

**Baker County Library District
Library Budget Committee**

Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2025

Call to Order

The meeting was held in the Riverside Conference Room at the Baker County Public Library, 2400 Resort Street, Baker City, Oregon, which serves as the administrative building for the Baker County Library District.

In-person attendees included Board Directors Kyra **Rohner**, Beth **Bigelow**, and Ashley **McClay**; Budget Committee members Jacque **Cobb** and Joy **Leamaster**; and, arriving a few minutes after the start of the meeting, Gary **Dielman**. Also present were Perry **Stokes**, Library Director, and Christine **Hawes**, Business Manager.

Attending remotely via Zoom were Budget Committee members Joan **Spriggs**, Linda **Collier**, and Aletha **Bonebrake**. Eleven individuals were in attendance. No guests were present.

Board President Kyra **Rohner called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM**. Stokes displayed the board packet on a large screen and distributed printed budget packets, including the FY 2025–2026 Budget Message. The same materials were made available on the District website and for early pickup by committee members prior to the meeting.

Roll Call

Rohner asked attendees to introduce themselves, thereby fulfilling roll call. A quorum was established with eight of ten committee members present. Stokes noted that he had spoken with Gary Dielman, who would arrive shortly.

Nomination & Election of Budget Committee Chair

Rohner called for nominations for Budget Committee Chair.

Joy Leamaster nominated Jacque Cobb, who accepted. With no further nominations, Aletha Bonebrake seconded the motion. *The motion passed unanimously (8–0).*

Stokes designated Christine Hawes to record the minutes. Rohner then transferred leadership of the meeting to Chair Cobb.

Agenda Approval

Cobb asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. Hearing none, **Rohner moved to approve the agenda as presented. Leamaster seconded. *The motion passed unanimously.***

Conflicts of Interest

Cobb asked if any members had conflicts or potential conflicts of interest to declare. None were stated.

Gary Dielman arrived at 6:14 PM.

Presentation of Proposed Budget

Chair Cobb invited Budget Officer Perry Stokes to present the proposed budget.

Stokes reviewed the budget documents included in the packets and presented a slideshow. He thanked committee members, staff, board, and community partners for their contributions.

The proposed total budget for FY 2025–2026 is \$3,586,088. Stokes outlined key strategic goals, which include:

- Allocating surplus funds to capital improvement and operations reserves,
- Maintaining debt-free operations,
- Providing a 2.5% COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) and step increases for staff,
- Contributing to the Sage Library System to mitigate potential loss of federal funds, and
- Expanding investment in library facilities.

Revenue Overview

- Property tax revenue is projected to increase by \$53,000 (3.7%).
- Interest earnings remain strong.
- Cash carryover is up by 25% due to resolution of a property tax dispute.
- Federal E-Rate funds are increasing due to support for mobile hotspots.
- Stokes reviewed the General Fund LB-10 Resource Sheet and addressed a question from Leamaster about the historical columns.

Expenditures Overview – General Fund LB-31

- Personnel Services account for 69.7% of the budget, an increase of \$51,200 (4.6%), including:
 - 2.5% COLA,
 - Five step increases,
 - A 6% increase in health insurance,
 - Higher PERS and workers' compensation rates.
- Materials & Services budget is increasing modestly by \$1,500.
 - Collection Development starts at \$128,500 (7.7% of operations), with a goal of reaching 10% during the fiscal year.
 - Sage System contribution increases by \$5,000 as a voluntary support effort.
 - Facilities expenditures increase by \$60,000.

- Election Expenses increase to \$6,500.

Dielman inquired about current facility projects. Stokes noted painting and carpet replacement at the Baker branch, and repairs at the Haines branch. Roof issues have been resolved.

Bigelow asked about bookmobile replacement. Stokes estimated \$180,000 and intends to build reserves toward a smaller replacement model.

Dielman inquired about federal funding reductions. Stokes explained IMLS support for Sage's courier services and emphasized the District's uniqueness in receiving this support. He outlined efforts to secure sustainable local funding for Sage.

Cobb asked about changes in the Collection Development line. Stokes explained that it starts low due to its discretionary nature and can be adjusted in October based on actual revenue. Leamaster asked about other discretionary lines, to which Stokes identified the facility maintenance budget. Cobb inquired about programming funds; Stokes provided an overview.

Stokes noted that the combined growth in Personnel and Materials & Services aligns with the projected \$53,000 increase in tax revenue.

Capital Outlay and Transfers – LB-30

- Capital Outlay: \$20,000
- Severance Reserve: \$10,000
- Technology Reserve: \$5,000 (Windows 10 is being phased out; upgrading to Windows 11)
- IT support is provided by Jim White.
- Capital Reserve Transfer: \$100,000
- Operating Contingency: \$15,000
- Operating Reserves: \$655,000
- General Fund total: \$2,445,145

Other Funds

- Memorial Fund LB-10: \$289,000. Revenue is stable; fund may serve as an operations backup but will not be needed this year.

Sage Library System Fund LB-10: \$639,463

- Increased cash carryover due to delayed retirement of senior admin.
- PERS-eligible staff allows for salary planning for a future successor.
- Membership fees to increase gradually over 4–5 years.
- 2.5% COLA for Sage staff.
- Vendor and feature upgrades (e.g., user messaging service).
- Website vendor change budgeted at \$3,000.
- Operating contingency increased due to reserve drawdown.

Bonebrake clarified that the Sage Council sets its own budget; the District includes it for transparency but does not alter it.

Capital Investment Reserve LB-11: \$212,500

- Boosted by \$100,000 transfer.
- Priority projects: Storytime Room remodel, staff workroom update, new carpet (Baker), Haines roof repair, HVAC upgrades, LED lighting at branches (final branch: Richland).

Total Proposed Budget: \$3,586,088

- Permanent Tax Rate: \$0.5334

- Local Option Tax Rate: \$0.249

Stokes invited discussion and recommended approval of the proposed budget if no changes are identified.

Committee Discussion

Bonebrake congratulated Stokes on the thorough and well-aligned budget. She asked about language on pages 4–5 regarding a 10% budget change and whether such changes require budget committee review. Stokes clarified that the board may approve those changes without further committee action; publication of a legal notice is required when a major category budget change exceeds 10%.

Leamaster asked if the tax rates presented match the renewal request. Stokes confirmed that they do, and the local option levy will be up for renewal in fall 2026. The levy has passed five times previously and is renewed over a year in advance to allow time for a backup vote if needed. Bonebrake provided historical context.

Cobb referenced page 19 of the Budget Notes regarding streaming services. Stokes noted a decline in physical movie usage and explained how the District transitioned from purchasing DVDs (including from the closed Baker Blockbuster in 2014) to digital platforms. He discussed the evolving cost models and content strategies.

Leamaster asked about genre analysis of movie usage. Stokes acknowledged the value of that analysis and said it hasn't been completed yet. Discussion followed on trends and overlap between physical and streaming formats.

Leamaster inquired about audiobook usage. Stokes confirmed they are highly popular. The library continues to offer eBooks and physical books, with some content overlap across formats.

Bigelow asked about public awareness of available services. Stokes described ongoing and potential marketing strategies.

Budget Approval

Following the presentation and discussion, Cobb invited a motion to approve the proposed budget and tax rates as presented.

Motion:

Aletha Bonebrake moved to approve the **FY2025–2026 budget** for the Baker County Library District in the total amount of **\$3,586,088**, and to approve the **permanent tax rate of \$0.5334 per \$1,000 of assessed value** along with the **local option tax rate of \$0.249 per \$1,000 of assessed value**, as proposed in the budget documents.

Second: Joy Leamaster

Discussion:

Rohner and Leamaster asked for clarification that the tax rates being approved matched those the

district intends to request for renewal in the upcoming levy. Stokes confirmed that the rates are the same as in previous years and are scheduled for renewal in the May 2026 special election. Bonebrake provided additional historical context on the district's successful local option levy renewals and their timing.

Vote:

The **motion passed unanimously** by all Budget Committee members present.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at **7:12 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

Perry Stokes
Secretary to the Board
PS/ch