

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library
Board of Trustees**

Call to Order: A meeting of the Alpena County Library Board of Trustees was called to order on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 4:02 pm by President Dustin Budd.

Present:

Board of Trustees: Dustin Budd, Julie Byrnes, Jennifer Graham, Joe Fulkerson

Staff: Christina Markowski, Nancy Mousseau, Carmen Grubaugh

Excused: Traci Collins

Approval of Agenda: It was moved by Fulkerson with support from Byrnes to accept the agenda. The motion passed.

Review and Approval of April 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes: It was moved by Byrnes with support from Fulkerson to accept the minutes from the April 15, 2026 meeting. The motion passed.

Financial Reports: The financial reports were reviewed by Markowski.

Approval of Bills: It was moved by Byrnes and supported by Fulkerson that the bills as presented be approved. The motion passed.

Leadership Team Reports:

A. Website Walk Through: Markowski stated the library's website needed to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant before April 2027 and as the board packets were not ADA compliant yet a few would be printed out for the public before the board meeting. She presented where patrons could access their library accounts and board meeting information on the new website.

(Graham entered at 4:12 pm.)

Friends of the Library Report: Markowski stated the Friends were planning to host a Hidden Bookstore Open House event on June 16, 2026 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm and they were looking to fill some open board positions. She noted the library was accepting donations for the annual book sale and while the set up would begin for the Friends on August 10, 2026, the sale would be from August 12, 2026 through August 15, 2026.

Public Comment: Diane O'Connor, Alpena, questioned what constituted DEI [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion] language and why DEI language was being stricken from the Strategic Plan by a few board members at last month's board meeting.

Stephanie Collman, Alpena, shared her experience of working in an environment without DEI when she was a manager at a stock market. She noted she was concerned about a library board that did not believe in DEI.

Mark Hunter, Alpena, stated the board represented the institution and if he were still a board member he would prefer to hear the audience clap to gauge the level of support. He expressed that DEI was no different than treating others the way you would like to be treated. Hunter suggested the board consult with a law firm before planning to remove any books and he noted the final decision regarding the selection of books rested with librarians not the board.

Julie Gandulla, Alpena, urged the board to have a powerful conversation about what DEI means because it has been stereotyped and politicized. She stated Robert's Rules of Order did not allow for nuance of conversation at the community level and she suggested the board find an alternative. She expressed concerns about maintaining diversity and not having board members try to supersede the role of bachelors or masters educated librarians in regards to the reconsideration procedure.

Mary Bray, Alpena, questioned if there was any relation to previous children's book removal requests happening now. She stated the library board should not be able to decide what is appropriate for her or for children.

(Budd temporarily closed the Public Comment citing item 5 of the Public Comment Policy when the audience clapped for Bray at 4:32 pm.)

Yvonne Johnson, Alpena, stated the audience was following the Public Comment Policy because the audience did not hiss or boo while a speaker was speaking and she cited the First Amendment.

(Budd reopened the Public Comment at 4:33 pm.)

Jackie Witter, Alpena, noted she felt reprimanded by Budd. She stated clapping was a First Amendment expression and hissing or booing should be allowed as long as it does not increase to a volume that would interfere with being able to hear the speaker. Witter commented that Markowski was qualified to do her job.

Yvonne Johnson, Alpena, voiced concerns about the board's reconsideration procedure and the board striking down DEI language. She stated libraries provide exposure to language, ideas, and thoughts that differ from one's own. Johnson repeated Budd's citation of item 5 of the Public Comment Policy emphasizing the audience was within their rights because no one clapped while a speaker was speaking. She noted that Roberts

Rules of Order did not overrule the constitution and clapping between speakers was an expression of free speech protected under the First Amendment.

Old Business:

A. Strategic Planning Update: Markowski shared Strategic Plan Goal #3 Community Outreach and Marketing. The board discussed it and provided suggestions.

B. Library Card Policy: It was moved by Byrnes with support from Fulkerson to adopt the Library Card Policy with modifications.

Roll Call Vote:

Budd: Yes

Byrnes: Yes

Graham: Yes

Fulkerson: Yes

The motion passed.

It was moved by Graham with support from Fulkerson to recall the vote that was taken earlier to adopt the Library Card Policy. The motion to recall the vote passed.

It was moved by Graham with support from Byrnes to adopt the Library Card Policy with the addition of charging out of district educators that teach within Alpena County (Alpena Community College, Alpena Public Schools, Alpena Private Schools) the semi-annual rate of \$28.00. The motion passed.

Committee Reports: Budd, on behalf of the Personnel Committee, stated they met on April 17, 2026 and reviewed notes from the Personnel/Policy Meeting Minutes. Budd noted the Gift Acceptance Committee (GAC) met on May 1, 2026 and Graham, on behalf of GAC, discussed the trifold brochure Collins worked on with the Community Foundation to promote the ability for the community to give to the library using QR codes.

It was moved by Graham with support from Byrnes to approve the trifold brochure for donations for the library from the community. The motion passed.

New Business:

A. Cook Endowment Request: It was moved by Graham with support from Byrnes to authorize the release of the Cook Endowment Fund for \$3,000 to cover the Alpena News microfilming expenses for 2024.

Roll Call Vote:

Budd: Yes

Byrnes: Yes

Graham: Yes

Fulkerson: Yes

The motion passed.

B. Social Media Policy 1st Review: Markowski recommended the existing social media policy for library employees be updated to include a social media policy for patrons. The board discussed the Social Media Policy and provided suggestions.

C. Director Evaluation Process: Budd noted the board would use the formal director evaluation process to provide feedback to the director and the director would adapt the process to provide feedback to the staff. Markowski collaborated with Brian Mortimore who modeled the process on the Kent County Public Library and Mortimore recommended Markowski request a closed session. The board required more time to determine what date would work best for the closed session.

D. Board Comment: Fulkerson stated books were not going to be removed but the controversy was about where books should be located in the library. He described DEI as politically polarizing and preventing others from voicing their thoughts or disagreeing. Fulkerson noted Robert's Rules of Order kept civil discourse and he was unsure what alternative would work better. He stated the reconsideration procedure to bypass the director allowed patrons the opportunity to go to the board for input and he recommended board members should have emails to communicate with the public.

Budd encouraged the public to watch recorded board meetings on Youtube to get the facts. He noted the community needed to work together to pass the millage in the next 8 years and a goal of the library was to provide access to resources to stay relevant for the community. Budd repeated the board was not going to remove books and was open to having conversations which was part of the reasoning behind creating the second public comment. He acknowledged item 5 of the Public Comment Policy discouraged disruptive behavior while a speaker was speaking but the audience could correctly interpret it to mean it did not pertain to the time in between speakers. He suggested the other board members consider changing the wording of the Public Comment Policy to prevent chaos and ensure speakers were able to voice their thoughts without being restricted.

Graham stated she could better understand the wants of the community by listening to their feedback as long as the feedback did not occur while speakers were speaking.

Public Comment: Stephanie Collman, Alpena, shared libraries offered her learning and respite because she did not have a lot of money growing up. She expressed that even though others might not recognize her face or know her name she has supported the library for many years. Collman stressed the importance of every board member supporting the library and trying to get the millage passed in the future.

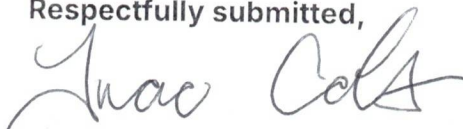
Yvonne Johnson, Alpena, thanked the board for their time and Budd for reviewing the Public Comment Policy. She noted the issue around clapping when the audience agrees with a speaker was settled law and protected by the Supreme Court as long as it does not disrupt the meeting. Johnson warned that not allowing the audience to clap in between speakers could be a violation of the First Amendment. She recommended clarifying in the Library Card Policy what Alpena schools would be included in regards to out of district educators as well as clarifying in the Social Media Policy under Patron Social Media Code of Conduct item 5 the type of campaigns.

Julie Gandulla, Alpena, noted there's a middle ground between not using DEI language at all and using DEI language too much. She suggested having the reconsideration procedure use a different library or two different librarians and a board member instead of the current option to bypass the director by going to the board. Gandulla stated people don't feel heard and thanked the board for their relevant feedback as well as for providing a second public comment.

Mark Hunter, Alpena, noted not allowing clapping could be a potential violation and stated the board members had probably not read Robert's Rules of Order. Hunter supported a formal library director evaluation recommending that the director's strengths and weaknesses be made available to the public using a formal statement similar to Alpena Community College.

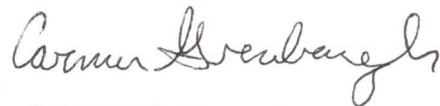
Adjournment: It was moved by Fulkerson with support from Byrnes to adjourn the meeting. Budd declared the meeting adjourned at 6:08 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Traci Collins

Secretary



Carmen Grubaugh

Recording Secretary