



Director's Report—Debbie Bird

Director's Goals

My overall goal, even starting on day one has been for succession planning—to prepare the Director's position at the Portage Public Library for the next incoming director. So much of my last six years has been focused on repairs and replacements, updating everything from policies to wiring to evaluations, protocols and equipment. In addition, my role has been spent crafting a municipal budget that includes comprehensive financial support for *basic library services, resources and materials*. There is more to do in many of these areas, but this will never totally be complete, before we need to start over again.

Goals for 2026

1. **Capital Improvement Plan - Air Conditioner.** I want to get a replacement Air Conditioner on the Capital Improvement Plan, probably for 2027. I want this to represent any adjustments that may need to be done to the evaporator coil. I need to know that the air flow and the air handler match the capacity of the new unit.
2. **Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Portage Public Library 2027-2030.** The next strategic plan is due before the end of 2026. There is much to prepare for with any strategic plan. A new mission and vision statement are not necessary; our statements seem very relevant and spot on, but the body of the plan—the library service responses, the goals, the objectives all need to be reviewed, reworked and updated to reflect the changes that Portage—the community and the library wants to see in the future.
3. **Circulation Clerk Wage Increases.** I think that we need to once again examine the starting wage for Circulation Clerks. When I began in 2019 Circulation Clerks were receiving \$9 per hour. That wage has been increased to \$13 per hour, but it is still extremely difficult to find anyone willing to work (or stay working) for that kind of non-competitive wage. Efforts to reach a more comparable wage must be one of the first considerations in 2026.
4. **Cleaning Personnel Revisited.** Our half-time Maintenance Technician in conjunction with our two part-time cleaning staff is making it difficult to keep up with the needs of the building, the grounds, the set-up and take-down of programs, trash, safety, inspections and overall cleanliness. Some jobs get done less frequently or need to be farmed out, lowering savings that happens when jobs are handled in-house.

The Portage Public Library serves and supports the community through open access to resources, partnerships and technology.