

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notice of Meeting

DATE: March 3, 2026

TIME: 4:30 PM

LOCATION: Mount Royal Branch Blue Room

Agenda

Call to Order

Welcome and introductions
Review and approve agenda
Approve minutes of February 3 meeting
Public comment

Reports

Library Manager's Report – Powers
Library Usage Report – Powers
Friends Report – Powers
Foundation Report on volunteer appreciation event - Arezzo
Guest staff member – Lori Crocker

Old Business

Safety update
Main Library facility/regional library services district
Advocacy update

New Business

Recommendation for Council on gifts from Friends and Library Foundation
Election of officers

Adjournment

Next meeting: April 7, 2026 Main Library Gold Room

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2026

Call to Order

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

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, staff member Libby Spehar, League of Women Voters observer Carolyn Baird, Interim PPL Director Erik Birkeland, Library Foundation Executive Director Erin Kreeger

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 PM by Bill Arezzo, President

Review & Approve Agenda

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Bladl, to approve agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes of December 2, 2025

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

Public comment

A member of the public had questions about Duluth Public Library relocation and timeline.

Reports

Library Manager

- DPL added a Spanish language storytime in January. It will take place monthly and rotate among the three locations.
- Juvenile and Young Adult book on disc collections will be discontinued in February due to decreased use and the growth in streaming options such as Libby and Hoopla. Patrons can still request this format through interlibrary loan.
- Reviewed 2025 usage data. Strong numbers overall.

Foundation

- Board reviewed a draft MOU between the Foundation and the Friends. It was drafted by the Friends & Foundation working group.
- Fundraising is continuing for the Downtown Children's Section project.
- Four new members were nominated for election at the March meeting.

Friends

- The Friends reviewed the draft MOU between the Foundation and the Friends, which outlines the duties of each organization and areas where they can assist one another.

Guest Staff Member

- Libby Spehar talked about her work in communications for the Library, including: the website redesign, working on document remediation for accessibility, creating the events calendar, and more.

Old Business

Safety Update

- Meetings took place with city administration, police department and AFSCME to address continued safety issues. Recommendations were made for increased safety at Main. Progress is being made on the recommendations.

Main Library facility/regional library services district

- Consultant study is in progress and may wrap up in mid-February.
- Discussed potential options, public comment, HUD grant, and more.

Advocacy Update

- No update. Advocacy team is starting to meet with new city councilors.

New Business

Library Board and Officer Elections

- Discussed the upcoming Library Board vacancy due to Lizzy Luoma finishing her second term in March. Applications will open soon.
- Officer elections will take place at the March meeting.

Duluth Library Foundation 2025 Year in Review

- The Foundation raised over \$515,000 and saw an increase in donors.
- Erin Kreeger shared highlights from 2025 for programming, fundraising and advocacy work.
- Kreeger shared what is made possible because of the Foundation, and what is ahead for 2026.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned: 5:57 pm

Library Manager's Report

March 2026

YMCA Passes. Passes to the Lake Superior YMCA became the latest addition to DPL's community pass program on Feb. 13. Passes can be used at the Duluth, Superior and Hermantown locations. They are like a week-long YMCA membership, allowing for multiple visits through the due date and providing access to exercise facilities, pools, gyms, and group exercise classes. There are four family passes (which admit two adults and their children) and four single passes for use by an adult 18 or over. Similar to other community passes, they are available on a first-come, first-served basis and do not allow for holds.

Pocketalkers. As part of the library's ongoing efforts to improve accessibility, small devices called Pocketalkers have been purchased for each of DPL's service desks. A Pocketalker is a personal amplifier that can help people with hearing loss navigate one-on-one or very small group conversations. The devices have been purchased for staff to use with patrons. They are not available for patrons to check out or use in the library without staff.

Cold Front. DPL had a tent at the Duluth Parks & Recreation's Cold Front Festival on Saturday, Feb. 7. A total of 503 attendees stopped by to spin the prize wheel, do a bird craft, or get more information about the library.

Statement of Concern. Recently a patron formally expressed concern over the book *The Truth About Hillary* by Edward Klein. The patron found the book to be biased and without journalistic merit. She requested that it be removed from the collection. While this book is controversial, it was written by a New York Times bestselling author and generated a lot of public interest when it was released. DPL owns eight other books by or about Hillary Clinton. I replied to the patron, letting her know that I do not intend to remove the book and explaining how to appeal this decision if she wishes to do so.

Staffing Update.

- A Library Technician at Mount Royal was chosen to fill the Senior Library Technician position there. I am seeking approval to backfill the now-vacant Library Technician position.
- A part-time, 67-day Library Technician has been hired to assist with a backlog of cataloging while DPL transitions into purchasing some catalog records. Getting set up to purchase records from our book vendor is taking longer than anticipated. The temporary employee will help ensure that new materials are available to the public in a timely manner.

MAIN															
2026 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2025 YTD	
Days open	25												25	25	100%
Hours open	199												199	202	99%
Visitors	12305												12,305	12,449	99%
Internet uses Labs	1704												1,704	1,929	88%
Internet uses laptops	57												57	28	204%
Internet total	1761	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,704	1,957	87%
Circulation print,av	25956												25,956	19,912	130%
Circulation OverDrive	14568												14,568	13,616	107%
Circulation Hoopla	2507												2,507	3,306	76%
Circulation - LLG	2												2	21	10%
Circulation - Other**	629												629	429	147%
Circulation total	43662	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	43,662	37,284	117%
In Person Programming Attendance*	427												427	803	53%
Live Virtual Attendance	0												-	-	0%
Self-Directed Participation	140												140	407	34%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	567	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	567	1,210	47%

*includes on and off-site programs

MT ROYAL															
2026 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2025 YTD	
Days open	20												20	21	95%
Hours open	161												161	168	96%
Visitors	9990	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,990	9,109	110%
Internet uses Labs	639												639	556	115%
Internet uses laptops	5												5	9	56%
Internet total	644	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	644	565	114%
Circulation print,av	25189												25,189	21,971	115%
Circulation - Other**	78												78	52	150%
In Person Programming Attendance*	408												408	402	101%
Live Virtual Attendance	0												-	12	0%
Self-Directed Participation	892												892	1,104	81%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	1300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,300	1,506	86%

*includes on and off-site programs

WEST DULUTH															
2026 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2025 YTD	
Days open	20												20	21	95%
Hours open	164												164	174	94%
Visitors	4926												4,926	5,341	92%
Internet uses Labs	440												440	465	95%
Internet uses laptops	1												1	8	13%
Internet total	441	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	441	473	93%
Circulation print,av	9589												9,589	8,428	114%
Circulation - Other**	33												33	10	330%
In Person Programming Attendance*	168												168	320	53%
Live Virtual Attendance	0												-	-	0%
Self-Directed Participation	231												231	158	146%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	399	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	399	478	83%

TOTAL MAIN AND BRANCHES															
2026 Hours, Visitors, Circulation, Internet Users															
Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	2025 YTD	
Visitors	27220	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,220	26,898	101%
Internet uses Labs	2783	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,783	2,950	94%
Internet uses laptops	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	63	45	140%
Internet total	2846	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,846	2,995	95%
Circulation print,av	60736	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60,736	50,332	121%
Circulation OverDrive	14568	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14,568	13,616	107%
Circulation Hoopla	2507	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,507	3,306	76%
Circulation - Other**	740	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	740	491	151%
Circulation total	78551	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	78,551	67,745	116%
In Person Programming Attendance*	1003	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,003	1,525	66%
Live Virtual Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0%
Self-Directed Participation	1263	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,263	1,669	76%
Programming Attendance TOTAL	2266	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,266	3,194	71%

*includes on and off-site programs

**Circulation - Other:

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

Friends of the Library Report

March 2026

The Friends of the Duluth Public Library Board meet on February 17, 2026.

- There was further discussion of a draft memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) between the Duluth Library Foundation and the Friends of the Duluth Public Library. However, no vote was taken because a couple of board members wanted to review the MOU again.
- The Friends will be providing gift cards to participants in a community conversations project organized by DPL’s Every Child Ready Duluth team. Government purchasing rules prohibit City staff from purchasing gift cards.
- The Duluth Library Foundation has invited the Friends to table at some of its National Library Week events.
- Community member Gerri Williams is organizing a group of library supporters with the goal of keeping the Duluth Public Library in its current location in central downtown.
- The Friends’ annual meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 19. All Friends members are invited to attend.

Prepared by Carla Powers