

GRAND RAPIDS AREA LIBRARY BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER:

2026 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING - ELECTION OF BOARD PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENT, AND SECRETARY

CALL OF ROLL:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

PUBLIC COMMENT (if anyone wishes to address the Board):

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider a motion to approve library board meeting minutes from the 12-10-2025 meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

FINANCIAL REPORT & CLAIMS (Roll Call Vote Required):

2. Consider approval of Library Bill List and review financial reports.

CONSENT AGENDA (Roll Call Vote Required):

3. Consider approval of a contract for library programs.
4. Consider adopting a resolution accepting donations.

REGULAR AGENDA:

5. Review Aaron Brown article.
6. Review Open Meeting Law.

UPDATES:

Friends

Foundation

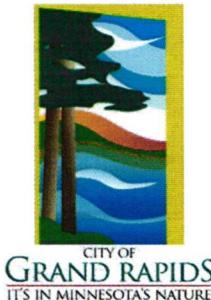
STAFF REPORTS:

7. Review library reports and statistics.

ADJOURNMENT:

NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 11, 2026, AT 5:00 PM.

ATTEST: Amy Dettmer, Director of Library Services



GRAND RAPIDS AREA LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-President Richards called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

CALL OF ROLL:

Present: Barr, Dobbs, Litchke, Richards, Squadroni, King

Absent: Casteel, Martin, Teigland

Staff present: Amy Dettmer, Library Director

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mover: Dobbs

Seconder: King

PUBLIC COMMENT (if anyone wishes to address the Board):

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. Consider approval of Minutes from the 11-19-2025 Special Meeting.

Mover: Dobbs

Seconder: King

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

FINANCIAL REPORT & CLAIMS (Roll Call Vote Required):

2. Review library financials and consider approval of Library Bill List.

Result: Approved unanimously by roll call vote.

CONSENT AGENDA (Roll Call Vote Required):

3. Consider a resolution accepting donations.

Item 1.

Mover: Squadroni

Seconder: Dobbs

Result: Approved unanimously by roll call vote.

REGULAR AGENDA:

4. IMLS update.

Library Director Dettmer reported a judge found the dismantling of the Institute for Museum and Library Services illegal and unconstitutional. In Minnesota, funds from IMLS help support the statewide sharing program.

5. Grand Rapids Area Library Fund.

Grand Rapids City Councilor Molly MacGregor reported on the Grand Rapids Area Library Fund held at the Community Foundation.

6. How a Book Gets on the Shelf Presentation.

Children's Librarian Tracy Kampa presented How a Book Gets on the Shelf via PowerPoint.

UPDATES:

7. Friends

Holiday Book Boutique sale in November netted about \$950.00.

Foundation

Foundation met in November and will meet again in February. The Foundation continues to approve receipts.

STAFF REPORTS:

8. Review library reports and statistics.

Library Director Dettmer reported 31 people attended a Reif Center Nutcracker story time in November.

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-President Richards adjourned the meeting at 6:03pm.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 14, 2026 AT 5:00 PM.

ATTEST: Amy Dettmer, Director of Library Services

GRAND RAPIDS AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY BILL LIST - DECEMBER 10, 2025
DETAILED REPORT

PUBLIC LIBRARY

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM	00015363-L	42.50
DEMCO INC	7728982-L	54.56
DEMCO INC	7731686-L	827.20
EBSCO SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE	1803840-L	3,847.22
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91749150-L	23.56
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91773181-L	23.38
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91773182-L	16.07
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91813995-L	155.52
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91829103-L	24.73
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838912-L	50.05
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838913-L	16.85
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838914-L	9.38
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838915-L	35.43
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838916-L	18.39
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838917-L	11.44
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838918-L	444.40
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838919-L	14.75
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838920-L	20.88
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91838921-L	66.55
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	91944958-L	25.80
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92012529-L	25.24
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052811-L	107.89
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052812-L	16.99
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052813-L	17.94
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052814-L	19.51
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052815-L	17.55
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052816-L	12.19
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052817-L	9.12
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052818-L	51.42
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052819-L	10.58
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92052820-L	24.67
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92091516-L	26.92
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92100151-L	26.92
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92160625-L	17.24
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92300327-L	12.90
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92300328-L	41.60
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92300329-L	12.54
INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS LL	IN4962015-L	303.74
INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS LL	IN4976283-L	61.81
INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS LL	IN4978173-L	20.14
INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS LL	IN4987325-L	317.66
INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS LL	IN4992428-L	21.10
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	507986844-L	26.24
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508030559-L	417.85
NARDINI FIRE EQUIPMENT CO INC	IVN00360978-L	1,290.75
NARDINI FIRE EQUIPMENT CO INC	IVN00360980-L	128.00
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55140-L	255.30
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55157-L	561.66
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55172-L	306.36
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55184-L	485.07
PLAYAWAY PRODUCTS LLC	517636-L	71.24
PLAYAWAY PRODUCTS LLC	517638-L	1,016.98
UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC	6143357-L	93.20
UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC	6144489-L	221.35
VESTIS GROUP, INC	2630489939-L	76.23

TOTAL ALL INVOICES: \$ 11,854.56

GRAND RAPIDS AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY BILL LIST - DECEMBER 10, 2025
DEPARTMENT SUMMARY REPORT

PUBLIC LIBRARY

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM	42.50
DEMCO INC	881.76
EBSCO SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE	3,847.22
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	1,408.40
INNOVATIVE OFFICE SOLUTIONS LL	724.45
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	444.09
NARDINI FIRE EQUIPMENT CO INC	1,418.75
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	1,608.39
PLAYAWAY PRODUCTS LLC	1,088.22
UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC	314.55
VESTIS GROUP, INC	76.23

TOTAL UNPAID TO BE APPROVED IN THE SUM OF: \$ 11,854.56

CHECKS ISSUED PRIOR APPROVAL

AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	1LJW-1KF7-D9Q4-L	36.98
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	1XFL-4HPJ-3XN7-L	334.25
AT&T	26202001	52.42
FIDELITY SECURITY LIFE	3267128	6.90
FIDELITY SECURITY LIFE	3273637	6.90
GRAND RAPIDS PAYROLL	11/14/2025	19,628.00
GRAND RAPIDS PAYROLL	11/28/2025	20,843.92
JOHNSON, MICHELLE	111925-L	81.74
LINDNER, EMILY	111725-L	175.00
MARCO	567887385-L	165.65
MEDTOX LABORATORIES	082025503826-L	26.38
METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE	TS053963310001/DEC25	80.64
MINNESOTA REVENUE	TAX0525	55.54
MINNESOTA REVENUE	TAX0625	46.47
MINNESOTA REVENUE	TAX0725	56.00
MINNESOTA REVENUE	TAX0825	65.00
MINNESOTA REVENUE	TAX0925	103.00
MINNESOTA REVENUE	TAX1025	66.00
PAUL BUNYAN COMMUNICATIONS	4026700/NOV25-L	249.04
PUC UTILITIES	LIB/OCT25	2,835.61
VISA	9403/OCT25	1,147.50
WASTE MANAGEMENT	0129126-2808-3	145.86

TOTAL PRIOR APPROVAL ALLOWED IN THE SUM OF: \$ 46,208.80

TOTAL: \$ 58,063.36

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-13
A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING DONATIONS

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Statutes 465.03, states that cities may accept gifts of real or personal property, including money, and use them in accordance with the terms the donor prescribes, and

WHEREAS, every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members,

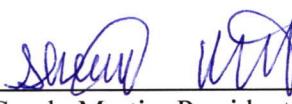
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Library Board of the City of Grand Rapids, Itasca County, Minnesota, accepts the listed donations and terms of the donors as follows:

Grand Rapids Area Library Foundation \$1,982.20

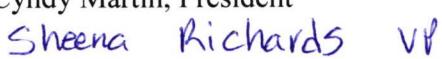
PEO Chapter FV \$530.00 (deferred revenue-funds to be used in 2026 to purchase adult fiction and nonfiction titles)

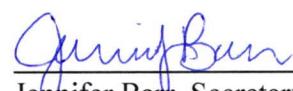
PEO Chapter ED \$1,493.00 (deferred revenue-funds to be used in 2026 to purchase adult fiction and nonfiction titles)

Adopted this 10th day of December 2025



Cyndy Martin, President

 Sheena Richards VP



Jennifer Barr, Secretary

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY BILL LIST - JANUARY 14, 2026
DETAILED REPORT

PUBLIC LIBRARY

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM	00015369-L	84.99
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2219954-L	7.96
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2219959-L	94.00
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2221592-L	3.98
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2219457-L	133.74
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2221088-L	94.00
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2221418-L	94.00
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	2220814-L	47.00
BUNES SEPTIC SERVICE INC	9987-L	360.00
DEMCO INC	7736304-L	1,225.84
GARTNER REFRIGERATION CO	107457-L	2,530.00
GARTNER REFRIGERATION CO	107366-L	1,210.00
GARTNER REFRIGERATION CO	107575-L	355.00
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92570546-L	165.03
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92695956-L	164.12
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92582057-L	18.06
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92582058-L	52.02
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92582059-L	10.86
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92582060-L	55.09
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	92582061-L	163.53
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93028190-L	452.89
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93028191-L	18.29
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93028192-L	45.17
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93028193-L	16.85
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93028194-L	29.42
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93167545-L	89.38
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93200925-L	38.61
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	93200926-L	54.94
LIBRARY IDEAS LLC	120414-L	1,236.32
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508062729-L	46.48
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508160460-L	34.84
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508086855-L	65.97
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508131639-L	26.99
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508131640-L	38.99
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	508187369-L	50.23
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55197-L	510.60
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55231-L	306.36
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55216-L	204.24
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55207-L	306.36
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	55248-L	102.12
PLAYAWAY PRODUCTS LLC	520120-L	1,050.60

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY BILL LIST - JANUARY 14, 2026
DETAILED REPORT

SANDSTROM'S INC	569026-L	252.36
SCENIC RANGE NEWS FORUM	9057-L	25.00
TECH LOGIC CORPORATION	INV21003879-L	459.86
TRU NORTH ELECTRIC LLC	1604-L	318.43
UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC	6147287-L	186.40
UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC	6149366-L	267.95
VESTIS GROUP, INC	2630504165-L	76.23
VESTIS GROUP, INC	2630499407-L	76.23
VESTIS GROUP, INC	2630480128-L	76.23
VESTIS GROUP, INC	2630494658-L	76.23

TOTAL ALL INVOICES: \$ 13,409.79

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY BILL LIST - JANUARY 14, 2026
DEPARTMENT SUMMARY REPORT

PUBLIC LIBRARY

ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM	\$	84.99
BLACKSTONE PUBLISHING	\$	474.68
BUNES SEPTIC SERVICE INC	\$	360.00
DEMCO INC	\$	1,225.84
GARTNER REFRIGERATION CO	\$	4,095.00
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES LLC	\$	1,374.26
LIBRARY IDEAS LLC	\$	1,236.32
MIDWEST TAPE LLC	\$	263.50
PERSONNEL DYNAMICS LLC	\$	1,429.68
PLAYAWAY PRODUCTS LLC	\$	1,050.60
SANDSTROM'S INC	\$	252.36
SCENIC RANGE NEWS FORUM	\$	25.00
TECH LOGIC CORPORATION	\$	459.86
TRU NORTH ELECTRIC LLC	\$	318.43
UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC	\$	454.35
VESTIS GROUP, INC	\$	304.92

TOTAL UNPAID TO BE APPROVED IN THE SUM OF: \$ 13,409.79

CHECKS ISSUED-PRIOR APPROVAL

AT&T	25-Dec	\$	54.30
GRAND RAPIDS PAYROLL	LIB - 12/12/2025	\$	23,078.60
GRAND RAPIDS PAYROLL	LIB - 12/26/2025	\$	23,117.06
MARCO	570284133-L/DEC25	\$	165.65
METROPOLITAN	TS053963310001/JAN26	\$	81.28
MN ENERGY	0507783569-01/OCT25-L	\$	347.18
MN ENERGY	0507783569-01/NOV25-L	\$	1,113.79
OPERATING ENGINNERS LOCAL #49	26-Jan	\$	8,860.00
PAUL BUNYAN COMMUNICATIONS	4026700/DEC25-L	\$	249.04
PUC UTILITIES	25-Nov	\$	2,565.01
VISA	25-Nov	\$	892.50
WASTE MANAGEMENT	25-Nov	\$	145.86

TOTAL PRIOR APPROVAL ALLOWED IN THE SUM OF: \$ 60,615.97

TOTAL ALL DEPARTMENTS: \$ 74,025.76



12/16/2025

Emily Lindner
23222 Old Stones Throw Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Dear Ms. Lindner:

I am pleased that you will be leading a series of book club meetings developed for school age children. These programs will be held 1/12/2026, 2/9/2026, 3/16/2026, 4/13/2026, and 5/4/2026.

The Library will pay you \$125 for each program. This fee will include your prep time, as well as set-up, programming, and clean-up time. In addition, the Library will pay you \$50 for program materials and snacks, for a total payment of \$175 per program. Payments will be made monthly, after the programs are completed. If these arrangements are agreeable, please sign below, and return this contract to the library.

My e-mail is: adettmer@grandrapidsmn.gov. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns about the arrangements for your programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Dettmer".

Amy Dettmer
Library Director

These terms are acceptable:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Lindner".

Signature

1/16/25

Date

Approved for the Board of Directors:

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01
A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING DONATIONS

WHEREAS, Minnesota State Statutes 465.03, states that cities may accept gifts of real or personal property, including money, and use them in accordance with the terms the donor prescribes, and

WHEREAS, every such acceptance shall be by resolution of the governing body adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Library Board of the City of Grand Rapids, Itasca County, Minnesota, accepts the listed donations and terms of the donors as follows:

Grand Rapids Area Library Foundation - \$1,603.50

Anonymous - \$43.00 for staff appreciation

Grand Rapids Area Library Friends – \$338.32 for book replacements

Gibeau/Maunu/Bignall Families - \$200.00

Hawkinson - \$250.00

Adopted this 14th day of January 2026

, President

, Secretary

COLUMNISTS

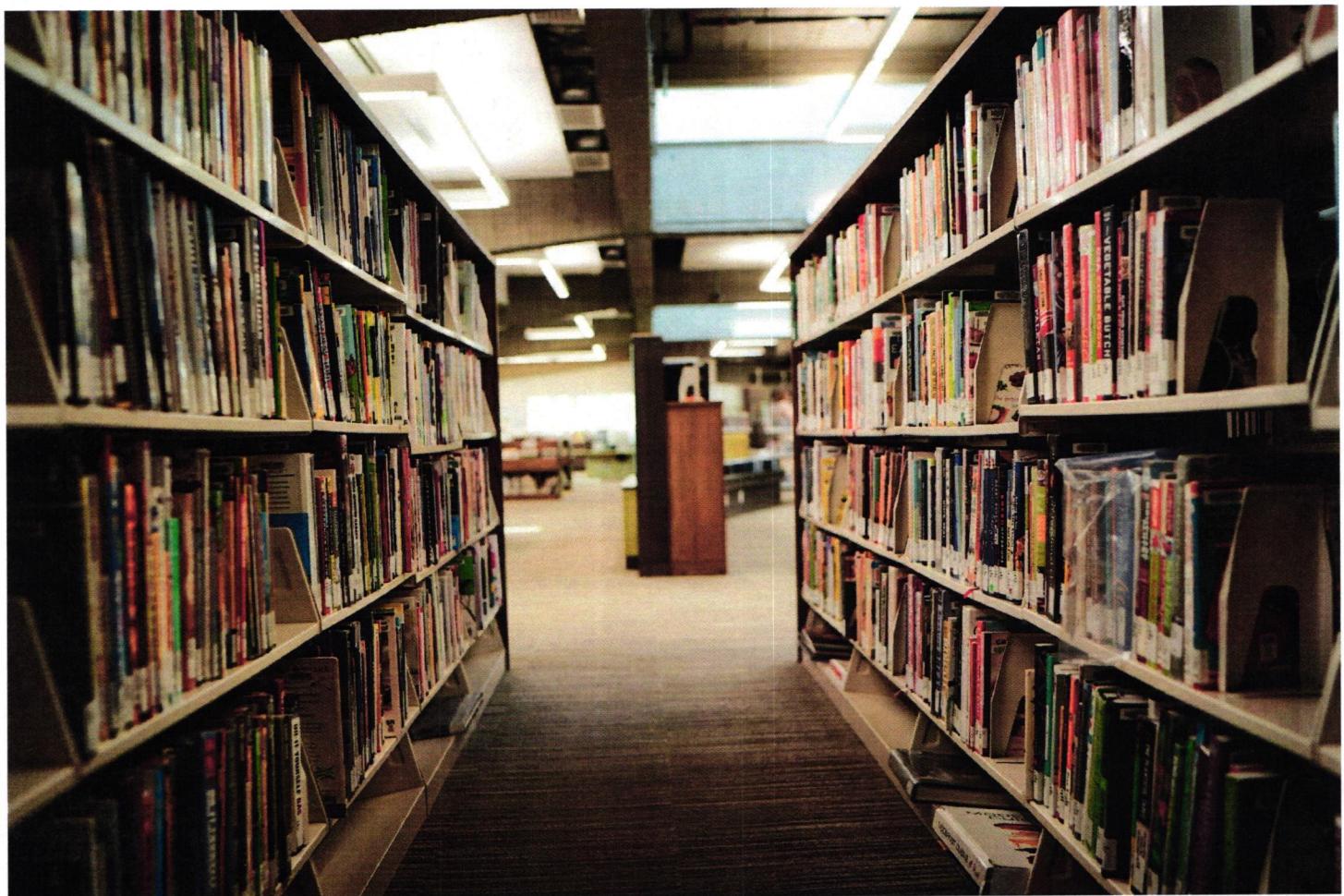
Brown: High costs? Budget cuts? Even more reason to protect public libraries.

If they're allowed to fail, don't expect the private sector to step up.

**By Aaron Brown**

The Minnesota Star Tribune

JANUARY 5, 2026 AT 5:00AM



Sun Ray Library in St. Paul. (Glen Stubbe/The Minnesota Star Tribune)

Opinion editor's note: *Strib Voices* publishes a mix of commentary online and in print each day. To contribute, click [here](#).

...

Libraries touched every stage of my life.

In first grade, I repeatedly checked out a *Godzilla* book from the Forbes Elementary library. Later, my mom took me to a paper airplane contest at one of my favorite places, the Hibbing Public Library. As a teenager, I drove my sister to dance class every Monday after school, spending the evening doing homework at the Virginia Public Library.

As a remote-working parent, I was bailed out many times by the Grand Rapids Area Public Library, which allowed me to work while our three little boys played and read books. In more recent years, several libraries supported my research as I wrote a Minnesota history book.

So for me and legions of library patrons from all walks of life, what's happening these days feels personal. Economic uncertainty and political neglect are quietly smothering public libraries across Minnesota.

"Communities are just having to face really tough decisions," said Sarah Hawkins, legislative director for the Minnesota Library Association and assistant director of the Anoka County Library. "When you're facing trickle-down budget cuts it's easier to cut the library because it [seems] a little bit more discretionary."

This is shortsighted. When we reduce library access, we aggravate our most pressing challenges: increased social isolation, inaccurate information, barriers to new technology and a higher cost of living. Libraries address all these problems efficiently, despite far too little political support.

In Minnesota, about 70% of public library funding comes from city and county governments, said Hawkins. The remaining 30% comes from state funding. Federal grant funding filters into both state and local sources. State funding has been stagnant and most federal grants have dried up under the current administration.

This pressures our cash-strapped local governments.

Like us, our cities and counties are paying more for everything these days. Local state aid is endangered, while state mandates are more numerous. Meantime, the population is aging while families become smaller, meaning fewer taxpayers split the expenses. Libraries aren't the biggest expense on a city ledger, but they jostle for increasingly limited funds.

The libraries from my life are now open far less often. In fact, Grand Rapids is open on three days a week. Virginia and Hibbing close much earlier than when I was a kid, which prevents a modern-day kid from using them the same way. But these towns are not alone.

Bemidji's library just took massive county budget cuts, and Duluth is considering leaving its valuable downtown library in favor of a shared facility with neighboring towns on the city's suburban edge. The problem is acute in rural Minnesota but also persists in metro library systems, where far more people are affected.

Modern libraries provide much more than books.

"We talk a lot about the library as a third place where you can come outside of your home or your work," said Hawkins. "You can gather or socialize and exchange ideas, and that really is just a key part in civic life and the well-being of our community."

In 2024, the New York Public Library system conducted a study of its patrons' experiences at the library. It established that a vast majority of people say the public library supported their physical and mental well-being, not just their reading lists.

You don't have to buy something to enjoy the library, nor do you need to join a new religion or swear allegiance to a political party. No need to feed quarters into a machine to sit down. At a library, you're free to be who you are and do what you want within the bounds of a few basic rules, most of which boil down to "love thy neighbor."

My local library is the only place I see kids from public schools, private schools and home-school families interacting with each other as part of a community. That's vitally important to our shared future.

There's nothing else like a public library, nor will the private sector ever provide such space and materials for everyone to use. Certainly not for free. And libraries continue to change with the times, offering e-books through easy-to-use apps and technology training for people of all ages.

Nevertheless, Minnesota libraries are seeking ways to survive funding shortfalls.

Starting Jan. 5, the Wyoming, Minn., Public Library in Chisago County begins a pilot project allowing some library patrons extended access to the library outside of normal hours.

From 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week, people who agree to a set of rules and short training program may use their library cards to swipe into the facility. They can read or

work, use the internet, meet with people, or even check out books using an automated Item 5. scanner.

“That allows us to more than double access to the community for the resource that they’re paying for,” said Carla Lydon, director of the East Central Regional Library system.

Staff remain available to help people and conduct programming during normal hours.

This kind of system has already been in use at libraries in Dakota and Scott counties for the past four years, said Lydon, to great success. If the first months go well at the Wyoming library, more patrons could sign up for the program around April.

There’s good reason for local leaders to make libraries more available to the public, but there’s a lot we can do even if they don’t.

“If you don’t have a library card, get one. If you have one, use it,” said Hawkins. “Think of one way to use your library in 2026. Don’t take them for granted.”

Minnesota must never give up on our public libraries. They are not a burden, but a cure for what ails our financially and emotionally stressed society.

 **The Minnesota Star Tribune**

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INFORMATION BRIEF**Research Department****Minnesota House of Representatives**

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Revised: July 2017

Minnesota Open Meeting Law

The Minnesota Open Meeting Law requires that meetings of governmental bodies generally be open to the public. This information brief discusses the groups and types of meetings covered by the open meeting law, and then reviews the requirements of and exceptions to the law and the penalties for its violation.

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Groups and Meetings Governed by the Open Meeting Law	3
Requirements of the Open Meeting Law	7
Exceptions to the Open Meeting Law	9
Penalties	14
Advice	15

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Executive Summary

The Minnesota Open Meeting Law was originally enacted in [Laws 1957, chapter 773](#), section 1. It is now codified in [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13D](#). The Minnesota Supreme Court has articulated three purposes of the open meeting law:

- To prohibit actions being taken at a secret meeting where it is impossible for the interested public to become fully informed about a public board's decisions or to detect improper influences
- To assure the public's right to be informed
- To afford the public an opportunity to present its views to the public body¹

“These purposes are deeply rooted in the fundamental proposition that a well-informed populace is essential to the vitality of our democratic form of government.”² Courts interpret the law liberally and in favor of openness.

Entities covered by the law. The law applies to state and local multimember governmental bodies, including committees and subcommittees, and nonprofits created by political subdivisions. A separate law applies to the legislature.

Situations where the law applies. A meeting is a “meeting” for purposes of the law when a quorum or more of the governmental body is gathered—in person or by electronic means, whether or not action is taken or contemplated. The open meeting law does not address whether the governmental body must keep or publish meeting minutes, hold a meeting for a particular purpose, or allow members of the public to address the body. For any particular governmental body, there may be other laws or charter provisions that address those topics.

What constitutes an open meeting. A meeting is open when proper notice was given in advance of the meeting, the public may attend and observe, and relevant materials are available to the public.

Exceptions to the law. A meeting may be closed based on a limited attorney-client privilege, and for the purposes of labor negotiations, employee evaluations, and discussion of security issues and property transactions. The law does not apply to a governmental body exercising quasi-judicial functions involving disciplinary proceedings.

¹ *Prior Lake American v. Mader*, 642 N.W.2d 729, 735 (Minn. 2002) (en banc) (citing *St. Cloud Newspapers, Inc. v. District 742 Community Schools*, 332 N.W.2d 1, 4 (Minn. 1983)). While the courts consistently say that the open meeting law is to afford the public an opportunity to present its views to the public body, there is no general right for members of the public to speak at a meeting. Some statutes, and perhaps some home rule charters, specify that a hearing on a particular matter must be held at which anyone who wishes to address the public body may do so. See, e.g., [Minn. Stat. § 117.0412](#), subd. 2.

² *Prior Lake American*, 642 N.W.2d at 735.

Violations of the law. While actions taken at a meeting held in violation of the law are still valid, the law provides for penalties and potentially removal from office.

Where to get advice. A governmental entity can seek advice from its attorney, the Minnesota Attorney General, or the Commissioner of Administration. An individual may seek advice from a private attorney or the Commissioner of Administration.

Groups and Meetings Governed by the Open Meeting Law

The law applies to all levels of state and local government.

The open meeting law applies to:

- a state agency, board, commission, or department when it is required or permitted by law to transact public business in a meeting;
- the governing body of any school district, unorganized territory, county, city, town, or other public body;
- a committee, subcommittee, board, department, or commission of a public body subject to the law; and
- the governing body or a committee of a statewide or local public pension plan.³

“Public body” is not defined but the Minnesota Supreme Court has stated that “[i]n common understanding, ‘public body’ is possibly the broadest expression for the category of governmental entities that perform functions for the public benefit.”⁴

In determining whether the open meeting law applies to a particular entity, one should look at all of the entity’s characteristics. For example, in a 1998 case, the Minnesota Supreme Court held that because the statute authorizing creation of a municipal power agency authorized an agency to conduct its affairs as a private corporation, it could hold closed meetings.⁵ The court held so notwithstanding the statute that provides for municipal power agencies to be political subdivisions of the state.⁶

³ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.01](#), subd. 1.

⁴ *Star Tribune Co. v. University of Minnesota Board of Regents*, 683 N.W.2d 274, 280-282 (Minn. 2004) (en banc).

⁵ *Southern Minn. Mun. Power Agency v. Boyne*, 578 N.W.2d 362, 364 (Minn. 1998) (en banc) (citing Minn. Stat. § 453.54, subd. 21, and discussing the factors that distinguish a public corporation from a private corporation). *See also Minnesota Joint Underwriting Ass’n v. Star Tribune Media Co.*, 862 N.W.2d 62, 65 (Minn. 2015) (discussing *Boyne*; stating whether a particular entity is a “government entity” under the Data Practices Act is a question of law subject to the court’s de novo review).

⁶ [Minn. Stat. § 453.53](#), subd. 1, para. (b), cl. (1) (The agency agreement shall state: “(1) That the municipal power agency is created and incorporated . . . as a municipal corporation and a political subdivision of the state, to exercise thereunder a part of the sovereign powers of the state;”).

The law generally applies to nonprofit corporations created by governmental entities.

The list of groups covered by the open meeting law does not refer to nonprofit corporations created by a governmental entity. However, the law creating a specific public nonprofit corporation may specify that it is subject to the open meeting law.⁷ In addition, any corporation created by a political subdivision before May 31, 1997, is clearly subject to the open meeting law.⁸

Gatherings of less than a quorum of a public body are not subject to the law; a “meeting” is held when the group is capable of exercising decision-making powers.

The Minnesota Supreme Court has held that the open meeting law applies only to a quorum or more of members of the governing body or a committee, subcommittee, board, department, or commission of the governing body.⁹ Serial meetings in groups of less than a quorum held in order to avoid open meeting law requirements may also be found to be a violation, depending on the facts of the case.¹⁰

A public body subject to the law should be cautious about using e-mail to communicate with other members of the body. Although the statute does not specifically address the use of e-mail, it is likely that the court would analyze use of e-mail in the same way as it has telephone conversations and letters.¹¹ That is, private communication about official business through

⁷ E.g., [Minn. Stat. §§ 62Q.03](#), subd. 6 (Minnesota Risk Adjustment Association); [85B.02](#), subd. 6 (Lake Superior Center Authority); [116V.01](#), subd. 10 (Agricultural Utilization Research Institute); [124D.385](#), subd. 4 (Minnesota Commission on National and Community Service may create a nonprofit but it is subject to the open meeting law); and [128C.22](#) (State High School League).

⁸ [Minn. Stat. § 465.719](#), subd. 9.

⁹ *Moberg v. Independent School Dist. No. 281*, 336 N.W.2d 510 (Minn. 1983) (en banc).

¹⁰ *Id.* at 518; *see also Mankato Free Press Co. v. City of North Mankato*, 563 N.W.2d 291, 295 (Minn. App. 1997). On remand to the district court for a factual finding on whether the city used serial interviews to avoid the open meeting law, the trial court found, and the court of appeals affirmed, that the serial meetings were not held to avoid the law. *Mankato Free Press Co. v. City of North Mankato*, No. C9-98-677, 1998 WL 865714 (Minn. App. 1998) (unpublished opinion), *review denied* (Minn. Feb. 24, 1999).

¹¹ *Moberg*, 336 N.W.2d at 518. The Commissioner of Administration stated in a July 9, 2008, opinion that an e-mail sent to all members of a city council by the city manager was effectively “printed material” that should be available to members of the public and also suggested that the legislature revise the statute to recognize the use of electronic and other types of communications. Minn. Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. 08-015. A September 8, 2009, opinion by the commissioner states that the exchange of e-mails by staff and members of the Metro Gang Strike Force Advisory Board violated the open meeting law because it was not just a matter of a quorum receiving information, but a quorum of the body discussing and then giving the staff person direction on the action to take. In June 2017, the Commissioner of Administration issued an opinion that a letter signed by a quorum of a school board that was sent without public notice, or discussion and decision on the substance of the letter in an open meeting violated the law. The school board said one member drafted it, sent it to the superintendent, who made minor revisions, placed it on letterhead, and then sent it to the other members to sign. The board asserted it did not discuss or take action on it. The commissioner however found that unlikely. “The Board’s assertion that it did not discuss, decide, or take action on the contents of the letter or sending the letter is not plausible based on the very existence of the letter purporting to be from “the Board” and bearing the signatures of a quorum of members of the Board.” Minn. Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. 17-005 (Eveleth-Gilbert Public Schools, I.S.D. No. 2154, and a letter sent to the IRRRB).

telephone conversations or letters by a quorum of a public body subject to the law would violate the law.

Serial communication through telephone conversations or letters by less than a quorum with the intent to avoid a public hearing or to come to an agreement on an issue relating to official business could also violate the law. In a 1993 case, the Minnesota Court of Appeals held that the open meeting law was not violated when two of five city council members attended private mediation sessions related to city business. The court determined that the two council members did not constitute a committee or subcommittee of the council because the group was not capable of exercising decision-making powers.¹²

The law applies to informational meetings.

The Minnesota Supreme Court has held that the open meeting law applies to all gatherings of members of a governing body, whether or not action is taken or contemplated. This means that a gathering of members of a public body for an informational seminar on matters currently facing the body or that might come before the body must be conducted openly.¹³ However, there are some exceptions. A 1975 attorney general opinion stated that city council attendance at a League of Minnesota Cities training program for city officials did not violate the open meeting law if the members did not discuss specific municipal business.¹⁴ The statute governing the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council allows members of the council to travel together to visit sites and learn about projects without it being a violation of the law as long as the members do not decide, or agree to decide, matters under the council's jurisdiction.¹⁵

The law does not cover chance or social gatherings.

The open meeting law does not apply to chance or social gatherings of members of a public body.¹⁶ However, a quorum of a public body may not, as a group, discuss or receive information on official business in any setting under the guise of a private social gathering.¹⁷

The law does not apply to certain types of advisory groups.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals has held that the open meeting law does not apply to certain types of advisory groups.¹⁸ In that case, a presidential search advisory committee to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents was held not to be a committee of the governing body for purposes of the open meeting law. In reaching its holding, the court pointed out that no

¹² *Sovereign v. Dunn*, 498 N.W.2d 62 (Minn. App. 1993), *review denied* (Minn. May 28, 1993).

¹³ *St. Cloud Newspapers, Inc.*, 332 N.W.2d 1.

¹⁴ Op. Att'y Gen. 63a-5, Feb. 5, 1975.

¹⁵ [Minn. Stat. § 97A.056](#), subd. 5, para. (b), provides "Travel to and from scheduled and publicly noticed site visits by council members for the purposes of receiving information is not a violation of paragraph (a). Any decision or agreement to make a decision during the travel is a violation of paragraph (a)."

¹⁶ *St. Cloud Newspapers, Inc.*, 332 N.W.2d at 7.

¹⁷ *Moberg*, 336 N.W.2d at 518.

¹⁸ *The Minnesota Daily v. University of Minnesota*, 432 N.W.2d 189 (Minn. App. 1988).

regents were on the search committee and that the committee had no power to set policy or make a final decision. It is not clear if a court would reach the same result if members of the governing body were also on the advisory committee. Depending on the number of members of the governing body involved and on the form or extent of the delegation of authority from the governing body to the members, a court might consider the advisory committee to be a committee of the governing body.

A separate law applies to the legislature.

In 1990, the legislature passed a law separate from the open meeting law that requires all legislative meetings be open to the public.¹⁹ The law applies to House and Senate floor sessions and to meetings of committees, subcommittees, conference committees, and legislative commissions. For purposes of this law, a meeting occurs when a quorum is present *and action is taken* regarding a matter within the jurisdiction of the group. Each house of the legislature must adopt rules to implement these requirements. Remedies provided under these rules are the exclusive means of enforcing this law.

Hybrid groups—those made up of both legislators and nonlegislators—may have different open meeting law requirements. The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources is subject to Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13D, except that a meeting only occurs when a quorum is present and action is taken, similar to the legislative open meeting law.²⁰ In contrast, the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, which also has both legislators and nonlegislators on it, is subject to chapter 13D, and a meeting occurs when a quorum is present whether or not action is taken.²¹ Similarly, how the law applies to the hybrid Child Support Task Force was clarified in 2017.²²

¹⁹ [Minn. Stat. § 3.055](#).

²⁰ [Minn. Stat. § 116P.08](#), subd. 5, “(a) Meetings of the commission, committees, or subcommittees of the commission, technical advisory committees, and peer reviewers must be open to the public and are subject to chapter 13D. The commission shall attempt to meet throughout various regions of the state during each biennium. For purposes of this subdivision, *a meeting occurs when a quorum is present and action is taken regarding a matter within the jurisdiction* of the commission, a committee or subcommittee of the commission, a technical advisory committee, or peer reviewers.

(b) For legislative members of the commission, enforcement of this subdivision is governed by section 3.055, subdivision 2. For nonlegislative members of the commission, enforcement of this subdivision is governed by [section 13D.06](#), subdivisions 1 and 2.” (emphasis added).

²¹ [Minn. Stat. § 97A.056](#), subd. 5.

²² [Minn. Stat. § 518A.79](#), subd. 3a (added by [Laws 2017, 1st spec. sess. ch. 4](#), art. 2, § 48, effective January 1, 2018): “Except as otherwise provided in this section, the task force is subject to chapter 13D. A meeting of the task force occurs when a quorum is present and the members receive information, discuss, or take action on any matter relating to the duties of the task force. The task force may conduct meetings as provided in section 13D.015 or 13D.02. The task force may conduct meetings at any location in the state that is appropriate for the purposes of the task force as long as the location is open and accessible to the public. For legislative members of the task force, enforcement of this subdivision is governed by [section 3.055](#), subdivision 2. For nonlegislative members of the task force, enforcement of this subdivision is governed by [section 13D.06](#), subdivisions 1 and 2.”

Requirements of the Open Meeting Law

The primary requirement of the open meeting law is that meetings be open to the public.

The law also requires that votes in open meetings be recorded in a journal and that the journal be open to the public. The vote of each member must be recorded on appropriations of money, except for payments of judgments and claims and amounts fixed by statute.²³ A straw ballot to narrow the list of candidates for city administrator and not made public was held to be a secret vote in violation of the open meeting law, particularly in light of the fact that the straw vote was acted on and given the same effect as an official act.²⁴

Open meetings must be held in a public place within the borders of the public body.²⁵

Meetings may be held by interactive television if specified conditions are met to ensure openness and accessibility for those who wish to attend.²⁶ The Commissioner of Administration issued an opinion in 2013 that attending a meeting using a web-based technology like Skype is like attending by interactive TV and is allowed as long as the requirements for attending by interactive TV are met.²⁷

A state entity may hold meetings by telephone or other electronic means as long as specified conditions are met to ensure openness and accessibility for those who wish to attend. In addition, a meeting of any public body (state or local) may be conducted by telephone or other electronic means if a health pandemic or other emergency makes meeting in person impractical or imprudent and all of the same conditions as for other meetings held by telephone or other electronic means are met, unless unfeasible due to the pandemic or emergency.

In general, those conditions include the following:

- All members of the body can hear one another and can hear all discussion and testimony.
- Members of the public at the regular meeting location can hear all discussion, testimony, and votes.
- At least one member of the body (or, in the case of a health pandemic or other emergency, the chief legal counsel or chief administrative officer) is present at the regular meeting location. (If using interactive TV under [section 13D.02](#)—as opposed to

²³ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.01](#), subds. 4 and 5.

²⁴ *Mankato Free Press Co.*, 563 N.W.2d at 295-96. In contrast, the Commissioner of Administration issued an advisory opinion finding that a secret straw ballot taken and its results described and discussed at the same meeting as the ballot was not a violation. Minn. Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. 10-011.

²⁵ *Quast v. Knutson*, 276 Minn. 340, 341, 150 N.W.2d 199, 200 (1967) (school board meeting held 20 miles outside the jurisdiction of the school board at a private office did not comply with open meeting law; consolidation proceedings were fatally defective because the resolution by which the proceedings were initiated was not adopted at a public meeting as required by law).

²⁶ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.02](#). See also [Minn. Stat. § 471.59](#), subd. 2 (joint powers board for educational purposes).

²⁷ Minn. Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. 13-009.

telephone or other electronic means—there is the additional condition that each location be open and accessible to the public.)

- All votes are conducted by roll call.
- The public body must allow a person to monitor the meeting electronically from another location. The body may require the person to pay for any documented additional costs the body incurs as a result of the additional connection.
- The public body must give notice of the regular meeting location, of the fact that some members may participate by telephone or other electronic means, and of the right of the public to monitor the meeting from another location. In addition, the public body must post the notice on its website at least ten days before any regular meeting.²⁸

The law requires public bodies to give notice of their meetings.

In 1974, the Minnesota Supreme Court held that failure to give notice of a meeting is a violation of the open meeting law.²⁹ The court has also held that it is a violation of the open meeting law to conduct business before the time publicly announced for a meeting.³⁰

In 1987, the legislature spelled out the notice requirements in statute for regular, special, emergency, and closed meetings. Public bodies must do the following:

- Keep schedules of *regular* meetings on file at their offices³¹
- Post notice of *special* meetings (meetings held at a time or place different from regular meetings) on their principal bulletin board. The public body must also either mail notice to people who have requested such mailings, or publish notice in the official newspaper, at least three days before the meetings³²

²⁸ [Minn. Stat. §§ 13D.015](#) (state entities); [13D.02](#); [13D.021](#) (state or local entities in the case of health pandemic, other emergency). Various statutes for specific public bodies also allow for meetings by interactive television, telephone, or other electronic means: [Minn. Stat. §§ 13D.02](#), subd. 5 (school boards with audio and visual link); [35.0661](#) (Board of Animal Health during restricted travel for animal health reasons); [41A.0235](#) (Minnesota Agricultural and Economic Development Board); [41B.026](#) (Rural Finance Agency); [116L.03](#), subd. 8 (Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership Board); [116M.15](#), subd. 5 (Minnesota Emerging Entrepreneur Board); [116T.02](#), subd. 6 (Northern Technology Initiative, Inc.); [116U.25](#) (Explore Minnesota Tourism Council); [123A.16](#), subd. 1 (education district boards); [129C.105](#) (Board of the Perpich Center for Arts Education); [134.31](#), subd. 7 (Advisory Committee for the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library); [176.102](#), subd. 3c (rehabilitation review panels); [176.103](#), subd. 3 (Medical Services Review Board); [248.10](#) (Rehabilitation Council for the Blind); [256.482](#), subd. 5b (Minnesota State Council on Disability); [256.975](#), subd. 2a. (Minnesota Board on Aging); [256C.28](#), subd. 7 (Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard-of-Hearing Minnesotans); [268A.02](#), subd. 3 (State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council); [326B.32](#), subd. 7 (Board of Electricity); [326B.435](#), subd. 7 (Board of Plumbing); [326B.925](#), subd. 7 (Board of High Pressure Piping Systems); [462A.041](#) (Minnesota Housing Finance Agency).

²⁹ [Sullivan v. Credit River Township](#), 299 Minn. 170, 217 N.W.2d 502 (1974).

³⁰ [Merz v. Leitch](#), 342 N.W.2d 141, 145 (Minn. 1984) (en banc).

³¹ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.04](#), subd. 1.

³² [Minn. Stat. § 13D.04](#), subd. 2; [Rupp v. Mayasich](#), 533 N.W.2d 893 (Minn. App. 1995) (bulletin board must be reasonably accessible to the public). A February 3, 2004, advisory opinion by the Commissioner of

- Make good faith efforts to notify news media that have filed written requests (with telephone numbers) for notice of *emergency* meetings (special meetings called because of circumstances that require immediate consideration)³³

The same notice requirements apply to closed meetings.³⁴

Absent any other specific law governing notice by a state agency, a state agency required or permitted by law to transact public business in a meeting satisfies notice requirements if it publishes notice in the State Register or posts notice on the agency's website. In addition, a schedule of the regular meetings must be kept on file at the primary offices or posted on the agency's website.³⁵

The law requires relevant materials to be publicly available.

The open meeting law requires that for open meetings, at least one copy of any printed material prepared by the public body and distributed or available to all members of the public body also be available in the meeting room for inspection by the public. This requirement does not apply to materials that are classified as other than public under the Government Data Practices Act.³⁶

Exceptions to the Open Meeting Law

A closed meeting, except one closed under the attorney-client privilege, must be electronically recorded at the expense of the public body. Unless otherwise provided by law, the recordings must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting.³⁷

The law does not apply to state agency disciplinary hearings.

The open meeting law does not apply to any state agency, board, or commission when exercising quasi-judicial functions involving disciplinary hearings.³⁸

Administration stated that a public body's actions at a special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice of special meeting. Minn. Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. 04-004.

³³ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.04](#), subd. 3.

³⁴ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.04](#), subd. 5.

³⁵ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.04](#), subd. 6.

³⁶ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.01](#), subd. 6.

³⁷ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 1.

³⁸ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.01](#), subd. 2. This subdivision also says that the law does not apply to meetings of the Commissioner of Corrections, which does not really make sense since such a meeting is not of a multimember body. It may be explained by the legislative history, however. Until 1982, the exception was for meetings of the Corrections Board, a multimember body. A 1983 instruction directed the Revisor of Statutes to change "Corrections Board" to "Commissioner of Corrections" throughout statutes. [Laws 1983, ch. 274](#), § 18.

Certain meetings involving employee evaluation or discipline must be closed.

A public body must close meetings for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority.³⁹ If the members of the public body conclude that discipline may be warranted as a result of those charges, further meetings or hearings relating to the charges must be open. Meetings must also be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting.

Statutes other than the open meeting law may permit or require closed meetings for certain local governmental bodies to conduct specific kinds of disciplinary hearings. For example, school board hearings held to discharge or demote a teacher are private unless the affected teacher wants a public hearing.⁴⁰

A public body may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority.⁴¹ Before closing a meeting, the public body must identify the individual to be evaluated. The public body must summarize the conclusions of the evaluation at its next open meeting. An evaluation meeting must be open at the request of the subject of the meeting.⁴²

A meeting may be closed to discuss labor negotiations.

The open meeting law permits a public body to hold a closed meeting to discuss strategy and proposals for labor negotiations conducted under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.⁴³ The statute specifies procedures for tape-recording of these meetings, and for the recordings to become public when negotiations are completed.⁴⁴ Another law permits the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services to close negotiations and mediation sessions between public employers and public employees. These negotiations are public meetings, unless the commissioner closes them.⁴⁵

The law permits closed meetings based on a limited attorney-client privilege.

In 1976, the Minnesota Supreme Court held that there is a limited exception, based on the attorney-client privilege, for meetings to discuss strategy for threatened or pending litigation.⁴⁶ In 1990, the legislature added the attorney-client exception to the open meeting law.⁴⁷ Although

³⁹ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 2.

⁴⁰ [Minn. Stat. § 122A.41](#), subd.

⁴¹ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 3.

⁴² [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 2.

⁴³ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.03](#), subd. 1.

⁴⁴ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.03](#), subd. 2.

⁴⁵ [Minn. Stat. § 179A.14](#), subd. 3.

⁴⁶ *Minneapolis Star & Tribune Co. v. Housing & Redevelopment Auth.*, 310 Minn. 313, 324, 251 N.W.2d 620, 626 (1976).

⁴⁷ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 3.

the statute is not limited, the court has since held that the scope of the exception remains limited in relation to the open meeting law.⁴⁸

The attorney-client privilege exception does not apply to a mere request for general legal advice. Nor does it apply when a governing body seeks to discuss with its attorney the strengths and weaknesses of a proposed legislative enactment (like a city ordinance) that may lead to future lawsuits because that can be viewed as general legal advice. Furthermore, discussion of proposed legislation is just the sort of discussion that should be public.⁴⁹

In order to close a meeting under the attorney-client privilege exception, the governing body must give a particularized statement describing the subject to be discussed. A general statement that the meeting is being closed to discuss pending or threatened litigation is not sufficient.⁵⁰

A meeting may be closed to address certain security issues.

If disclosure of the information discussed would pose a danger to public safety or compromise security procedures or responses, a meeting may be closed to:

- receive security briefings and reports,
- discuss issues related to security systems,
- discuss emergency response procedures, and
- discuss security deficiencies in or recommendations regarding public services, infrastructure, and facilities.

Before closing a meeting, the public body must refer to the facilities, systems, procedures, services, or infrastructures to be considered during the closed meeting. A closed meeting must be tape-recorded at the expense of the governing body, and the recording must be preserved for at least four years.

⁴⁸ *Star Tribune v. Board of Ed., Special School Dist. No. 1*, 507 N.W.2d 869 (Minn. App. 1993) *review denied* (Minn. Dec. 22, 1993). The court of appeals did not accept the argument that the statutory exception encompassed the full attorney-client privilege because that would result in the exception swallowing the rule in favor of open meetings. In 2002, the Minnesota Supreme Court restated that the attorney-client privilege exception only applies when the purposes for the exception outweigh the purposes of the open meeting law. In that case, the city council was threatened with a lawsuit if it did not grant a request. The court found that the threat of a lawsuit did not warrant closing the meeting. *Prior Lake American v. Mader*, 642 N.W.2d 729 (Minn. 2002) (en banc). Cf. *Brainerd Daily Dispatch v. Dehen*, 693 N.W.2d 435 (Minn. App. 2005) (applying analysis of *Star Tribune* and *Prior Lake American*, finding threats were sufficiently specific and imminent that confidential consultation with legal counsel appointed by city's insurer to discuss defense strategy or reconciliation to address a threatened lawsuit justified closing the meeting).

⁴⁹ *Star Tribune*, 507 N.W.2d at 872.

⁵⁰ *The Free Press v. County of Blue Earth*, 677 N.W.2d 471 (Minn. App. 2004).

Financial issues related to security matters must be discussed and all related financial decisions must be made at an open meeting.⁵¹

A meeting may be closed to discuss certain issues relating to government property sales or purchases.

A public body may close a meeting to:

- determine the asking price for real or personal property to be sold by the government entity;
- review confidential or nonpublic appraisal data; and
- develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real or personal property.

Before holding a closed meeting, the public body must identify on the record the particular property that is the subject of the closed meeting. The proceedings must be tape-recorded at the expense of the public body. The recording must be preserved for eight years after the date of the meeting and made available to the public after all property discussed at the meeting has been purchased or sold or the governing body has abandoned the purchase or sale. The property that is the subject of the closed meeting must be specifically identified on the tape. A list of members and all other persons present at the closed meeting must be made available to the public after the closed meeting. If an action is brought claiming that public business other than discussions allowed under this exception was transacted at a closed meeting held during the time when the tape is not available to the public, the court would review the recording of the meeting *in camera* and either dismiss the action if the court finds no violation, or permit use of the recording at trial (subject to protective orders) if the court finds there is a violation.⁵²

An agreement reached that is based on an offer considered at a closed meeting is contingent on approval of the public body at an open meeting. The actual purchase or sale must be approved at an open meeting after the notice period required by statute or the governing body's internal procedures, and the purchase price or sale price is public data.⁵³

There is a narrow exception for certain meetings of public hospital boards.

Boards of public hospitals and certain health organizations may close meetings to discuss competitive market activities and contracts.⁵⁴

⁵¹ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 3.

⁵² [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 3, referring to [§ 13D.03](#), subd. 3.

⁵³ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 3. Property appraisal data covered by this law is described in [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.44](#), subdivision 3.

⁵⁴ [Minn. Stat. § 144.581](#), subds. 4 and 5.

On-site inspections by town board members are not subject to the law.

The law does not apply to a gathering of town board members to perform on-site inspections, if the town has no employees or other staff able to perform the inspections and the town board is acting essentially in a staff capacity. The town board must make good faith efforts to provide notice of the inspections to the media that have filed a written request, including a telephone number, for notice. Notice must be by telephone or by any other method used to notify the members of the public body.⁵⁵

The law specifies how it relates to the Government Data Practices Act.

Except as specifically provided, public meetings may not be closed to discuss data that are not public data under the Government Data Practices Act.⁵⁶ Data that are not public may be discussed at an open meeting without liability, if the matter discussed is within the public body's authority and if it is reasonably necessary to conduct the business before the public body.⁵⁷

A portion of a meeting must be closed if the following data are discussed:

- Data that would identify alleged victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors or vulnerable adults
- Active investigative data collected by a law enforcement agency, or internal affairs data relating to alleged misconduct by law enforcement personnel
- Certain types of educational, health, medical, welfare, or mental health data that are not public data
- An individual's medical records governed by the Minnesota Health Records Act, Minnesota Statutes, sections 144.291 to 144.298⁵⁸

The legislature has addressed social media.

In 2014, the legislature added a provision relating to use of social media. "The use of social media by members of a public body does not violate this chapter so long as the social media use is limited to exchanges with all members of the general public. For purposes of this section, e-mail is not considered a type of social media."⁵⁹ "Social media" is not defined.

⁵⁵ [Minn. Stat. § 366.01](#), subd. 11.

⁵⁶ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 1.

⁵⁷ [Minn. Stat. §§ 13.03](#), subd. 11; [13.05](#), subd. 4; and [13D.05](#), subd. 1.

⁵⁸ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.05](#), subd. 2.

⁵⁹ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.065](#) (added by [Laws 2014, ch. 274](#), § 2).

Penalties

The open meeting law provides a civil penalty of up to \$300 for intentional violation.⁶⁰ A person who is found to have intentionally violated the law in three or more legal actions involving the same governmental body forfeits the right to serve on that body for a time equal to the term the person was serving. The Minnesota Supreme Court has held that this removal provision is constitutional as to removal of elected officials only if the conduct constitutes malfeasance or nonfeasance and provided that the violations occurred after the person had a reasonable amount of time to learn the responsibilities of office.⁶¹

A public body may not pay a civil penalty on behalf of a person who violated the law. However, a public body may pay any costs, disbursements, or attorney fees incurred by or awarded against a member of the body in an action under the open meeting law if the member was found not guilty of a violation.⁶²

A court may award reasonable costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorney fees of up to \$13,000 to any party in an action under the open meeting law. However, the following conditions apply:

- A court may award costs and attorney fees to a defendant only if it finds that the action was frivolous and without merit
- A court may award monetary penalties or attorney fees against a member of a public body only if the court finds there was an intent to violate the open meeting law

The court must award reasonable attorney fees to a prevailing plaintiff if the public body was also the subject of a prior written opinion issued by the Commissioner of Administration, and the court finds that the opinion is directly related to the cause of action being litigated and that the public body did not follow the opinion.⁶³

The appropriate mechanism to enforce the open meeting law is to bring an action in district court seeking injunctive relief or damages. The statute does not provide for a declaratory judgment action.⁶⁴

The Minnesota Supreme Court has held that actions taken at a meeting held in violation of the open meeting law are not invalid or rescindable.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.06](#), subd. 1.

⁶¹ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.06](#), subd. 3; *Claude v. Collins*, 518 N.W.2d 836, 843 (Minn. 1994); *see also Brown v. Cannon Falls Township*, 723 N.W.2d 31, 41-44 (Minn. App. 2006) (discussing the statutory history and that since 1994 the statute has required three or more legal actions).

⁶² Op. Att'y Gen. 471-a, Dec. 31, 1992; [Minn. Stat. § 13D.06](#), subd. 4.

⁶³ [Minn. Stat. § 13D.06](#), subd. 4.

⁶⁴ *Rupp v. Mayasich*, 561 N.W.2d 555 (Minn. App. 1997).

⁶⁵ *Sullivan v. Credit River Township*, 299 Minn. 170, 176-177, 217 N.W.2d 502, 507 (Minn. 1974).

Advice

Public bodies subject to the open meeting law may seek advice on the application of the law and how to comply with it from three sources:

- The governmental entity's attorney
- The attorney general⁶⁶
- The Commissioner of Administration⁶⁷

An individual may seek advice from two sources:

- The individual's attorney
- The Commissioner of Administration⁶⁸

An individual who disagrees with the manner in which members of a governing body perform their duties under the open meeting law may request the Commissioner of Administration to give a written opinion on the governing body's compliance with the law.

A governing body or person requesting an opinion of the Commissioner of Administration must pay a \$200 fee if the commissioner issues an opinion.

The commissioner may decide not to issue an opinion. If the commissioner decides not to issue an opinion, the commissioner must notify the requester within five days of receipt of the request. If the commissioner decides to issue an opinion, it must be done within 20 days of the request (with a 30-day extension possible for good cause and notice to the requester). The governing body must be allowed to explain how it performs its duties under the law.

Opinions of the Commissioner of Administration are not binding, but a court must give the opinions deference. However, a governing body that follows an opinion is not liable for fines, attorney's fees or any other penalty, or forfeiture of office.

For more information about open meetings and other issues related to the government, visit the government operations area of our website, www.house.mn/hrd/.

⁶⁶ Under [Minnesota Statutes, section 8.06](#), the attorney general is the attorney for all state officers and boards or commissions created by law. Under [Minnesota Statutes, section 8.07](#), the attorney general, on request from an attorney for a county, city, town, public pension fund, school board, or unorganized area, gives written opinions on matters of public importance.

⁶⁷ [Minn. Stat. § 13.072](#), subds. 1 and 2.

⁶⁸ *Id.*; see <https://mn.gov/admin/data-practices/> for access to prior opinions of the Commissioner of Administration or to find out how to request an opinion.

Monthly Report - Overview for Dec 2025

Locations on this report: Grand Rapids Area Library

Checkout

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
1st Time	7166	6949	3	7856	-9	109604	119205	-9
Phone Renewal	179	142	26	239	-26	2331	3415	-32
Renewal	114	95	20	182	-38	1713	2237	-24
Opac Renewal	781	722	8	681	14	7790	7741	0
Offline 1st Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Offline Renewal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dayend Auto Renew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	8240	7908	4	8958	-9	121438	132598	-9

Checkout Stock Rotation

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
1st Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phone Renewal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Renewal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Opac Renewal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Offline 1st Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Offline Renewal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dayend Auto Renew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0							

Checkin

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
Normal	7198	7114	1	8195	-13	100832	108791	-8
Late	1856	1533	21	1996	-8	22379	24861	-10
Offline Normal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Offline Late	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9054	8647	4	10191	-12	123211	133652	-8

Requests Placed

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
Placed	1465	1397	4	1984	-27	21188	25200	-16
Total	1465	1397	4	1984	-27	21188	25200	-16

Requests Resolved

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
Cancelled	192	126	52	107	79	1364	1400	-3
Filled	2394	2252	6	2772	-14	31970	35437	-10
Expired	6	4	50	1	500	50	28	78
Total	2592	2382	8	2880	-10	33384	36865	-10

Holds Resolved

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
Picked Up	1310	1446	-10	1684	-23	19831	22438	-12
Cancelled	5	5	0	3	66	57	34	67
Expired	111	64	73	135	-18	1368	1692	-20
Total	1426	1515	-6	1822	-22	21256	24164	-13

Overdues

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
1st Notice	582	817	-29	809	-29	7971	8776	-10
2nd Notice	2	5	-60	7	-72	50	61	-19
3rd Notice	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	16
4th Notice	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0
5th Notice	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	-80
Final Notice	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-100
Notice # 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-100
Notice # 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	-100
Notice # 0	185	197	-7	232	-21	2404	2641	-9
Total	769	1019	-25	1048	-27	10438	11497	-10

Borrower Delta

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
New (Manual)	52	53	-2	55	-6	1009	1035	-3
Deleted (Manual)	4	3	33	5	-20	63	89	-30
New (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deleted (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	56	56	0	60	-7	1072	1124	-5

Bib Delta

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
New (Manual)	114	123	-8	115	-1	1848	1972	-7
Deleted (Manual)	147	351	-59	1091	-87	4074	5375	-25
New (Batch)	94	99	-6	42	123	655	1160	-44
Deleted (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	355	573	-39	1248	-72	6577	8507	-23

Auth Delta

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
New (Manual)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deleted (Manual)	0	5	-100	0	0	78	20	290
New (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deleted (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	5	-100	0	0	78	20	290

Item Delta

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
New (Manual)	301	373	-20	322	-7	5542	6001	-8
Deleted (Manual)	410	544	-25	4200	-91	6919	10701	-36
New (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deleted (Batch)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	711	917	-23	4522	-85	12461	16702	-26

Acquisitions Activities

Description	Dec 2025	Nov 2025	%chg	Dec 2024	%chg	2025 YTD	2024 YTD	%chg
Lines Ordered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Items Ordered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lines Received	139	156	-11	215	-36	2998	3137	-5
Items Rcvd by Ven	140	164	-15	223	-38	3097	3209	-4
Claims	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	279	320	-13	438	-37	6095	6346	-4

Grand Rapids Area Library

Reference Statistics

December 2025

	December	YTD 2025
Door Count	4,456	57,101
Reference Questions	187	2,157
Computer Help Over 5 Minutes	15	190
Tests Proctored	0	4
Public Computer Use: Sessions	225	2,452
Public Computer Use: Hours	193	1,927
Special Computer Sessions	85	1,151
Passports Accepted	112	1,223

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NOV 26 th door # 216479 (last day open 7 before 12/1)	¹ Nov 26 th ⑤	² 216990	³ 217243	⁴ 217515	⁵ 217640	⁶
	8	5	8	5	0	23
	217887	218119	218334	218545	218627	13
	5	8	5	9	0	27
14	218849	219147	219384	219559	219733	20
	7	9	5	6	0	27
21	219933	220153	24	25	220277	27
	7	10	CLOSED	CLOSED	0	17
28	220526	220724	220935			18
	4	5	9			112

$$220935 - 216479 = 4,456$$

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 5 np/ c/	2 4 np/ c/	3 22 np/ c/	4 7 np/ c/	5 2 np/ c/	6
7	8 7 np/ c/	9 9 np/ c/	10 9 np/ c/	11 8 np/ c/	12 7 np/ c/	13
14	15 13 np/ c/	16 9 np/ c/	17 22 np/ c/	18 5 np/ c/	19	20
21	22 7 np/ c/	23 6 np/ c/	24	25	26 8 np/ c/	27
28	29 9 np/ c/	30 7 np/ c/	31 21 np/ c/			

GRAL Children's Library Monthly Statistics December 2025

12/02	Book Time	35
12/08	Page Turners	6
12/09	Book Time	35
12/16	Book Time	21

Total Programs: 4 People: 27

Book Times : 3 People: 91

Library Programs: 1 People: 6

Reference Questions 2025: 245

Reference Questions 2024: 294

December 2025

245

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 15	2 19	3 17	4 8	5 NO VAL 2	6 61
7	8 10	9 5	10 5	11 10	12 2	13 32
14	15 a	16 13	17 11	18 7	19 3	20 43
21	22 27	23 15	24 CLOSED	25 CLOSED	26 4	27 42
28	29 28	30 20	31 21			61

GRAND RAPIDS AREA LIBRARY: 2025 Volunteer Report

Month	Regular Volunteers		RSVP Volunteers		Library Board		Library Friends		Library Foundation		Total	Total
	# Vol	Hours	# Vol	Hours	# Vol	Hours	# Vol	Hours	# Vol	Hours		
January	27	160.75	3	90.50	7	27.00	9	85.75	2	5.00	30	251.25
February	36	157.50	4	57.25	8	28.00	8	56.25	10	14.00	40	214.75
March	30	167.75	4	70.00	8	28.00	9	70.50	1	3.00	34	237.75
April	27	149.00	4	65.25	8	28.00	6	52.00	1	3.00	31	214.25
May	35	163.25	4	94.00	9	29.00	8	89.75	8	12.00	39	257.25
June	32	174.25	5	96.75	8	28.00	8	98.50	1	4.00	37	271.00
July	42	221.50	7	129.25	7	27.00	19	131.50	1	4.00	49	350.75
August	48	234.00	5	59.00	8	46.00	6	58.50	2	6.00	53	293.00
September	43	188.75	5	64.25	7	27.00	9	71.00	9	12.50	48	253.00
October	33	160.50	4	53.75	7	27.00	10	76.25	1	2.50	37	214.25
November	37	165.50	4	85.75	7	27.00	9	94.00	8	15.00	41	251.25
December	30	136.75	4	65.25	6	16.00	8	63.00	1	6.00	34	202.00
Total		2079.50		931.00		338.00		947.00		87.00	90	3,010.50

The only note is that Foundation hours are approximate for December. We had 90 volunteers this year, which may be the most yet!

2025 Program Attendance

Item 7.

Take & Create Art Kits (Legacy)

	Date	Description	Qty
1	May 5-30	Mary Mulari: No Ordinary Scrap Journal Take & Create Kits	60
2	Aug 1-30	Erika LeMay: Beginner Basketry Take & Create Kits	60
Total:			120

Take & Make Kits (Community)

	Date	Description	Qty
1	May	One Vegetable One Community: Herbs	100
Total:			100

In-Library/In-Person Programming

	Date	Program Title	Adult	Teen	Child	All
1	6-Jan	LEGACY: Dennis Warner & The D's	20		6	26
2	6-Feb	LEGACY: Author Cary J. Griffith: Gunflint Falling	28			28
3	17-Apr	LEGACY: Timber! Tales of Lumberjacks with Susan Hawkinson	19			19
4	24-Apr	Exploring the Superior National Forest (Jo Swanson, Friends of the SNF)	4		2	6
5	1-May	LEGACY: Going to Bartalina - Songs & Stories of Commercial Sailing on the Great Lakes (Charlie Maguire)	35	1		36
6	25-Sep	LEGACY: Colorful Coiled Baskets with Erika Lemay (1-3:30pm)	16	3		19
7	25-Sep	LEGACY: Colorful Coiled Baskets with Erika Lemay (4:30-7pm)	12	1	1	14

8	5-Nov	LEGACY: They Brought Their Songs - International Foll Music in Minnesota with Caleigh	42	2	4	Item 7.	18
9	17-Nov	LEGACY: Songs of Mesabi with Greg Tiburzi	12				12
10	4-Dec	Itasca Orchestra Strings Program: Christmas at the Library					45
11	16-Dec	Itasca Orchestra Strings Program: Christmas at the Library					36
12	26-Dec	Puzzle Palooza	31	6	3		40

Total:

329