

**Red Wing Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
City Council Chambers,
November 12th, 2025**

Members Present: Library Board President Natasha Yates; Board Members Bruce McBeath, Amanda Motschke, Marm Nihart, Catherine Friend, Jacqueline West, Ron Skjong, and Joan Heineman.

Members Absent: Board Member Kim Emery.

Others Present: Dan Brower, Library Director; Vicki Jo Lambert, Council Liaison.

1. Call to Order

Library Board President Natasha Yates called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

President Yates led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Excusal of Members

Roll call was conducted. President Yates and Members McBeath, Motschke, Nihart, Friend, West, Skjong, and Heineman were in attendance.

Commissioner Emery previously indicated she would be absent.

4. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Member Nihart, seconded by Member Friend to approve the agenda as presented. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8:0.

5. Public Comment

President Yates reviewed the public comment procedure.

No one wished to address the Commission.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Motion to Approve the September 10th, 2025, Library Board Meeting Minutes.

B. Motion to Approve the October 2025 Library Board Workshop Minutes.

C. Motion to Approve September and October Bills.

A motion was made by President Yates, seconded by Vice President West to approve the consent agenda as amended. A vote was conducted, and the motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8:0

7. Motions & General Business

President Yates proceeded with the agenda and asked if there were any items for discussion. Director Brower reported that there were no motions or general business to note.

8. Communication Items

A. Director's Report.

Director Brower highlighted topics from his report:

- Director Brower is increasingly involved with SELCO and serves as an officer on the shared ILS committee. His role includes troubleshooting Evergreen system issues, introducing new features, and ensuring library procedures remain consistent across the region. Libraries can propose improvement ideas; an example involved revising checkout/return workflows to restore a previous process for more consistent statistics. Brewer's favorite aspect of the committee is receiving and reviewing community comments.
- Director Brower represents large libraries on the committee, alongside officers representing small and medium libraries. SELCO recently purchased an automatic sorter requiring barcodes on front covers or RFID tags. Red Wing Library is currently the only library fully equipped with RFID tags and is assisting others. Director Brower reports that six additional libraries are expected to adopt RFID tags by March.
- Director Brower provided an update on library cards, noting progress in the long-range plan and an increase in agency accounts to 48. He has worked with schools to encourage teachers to use agency accounts, which allow up to 100 checkouts, a six-week loan period, one renewal, and place responsibility for damages on the organization. Library card usage by ward previously stood at 34% in Wards 1–2, 36% in Ward 3, and 40% in Ward 4. After this year's community engagement efforts, all wards now have library card usage above 40%.
- Director Brower visited the Minnesota State Services for the Blind and the Low Vision Store in Saint Paul. He described the experience as exciting and eye-opening, expressing gratitude for advancements in assistive technology. The visit was connected to a potential bequest, and he is interested in investing in NaviLens to help blind and low-vision patrons navigate the library. Board member Bruce McBeath voiced support for implementing NaviLens and emphasized the importance of creating more opportunities for blind and low-vision community members.
- Director Brower stated that three staff members attended the Minnesota Library Association Conference. SELCO covered Derek Scott's registration, leaving a \$50 balance, and Chris and Dean each attended for one day. Next year's conference will be held virtually. In 2026, the Public Library Association National Conference will take place in Minneapolis and will coincide with the Friends of the Library Book Sale. Director Brower expresses the importance of attending this conference since it is not often this close and so easily and cost-effectively.

- On November 3rd, Director Brower and Megan attended the hearing for the juvenile who vandalized the library's listening devices. The damaged devices have since been replaced with funding from the Friends of the Library. A follow-up hearing is scheduled for December to finalize the total cost of damages owed to the library
- Director Brower stated that welcome packs are nearly completed. Director Brower attended a breakfast with nonprofit directors in Red Wing and the surrounding areas to discuss barriers that prevent community members from wanting to attend the Hope and Harbor event. Director Brower compiled a comprehensive resource sheet for community members, including information on food shelves, clothing donations, Spanish-language services, veteran support, job assistance, and resources for victims of domestic and sexual violence. He used United Way as a starting point and conducted additional research to expand the list
- Director Brower stated the activity report for September was inaccurate due to the attendance counter being broken.

B. Library Board President's Report.

There was no report.

C. SELCO.

There was no report.

D. City Council Liaison Report.

Council Liaison Lambert reported that the city is in the middle of the budget process. Director Brower presented two staffing requests to the City Council: converting the current part-time Youth Services position to full-time and adding a new part-time Outreach Library Assistant position. The City Council indicated they did not have the means to add new positions this year, but were open to converting the existing part-time Youth Services role into a full-time position.

E. Friends of the Library.

Friends of the Library Representative Lois Burns highlighted 26 years of involvement with the Friends of the Library. Although not currently on the board, she remains an active library supporter. She noted leadership challenges in recent months but reported that all board positions are now filled, including new members, and the organization is gaining more members during book sales. Overall, the Friends are feeling more stable as an organization.

The Friends have reviewed and revised their standing rules, constitution, and bylaws. A few changes were needed, and new processes have been made permanent.

Financial report highlights: a \$1,500 donation was given to the children's librarian

due to the success of the children's reading program, exceeding the budgeted reward. The October book sale generated \$4,000 in revenue, which Burns expressed to be very exciting.

Some future plans include the 2026 Winter event, Cozy Up and Read, featuring authors and other activities. A committee, mostly composed of new members, will organize the event.

The Minnesota Association of Library Friends meets three times a year via Zoom. Nancy Thorson was nominated and received positive feedback.

F. Fine Arts Committee.

There was no report.

G. Personnel Committee.

President Yates reported that the Library Board completed Director Brower's performance review. He scored outstanding overall, with positive remarks, and President Yates expressed appreciation, stating, "We are glad that you are here." The Board recommends a 5% pay increase in recognition of Director Brower's excellent performance over the past year.

H. Long-Range Planning Committee.

There was no report.

I. Budget Committee.

There was no report.

J. Bequest Committee.

There was no report.

K. Board Member Comments.

Board Members were offered an opportunity to provide book reviews.

Friends of the Library Burns recommended *The Maid* by Nita Prose, noting it sparked differing perspectives in her book club, which she enjoyed. Burns described it as a very good read and is looking forward to the sequel.

Member Motschke recommended the *Book of Unknown Americans* by Christina Henríquez, highlighting how community member entrust their stories to others and how community leaders can show empathy similar to how Director Brower does in his role. Motschke described the book as emotional, beautiful, and reflective of how humanity and the world state currently are.

Member Heineman recommended the book *The Emperor of Gladness* by Ocean Vuong, describing it as beautifully written and telling the story of a young boy leading a double life, working while his mother believes he is studying to be a doctor, while he is building a community he enjoys. Member Heineman noted a

similarity in messaging between this book and the one recommended by Member Motschke.

President Yates recommended *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI* by Yuval Noah Harari, noting it is not a light read. The book explores how community grows alongside the internet, encourages precaution with AI usage, and highlights its potential benefit with the right intention.

Member West recommended *Sunny Place for Shady People* by Mariana Enriquez, noting it was translated from Spanish and expressing the writing as wonderful. Member West described the book as a blend of horror literature and magical realism.

Member McBeath recommended *Is a River Alive* by Robert Macfarlane, which explores whether nature can have legal rights and standing. The book examines three river systems and discusses agreements on whether rivers should remain fresh or be allowed to become polluted.

Member Skjong recommended *Norwegians in Minnesota* by Jon Gjerde, focusing on Norwegian immigration waves in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Member Skjong read the book to learn more about his father's past and found it interesting how Norwegian immigrants influenced Minnesota and other Midwestern states.

Member Nihart recommended *To Die For* by David Baldacci, noting she enjoys the author's writing style and reads most of his books. She described this book as one of her favorites and expressed her enjoyment of a fiction book while also finding it hard to read other books by different authors.

Council Liaison Vicki Jo Lambert recommended *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The book is about how to orient one's life around gratitude, reciprocity, and community.

L. Announcements.

No announcements to report.

M. Attachments.

9. Adjournment

President Yates adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

ATTEST:

Joan Heineman, Secretary