

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes
June 27, 2023

Present: Susan Henke, Bill Arezzo, Betty Ramsland, Lizzy Luoma, Jose Gonzalez, Ellen Hatfield, Lori Steinbach

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, Noah Hobbs, Jim Filby Williams

Absent: Matt Rosendahl, Michelle Foshay

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 PM by Sue Henke, Vice President

Review and approval of agenda

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

Approval of Minutes of the April 24, 2023, meeting

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

Reports

Library Manager

- Library is very close to being fully staffed, hoping for a fall hire for the vacant half-time Library Technician position. A half-time Library Technician is retiring in August. This position may be converted to a .5 Library Safety Specialist. There is also a vacant 13-hour Library Aide position in the process of being filled..

Foundation

- Learning & Libations at the Library will be held on Friday September 15th. This one of the main fundraisers for the Foundation. The theme is reunions for this after-hours event. It will take place at the Main Library.

Friends

- Social media training is being given to the friends by some of the library staff.
- The Friends are planning a retreat to work on a Strategic Plan and remind people that the library has three separate supporting organizations.
- \$14,00 was raised at the book sale and 75 new members signed up!
- The Friends will set up a tent at Sidewalk Days to give out free books to children.
- Dan at the DECC set up a program for volunteers. The DECC will donate their hourly wage to a non-profit of their choice. The volunteer wage is \$10.00 an hour. So far \$2,500 has been raised from volunteering at the DECC.

Old Business

Safety Update

- Jim Filby Williams has worked to secure funding for off-duty police officers, security cameras and a new staff badge scanner. This is all in the works and going forward.
- A bench was moved further from the entrance.

- Jim Filby Williams has requested annual funding as part of the 2024 budget to provide training and ongoing funding for off-duty police in perpetuity at the Main Library.

Main Library Facility Update

- NEOO Partners, the community engagement consultants, received 338 survey responses and had 84 people come to the event at Harrison Park. Feedback included: providing design space for families with a small play area, off -hour computer hours, friendly activities. Loan and learn for childcare facilities (similar to Book Club in a Bag), basic training for early childhood, more youth activities. Surveys indicated that Duluth residents do know where the Main Library is and like that it is on the bus line. They noted that parking at the West Duluth library is hard.
- The initial pre-design report has been submitted. After reviewing cost estimates and relative value of renovating the building vs. demolishing it and rebuilding on the same site, the internal design team recommended the latter. Initial concept is for an 88,000-square-foot building, which equals the current square footage of the Main Library and Workforce Center. A final pre-design is due October 1. Construction is estimated to take 18 to 24 months, with federal funds needing to be spent by 2026.
- On Wednesday, July 12th at 4:00 pm at the Depot, the boards of the Library, Library Foundation and Workforce Development will meet for a visioningsession and update on community feedback.

Library Board Appointments

New Board members Jose Gonzalez and Ellen Hatfield were welcomed.

New Business

2024 Budget

The process is getting underway, with expense budgets due July 28th. The library's budget presentation to the City Council is tentatively scheduled for October 23rd at 5:30 p.m. Priorities are an additional \$75,000 to fully implement the safety plan and an increase of \$25,000 in the materials budget. This is to restore a portion of the historic cuts which date back to the year 2009 on circulation materials and begin to reverse a decade-long freeze.

Ongoing Business

Advocacy

Advocacy for the 2024 budget was discussed. The advocacy team is putting together a carefully crafted message to take forward to council, Noah Schuchman and the Mayor. The advocacy team is made up of representatives from the Library Board, the Friends of the Library and the Duluth Library Foundation. Foundation Executive Director Erin Kreeger is coordinating and providing administrative support for the group.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 PM