



Albert Lea
Public Library

211 E. Clark Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007

507-377-4350
alpl.library@gmail.com
www.alplonline.org

Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2024

5:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

Present: Annice Sevett, Anna Andersen, Jay Escobar, Heidi Gaston, Andrew Gustafson, Becky Tennis Hanson, Cheryll Intihar, Dawn Kaasa (Freeborn County Commissioner), Cindy Gilbert (ALPL SELCO Board Representative), Cathy Malakowsky, Matthew Tessmer

1. Approve Minutes of the May 15, 2024 Meeting

Gustafson asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Gaston made the motion, Escobar seconded. The board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the May 15, 2024 meeting as written.

2. Old Business

a. Director's Report

A new integrated library system (ILS) has been selected by SELCO. The new software, Evergreen, is an open source product with more up to date features than the current system. The new system includes a change to the public catalog. The new system should be easier for both staff and patrons to use. The contract is still being negotiated, so exact dates for the transition have not been finalized. But the transition should happen in early May at the latest. With the transition to the new ILS, SELCO voted to remove the remaining schools from the ILS and work to provide a different solution. No school districts in Freeborn County currently use the ILS. The board asked if there will be significant library staff time devoted to the transition. Sevett detailed how SELCO staff will be responsible for the transition itself; library staff will do some data cleanup to ease the transition and will need to be trained on the new system.

Statistics from summer programs were shared. Overall, summer programming efforts were successful. The number of programs offered and attendance were similar to last summer's statistics. The new program offerings for teens and tweens were very successful. A few summer programs remain, including the Local Author Festival.

Circulation statistics from May, June, and July were presented and compared to the same period from the previous year. Overall, there was a slight increase in total circulation, and a 13% increase in the number of new patrons registered. The increase in Hoopla circulation was highlighted. Hoopla has a pay per checkout model; Sevett detailed how this increase could impact the collections budget. The board discussed options to balance budgetary concerns with patron's ability to use the service.

b. 2024 Goals

The library's goals for 2024 were presented. Goals include: (1) improve services and outreach efforts to non-native English speakers using the ALPL 2024-2026 Plan for Library Services to Immigrant and Refugee Communities, (2) participate in outreach activities and partner with relevant community organizations to bring the library out into the community, (3) increase the number of residents who have a library card, (4) promote adult programs and non-traditional library offerings with targeted marketing efforts to increase attendance and usage, and (5) expand programs and services for tweens and teens not served by existing library programs.

An update on the progress made on the library's 2024 goals was given. Highlights include: attending a Karen Festival to promote library programs and services, plans to translate ads for upcoming events into Spanish and Karen and place them in the Freeborn County Shopper, participation in events for families, regular meetings with community organizations focused on community programming, holding a Library Card Design contest to encourage sign ups, marketing adult programs where their intended audiences hear about events, and building on the success of the summer tween and teen events by continuing programming in the fall.

3. New Business

a. Local Author Shelf Guidelines

Guidelines and a submission form for the inclusion of works on the library's Local Author Shelf were presented. The purpose of the guidelines is to create clear criteria for which contributions will be considered for inclusion by the library and to provide a process for the submission of these contributions. Sevett adapted the inclusion criteria from the library's Local Author Festival and surveyed similar policies at other libraries to create the guidelines. The guidelines are not an official policy, but will be referenced in the Policy Manual.

Gustafson asked for a motion to approve the Local Author Shelf Guidelines as written. Gaston made the motion, Intihar seconded. The board voted unanimously to approve the Local Author Shelf Guidelines as written.

b. Program Challenge Policy

The addition of a program challenge policy and form to the library's Program Policy and the expansion of programs to include displays and exhibits were presented. The procedure to challenge a program is the same as that to challenge library materials, with the exception of a four week timeline for an in-person meeting of the appeals committee. The board asked if the library is encountering challenges to programs. Sevett detailed that while the library has not experienced challenges, other libraries in the region have had programs questioned. Having a procedure in place will help the library should it receive challenges in the future. Gilbert added that SELCO is considering requiring libraries to have a policy like this in place; the library's procedures are a good model for other libraries to adapt and adopt.

Gustafson asked for a motion to recommend the proposed changes to the Program Policy be adopted by the City Council. Andersen made the motion, Gaston seconded. The board voted unanimously to recommend the proposed changes to the Program Policy be adopted by the City Council at its next meeting on Monday, August 26.

4. SELCO Board Report

Gilbert provided updates on her activities representing the library on the SELCO Board of Directors. New SELCO Board Officers were elected for the 2025 fiscal year. Gilbert was not elected to serve on the Executive Committee. Gilbert was assigned to two committees, the Legacy Committee and the Advocacy Committee.

5. Board Comments or Concerns

There were no board comments or concerns at this time.

6. Adjournment

Gustafson asked for a motion to end the meeting. Hanson made the motion, Intihar seconded. The August 21, 2024 meeting of the Library Advisory Board concluded at 5:42 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Matthew Tessmer