

ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Members present: Cynthia Dunlop, Janet Gruwell, Dan Holtz, James W. Rieckhoff, Yuliana Rivera Arce, Jeri Stahr, and Laura Steffen.

Others present: Jamie Arce, Director of Finance/Treasurer; Kevin J. Kilmer, Director of Branch and Technical Services; and Mary Beth Schlabach, Interim Executive Director.

Staff present: Nathan Claeys, Director of Human Resources; Micah Daso, Computer Support Specialist; Laura Holland, Administrative Clerk; Sam Householder, Communications Manager; Allison McLean, YPS Department Head; Eric Nord, Computer Services Department Head; and Trevor Wendzonka, Chief Marketing Officer.

Staff present via Zoom: Deb Bloom, Circulation Department Head; Judy Beacham, YPS Clerk; Katie Cullison, Osolo Branch Manager; Mary Ann Kempa, Cleveland Branch Manager; Elizabeth Layman, Technical Services Librarian; and Susan Schroeder, Reference Department Head.

PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

The public hearing for the 2026 Budget was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by James W. Rieckhoff, President. Jamie Arce, Director of Finance/Treasurer summarized the 2026 budget that was distributed to board members. This contains the same budget amounts as was presented at the August meeting, but has been further broken down by departments.

There being no public present to comment on the budget, Dan Holtz moved

THAT the Public Budget Hearing be closed.

Jeri Stahr seconded. Motion: carried (7-0)

The meeting was closed at 5:43 p.m. The 2026 Budget Adoption Meeting will be at 5:30 October 21, 2025 during the regular board meeting.

REGULAR BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Elkhart Public Library was called to order at 5:43 p.m. by James W. Rieckhoff, President.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda was presented. Laura Steffen moved

THAT the Consent Agenda be adopted.

Cynthia Dunlop seconded. Motion: carried (7-0)

PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

James W. Rieckhoff, President, noted that small concerts will continue. He has enjoyed the wide variety of music. He announced that EPL is again sending a staff member to the Leadership Academy and stated this is a worthwhile investment based on his experience with the program. The fall in-service program has many areas of interest. Board members are encouraged to attend any sessions if they are interested.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Elkhart Jazz Festival 2026

Mary Beth Schlabach, Interim Executive Director, discussed the 2026 Jazz Festival. In recent past the Downtown location has been closed both Friday and Saturday when it was a venue for performances. Next month, a proposal concerning the amount of time for closure will be brought for the board's consideration after discussion with department heads and facilitators.

Young People's Services Department

Allison McLean, YPS Department Head gave a presentation on her department. Each full-time staff member has an area of specialty, along with three part-time Growing-Readers Tutors. She noted that moving some of the materials to the other side of the wall outside of the children's department has increased play space and noted families are staying longer. The two temporary summer clerks have been very helpful during the busy summer reading program. She shared statistics showing the increase in participation. Some of the programs were highlighted, including the Summer Reading Program end party, Growing Readers, school fieldtrips, and an upcoming joint program with Concord Community Schools to bring children's author Mac Barnett to the junior high school.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Friends Week Proclamation

Mary Beth Schlabach, Interim Executive Director, presented Friends Week Proclamation and requested board members sign it. This will be delivered during Friends Week, which is October 19-25.

Questions and Information from Board, Staff, and Guests

Jeri Stahr mentioned she had visited a library in California. They had wonderful spaces, including a Friends sale area just inside the door, a café area, and a large children's department. She imagined what could be done if EPL had similar space.

Yuliana Rivera Arce gave a shout-out to the Book Bus and a recent willingness to be accommodating to reschedule after weather required a cancelation.

ADJOURNMENT

Jeri Stahr moved

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Cynthia Dunlop seconded. James W. Rieckhoff, President, adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Elkhart Public Library at 6:15 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be October 21, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Downtown Location, 300 S. Second Street, Elkhart, IN.

Laura Steffen, Secretary