

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notice of Meeting

DATE: August 5, 2025

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Main Library Gold Room

AGENDA

Call to order

Welcome and introductions

Review and approve agenda

Approve minutes of June 3 meeting

Public comment

Reports

Library Manager's Report – Powers

Library Usage Report – Powers

Foundation Report – Arezzo

Friends Report – Gonzalez

Guest staff member – Jason DeShaw

Old Business

Safety update

Main Library facility/regional library services district

Advocacy update

Statement of Commitment

New Business

2026 budget

Adjournment

Next regular meeting: 4:30 PM on September 2, Main Library Gold Room

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes June 3, 2025

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

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, Jim Filby Williams, Tara Swenson, Betty Ramsland – former Library Board member, Carolyn Baird – League of Women Voters, Julia Luger – DPL, Carmella Hatch – DPL, Cameron Herrity – DPL, three citizens from The Pines

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 PM by Billa Arezzo, President
Recognized departing board member Betty Ramsland for her years of service

Review and approval of agenda

Motion by Foshay, seconded by Steinbach, to approve the agenda with the additions for public comment, Mount Royal staff update, and comments from Park Commissioner. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes of May 6, 2025

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

Public Comment

The three residents from The Pines who joined our meeting expressed their concerns about uptick in censorship issues at libraries across the US and asked if DPL has encountered book challenges. Mostly they wanted to express their support for the Library.

Reports

Library Manager

- **Summer hours** are now in effect with Saturdays being closed at all locations so Library staff can do outreach throughout the community.
- **Port Cards** will be available to students at Harbor City International School starting this Fall, which marks the first expansion of the Port Card program.
- **Gaming in the Teen Space** at Main will soon be available during open hours instead of only during specific programs.
- **Summer Reading** kicked off June 5th

Library Usage

- “Library of Things” is being very well used at all locations

Foundation

- The next major project the Foundation is focusing on is to update/transform the Children’s Section at Main. They are in the early stages of planning.

Friends

- Friends of the Library held their annual meeting in May, and it was well attended. The Year in Review highlighted that the Friends' fundraising efforts led to the group donating \$35,000 to the Library in 2024-25.
- Annual Book Sale is happening in June.

Every Child Ready Duluth – Carmella Hatch & Cameron Herrity

- Hatch & Herrity highlighted the efforts of the Every Child Ready Duluth program that focuses on early childhood literacy.
- They visit schools throughout Duluth twice per year and their coalition with community partners is going well.
- They are launching a new program, "Ready, Set, Grow," in response to parents asking about having evening programs available in the community.

Mount Royal Staff Update – Julia Luger

- Luger talked about programs such as the adult book club, outreach to The Pines, adult programming in general, and Take & Makes that all happen at the Mount Royal Branch. Many of these programs are made possible because of donations from the Friends.

Park Commissioner Report

- Filby Williams gave a facilities update. Currently working on a draft of the study for a Regional Library and will be coming to the Board soon.
- Meeting with folks at City of Hermantown in June about the study.

Old Business

Safety Update

- Staff did a walk-through of Main to assess where security cameras can be added.
- Requested Duluth PD to do extra patrols after hours.

Advocacy Update

- Henke updated the Board about current advocacy efforts, including coordinating folks to have a presence at City Council meetings.
- Foundation is working on adding resources on website to help folks advocate on behalf of the Library.

New Business

Reviewed Updated Photo Policy

- Motion by Foshay, seconded by Henke, to move forward with policy as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Statement of Commitment

Tabled until next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM

Library Manager's Report to Library Board

August 2025

Mount Royal Shopping Center Flooring Project. Work is being done in the common area at the Mount Royal Shopping Center. New ceiling tiles and paint are next. The public restrooms will get a refresh as well. Work has been done in a way that minimizes disruption to the businesses and library. The contractor is working to resolve an issue with the new floor tiles and the sliding glass doors.

West Duluth Branch Alcove Project. A small construction project also is in the works at the West Duluth Branch. When the project is complete, the alcove off the lobby will be accessible through the library. The library has been the primary user of this space for years but did not have direct access. The project is expected to wrap up in two to three weeks.

People Counters. Recently new people counters were installed at all three library locations. The previous counters had used a beam-break system to count people as they come and go. Beam-break, which utilizes older technology, is often inaccurate. The new system utilizes a monitor installed in the ceiling. Not only is the system more accurate, but it can provide hour-by-hour statistics and more sophisticated reports. In the first month of use, the new people counters showed a higher number of library visits than we've seen in the past at all three locations.

State Park Passes. The number of Minnesota state park passes in DPL's collection has more than doubled! Previously we had four passes for checkout. Now we have nine, thanks to an expansion of the program and the high level of usage by DPL patrons. The state Department of Natural Resources began the library checkout program in 2021 as a way of making it easier for Minnesotans who live in low-income communities to visit state parks. Libraries across the state can qualify for the program if they are located in a city or county where the median annual household income is no higher than \$58,000, and/or in a school district where over 40% of students are eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program. Passes check out for seven days and can be used more than once during that time.

Statement of Concern. Earlier this month a library patron filled out a Statement of Concern form about the book *Before Gender: Lost Stories from Trans History, 1850-1950* by Eli Erlick. In filling out the form, the patron expressed concern around the author's social media posts, calling them vicious and dangerous. I read portions of the book, looked at reviews in professional journals, and scanned information by and about the author online. The author appears to be well respected in her field, and the book provides information not found elsewhere in the library's collection. Therefore I decided it should remain. I informed the patron, provided a link to the library's collection development policy, and explained how the patron can appeal the decision if he wishes.

Automatic Renewals. An automatic renewal feature in our software system will be activated on August 1. With this feature, any checked-out item that is eligible for renewal will automatically be renewed two days before it is due, with no action needed from the patron. The feature is being activated as a way of improving customer service. However, it also will result in an increase in monthly circulation statistics. More renewals are expected to take place, and a renewal counts as a checkout.

Staffing Update. Two staff retirements are in the works. A .5 Library Technician from Mount Royal is set to retire on August 1. A full-time Librarian I who works at the Main Library will retire on September 6. Hiring for both positions is on hold until more is known about the 2026 budget.

MAIN 2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users																
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD		
Days open	25	23	26	25	24								123	124	99%	
Hours open	202	185	206	202	190								985	997	99%	
Visitors	12449	13031	13970	13782	11944								65,174	67,122	97%	
Internet uses Labs	1929	1746	1910	1888	1706								9,179	9,413	98%	
Internet uses laptops	28	22	49	38	47								184	442	42%	
Internet total	1957	1768	1959	1926	1753	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,363	9,616	97%	
Circulation print,av	19912	19014	22082	20672	19167								100,847	113,828	89%	
Circulation OverDrive	13616	11905	13430	13239	13227								65,417	52,265	125%	
Circulation Hoopla	3214	3068	3462	2690	2491								14,925	11,992	124%	
Circulation - LLG	21	30	0	0	17								68	16	425%	
Circulation - Other***	429	424	519	470	419								2,261	5,259	43%	
Circulation total	37192	34441	39493	37071	35321	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	183,518	178,101	103%	
In Person Programming Attendance*	803	2457	525	1063	1159								6,007	5,454	110%	
Virtual Attendance**	0	25	21	13	0								59	84	70%	
Self-Directed Participation	407	202	150	427	270								1,456	1,910	76%	
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1210	2684	696	1503	1429	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,522	7,448	101%	

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

MT ROYAL																
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users																
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD		
Days open	21	19	21	21	21								103	104	99%	
Hours open	168	154	174	174	168								838	842	100%	
Visitors	9109	8548	9654	9397	9176								45,884	42,931	107%	
Internet uses Labs	556	545	670	671	702								3,144	2,840	111%	
Internet uses laptops	9	6	9	5	5								34	8	425%	
Internet total	565	551	679	676	707	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,178	2,848	112%	
Circulation print,av	21971	19729	22227	21368	20172								105,467	110,155	96%	
Circulation - Other***	52	57	53	71	63								296	204	145%	
In Person Programming Attendance*	402	498	541	768	582								2,791	2,232	125%	
Virtual Attendance**	0	9	8	7	4								28	12	233%	
Self-Directed Participation	1104	696	391	206	513								2,910	3,808	76%	
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1506	1203	940	981	1099	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,729	6,052	95%	

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

WEST DULUTH																
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users																
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD		
Days open	21	19	21	21	21								103	104	99%	
Hours open	174	157	171	174	174								850	857	99%	
Visitors	5341	5091	5942	5634	5302								27,309	25,741	106%	
Internet uses Labs	465	533	578	576	569								2,721	1,800	151%	
Internet uses laptops	8	4	0	2	1								15	11	136%	
Internet total	473	537	578	578	570	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,736	1,811	151%	
Circulation print,av	8428	7650	8681	8306	8108								41,173	41,167	100%	
Circulation - Other***	10	26	56	51	57								200	81	247%	
In Person Programming Attendance*	314	266	369	241	267								1,457	1,096	133%	
Virtual Attendance**	0	0	0	0	0								-	-	0%	
Self-Directed Participation	158	134	239	239	181								951	1,404	68%	
Programming Attendance TOTAL	472	400	608	480	448	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,408	2,500	96%	

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

TOTAL MAIN AND BRANCHES																
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users																
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD		
Visitors	26898	26669	29566	28813	26422	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	138,367	135,794	102%	
Internet uses Labs	2950	2824	3158	3135	2977	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15,044	14,053	107%	
Internet uses laptops	45	32	58	45	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	233	222	105%	
Internet total	2995	2856	3216	3180	3030	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15,277	14,275	107%	
Circulation print,av	50332	46423	52990	50346	47464	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	247,555	265,166	93%	
Circulation OverDrive	13616	11905	13430	13239	13227	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	65,417	52,265	125%	
Circulation Hoopla	3214	3068	3462	2690	2491	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,925	11,992	124%	
Circulation - Other***	491	507	628	592	539	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,757	2,521	109%	
Circulation total	67653	61396	69882	66275	63182	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	328,388	331,944	99%	
In Person Programming Attendance*	1519	3221	1435	2072	2008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,255	8,782	117%	
Virtual Attendance**	0	34	29	20	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	87	96	91%	
Self-Directed Participation	1669	1032	780	872	964	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,317	7,122	75%	
Programming Attendance TOTAL	3188	4287	2244	2964	2976	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15,659	16,000	98%	

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

***Circulation - Other:

Computer Accessories, Toys, Toy Bag, Electric Meters, Hotspots, Community Passes, Puzzles, Ereaders

MAIN															
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD	
Days open	25	23	26	25	24	20							143	143	100%
Hours open	202	185	206	202	190	161							1,146	1,154	99%
Visitors	12449	13031	13970	13782	11944	12695							77,869	79,856	98%
Internet uses Labs	1929	1746	1910	1888	1706	1481							10,660	10,892	98%
Internet uses laptops	28	22	49	38	47	53							237	442	54%
Internet total	1957	1768	1959	1926	1753	1534	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,897	11,129	98%
Circulation print,av	19912	19014	22082	20672	19167	20695							121,542	134,001	91%
Circulation OverDrive	13616	11905	13430	13239	13227	13341							78,758	62,599	126%
Circulation Hoopla	3214	3068	3462	2690	2491	2439							17,364	14,513	120%
Circulation - LLG	21	30	0	0	17	108							176	111	159%
Circulation - Other***	429	424	519	470	419	449							2,710	5,259	52%
Circulation total	37192	34441	39493	37071	35321	37032	0	0	0	0	0	0	220,550	211,224	104%
In Person Programming Attendance*	803	2457	525	1063	1159	1231							8,238	6,829	121%
Virtual Attendance**	0	25	21	13	0	6							65	99	66%
Self-Directed Participation	407	202	150	427	270	200							1,656	2,600	64%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1210	2684	696	1503	1429	2437	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,959	7,448	134%

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

MT ROYAL															
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD	
Days open	21	19	21	21	21	20							123	123	100%
Hours open	168	154	174	174	168	167							1,005	996	101%
Visitors	9109	8548	9654	9397	9176	12178							58,062	53,182	109%
Internet uses Labs	556	545	670	671	702	734							3,878	3,356	116%
Internet uses laptops	9	6	9	5	5	6							40	12	333%
Internet total	565	551	679	676	707	740	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,918	3,368	116%
Circulation print,av	21971	19729	22227	21368	20172	24010							129,477	134,375	96%
Circulation - Other***	52	57	53	71	63	88							384	267	144%
In Person Programming Attendance*	402	498	541	768	582	956							3,747	3,260	115%
Virtual Attendance**	0	9	8	7	4	0							28	12	233%
Self-Directed Participation	1104	696	391	206	513	1071							3,981	5,444	73%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1506	1203	940	981	1099	2027	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,756	8,716	89%

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

WEST DULUTH															
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD	
Days open	21	19	21	21	21	20							123	123	100%
Hours open	174	157	171	174	174	161							1,011	1,014	100%
Visitors	5341	5091	5942	5634	5302	5593							32,902	31,234	105%
Internet uses Labs	465	533	578	576	569	498							3,219	2,177	148%
Internet uses laptops	8	4	0	2	1	3							18	12	150%
Internet total	473	537	578	578	570	501	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,237	2,189	148%
Circulation print,av	8428	7650	8681	8306	8108	8579							49,752	50,479	99%
Circulation - Other***	10	26	56	51	57	65							265	106	250%
In Person Programming Attendance*	314	266	369	241	267	301							1,758	1,454	121%
Virtual Attendance**	0	0	0	0	0	0							-	-	0%
Self-Directed Participation	158	134	239	239	181	120							1,071	1,577	68%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	472	400	608	480	448	421	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,829	3,031	93%

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

TOTAL MAIN AND BRANCHES															
2025 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2024 YTD	
Visitors	26898	26669	29566	28813	26422	30465	0	0	0	0	0	0	168,832	164,271	103%
Internet uses Labs	2950	2824	3158	3135	2977	2713	0	0	0	0	0	0	17,757	16,425	108%
Internet uses laptops	45	32	58	45	53	62	0	0	0	0	0	0	295	261	113%
Internet total	2995	2856	3216	3180	3030	2775	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,052	16,686	108%
Circulation print,av	50332	46423	52990	50346	47464	53392	0	0	0	0	0	0	300,947	318,966	94%
Circulation OverDrive	13616	11905	13430	13239	13227	13341	0	0	0	0	0	0	78,758	62,599	126%
Circulation Hoopla	3214	3068	3462	2690	2491	2439	0	0	0	0	0	0	17,364	14,513	120%
Circulation - Other***	491	507	628	592	539	602	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,359	3,010	112%
Circulation total	67653	61396	69882	66275	63182	69172	0	0	0	0	0	0	397,560	399,088	100%
In Person Programming Attendance*	1519	3221	1435	2072	2008	3488	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,743	11,543	119%
Virtual Attendance**	0	34	29	20	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	93	111	84%
Self-Directed Participation	1669	1032	780	872	964	1391	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,708	9,621	70%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	3188	4287	2244	2964	2976	4885	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,544	21,275	97%

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

***Circulation - Other:

Computer Accessories, Toys, Toy Bag, Electric Meters, Hotspots, Community Passes, Puzzles, Ereaders

**Foundation Report
August 2025**

The Library Foundation Board met on July 9, 2025 at the Lyric.

September 20 has been designated as Statewide Day of Action for Libraries. Events and activities are in the process of being planned.

Books & Buzzers Bash fundraiser is being planned for 11/13/25. Final details are still being planned but will probably include dinner, silent auction, live auction, games, etc. More details to follow as content is finalized. This will support the modifications of the children's area - see below.

Discussion held on Foundations to Learn, Play & Grow transforming the Children's Section of the Downtown Duluth Public Library. Total budget estimated to be \$350,000 not including new bookshelves which could cost \$107,000. Specifics are still being developed but will include such items as furniture, signage, holds for picture & board books, play area items, furniture, crafts, activities, reading, games, demo, painting, wiring and professional design, layout and planning fees. More info to follow.

A Friends and Foundation retreat and Strategic Planning session will be held on August 6, 2025 to help plan a future of collaboration. It will be led by an outside facilitator.

The next Foundation Board meeting will be held on Sept 10, 2025.

Prepared by Bill Arezzo

Friends of the Library Report
August 2025

The Friends of the Library Board met on July 15, 2025.

The Board discussed upcoming training opportunities, including two MALF webinars. The Board also discussed the agenda for the upcoming joint meeting with the Library Foundation Board. The Board approved a \$20,000.00 donation to the Duluth Public Library. Bill Lundberg from Breakwall Digital presented a proposal to the Board for maintenance of the Friends' website, and the Board approved to expenditure of \$150.00 for monthly maintenance of the website. There is still no firm answer as to whether we have access to the Friends' Facebook page or if we need to begin anew. Jose Gonzalez presented an update on the NEMBA Award in which he indicated that the NEMBA Award is progressing nicely, and he encouraged the Board to continue to financially support the NEMBA Award with a \$600.00 annual donation. The Board will discuss providing NEMBA with the donation at the next meeting.

Prepared by Jose Gonzalez

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The Duluth Public Library Manager and Board members are committed through our decisions, actions and attitudes to foster a library that supports and respects all library patrons and staff members.

We are committed to the Duluth Public Library standing in solidarity with BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ community members and allies against systemic racism and social injustice. We work to identify and eliminate behavior that is racist, discriminatory, or exhibits bias of any kind and expect those who represent the Duluth Public Library to do the same.

We lead an organization committed to:

- consistently meeting the needs of our community with integrity. We believe that everyone has a right to feel respected, safe, and valued within the library and community.
- eliminating societal barriers and creating a welcoming space in our programs, services, internal operations, and institutional culture.
- reducing barriers to library use and endeavoring to provide access to all regardless of ability.
- championing everyone's right to intellectual freedom, and safeguarding open and equitable access to our shared resources.
- seeking feedback from our community and utilizing that feedback to explore and implement more effective ways to make a positive impact.

We will continue to listen, learn, and act in collaboration with Library staff, volunteers, partners, and community members to make sure everyone knows that they are safe and respected within our walls.

Library Manager Carla Powers and the Library Board
June 2025