

ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Members present: Cynthia Dunlop, Sarah Hooley, Dan Holtz, Laura Steffen, Jeri Stahr, and Yuliana Rivera Arce. James W. Rieckhoff did not attend.

Others present: Jamie Arce, Director of Finance/Treasurer; Kristen Edson, Executive Director; Kevin J. Kilmer, Director of Branch and Technical Services; and Allison McLean, Interim Director of Public Services.

Staff present: Deb Bloom, Circulation Department Head; Jeanne Glanders, Popular Materials Department Head; Laura Holland, Administrative Clerk; Mary Ann Kempa, Cleveland Branch Manager; Jill Martinson, Audience Development Manager; Eric Nord, Computer Services Department Head; Charles Pieri, Branch YPS Librarian; Sahib Ramirez, Content Marketing Specialist; and Violeta Stroth-Campos; Executive Assistant.

Staff present via Zoom: Sue Eller, Dunlap Branch Manager; Nathan Claeys, Director of Human Resources; Katie Cullison, Osolo Branch Manager; John Dawson, Senior Building Operations Manager; Katie Graham, Technical Services Department Head; Elizabeth Layman, Technical Services Librarian; and Jarret Mitchell, Pierre Moran Branch Manager.

Guests present: Ralph Spelbring, patron and Libby Eisele, President of Friends of EPL.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Elkhart Public Library was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Dan Holtz, Vice-President.

CONSENT AGENDA

Before the vote, Finance Director Jaime Arce highlighted several significant payments that may appear as anomalies in the financial statements. It was explained that these annual/periodic expenses will temporarily make budget projections look higher but will even out over the course of the year.

Jeri Stahr moved

THAT the Consent Agenda be adopted.

Cynthia Dunlop seconded. Motion: carried 6-0)

Yuliana Rivera Arce moved

THAT the Minutes of the Last Meeting be approved.

Laura Steffen seconded. Motion: carried 6-0)

Jeri Stahr noted that her motion was for the entire Consent Agenda. No further action was taken on these items.

PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

Dan Holtz, Acting President, had no business to discuss.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kristen Edson, Executive Director, presented her Director's Report. Facilities Master Plan was discussed. The library received a strong response to community surveys. Additional online focus groups are being arranged for stakeholders who were unable to attend the previously held in person sessions. The primary community engagement phase is now complete. Consultants will go through all information collected and will begin developing draft recommendations. Recommendation was made to move forward with OrangeBoy for the library's next strategic plan; some board participation has been requested during future planning sessions. The Director of Public Services position has been posted, and applications will be accepted through September 25th. The library hopes to receive both external and internal applications. Board members were invited to attend the trustee training on November 9th through Indiana Library Federation, due to the previously scheduled session at the end of the month being cancelled.

Jeanne Glanders, Popular Materials Department Head, gave a presentation on what the department oversees, programming offered, and partnerships currently taking place. A new book club kit was introduced, and the library will soon be adding additional titles to their collection. The department also highlighted two of their monthly programs. Open Doors, a monthly gathering for adults with disabilities, which includes participants from Mosaic, ADEC, and other members of the community. Crafternoon, a monthly adult craft program. A special four-hour "homemade holiday" program is being planned, with approximately 15-20 crafts that people could make and give as holiday gifts. Jeanne also oversees the information desk; the desk assists patrons with a variety of things around the library. This department has also been vital in creating a partnership with Elkhart County mental health organizations. An art exhibit is held where participants express their mental-health journeys; and future plans include offering our patrons education programs that discuss mental health in both English and Spanish. The library received an Outstanding Partner Award at the organization's annual gala due to their hard work and achievements. The department also discussed its partnership with WNIT.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed 2027 Budget

Jaime Arce, Finance Director, presented the Proposed 2027 Budget and explained that the budget materials included additional information compared to prior years. Specifically, a "Budget in Brief" and memorandum explain the new format. This revised format moves toward the criteria established

by the GFOA for its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. Jaime explained that the new format includes definitions, narratives, philosophies, and information connecting budget allocations to the library's strategic priorities. The proposed operating/general fund budget was presented at approximately \$10.138 million, representing an increase of approximately 3.1% over the prior year's budget. Projected revenue was approximately \$10.128 million, resulting in a small, budgeted deficit. It was noted that historically the library does not spend 100% of its budget and therefore expects to remain cash-flow positive. The library had previously been able to adopt budgets close to the maximum levy-growth amount. Based on current revenue estimates, the library chose not to pursue full available growth because doing so could have created revenue constraints and reduced the board's flexibility. Approximately two-thirds of expenditures were identified as personnel-related, including wages, salaries, and benefits. Budget materials included narratives describing the major reasons behind departmental changes. Debt was currently projected through 2030 and that the library's general-obligation debt capacity was approximately \$42 million. A 4% wage increase was included as a placeholder. The final amount will be refined when the board considers the wage resolution.

The public hearing for the 2027 Budget was called to order at 6:21 p.m. by Dan Holtz, Vice-President. There being no public present to comment on the budget, the meeting was closed at 6:22 p.m. The 2027 Budget Adoption Meeting will be at 5:30 October 20, 2026 during the regular board meeting.

Library Code of Conduct Policy Update

Kristen Edson, Executive Director, proposed updates to the library's Code of Conduct. Major changes consist of allowing limited food in designated areas, clarifying beverage-container requirements, reorganizing the policy for staff, adding headings to provisions, and separating the patron suspension appeal process into its own policy.

Yuliana Rivera Arce moved

THAT the Library Code of Conduct Policy Update be adopted as presented

Sarah Hooley seconded. Motion: carried (6-0)

New Patron Suspension Review Policy

Kristen Edson, Executive Director, introduced a new Patron Suspension Review Policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide a clearer process for patrons who have been suspended for more than 30 days to request a review. The previous process was contained within the Code of Conduct but did not clearly explain to patrons what they needed to do to request review or demonstrate that they were prepared to return to the library. The new policy will establish a more structured process. The terminology will also change from "ban" or "banned" to "suspension". There are plans for a postcard-sized suspension notice that could be provided to patrons who leave the library before receiving complete information about their suspension. An online form/QR code is also being considered to make the review process easier to access.

Jeri Stahr noted that not all edits to change the word ban had been removed from both the Code of Conduct revisions or the new Patron Suspension Review Policy.

Laura Steffen moved

THAT the Library Code of Conduct Policy Update be amended and adopted as amended and
THAT the New Patron Suspension Review Policy be amended.

Jeri Stahr seconded. Motion: carried (6-0)

Jeri Stahr moved

THAT the New Patron Suspension Review Policy be adopted as amended.

Yuliana Rivera Arce seconded. Motion: carried (6-0)

Resolution 2026-09: Non-Binding Letter of Intent

Kristen Edson, Executive Director, requested the board to authorize a non-binding letter of intent concerning the potential acquisition of the Woodland Crossing property. Legal counsel reviewed the letter of intent and provided the language included in the resolution.

Jeri Stahr moved

THAT the Resolution 2026-09: Non-Binding Letter of Intent be adopted as presented

Cynthia Dunlop seconded. Motion: carried (6-0)

Questions and Information from Board, Staff, and Guests

President of the Friends organization addressed the board. She referenced an article previously provided to the board about the process for withdrawing books from the library Collection. The Friends currently work with Fables, and Better World Books, but have become concerned with their relationship with BWB and have investigated ThriftBooks as a possible alternative. She also distributed the Friends of EPL statement of cash flows.

ADJOURNMENT

Yuliana Rivera Arce moved

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

Sarah Hooley seconded. Dan Holtz, Acting President, adjourned the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Elkhart Public Library at 6:55 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will be October 20, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Branch, 53715 County Rd 1, Elkhart, IN.

Laura Steffen, Secretary