

MINUTES
Northern Lights Library Network
Governing Board Meeting
September 20, 2025
Minnesota State University Moorhead
Comstock Memorial Union
and Online

NLLN Officers:

- President: Charlie Lindberg
- Vice President: Joe Gould
- Treasurer: Karen Qualey
- Secretary: Ruth Holmgren

Present:

- Kathy Enger, Executive Director, NLLN
- Marc Colin, CPA, Carpenter, Evert & Associates
- Magen Koepp, CPA, Olsen, Thielen & Associates
- Lisa Bode, City of Moorhead
- Chizuko Shastri, Lake Agassiz Regional Library Representative (LARL)
- Joe Gould, Kitchigami Regional Library System Representative (KRLS)
- Charlie Lindberg, President, NLLN; Northwest Regional Library Representative (NWRL)
- Karen Qualey, Treasurer, NLLN; Academic Library Representative
- Bethany Hait, NLLN Public Library Representative
- Aleta Sanford, Minute-taker, NLLN

1. Call to Order.
 - a. 10:02 A.M.
2. Review and approve agenda and minutes.
 - a. Agenda.
 - i. Joe, Bethany MCU
 - b. Minutes.
 - i. Joe, Karen MCU
3. 10 a.m. Audit Report from Marc Colin, CPA, Carpenter, Evert & Associates. Review and approve the following policies:
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Whistleblower
 - Fund Balance
 - Document Retention and Destruction
 - a. Audit Report.

- i. Marc Colin, CPA from Carpenter, Evert & Associates, reviewed NLLN's recently completed audit. The 990 filing is in process and should be completed in October. NLLN's audit report was an unmodified (clean) opinion, which is a good outcome. Two letters accompany the report, one to governance and regarding significant deficiencies and material weaknesses.
 - 1. The communication to governance notes some comments on how allocations of expenses are estimated, but it also shows no material misstatements in the financials and no difficulties with management were encountered during the audit process.
 - 2. The letter regarding significant deficiencies and material weaknesses notes some concerns that are largely attributed to the small size of the organization that makes meeting these requirements difficult: there is not an ideal segregation of duties. The letter also notes that Carpenter, Evert & Associates helped prepare the financial statements, including the notes.
 - ii. Overall, NLLN is in a good financial position and had a \$78,000 surplus for fiscal year 2025, which matched a similar surplus in the previous fiscal year. Revenue increased 5% and expenses increased 7%. NLLN's support services cost was at 29%, which is within the industry recommendation of 25-30%. NLLN has a healthy reserve fund that can support continued operation for approximately 22 months, which is significantly greater than the recommended 3-6 month reserve.
 - iii. Joe asked how NLLN plans to use reserves and Kathy noted several exciting opportunities NLLN has engaged with regional partners. Now that two years of surplus have restored the reserves following those expenditures, along with the increase in the State's funding, NLLN is looking to develop a strategic plan to effectively use funds to serve the region.
 - iv. Motion to approve audit.
 - 1. Karen, Joe MCU
 - b. Review and approve policies.
 - i. Bethany, Chizuko MCU
- 4. 10:30 a.m. Magen Koepp, CPA, Olsen, Thielen & Associates. NLLN online accounting and bookkeeping, procedures. Retirement payout. Thank you to NLLN Treasurer, Karen Qualey.
 - a. Magen reviewed how Olsen, Thielen & Associates has assumed Deb's bookkeeping duties. They coordinated with Deb prior to her retirement to transfer the work. It continues to be done on Quickbooks Online, but Accounts Payable has moved to Bill.com, which syncs with Quickbooks Online. Kathy meets

- weekly with them to review all the bills that need approval. Regarding payroll, to enhance segregation of duties, NLLN Treasurer Karen Qualey now reviews and signs the bi-weekly payroll.
- b. Deb's retirement payout included all her accrued paid time off of 85.5 hours, and 479.25 of her accrued 958.5 accrued sick hours, per NLLN's policy to pay out a maximum of 480 hours of accrued sick. The total payout was \$17,030.51.
5. 11 a.m. Lisa Bode, City of Moorhead. Support for the Moorhead Public Library and Community Center.
 - a. Lisa reviewed the diverse amenities that will be available to the Moorhead community through the new Moorhead Public Library and Community Center building, which is now under construction and anticipated to be finished by April 1, 2026. Features of the building include space for LARL's offices, the Moorhead Public Library, a walking loop, an indoor playground, and a center for entrepreneurship that will include professional spaces community members can reserve for meetings. The vision for the building is to be a true community space. The construction was financed with a local sales tax, but since the pandemic inflation, additional fundraising has been underway.
 - b. Motion to approve \$15,000 in the current fiscal year and \$15,000 in the next fiscal year.
 - i. Chizuko, Joe MCU
 6. Review and approve financial reports.
 - a. Motion to approve.
 - i. Joe, Bethany MCU
 7. Deb Keena home office materials moved to 265C MacLean, MSUM, NLLN's office.
 8. New CD FDIC insured with American Federal Bank.
 9. *Report of Results* Minnesota Department of Education, State Library Services. FY25 highlights.
 - a. Motion to approve the *Report of Results*.
 - i. Joe, Chizuko MCU
 10. New Business.
 - a. Cass Lake School Library Support.
 - i. The district built a new elementary school but plans to retain the old building to be used as the district's offices, a place for the boys and girls club, and a pre-K location. During this school year, they plan to renovate the building. They are also preserving the old library space but want to upgrade it to the 21st century and have it available for approximately 150 ALC students and to host meetings. They need new materials, shelving, furniture, and technology.
 - ii. Motion to approve \$10,000 this year and \$10,000 next year for the Cass Lake School Library.

1. Joe, Chizuko MCU
 - b. A.I. Education Event October 28 at MSUM.
 - i. MSUM is sponsoring a three-day event covering A.I. topics. Day 2 is specific to educators. NLLN would like to provide \$3,000 in scholarships to assist area paras, teachers, and librarians to attend this event.
 - ii. Motion to approve \$3,000 for scholarships.
 1. Joe, Chizuko MCU
 - c. The Rourke Museum Library.
 - i. Chizuko noticed the Rourke Museum Library was not included on NLLN's membership list. This has now been added as a member of NLLN.
 - d. Hot Spots for the Park Rapids School Library.
 - i. The Park Rapids School Library has asked NLLN for support in purchasing 10 hot spot devices as check-out items for students in an area without sufficient internet services. The first year cost is estimated at \$3,720.
 - ii. Motion to approve \$3,720 and review additional support next year.
 1. Bethany, Joe MCU
 - e. Lajimodiere Broadside Donation.
 - i. NLLN donated works by Denise Lajimodiere, the North Dakota Poet Laureate, to the Plains Art Museum. There are still some broadsides left that NLLN would like to donate to libraries in the region. If your libraries are interested, reach out to NLLN.
 - f. Tracing Your Family History Workshop: Heritage Education Commission Workshop, September 20, 2025, at MSUM.
 - i. Following the board meeting, this event is occurring on the MSUM campus.
 - g. Great NorthStar Read Together.
 - i. This event is ongoing across Minnesota.
 - h. Minnesota Library Association Fall Conference. October 9-10, St. Cloud Convention Center.
 - i. Kathy will be attending the MCMT meeting on October 8th and remaining for this event. NLLN has set aside funds for at least four scholarships for librarians in the region to attend. Contact NLLN for information on how to apply for a scholarship.
11. Old Business.
- a. Strategic Plan.
 - i. Qualitative questionnaires are out to board members. If you have not submitted your responses, please do so. Content-rich answers are really important. Kathy will send the questionnaire out again to board members

who have not yet responded. Quality information on this initial questionnaire is crucial to development of a strong survey of NLLN member libraries.

- b. Communities Collaborative Brain Conference.
 - i. Joe attended the conference for the second time and it was a very rewarding experience. Particularly, the Native American focus was very valuable. For example, one workshop had two women who work for the White Earth tribe present on the importance of getting students outside for outdoor learning. The emphasis was on early learning, but there was overlap for middle and high school age students and even adults.
 - ii. NLLN provided support to frame posters from the last 20 years of the Brain Conference, which were on display at the conference this year.
- c. Collection Support.
 - i. This is ongoing and will be a part of NLLN's strategic plan. The census conducted on school libraries throughout Minnesota noted they have dated print collections. NLLN aims to help support libraries update their print collections.
- d. Licensed Media Specialist (LMS) Scholarships.
 - i. Now that the census is complete, the MCMTs are exploring ways to provide scholarships to people in their regions to become licensed media specialists. Kathy is exploring opportunities to partner with nonprofits to find ways to provide these scholarships. As the funding for this activity was an appropriation, not a grant, there is time to explore the best ways.
- e. Reports from the region.
 - i. Joe stated it was re-invigorating to be around supportive colleagues, boardmembers, and people who value knowledge and reading. Things have been tough on the Beltrami and Kitchigami boards lately. At the most recent county board meeting, the library's budget was cut significantly, down to the minimum required by the State, despite community support at the meeting for the Bemidji and Blackduck libraries. Advice on how to continue to fight for support and funding is appreciated.

12. Adjourn.

- a. 11:55 A.M.