

Aurora Free Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 15, 2026

Facilitator: David Eckhardt, President, AFL Board of Trustees

Trustees: Dennis Looney, Lori Knopp, Mary Jo May, Thea Miller,
Lars Peterson (arrived late), and Susan Dean (Zoom)

Staff: Sandy Groth, Library Director

1. Call to Order: Dave called the meeting to order at 5:36 pm.

2. Consent Agenda Approval:

Dave made a motion that we approve the meeting minutes of 11/20/25 as well as the 1/15/2026 Trustee Meeting Agenda. Dennis seconded the motion.

Approved unanimously: 6-0-0 (at this time, Lars had not yet arrived).

3. Conflict of Interest: There were no conflicts of interest.

4. Treasurer's Report & 2025 Budget Closeout: Our operating balance is currently \$82,790.22, which does not include accounts for invested funds, Morgan Opera House, or Preservation. Lori shared an itemized overview of the 2025 budget. The Library closed out the 2025 operations with a net positive balance, in part due to extra revenue from a bequeathal donation from Ann Burch, as well as projected funding for salaries that was not fully used. The balance of funds for building preservation was negative, however, due to expenditures for the MOH air conditioning installation, for which funds were received in 2024.

5. Director's Report: Sandy shared a comprehensive report on all the happenings and highlights, grant activity, programming, plus administration and human resources, finances & fundraising, attendance, building use and maintenance, and circulation. She highlighted the upcoming Community Read of "James", the Rosen Grants she is writing, the Friends of TCPL grant we received for a Cricut and buttonmaker supplies, and a Candid Foundation Directory that is available through the South Central Regional Library Council to look for grant opportunities.

6. Committee Reports:

MOH - Lars did not have any new items to share at this time.

Preservation - Dave shared updates including the 2026 anticipated clear-glass window restoration project that has been submitted to the NYSED Aid for Library Construction Program. He also reported the closeout of the 2024 MOH Cooling Project, for which we are awaiting the final 10% of State funding. Funding for the leaded-glass windows restoration for the MOH balcony and around the front door has been requested through Senator Rachel May's office. Also, we had the beautiful old oak table in the Reading Room refinished, which looks lovely.

Nominating Committee - Several names were suggested as a replacement for Sue Dean, as she is stepping down at the end of her term in February. Thank you for all of your hard work, Sue!

Booklover's Ball - Jo reported that she will be chairing the event this year. New members are always welcome! Jo will be meeting with Sue Edinger of the Inns of Aurora at the end of the month to discuss the possibilities to once again hold the event there. Thank you cards were signed for both Robin Driskel and Marie Dentes for all of their dedicated efforts over many years of chairing this event.

Fundraising - The Annual Appeal appears to be very successful so far, and donations are still being tabulated. Our upcoming Fargo Fundraiser will be held on Friday, February 20th.

7. Old Business: Dennis will be organizing a Strategic Long-Term Plan for 2026-30, and the Board discussed several potential members for its committee. Sandy noted that all Trustees have completed the required Trustee training for 2025.

8. New Business: Several items were discussed:

- Jo made a motion to approve the *Resolution of the 2026 Staff Benefits* which was presented prior for review. Lars seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 7-0-0.
- Dave made a motion to approve a Resolution for a \$10,000 increase in the 2026 tax levy request for the Library, which was also presented for prior review. Thea seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, 7-0-0.
- There was a brief discussion of the 2026 draft Operating Budget, which was reviewed and discussed at our November 2025 meeting. Lori made a motion to approve a Resolution to accept the 2026 Operating Budget. Dennis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously approved, 7-0-0.
- There was no other New Business.

9. Meeting Adjournment: Thea made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Sue seconded the motion. Following unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm. The next Meeting will be our Annual Association Meeting to be held on **February 12th, 2026** at 5:30 pm.