

## **Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes**

### **August 5, 2025**

**Present:** Bill Arezzo, Sue Henke, Lori Steinbach, Ellen Hatfield, Lizzy Luoma, Jose Gonzalez, Carlee Bladl, Sarah Kessler

**Also in attendance:** Carla Powers, Jim Filby Williams, Jason DeShaw - DPL

#### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:32 PM by Bill Arezzo, President

#### **Approval of minutes of June 3, 2025**

Motion by Henke, seconded by Gonzalez, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Reports**

##### **Library Manager**

- **Automatic renewals** were activated on August 1<sup>st</sup> within the Library's software system to improve customer service.
- **Staffing update.** Two retirements will be happening soon and filling the positions is on hold until more is known about the 2026 budget.

##### **Foundation**

- Books & Buzzers Bash fundraiser will be Nov 13, 2025, to support improvements to the Children's section at Main.

##### **Friends**

- The board approved a \$20,000 donation to Duluth Public Library.

##### **Guest Staff Member – Jason DeShaw**

- Jason highlighted his work in circulation, safety, & technical services.
- Shared that 15,000+ new items are added to the catalog each year, and about the same number are removed.

##### **Regional Library Update**

- Filby Williams shared information with the board on the use of funding from a Housing and Urban Development grant.
- Proctor has now joined Hermantown in expressing interest in joining with Duluth to study a regional library system. Rice Lake will be approached next.

#### **Old Business**

##### **Safety Update**

- The library is working with city IT for more cameras to be installed because there are still some areas in the Main Library without adequate coverage. Wiring costs are covered by

the Facilities division. Paying for cameras is the library's responsibility. Cameras are key for staff to see what to expect when they respond to a situation. Cameras also are used for helping to share information internally about people who are trespassed.

- Safety incidents are still relatively high. However, they have started to slow in the past couple of weeks, which is typical for summer.
- Incidents often involve drugs (using and selling) and/or disruptive behavior. Approximately 70 people are currently trespassed from the Main Library.
- Next steps for improving safety are to consider making adjustments to the Michigan Street entrance and vestibule.

### **Advocacy Update**

- Foundation has added resources to their website to help folks advocate on behalf of the library at City Council meetings.
- Postcards are available at all library locations. Patrons can fill out the postcards and send them to elected officials.

### **New Business**

#### **2026 Budget**

- Filby Williams shared that the City is facing a budget deficit of approximately \$5.3 million. The City's largest expense is personnel, so closing the deficit will require cuts to staffing and services. The library has already lost about 15% of staff over the years. Large wage increases approved in collective bargaining agreements last year are contributing to the deficit.
- The Mayor has not presented his plan for the 2026 budget yet. The City Council will set the maximum levy at its September 22 meeting.

#### **Statement of Commitment**

- This statement, which was put together by library staff, was first brought to the board several months ago. After discussion at that meeting, Powers took it back to the staff committee for further revision.
- Board members noted that the statement is in alignment with the library's mission and questioned whether a separate statement is needed. Perhaps this expression of support should instead be in the library's strategic plan, which is due for an update soon.
- After much discussion, the Board opted not to take action on the Statement of Commitment at this time.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.