



Portage District
LIBRARY

Portage District Library Board
Election Information Packet

For any individual interested in running
for the Tuesday, November 3, 2026 Election



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Portage District
LIBRARY



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Dear Prospective Library Board Candidate,

On behalf of the Portage District Library Board and administration, I would like to thank you for considering placing your name on the ballot for the November 2026 election as a candidate for the Portage District Library Board.

Your interest in the library and your willingness to serve on its governing board is commendable. The Portage District Library Board's oversight is extremely important in guiding the library. Trustees have been very successful at working together using the "Carver Policy Governance" mode of operating to set goals (referred to as "Ends" for the library to accomplish), establishing policies, and overseeing the budget. The Library Board and Administration work very well together as a library "Team" to develop and implement a long-range vision for the library and keep our organization on track.

As you go through the candidate and election process, I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about the library or provide you with any informational materials that may assist you. The information packet you have been given was put together for prospective board candidates to give you an overview of trustees responsibilities and about the current status of the Portage District Library.

Candidates who are elected in November will receive additional orientation before beginning their service as a trustee. If I can be of any help to you at all, please feel free to contact me at (269) 585-8721 or cklien@portagelibrary.info.

Sincerely,

Christy Klien
Library Director



Understanding Your Library Board Candidacy Packet

We have curated this packet to equip potential candidates with the necessary information to understand the responsibilities and requirements associated with serving on the library board.

Filing Procedures for Ballot Candidacy (Page 4)

This guide outlines the procedural steps that must be completed for individuals interested in running for a position on the library board to appear on the ballot.

Board Member Commitment Statement: (Page 5)

If elected, trustees will affirm this statement during the swearing in ceremony to express their dedication to fulfilling the duties and obligations inherent in serving as a library board member.

Library Board Bylaws: (Page 6)

The bylaws serve as the foundational framework governing the operations and decision-making processes of the library board, fostering clarity and consistency in governance practices.

Do's and Dont's: (Page 9)

This concise guide, written by board members, delineates the acceptable conduct and practices expected from board members, promoting ethical behavior and maintaining the public trust.

Current Board Roster: (Page 10)

Reviewing the roster allows candidates to familiarize themselves with the existing board members for questions or facilitating potential collaboration and continuity in board dynamics.

2026 Board Meeting Schedule: (Page 11)

The 2027 schedule will be set by the board by the end of the year, however the meeting schedule from 2026 provides insight into the frequency and timing of board meetings enabling candidates to anticipate and plan for active participation in board proceedings.

2023-2026 Strategic Plan: (Page 12)

The strategic plan articulates the vision, goals, and priorities of the library, guiding the board in strategic decision-making and ensuring alignment with the institution's long-term objectives.

Additional Library Information Resources: (Page 20)

Browse for further education and understanding of the libraries goals, policies and procedures, empowering them to deepen their understanding of library governance and management principles.

This information packet has been compiled by:

Quyên Edwards

Assistant to the Director and Library Board Secretary
(269) 585-8701 or qedwards@portagelibrary.info

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Filing Procedures for Ballot Candidacy

Election Information

There are 3 trustee positions on the Portage District Library Board with terms ending on December 31, 2026.

The election in Kalamazoo County will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 and will provide an opportunity for incumbents and other candidates who have filed nominations to be placed on the ballot for consideration.

These terms on the library board are for four years commencing on January 1, 2027.

Requirements:

Candidates must be 18 years old and live within the library's legal service area. (This includes the City of Portage and portions of Pavilion Township and Texas Township that are in the Portage School District.)

Candidates must file a Nominating Non-Partisan Petition and an Affidavit of Identity at the Kalamazoo County Clerk's office by 4:00 P.M. on Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

Please call the County Clerk's office to make an appointment to file.

(NOTE: Petitions must have a minimum of 40 valid signatures, but no more than 100 of registered Michigan voters in the Portage Public School district OR candidates may file a \$100 nonrefundable filing fee in lieu of a nominating petition.)

First time candidates must also file a Statement of Organization for Candidate Committee with the Kalamazoo County Clerk.

Kalamazoo County Clerk

Meridith Place

Kalamazoo County Clerk

201 W. Kalamazoo Ave, Room 107|Kalamazoo, MI 49007

office 269-384-8080 | fax 269-384-8143

<https://www.kalcounty.gov/447/Elections-Voting>

Important Dates

Filing is Due:

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 by 4:00 P.M

- Nominating Non-Partisan Petition
- Affidavit of Identity
- Statement of Organization for Candidate Committee
(First Time Candidates only)

Election Day

· Tuesday, November 3, 2026

Board Term for Prospective Candidates

January 1, 2027 - December 31, 2030

PORTAGE DISTRICT LIBRARY

Board Member Commitment Statement

I, _____, accept my elected position as a Portage District Library Board Member, effective _____, for a four-year term, and promise to do my best to fulfill this role. I understand that this is a public service position, responsible to the citizens who support the Portage District Library through their taxes, and that my duty is to represent these constituents and protect, preserve and promote the Portage District Library and its resources. I further acknowledge that as a Portage District Library Board Member, I am committing myself to governing the Library during my term of office in a prudent and responsible manner, and adhering to Expectations for Board Members in my contacts beyond the Library where I may be recognized or identified as a member of the Portage District Library Board. This commitment includes, but is not limited to:

- Attendance and participation in Portage District Library Board meetings.
- Review of agenda packet materials prior to each meeting, to be informed.
- Knowledge of the Portage District Library and its Mission Statement and operations.
- Awareness and support of all Portage District Library policies.
- Awareness and advancement of Portage District Library Long-Range Strategic Plans.
- Compliance with District Library Law requirements.
- Compliance with State and Federal regulations related to non-profit governing boards.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Quyen Edwards, Library Board Secretary

Library Board By-Laws

Article I **Incorporation and Name:**

The Portage District Library was formed under the Michigan District Library Establishment Act, May 22, 1989 PA 24 (MCL 397.171, et seq.) (the "Act"), through an agreement entered into on January 27, 1998, by and between the School District of the City of Portage, the County of Kalamazoo Michigan, and the City of Portage to provide library services to their combined populations. The Library of Michigan formally approved the agreement to form the Portage District Library and officially recognized the Portage District Library as a legally established district library on March 22, 1998 and approved an amendment to the agreement on June 1, 1998. The address of the main office is as follows:

Portage District Library

300 Library Lane
Portage, Michigan 49002

Article II **Membership:**

In accordance with the provisions of the Portage District Library agreement, the Portage District Library shall consist of seven members who shall be elected by the electors of the District Library at the regularly scheduled school elections in the month of November in even-numbered years. Terms are for four years and commence on the January 1st following the November election. Members are elected on a rotating basis with four members elected to four year terms at one school election and three members elected to four year terms at the succeeding school election.

Before assuming the office of Library Board Member, each person elected shall take the oath of office prescribed for public officers by the Constitution and shall file the oath with the staff Board Secretary.

The expectation is that no elected board member shall be unexcused for more than (1) meeting per fiscal year.

The office of a Library Board member becomes vacant when the incumbent dies, resigns, is convicted of a felony, is removed from office by the governor pursuant to Section 10, Article V of the State Constitution of 1963, or ceases to be a resident of the district. In the event that a Library Board member cannot fulfill the length of his term, the Portage District Library Board shall appoint a replacement who will be a qualified elector of a participating municipality. The appointed Library Board member's term will come up for election at the next Portage District Library Board election and shall be for the length of the remaining term.

Article III **Officers**

Officers of the Portage District Library Board shall be a Chairperson, and a Vice-Chairperson, who shall be elected at the January Board Meeting, for a term of one year commencing at the first board meeting in January.

The Library Board Chairperson may appoint a board member as official Secretary when needed, such as to take minutes for a closed session. The staff Library Board Secretary shall record minutes at meetings, maintain official Library Board files and records and produce Library Board correspondence as required. The staff Library Board Secretary shall, in collaboration with the Chairperson and Library Director, prepare the agenda. The agenda-planning meeting shall be two weeks prior to the Library Board meeting. It is the responsibility of the staff Board Secretary to provide the Library Board with the agenda and supporting materials 96 hours (4 days) prior to the Library Board meeting.

In the event an office becomes vacant, the office shall be filled by a Library Board election at the next regular meeting. However, in the case of the Chairperson the current Vice-Chairperson shall fill the vacancy and a new Vice-Chairperson shall be elected.

Article IV **Meetings**

The Library Board shall meet at times and dates approved by the Library Board at the December Library Board meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, or upon written request of two members, for the transaction of business as stated in the call. Written notice stating the time and the place of any special meeting and the purpose for which it is called shall be given to each member of the Library Board 18 hours in advance, and posted for the public in accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

The meeting will commence as soon after the hour of the meeting as there shall be a quorum present. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall call the meeting to order. If neither the Chairperson nor the Vice-Chairperson is present, then board members may elect a temporary Chair for the limited purpose of moderating the meeting.

A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of a simple majority. Members of the Library Board who are unable to attend a meeting will notify the staff Board Secretary (24) hours prior to the meeting. In the absence of a quorum the Library Board shall meet as a committee of the whole, however no binding decisions may be made.

Roberts Rules of Order, the latest revised edition, shall govern the parliamentary procedure of the Library Board.

Sufficient time will be provided at the beginning of the meeting for any person, not a member of the Library Board, to address the Library Board on any matter within the scope of the provision of District Library Law.

Article V **Committees**

The Chairperson of the Library Board may nominate members to special committees, with Library Board approval, as the need arises.

The Personnel Committee will consist of the Chairperson of the Library Board and two members of the Library Board nominated by the Chairperson and elected by the full Library Board at the next regular board meeting. The purpose of the Personnel Committee is to conduct the annual evaluation of the Library Director.

Article VI **Powers and Duties of the Library Board**

The powers and duties of the Portage District Library Board are set forth in the District Library Law, PA 24 (MCL 397.171, et seq.) (the "Act"), and include the following:

Section 1: The Library Board may exercise any and all of the powers granted to it in the Act. The Library Board may delegate such powers to the Officers of the Library Board and/or the Library Director, as it deems necessary.

Section 2: The fiscal year of the Portage District Library shall be the annual period commencing January 1st and ending December 31st.

Section 3: The Library Board shall adopt and publish an annual operating budget in accordance with the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act, being Act No. 2 of the Public Laws of Michigan of 1968, as amended ("UBAA").

Section 4: The Library Board shall have exclusive control of the budget of the Portage District Library except as provided by delegation to the Library Director in accordance with the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act.

Section 5: The Library Board shall adopt Policies, Rules and Regulations for the operations of the library, not inconsistent with law or with these by-laws.

Article VII **Conflict of Interest**

Members of the Library Board shall disclose any conflict of interest in accordance with legal requirements. (Current conflict of interest statute, MCLA 15.323, states that 7 days is required.) Conflict of Interest statements will be completed and signed annually by Library Board members at January board meeting.

Article VIII **Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Library Board with a quorum present by a majority vote of the members present providing the amendment was stated in the call for the meeting and that it is done in accordance with legal requirements.

NOTE: These by-laws were adopted by the Portage District Library Board at its regular meeting on December 14, 2000, and last reviewed and approved on February 26, 2025. All prior bylaws are hereby repealed.

Portage District Library

Board Members Do's and Don'ts

1. We cannot have a group of (3) or more get-together to discuss library business unless we post the meeting notice a week in advance.
2. We should not go as individuals to the Library Director to try and influence the Library Director or to give assignments to the Library Director.
3. We should not delegate decision-making to a sub-committee or individual. The Library Board should always act as a "Committee of the Whole." While sub-committees may be formed, decisions are always made by the whole board.
4. We should not get into the day-to-day running of the library - that is the job of the Library Director.
5. We should not give projects directly to staff but should work through the Library Director.
6. We should not do anything illegal, immoral or outside the normally accepted standards of the community we represent.
7. We should network with the community and with our patrons.
8. We should represent our constituency as a whole.
9. We should give a unified image to the community. While differences may arise during our deliberations, once the Library Board has made a decision, we must all support it.
10. We should set the vision and strategy for the library and leave the implementation to the Library Director.
11. We should treat each other and library staff with respect.
12. WE SHOULD HAVE FUN!

LIBRARY BOARD 2026 ROSTER

Reviewed: January 26, 2026

NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	TERM EXPIRES
Ken Baker	2187 Austin Shores Ave. Portage, MI 49002	269-998-4395 kenbaker0425@aol.com	December 31, 2028
Michele Behr *Vice Chair	6526 Robinswood Street Portage, MI 49024	(269) 365-0094 (Home) (269) 365-5387 (Cell) mdbehr@yahoo.com	December 31, 2028
Jeanne Friedman *Board Chair	3045 Kalarama Portage, Michigan 49024	(269) 323-8991 (Home) (269) 569-6777 (Cell) jfriedman@portageps.org	December 31, 2026
Cara Terry	9895 Fort Myers Parkway Portage, MI 49002	(269) 598-8878 carayterry@gmail.com	December 31, 2026
Tom Vance	7673 Moors Pointe Way Portage, MI 49024	269-251-2073 (Cell) 269-327-5463 (Home) prguy1955@gmail.com	December 31, 2028
Donna VanderVries	1225 Holiday Lane Portage, MI 49024	(616) 802-0044 (Cell #1) (231) 750-6750 (Cell #2) osulawyer@hotmail.com	December 31, 2026
Linda Whitlock	9706 Oakview Drive Portage, MI 49024	(269) 327-0583 (Home) (269) 370-4374 (Cell) whitkazoo52@gmail.com	December 31, 2028

Christy Klien (*Library Director*)

(269) 585-8721 (Office #)
 (269) 216-1953 (Cell #)

cklien@portagelibrary.info

Quyen Edwards (*Assistant to the Director & Library Board Secretary*)

(269) 585-8701 (Office #)
 (269) 455-9004 (Cell #)

qedwards@portagelibrary.info

Memo

Proposed Schedule for 2026 Library Board Meetings

To: Portage District Library Board
From: Christy Klien, Library Director
Date: December 18, 2025

The following is the proposed schedule of Portage District Library Board meetings from January through December 2026. Please note that the regular day and time for all library board meetings will be the 4th Monday* of each month at 6:00 p.m. Additional meetings may be called or changes in meeting dates may be made by the Library Board Chair if needed. The location and/or attendance instructions for library board meetings are indicated on the meeting notice which is posted three days prior to a regular meeting. Rescheduled regular meetings or special meeting notices are posted a minimum of 18 hours prior to their start.

January 26, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
February 23, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
March 23, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
April 27, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
*May 18, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
June 22, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
July 27, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
August 24, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting & Public Budget Hearing
September 28, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
October 2026	Library Board Retreat	To be determined
October 26, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting
November 2026	No Library Board Meeting Planned	
*December 14, 2026	Monday	Regular Meeting

* **NOTES:** PDL Staff are proposing holding the May 2026 board meeting one week earlier due to Memorial Day, and the December 2026 board meeting two weeks earlier due to winter holidays.



Portage District
LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2026



Why

Portage District Library is a hub of learning and social connection, with constantly evolving collections, programs, and services. To align its resources with the emerging priorities of the community, Portage District Library has undergone a comprehensive strategic planning process with feedback from the community and stakeholders. By implementing a new strategic plan, Portage District Library will be able to focus efforts on its new strategic directions: Strengthening the Community; Extraordinary Experiences; and Investing in the Future.

How

Portage District Library initiated a strategic planning process starting in the Summer of 2022. Amanda E. Standerfer from Fast Forward Libraries LLC was engaged to facilitate the planning process in three phases: Learn, Dream, Do. The Learn phase entailed forming a Planning Team to guide the process, holding staff and Board feedback sessions, conducting a community survey, and leading stakeholder focus groups and interviews. In the Dream phase, the Planning Team discussed possible future pathways for the library and developed strategic directions and goals for the coming four years. This strategic plan will guide Portage District Library through the Do phase, as the library executes its vision for the future.



Vision

*Inspiring, Enriching, and
Empowering Our Community*

Mission

*We transform lives by cultivating
connection, discovery, creativity,
and personal growth.*



Ends Statements

Optimize access to resources for information, education, and entertainment.

Be a safe, welcoming, inclusive destination for families, groups, and individuals.

Be a leader in strengthening our community.

Be a community hub to experience and explore diverse arts and culture.

Core Values

- Accountability
- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Customer Service
- Safety
- Partnerships
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Equitable Access
- Excellence
- Inclusivity
- Innovation
- Intellectual Freedom
- Play and Inspiration
- Respect and Kindness
- Community Building



Strengthening the Community

We facilitate community members learning, creating, and bridging divides.

GOAL 1: Enrich the lives of community members by providing innovative and ample outlets for expressing creativity.

Activities:

- 1.1.1 Invest in cutting edge technology in the Makerspace, Creation Station, and Library of Things service areas to provide learning opportunities for patrons.
- 1.1.2 Create opportunities for patrons' creative work to be displayed and highlighted at the library.

GOAL 2: Build and expand vibrant partner plans with organizations working towards aligned goals.

Activities:

- 1.2.1 Partner with community organizations to host programming.
- 1.2.2 Consult with existing and potential community partners about effective ways to meet community needs.

GOAL 3: Implement targeted community engagement campaigns and create routine feedback opportunities for patrons.

Activities:

- 1.3.1 Prioritize directions for outreach including staff connections and community interest.
- 1.3.2 Create a robust feedback system to allow data from multiple sources to be analyzed and shared with the staff and community.



Extraordinary Experiences

We provide exceptional services that lead to delightful and meaningful interactions.

Goal 1: Position the library in unexpected ways in the community.

Activities:

- 2.1.1 For outreach to underserved populations, prioritize access to regular remote circulation of materials and personal connections with Library staff.
- 2.1.2 Prioritize offsite outreach opportunities that target those who have barriers to in-building services.

Goal 2: Equip staff to provide caring, responsive service to support the information and life-stage needs of community members.

Activities:

- 2.2.1 Develop and execute training to educate staff on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) principles, ensuring their effective implementation throughout the organization.
- 2.2.2 Conduct staff trainings to enhance their skills in providing empathetic support and social emotional assistance to patrons.

Goal 3: Celebrate and strengthen the community's social fabric by incorporating relationship building opportunities in library programs and throughout the building.

Activities:

- 2.3.1 Host more programs that foster interaction and community.
- 2.3.2 Investigate framework that helps people share differing viewpoints in a safe space.



Investing in the Future

We help the community evolve and grow.

Goal 1: Maintain high-quality staff by investing in hiring, orientation, and retention practices that are equitable and inclusive.

Activities:

- 3.1.1 Review staff wages and adjust based on the results of the compensation study.
- 3.1.2 Create a standardized orientation and cross training.
- 3.1.3 Implement robust internal communication procedures.
- 3.1.4 Create a performance evaluation system that encourages open communication and clear expectations.

Goal 2: Provide technology access and learning opportunities for community members so they are confident navigating an evolving digital world.

Activities:

- 3.2.1 Offer a robust, cutting-edge catalog for patrons to access our full collections including Library of Things, e-Resources, and databases.
- 3.2.2 Create promotional campaigns to highlight the library's services.
- 3.2.3 Implement staff training focused on empowering individuals with the necessary technology skills to support and assist patrons in navigating and maximizing their use of various technologies.
- 3.2.4 Invest in more device offerings.

Goal 3: Find ways to be welcoming and inclusive through collections, programs, displays, messaging, and facilities.

Activities:

- 3.3.1 Create successful collection display practices.
- 3.3.2 Improve access to and visibility of collections/services that meet local needs and interests. Prioritize currency, responsiveness, local information, and ties to library and local events.
- 3.3.3 Prioritize accommodating people with disabilities when designing or selecting offerings.



Additional Library Information Resources:

Library Website

Explore the Library's website to learn about services and offerings you may not be aware of.

www.portagelibrary.info

Library Board Documents

Information about the PDL Board and Board Meeting documents from the last four years can be found on the library board page on the Library's website.

<https://www.portagelibrary.info/pdl-board/>

Library Policies:

Policies and procedures that dictate patron expectations, and decisions of the staff can be found on the policies page of the Library's website.

<https://www.portagelibrary.info/policies/>

The Michigan Library Trustee Manual

This manual provides information and links to resources of use to Public Library Trustees and Directors provided by the Library of Michigan.

<https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/libraries/admin/librarylaw/manuals/michigan-public-library-trustee-manual>