

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes
January 28th, 2025

Present: Bill Arezzo, Lori Steinbach, Lizzy Luoma, Ellen Hatfield and Jose Gonzalez

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, Observers Sarah Kesler and Cindy Miller

Absent: Sue Henke, Betty Ramsland, Matt Rosendahl and Michelle Foshay

Call to Order

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

Review and approval of agenda

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Hatfield, to approve the agenda as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes of November 26th, 2024

Motion by Steinbach, seconded by Arezzo, to approve minutes as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Library Manager

- **December Programs** – The Main Library wrapped up 2024 with a couple of standout programs. Noon Year’s Eve featured a balloon drop at 12 noon. Kids are thrilled by this and get to take a balloon home.
- **Duluth Children’s Museum Passes** – This is a new offering for the community pass program. Passes are good for 2 adults and their kids to visit for one day. Patrons cannot place a hold online for the passes. However, they can call the library and ask for an available pass to be set aside while they come to get it.
- **Winter Reading** – This annual program is now underway. It is made possible by Friends of the Library with additional support from the Duluth Library Foundation.
- **Ojibwe Programming** – Throughout the month of January DPL offered a series of programs highlighting Ojibwe stories and language. The series was well received by the community.
- **One Book Northland** – This year One Book Northland will feature the title *Where Rivers Part: A Story of My Mothers’ Life* by Kao Kalia Yang. The committee is working on a visit by the author possibly to be held at UMD. Date and time are still to be determined.
- **Library Usage** – DPL had a good strong year. Usage was up in most categories except for computer usage at all locations and circulation of physical items at Main. Usage of electronic materials is increasing and more than made up for the decrease in usage of physical items. The library continues to work its way back up to pre-pandemic usage. The exception is programming attendance, which far exceeds 2019. There was discussion about Hoopla, which continues to experience rising costs. The library can place limits on Hoopla use, but doing so may cause patrons to become confused or frustrated. The most popular format on Hoopla is audiobooks, which also happens to be the most expensive.

Foundation

- The Foundation Board has approved their next campaign focus, which will fund improvements in the youth area at the Main Library.

Friends

- The Friends' bank balance currently stands at \$19,110, but they have approved giving DPL \$10,000.
- The Friends Board is discussing the cost of using the credit card reader Square, and whether the price of books at the book sale should increase. There is also discussion of having a space at DPL where the Friends could stock and sell books year-round on the honor system.
- The library will not have a booth at Sidewalk Days but possibly will have programming in the library garden.

Old Business

Main Library Facility Update

- Jim Filby Williams does not see a viable path forward to fund an \$80 million library building at this point in time. Funding sources that could have provided a large portion of the money are no longer available. With the loss of state and federal dollars, a public/private partnership would not be able to provide enough funds for a new building. The idea of forming a regional library services authority may be explored. Historically, roughly 30% of DPL card holders have resided outside of the city limits. Several other states allow for district libraries, but none currently exist in Minnesota.
- **Advocacy** – Thanking the Mayor for the increase of \$24,000 to the library budget has been the focus of advocacy efforts recently. The advocacy team is in the process of setting up meetings with the new City Council and City Administrator. The meetings are planned to be informational only. The Library Foundation will attend Duluth and St. Louis County Days at the Capitol to advocate for libraries. The next advocacy team meeting is in February.
- **Terms** - Matt Rosendahl and Betty Ramsland will reach the end of their term in March. There will be an election of officers in March.
- **Liaison to the Foundation Board or The Friends of the Library Board** – Still in need of both. There is an application process to be on either of these boards.

New Business

- Computer and Internet Policy – A new draft policy was discussed and some language was adjusted. A final draft will be reviewed next month.
- The library's new City Council liaison is Tara Swenson.

Adjournment

Arezzo adjourned the meeting at 5:38 pm.