



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  
November 20, 2024  
5:00 p.m.  
Room 109

Present: Annice Sevett, Anna Andersen, Andrew Gustafson, Becky Tennis Hanson, Vicky Robson, Robert Rasmussen (City Council Representative), Cathy Malakowsky, Cindy Gilbert (ALPL SELCO Board Representative), Matthew Tessmer

1. Approve Minutes of the August 21, 2024 Meeting

Gustafson asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Hanson made the motion, Andersen seconded. The board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2024 meeting as written.

2. Old Business

a. Director's Report

Circulation statistics from August, September, and October were presented and compared to the same period from the previous year. The numbers were largely comparable for physical materials and for OverDrive. September had a notable increase in physical circulation.

An update was given on the migration to the new integrated library system (ILS), Evergreen. SELCO has signed the contract, and the migration project should be kicking off soon. Sevett detailed the data cleaning efforts that the library has undertaken to reduce the amount of unnecessary data transferred to the new system, including the waiving of lost fees under \$25 and over ten years old. This resulted in the elimination of almost 800 inactive user records, and will help the library have a more accurate picture of cardholder data.

An update was given on library programming. Program participation has been consistent with 2023 numbers. Adult Craft Night remains popular; almost every session has a long waiting list. Drop in crafts have been added when there are five Tuesdays in a month to open up crafting opportunities for those unable to attend Adult Craft Night. A new children's program, Read to a Dog, has been added. It allows children to read aloud to a therapy dog for fifteen minutes, a practice that research shows can help children build literacy skills, especially for reluctant readers. Looking ahead, two winter reading programs will begin soon. Family Reads begins December 8th, and the Adult Winter Reading Program begins January 6th. More sessions of the Read to a Dog program have been added as well. The Winter/Spring Fun Guides will be mailed the week of Dec. 9th; registration for winter programs will open Dec. 9th.

The results of the Library Card Design Contest were shared. A total of 41 entries were received, with five winning designs chosen. These were shared with the board. Individuals who get a library card for the first time can select one of the limited designs for their card; individuals who currently have a card can sign up

for a drawing for a chance to get a limited edition sticker for their card. The designs are available through Nov. 27th, and the drawing will close on that day. The designs have been available for approximately a month, and the registration of new cards for that period has remained steady at about fifty.

The initial details of a new Books by Mail program were shared. The goal of the program is to make most physical library materials from ALPL's collection more accessible for homebound residents and residents that live outside city limits. A \$500 mini grant was received from SELCO to assist with postage costs to get the program started. There will be a soft launch of the program on Dec. 2nd. Sevett will share more information about the program with board members as it begins and develops.

#### 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: placing ads in community specific publications and translating select ads into Spanish, scheduling a Dec. tour for Adult Basic Education students, participating in a variety of community events across age ranges, being on track in 2024 to exceed the number of new cardholders registered in 2023, attendance of the Library Director at a number of service clubs and groups to speak about adult programming, continuing to reach tweens and teens with programming, and planning to gather feedback from attendees at tween and teen programs to guide the development of new programs for summer 2025.

Sevett noted that the library will need to develop a new strategic plan soon. The process would likely start in late 2025 or early 2026, due to the ILS migration and the availability of SELCO staff to assist with the process. Sevett asked board members to solicit feedback from the community and come to the Feb. 2025 board meeting with ideas for goals to guide the year.

### 3. New Business

#### a. Hoopla

An overview of Hoopla, one of the library's digital services for electronic materials, was given. The library is charged per circulation for this service. The increase in usage in recent years has made the service unsustainable at the current checkout limit. Options to reduce the cost of the service include lowering the monthly checkout limit, placing a limit on the cost per item maximum that is available to patrons, and placing daily or monthly spending limits.

Statistics on the average number of circulations and the circulations by format and age category were shared. Sevett recommended reducing the monthly checkout limit from ten items to four, as the average circulation was 4.25 per

patron. This change would significantly reduce the cost of the service. The board asked clarifying questions about what types of materials cost the most per use and if the reduction in costs would be sustainable for the long term. The board supported Sevett's recommended reduction of the monthly checkout limit and suggested the addition of a limit on the cost per item maximum that is available, with the goal of ensuring that one change will make the continued use of the service sustainable for the long term. Sevett agreed with the board's suggestion, and will research what limit on item maximums will balance sustainability of the service with patron's access to a broad range of materials.

Sevett will share the final cost reduction strategy with the board. The change is planned to take place at the start of the new year.

#### b. Board Member Terms

A list of the current members of the ALPL Advisory Board and their term expiration dates was provided. No member terms are expiring in 2024.

City Council Representative Robert Rasmussen, whose term on the Albert Lea City Council is ending, was thanked for his service on the ALPL Advisory Board.

#### 4. SELCO Board Report

Gilbert provided updates on her activities representing the library on the SELCO Board of Directors, Legacy Committee, and Advocacy Committee. At the recent meeting of the Board of Directors, discussion items of note included a new procedure for liaison communication and the results of a membership satisfaction survey. These survey results will be considered by additional committees of the Board of Directors, and by the SELCO Advisory Board. The Legacy Committee has reviewed submissions for the Community Collaboration Grant. There may be another opportunity for submissions to this grant in the spring of 2025; Sevett shared that library staff have been brainstorming and may submit to this second round. The Advocacy Committee has begun lobbying to request additional funding for Library Construction Grants, Legacy funds for Arts & Cultural Heritage, and Minitex, which provides services to libraries throughout the state. The board expressed interest in the Library Construction Grant for incorporating the old fire station into the library space. Gilbert and Sevett shared that the grant is competitive and requires matching funds, but that winning the grant would help to grow the support of the City Council for the project.

#### 5. Board Comments or Concerns

The board asked about the results of the fall book sale of the Friends of the Library. Sevett shared that the proceeds from the 2024 fall sale were greater than the 2023 sale and that the partnership with the Disabled American Veterans of MN continued for the removal and reuse of leftover materials from the sale.

#### 6. Adjournment

Gustafson asked for a motion to end the meeting. Andersen made the motion, Robson seconded. The November 20, 2024 meeting of the Library Advisory Board concluded at 6:04 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Matthew Tessmer