeric. We should also contact Aaron Byrum of Clearwater Designs and ask if he's interested in helping. Major will send out an email and try to get people together to walk the area, talk about design, and get some idea of budget.

Trees:

Major passed out some information on the species of trees recommended by the Paonia Tree Board, the Cedaredge Tree Board, the Grand Valley Tree Board, and the Colorado Tree Coalition. They had only eight trees in common. None of them recommended planting cottonwoods, probably because of their water requirements.

Irrigation

We probably can't do anything about irrigation until we have a firmer grip on what the landscape will be like going forward. We could, however, start doing something about the flower garden, which hasn't had any new plants in many years.

Parking lot

Weber measured the parking lot and it is 10,200 square feet. It does need to have the cracks filled but shouldn't require a total replacement. Gunn said that the estimate they gave us was for having the whole thing scraped off and repaved. But the District needs to bring in an expert who can assess what needs to be done. There is no final decision and nothing will happen until the end of summer since there's so much else to do.

VI. Elections

Because there wasn't a quorum, we couldn't have elections, but Stephens will send out an email asking if everyone is okay with a continuation of the current officers. Stephens (president), Weber (treasurer), and Major (Secretary, Vice-President) all agreed to continue if elected. Unless someone else is dying to replace one of them.

VII. District Director's Report

The Paonia Library has a new manager, Nathan Franklin, who is scheduled to start the end of March.

Gunn passed out the District's budget. There have been increases in expenses across the board, so the requests she made of the Friends earlier in the year will probably not be enough to cover the entire cost of what the District wants. For example, the couch for the teen area cost twice what they expected, so we need to decide if we want to pay for all of it or what we agreed to.

The parking lot lights are now being fixed to meet Dark Sky requirements. That will be completed this month.

Fence repair should happen in late spring.

The amphitheater seats are an ongoing issue. The District maintenance person is experimenting to see if they can be repoured. If not, they will need to look for something different.

Clear Creek (the company that mows the grass) must provide proof of insurance or they can't work on library property. Major will get in touch with them again.

Friends Groups have space on the District web. Weber said to put our web address on it, not our

mailing address.

The flyers that Shishim puts out have good image of our logo. The District would like a copy. Major will ask Shishim to send Delaney a copy.

VIII. Library Manager's Report

Ben Lehman gave an extensive report on the programs that the library offers: The following is a list:

Pokeman

Improve games

Open mike

Wild horses; on March 25 someone will talk about Colorado's wild horses and burros.

Tech Tuesday.

Coffee at Library

Regenerative agriculture; a speaker Mar.11 at 4:30

Songwriting workshop

Fiber Friends, a knitting group

Book Clubs, at least three.

IX. Treasurer's Report

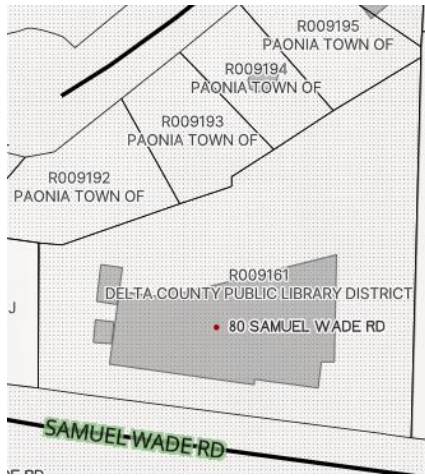
Weber reported that if anything should befall him, all the Quickbook data are online. Major and Stephens have the password list.

X. Public Relations Report

Shishim was absent from the meeting, but she filed the following report

- The district is transitioning to a new website soon, so be on the lookout for that
- Katheryn Delaney from the District will promote the sale in early April using the graphic Shishim attached in her email
- She included the annual meeting and book sale in the most recent newsletter for Weber to put on our website
- She posted our annual meeting and potluck event on the Paonia message boards and created a flyer that she will distribute around town next week
- Here's the link to the map of the library property:

https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d27b59bc525742278f92a60d6da278e5/#data_s=id%3Awid_get_266_output_config_1%3A0



XI. Book Barn

We have lots of books

XII. Spring Book Sale

- a. Friday-Saturday, April 24-25 (10AM-5PM each day)
- b. Set up at 4pm on April 23
- c. Lynn Mattingly will call for volunteers (set up, sales, take down)
- d. Marketing, flyers

XIII. Annual Meeting and Friends Potluck

- a) Saturday, March 21 (meeting at 3PM, potluck 4PM-6PM)
- b) Need marketing (website, email to Friends [Teresa], flyers), volunteers for set up/clean up/food
Lynn Mattingly, maybe or perhaps separate call; Thorup will ask Mattingly.
 - Set up last year was at 11AM. That was a little early, probably 1 pm is time enough
 - Tables/chairs/tablecloths/plates/utensils/napkins/cups/extension cordsAll the present board members offered to bring something, as did Barley.

XIV. Next regular meeting for Cherry Days planning

Friday, June 12, 12 - 2

XV. Adjourn

We adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Major, Secretary