

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2025

Present: Bill Arezzo, Lori Steinbach, Lizzy Luoma, Ellen Hatfield, Jose Gonzalez, Matt Rosendahl, Michelle Foshay

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, Jim Filby Williams, Carolyn Baird – League of Women Voters, Library staff members Lori Crocker, Katie Schmitz, Anna Montgomery

Absent: Sue Henke, Betty Ramsland

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm by Bill Arezzo, Vice President

Review and approval of agenda

Motion by Rosendahl, seconded by Luoma, to approve the agenda as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes of January 28, 2025

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Foshay, to approve minutes as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Library Manager

- Tech Café – Gives adults who need help with technology a chance to meet one on one with Library staff. Wednesdays at the Main Library from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.
- Family Fest – This marked the third year of the event and it has really come into its own. It drew 867 people this year. It is fun and connects families with library and community resources.
- Hard of Hearing Resource Fair – This event was spearheaded by Anne Jackila who is a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Students got to connect with other students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. They also got to interact with emergency personnel to learn how to better communicate, including how to let emergency personnel know they have hearing loss.
- Swap Events – In the month of March, puzzle, game and plant swaps will be taking place. This is a big draw and fits in with the library's sustainability initiative. Items can be dropped off during the swap times.
- Summer Interns – One intern is already in place and more will be starting this summer. Internships offer an opportunity to mentor young people and allow them to explore careers in the library field. A half-time Library Technician recently resigned, and Powers is in the process of getting approval to hire a replacement.

- Safety – The Main library is experiencing more frequent behavioral issues due to the displacement of people from downtown skywalks and parking ramps. Sixty people are currently trespassed from the Main Library due to violating the behavior policy. This number has spiked over the years and is higher than in the past. Recently Filby Williams, Powers, and a few other staff members met with the Duluth Police Department. The DPD had a number of recommendations, which will be discussed by the Library Safety and Security Committee in the coming weeks.

Library Usage

January usage statistics were reviewed.

Library Foundation

- The Foundation turned 35 years old on Valentine’s Day!
- The Love Letter campaign for the library was looking for 100 responses but received well over 1,000. The next fundraising initiative is to create a more welcoming and dynamic space in the children’s area. The Foundation will pay for architectural and interior design help.
- April 6th – 12th is National Library Week, and the Foundation has several special events planned. They will kick off the week with a family program on April 6th from 10:00 am – noon at the Great Lakes Aquarium.

Friends of the Library

- The Friends’ bank balance currently stands at \$8,890 and membership stands at 78.
- Discussion of possible book fair at Ursa Minor on April 12 in conjunction with the Foundation.
- Two new Friends board members were approved: Jose Gonzalez and Judy Peterson.

Old Business

Main Library Facility Update

Filby Williams provided an update to the board on library facilities and efforts to create a regional library services district. He said that close guidance from the Library Board and other partners will be important as concepts are explored. There is likely to be a public input process as well.

Advocacy

Advocacy team is currently setting up meetings with City Councilors to discuss what the group does and answer any questions.

Computer and Internet Use Policy

Some language in the previous draft was reworked. Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Foshay, to approve policy with one revision as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Statement of Support

The idea for this statement came about 2 ½ years ago from the library's Diversity Action Group, which is made up of library employees. The statement is meant to reinforce the idea that DPL is a safe and welcoming place for all. It could be displayed in the library, posted on the website, and/or used in future employment listings. Board members expressed general support for the statement but had some questions. It was decided that Powers and members of DAG should do more work on the statement and bring it back to a future meeting.

Reminder: Election of officers will take place at the March meeting.

Adjournment – 6:07 pm by Bill Arezzo, Vice President