

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes October 29, 2024

Present: Bill Arezzo, Ellen Hatfield, Lori Steinbach, Michelle Foshay, Matt Rosendahl, Sue Henke, Jose Gonzalez and Betty Ramsland

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, City Councilor Azrin Awal, Jim Filby Williams, League of Women Voters observer Carolyn Baird, library staff member Lori Crocker, Sarah Kesler, John Ramos

Absent: Lizzy Luoma

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Sue Henke, President

Review and approve agenda

Motion by Arezzo, seconded by Ramsland, to approve agenda as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes of September 2024 meeting

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

Reports

Library Manager

- Hold notices have improved due to new software. They look better and are more user friendly.
- Crisis Intervention Training took place in conjunction with the police department. It gave staff an opportunity to learn about de-escalation and practice their skills in a supportive and non-threatening environment. The Safety Specialists recently completed a more extensive, four-day training.
- A potential 2025 legislative priority for the Minnesota Library Association is to give municipalities the option of banning weapons in public facilities, including libraries. DPL staff have expressed support for such a ban.
- The Duluth Library Foundation is considering kiosks as their next funding project. Kiosks range from simple lockers for holds storage and pickup to more full-service models that provide a browsing collection and a wi-fi hotspot. They could be placed in community centers or businesses that are conveniently located and have generous open hours. They would provide improved access to people who are not close to a library or who can't make it to the library during open hours. Keeping kiosks stocked and maintained has implications for staffing.
- Bluey Book Bingo at the West Duluth Branch recently brought in 120 participants of all ages.
- The Library is fully staffed! 2021 and 2022 were tough years, but morale has improved since then. Staff are organizing staff game nights, informal get-togethers and a staff newsletter, which have helped them feel more connected.

User Statistics

Self-directed participation at Mt. Royal had not been properly reported last month. It has been corrected now. All locations are experiencing more usage as compared to 2023. Usage is continuing to rebound following the extended closure in 2020 and 2021 due to the covid pandemic. The only category that is not up is computer usage at West Duluth.

Friends

- Littlest Holiday Sale will take place at Mt. Royal on December 3rd, 4th, and 5th.
- There was a recommendation that everyone on the Library Board should be a member of the Friends of the Library
- At the next Friends meeting they will discuss writing another check to the Library.
- Board members are working on a new brochure and getting the mailing list reduced to more current members.

Foundation

Give to the Max Day is November 21st. The Foundation Board will be providing a matching gift up to \$8,000 for the Give to the Max challenge. Money given to the library is used to support Hoopla and programming. The Foundation currently has two job openings.

Old Business

Main Library Facility Update

There is little news on the building. The City has been approved for federal funding, and Jim Filby Williams will request clarification on whether it can be used for design and planning for community centers in addition to the downtown library. Mayor Reinert is looking at various public/private options, such as having a building co-owned by the city or owned by a private party and leased by the library.

Advocacy

Board will express gratitude to the Mayor for finding money in a tight city budget. In a year with no tax levy increase, the library is receiving an additional \$45,000. With the 2025 budget process done, and with the building still in limbo and the library fully staffed, there are no further asks in terms of advocacy.

New Business

2025 Meeting Dates

Potential meeting dates and locations were reviewed. Meetings will take place on the fourth Tuesday of most months in the Gold Room at the Main Library. The June meeting will take place at the Mount Royal Branch Library. The September meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 30 (the fifth Tuesday) in the Evergreen Center adjacent to the West Duluth Branch.

Liaison to the Foundation Board or Friends of the Library Board

With both of these liaisons reaching the end of their second term on the Library Board in March, there was discussion of other board members applying to be on the Foundation or Friends Board. Both boards have an application process to express interest in joining

Meeting adjourned at 5:23 pm by Sue Henke, President