

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING

April 14, 2025; 4:30 pm

Chair Stephanie Postma called the regular meeting of the Austin Public Library Board to order at 4:30 p.m., on Monday, April 14, 2025, at the Austin Public Library.

PRESENT: Sue Grove, Kristi Beckman, Jwokamer Debock, Ted Hinchcliffe, Nitaya Jandragholica, Stephanie Postma, Tim Rietz, Valerie Sheedy

ALSO PRESENT: Julie Clinefelter, Sara Steinhoff

ABSENT WITH NOTICE: Gema Alvarado-Guerrero

AGENDA: Kristi Beckman moved to approve the agenda; Nitaya Jandragholica seconded. Motion carried.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ted Hinchcliffe, seconded by Tim Rietz, to approve the March 10, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Carried.

EXPENSES AND FINANCE REPORTS:

A motion was made by Kristi Beckman to approve expenditures and accept the finance reports for March 2025. Valerie Sheedy seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous roll-call vote.

SELCO REPORT:

Valerie Sheedy reported on the March 25 SELCO Board meeting, including updates on the upcoming inter-library system migration, which was the main topic of the meeting. She noted the new system is scheduled to go live starting April 28. Sheedy also reported the Board approved a resolution to support Minitex, which is facing an uncertain future in light of announced cuts to IMLS and related funding, and advised SELCO's director, Krista Ross, is working on goals and outcome measures for an upcoming board evaluation.

LIAISON REPORTS:

None – no liaisons present.

OPERATIONAL REPORT:

Julie Clinefelter provided a written report prior to the board meeting, and reviewed the following items:

Library Staff and Administration

Clinefelter advised most of the staff are currently focused on ILS migration preparation, including final training on running reports in the new system, preparing workflow directors and reminders for clerks and pages, and preparing to adapt processes to the new software. She noted the administrative team is continuing work on moving forward with the Implementation Plans for 2025 strategic priorities and have met with four of the six staff leads to complete their drafts of Action Steps.

Also in relation to the ILS data migration, Julie advised the library will be closed Monday, April 28, for the first day of the ILS go-live. She reported staff and clerks will meet to make sure everyone is ready for April 29, and there will be balloons and cookies on Tuesday for patrons, to celebrate the many improvements the new system will bring. Julie also noted there has been some pushback from patrons on needing to have physical library card in order to check out at the desk, which has been implemented to prepare the public for this policy being a requirement under the new system. She further advised MNLink will be shut down April 10-May 6 for the system changeover.

Programs and Outreach

Julie advised the work on "Milly the Mill Pond Monster" project is proceeding at the Austin High School metal-working shop, and noted the final grant request is due April 22, so she is finalizing that request and gathering all the letters of support.

SELCO Membership Agreement

Director Clinefelter provided the new proposed SELCO Membership Agreement for approval by the board. She pointed out the changed language in new paragraph 1A – “Operate according to the requirements for public libraries in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 134.” She noted the situation in Austin is complicated by the fact that Austin is a charter city, and the Austin Public Library was created through the charter in Chapter 12. Nitaya Jandragholica advised she is a member of the Charter Committee for the City and stated the committee had assured the language of Austin’s charter is consistent with all language of Minn. Stat. 134. Julie advised the signed membership agreement is due back June 30.

Nitaya Jandragholica moved to approve the updated SELCO Membership Agreement for signature by the board chair. Sue Grove seconded the motion. Motion carried.

IMLS/MNLink Update

Julie reported that federal funding of IMLS was cut, though current funds will continue through June, and the effects on APL would be first noticed in an inability to request and circulate items throughout the state. Julie distributed circulation numbers for MNLink, ILL and total circulation numbers for last five years, for context.

Sue Grove moved to draft a resolution in support of Minitex (which provides the MNLink exchange service); Vale Sheedy seconded. Motion carried. Julie will present a resolution at the May meeting for approval.

Community Networking

Julie advised the board the library will participate in Austin’s newly-organized Homelessness Response Team, which will have a Community Group meeting quarterly. In addition, she stated there will be monthly action team meetings, which will be attended by Sara Steinhoff (as participant in the Resource Sharing and Navigation group), and the library’s primary role will be to stay informed and share out information on new resources with patrons in need of assistance, and to provide feedback to the group.

Julie noted the library will have table at the IJ Holton School during the Mexican consulate event on April 26, and there will also be a Spanish-language story time presented by the Hispanic Latino Youth Group that day.

2024 Annual Report of the Austin Public Library

Clinefelter presented the library’s 2024 Annual Report for review and approval by the board. She pointed out a number of significant data points, including an increase in circulation, a decrease in program attendance in the elementary age group, a large increase in room use, and information relating to fees on digital materials.

Sue Grove moved to approve the 2024 Annual Report, and Val Sheedy provided a second. Motion carried.

Facilities

Julie advised of difficulty controlling temperature in the new study rooms and the workshop, noting that facilities supervisor Brian Mason is working with the HVAC controls to improve the situation, and she will be reviewing costs for window shades for those rooms. She also noted she met with the new Park & Rec supervisor, who will be assisting with improving the library’s landscaping and working on options for developing the patio space.

CITIZEN’S COMMENTS: None.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Sue Gove shared appreciation for the library’s item-request service. She also noted she took three international students to the Twin Cities last week, and she shared their comments about how they love the Austin Public Library, especially the study rooms, and had very good things to say about it. Kristi Beckman noted the Friends of the Library book sale was great and very crowded. Julie stated she will share sales results when she receives them from the group.

ADJOURNMENT: Kristi Beckman moved to adjourn at 5:35 p.m.; Ted Hinchcliffe seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Steinhoff, Secretary

NEXT BOARD MEETING – Monday, May 12, 2025, 4:30 p.m.