

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notice of Meeting

DATE: September 2, 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 August 5 meeting

Public comment

Reports

Library Manager's Report – Powers

Library Usage Report – Powers

Foundation Report – Arezzo

Friends Report – Gonzalez

Friends and Foundation Retreat – Gonzalez and Powers

Guest staff member – Steph Myers

Old Business

Safety update

Main Library facility/regional library services district

2026 budget

Advocacy update

New Business

2026 fee schedule

Adjournment

Next regular meeting: 4:30 PM on October 7, Evergreen Senior Center

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 1st 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.

Library Manager's Report to Library Board September 2025

West Duluth Branch Alcove Project. This project is nearing completion. The contractor is working on painting walls and installing carpet and trim. The library is ordering new folding tables and Caper chairs to make the space functional once the project wraps up. Similar to the Mount Royal Blue Room, the Alcove will be a public use space not reservable for private meetings, in order to make it available for as many people as possible.

Summer Reading Program. Community feedback on this year's Summer Reading Program has been overwhelmingly positive. Participation was up in nearly all categories as compared with last year. A total of 1,912 community members signed up for the program this summer, with 1,044 completing the program. Participants logged over two million minutes of reading time between June and August. The Summer Reading Program is open to people of all ages, from babies to adults. We've found that the most difficult age group to engage is birth to 5 years old. While we try to let caregivers know that doing all sorts of activities with their baby or young child counts, the program seems to gain more traction as kids get older.

Pride Programs. Again this year DPL is organizing several programs to help celebrate the Duluth-Superior Pride Festival. Drag Queen Storytime will take place at the Main Library on Friday, Aug. 29. Library staff will be at the festival with Little Library Go on Saturday, Aug. 30. Craft programs took place at Main and the West Duluth Branch in the week leading up to the festival.

Saturday Hours. The Main Library is scheduled to resume Saturday hours beginning September 6. As in the past, the library will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Historically Main has closed on Saturdays from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. The decision was made years ago due to less usage on summer Saturdays and more community interest in library outreach as outdoor activities ramp up during the warmer months.

Great North Star Read Together. On Saturday, Sept. 20, DPL will join 34 other libraries throughout Minnesota for The Great North Star Read Together. People all over the state are being encouraged to gather at libraries between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. that day to show appreciation for all types of libraries and the vital role these libraries play in their community. Our library's events will take place in the Main Library Plaza and at Chester Bowl Fall Fest. The Duluth Library Foundation is creating special limited edition t-shirts for community members to wear to the event or just around town.

Staffing Update.

- Current and upcoming vacancies among permanent staff include a half-time Library Technician at the Mount Royal branch (vacant since Aug. 2), a full-time Librarian I in Adult Services (effective Sept. 6) and a second full-time Librarian I in Adult Services (effective Oct. 10). Requests to fill these positions have been placed on hold pending decisions about the 2026 budget.
- Requests to fill a 13-hour-per-week Delivery Driver position and a 67-day Library Technician position are moving forward. The 67-day position will provide short-term help during an upcoming staff medical leave. The Delivery Driver position is currently vacant.

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	22						165	165	100%
Hours open	202	185	206	202	190	161	184						1,330	1,341	99%
Visitors	12449	13031	13970	13782	11944	12695	13216						91,085	93,975	97%
Internet uses Labs	1929	1746	1910	1888	1706	1481	1472						12,132	12,599	96%
Internet uses laptops	28	22	49	38	47	53	30						267	290	92%
Internet total	1957	1768	1959	1926	1753	1534	1502	0	0	0	0	0	12,399	12,889	96%
Circulation print,av	19912	19014	22082	20672	19167	20695	22169						143,711	156,120	92%
Circulation OverDrive	13616	11905	13430	13239	13227	13341	13911						92,669	73,713	126%
Circulation Hoopla	3214	3068	3462	2690	2491	2439	2497						19,861	17,145	116%
Circulation - LLG	21	30	0	0	17	108	119						295	183	161%
Circulation - Other***	429	424	519	470	419	449	493						3,203	3,097	103%
Circulation total	37192	34441	39493	37071	35321	37032	39189	0	0	0	0	0	259,739	247,161	105%
In Person Programming Attendance*	803	2457	525	1063	1159	2231	2463						10,701	11,373	94%
Virtual Attendance**	0	25	21	13	0	6	0						65	99	66%
Self-Directed Participation	407	202	150	427	270	200	163						1,819	2,838	64%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1210	2684	696	1503	1429	2437	2626	0	0	0	0	0	12,585	14,310	88%

*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	22						145	145	100%
Hours open	168	154	174	174	168	167	181						1,186	1,180	101%
Visitors	9109	8548	9654	9397	9176	12178	13055						71,116	63,599	112%
Internet uses Labs	556	545	670	671	702	734	752						4,630	3,951	117%
Internet uses laptops	9	6	9	5	5	6	1						41	21	195%
Internet total	565	551	679	676	707	740	753	0	0	0	0	0	4,671	3,972	118%
Circulation print,av	21971	19729	22227	21368	20172	24010	25666						155,143	160,717	97%
Circulation - Other***	52	57	53	71	63	88	105						489	342	143%
In Person Programming Attendance*	402	498	541	768	582	956	627						4,374	3,765	116%
Virtual Attendance**	0	9	8	7	4	0	0						28	12	233%
Self-Directed Participation	1104	696	391	206	513	1071	1703						5,684	6,775	84%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1506	1203	940	981	1099	2027	2330	0	0	0	0	0	10,086	10,552	96%

*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	22						145	145	100%
Hours open	174	157	171	174	174	161	184						1,195	1,192	100%
Visitors	5341	5091	5942	5634	5302	5593	7065						39,967	37,142	108%
Internet uses Labs	465	533	578	576	569	498	708						3,927	2,682	146%
Internet uses laptops	8	4	0	2	1	3	3						21	12	175%
Internet total	473	537	578	578	570	501	711	0	0	0	0	0	3,948	2,694	147%
Circulation print,av	8428	7650	8681	8306	8108	8579	9598						59,350	60,266	98%
Circulation - Other***	10	26	56	51	57	65	65						330	157	210%
In Person Programming Attendance*	314	266	369	241	267	301	309						2,067	1,713	121%
Virtual Attendance**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						-	-	0%
Self-Directed Participation	158	134	239	239	181	125	229						1,305	1,934	67%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	472	400	608	480	448	426	538	0	0	0	0	0	3,372	3,647	92%

*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	33336	0	0	0	0	0	202,168	194,715	104%
Internet uses Labs	2950	2824	3158	3135	2977	2713	2932	0	0	0	0	0	20,689	19,232	108%
Internet uses laptops	45	32	58	45	53	62	34	0	0	0	0	0	329	323	102%
Internet total	2995	2856	3216	3180	3030	2775	2966	0	0	0	0	0	21,018	19,555	107%
Circulation print,av	50332	46423	52990	50346	47464	53392	57552	0	0	0	0	0	358,499	377,286	95%
Circulation OverDrive	13616	11905	13430	13239	13227	13341	13911	0	0	0	0	0	92,669	73,713	126%
Circulation Hoopla	3214	3068	3462	2690	2491	2439	2497	0	0	0	0	0	19,861	17,145	116%
Circulation - Other***	491	507	628	592	539	602	663	0	0	0	0	0	4,022	3,596	112%
Circulation total	67653	61396	69882	66275	63182	69172	73960	0	0	0	0	0	471,520	471,740	100%
In Person Programming Attendance*	1519	3221	1435	2072	2008	3488	3399	0	0	0	0	0	17,142	16,851	102%
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	1396	2095	0	0	0	0	0	8,808	11,547	76%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	3188	4287	2244	2964	2976	4890	5494	0	0	0	0	0	26,043	28,509	91%

*includes on and off-site programs

**includes live and recorded

***Circulation - Other:

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

Visitors: New door counters installed in June 6, 2025

Circulation print, av: Auto-renewals started August 1, 2025

Duluth Library Foundation Report

No written report this month, as the Foundation Board did not meet.

Friends of the Library Report September 2025

The Friends of the Library Board met on August 19, 2025.

The Friends of the Duluth Public Library's Board continues to work on updating the Friends' website, including updating the language and wording throughout the site. The Board member who was chair of the Membership Committee has resigned her position on the Board, so we are in need of a new chair for the Membership Committee or two co-chairs. After regaining access to our Facebook account, we are working to better utilize it. Our first step is to add additional administrators so there can be somewhat consistent content. The Board approved a \$600 donation to the Northeastern Minnesota Book Award. The Board also discussed our initiative to have a Friends member offer program introductions at the Library's various programs which are funded through donations from the Friends. However, due to the issues involved with scheduling a speaker for each program, the Board discussed the possibility of using signs to inform the public.

Prepared by Jose Gonzalez

Dept/Div	Name of License	Last Approved Change	2025 Fee	IPD	2026 Fee w/IPD	2026 Recommendation	Reason for recommendation
Library							
	Barcode/Security Label Destruction Service Charge	10/11/2003	\$3.00	2.43%	\$ 3.07	\$3.00	Fee adequately covers actual cost of replacement and staff time
	Card Replacement	7/21/2008	\$3.00	2.43%	\$ 3.07	\$3.00	Fee adequately covers actual cost of replacement and staff time
	Conference Room Rental - Commercial - 0-4 hours	12/20/2022	\$70.00	2.43%	\$ 71.70	\$70.00	Fair price for limited amenities
	Conference Room Rental - Commercial - Per Day	12/20/2022	\$90.00	2.43%	\$ 92.19	\$90.00	Fair price for limited amenities
	Conference Room Rental - Nonprofit/Community Group	12/17/2012	\$ -	2.43%	\$ -	\$ -	Free as a public service
	Deposit Card Fee	12/20/2022	\$65.00	2.43%	\$ 66.58	\$65.00	Average replacement costs if materials are not returned
	Gold Room Rental - Commercial - 0-4 hours	12/20/2022	\$70.00	2.43%	\$ 71.70	\$70.00	Fair price for limited amenities
	Gold Room Rental - Commercial - per day	12/20/2022	\$90.00	2.43%	\$ 92.19	\$90.00	Fair price for limited amenities
	Gold Room Rental - Nonprofit/Community Group	12/17/2012	\$ -	2.43%	\$ -	\$ -	Free as a public service
	Green Room Rental - Commercial - 0-4 hours	12/20/2022	\$115.00	2.43%	\$ 117.79	\$115.00	Fair price for limited amenities
	Green Room Rental - Commercial - Per day	12/20/2022	\$150.00	2.43%	\$ 153.65	\$150.00	Fair price for limited amenities
	Green Room Rental - Nonprofit/Community Group	12/17/2012	\$ -	2.43%	\$ -	\$ -	Free as a public service
	Lost/Damaged Materials Fee [fee is actual cost of replacement and processing only]	10/11/2003	\$ -	2.43%	\$ -	\$ -	
	Non Minnesota Resident Borrower's Card - 1st Family Member - Annual	12/4/2017	\$55.00	2.43%	\$ 56.34	\$60.00	Fee based on Duluth's per capita tax for library services
	Research - After 1st 1/2 hour (per hour)	12/20/2021	\$30.00	2.43%	\$ 30.73	\$30.00	Covers staff time for doing in-depth research
	Research Results - Per Page	12/20/2022	\$3.00	2.43%		\$3.00	Covers copying/printing costs