

**Kitchigami Regional Library System  
Special Board Meeting July 24, 2025, 6:00 p.m.  
Kitchigami Headquarters Building, Pine River, MN**

Board members present: Jeremy Engholm (Park Rapids), Lynn Eaton (Bemidji), George Deiss (Wadena), Tom Krueger (Hubbard Cty.), Brent Norman (Pine River), Scott Bruns (Cass Cty.), Neil Tobiason (Longville), Mary Koep (Brainerd), Donald Johnson (Blackduck, alt.)

Board members present virtually: Murlyn Kreklau (Wadena Cty.), Cecil Reams (Cass Lake)

Board members absent: Mary Beth Hansen (Walker), Jamie Lee (Crow Wing Cty.), Joe Gould (Beltrami Cty.)

Others present non-voting: Director Melissa Whatley, Admin Asst. Svetlana Lang, Valerie McCormic, Paul Riggins, Lorraine Briddon, Danni Rardin, Judy Schrupp, Muriel Erickson, Marla Sullivan, Nancy Huckstead, Karen Rubado, Melissa Dingman, Angie Flaten, Maren Kimbler, Faith Kimbler, Rhoda Jackson, Mary Beth Durham, Patty Durham, Terria Rohloff, Marie McNamara, Carol Christensen, Joan Heinrich, Sue Oliver, Kim Oliver, Kristi Kauffman, Allison Royce, Mary Shaffer, Dan Touchette, Tami Beto.

Chair Tom Krueger called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and requested participation in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Krueger described for the members of the public what would happen during the meeting. Director Whatley read the purpose of the meeting from the agenda:

The Kitchigami Regional Library Board will go into closed session during the meeting on July 24, scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m., as permitted by Minnesota Statute § 13D.05, subdivision 2 (b) for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority.

**Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Jeremy Engholm, to move the board meeting into a closed session at 6:01 p.m.** Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, George Deiss, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Neil Tobiason, Mary Koep, Donald Johnson; via Zoom – Murlyn Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

6:02 p.m. -- Dan Touchette joined the meeting via Zoom.

6:03 p.m. -- The members of the public were asked to leave the meeting room.

6:04 p.m. -- Murlyn Kreklau signed out of the public Zoom meeting.

6:05 p.m. – Murlyn Kreklau and Cecil Reams joined the closed session via Zoom.

7:21 p.m. – Closed session was ended, and members of the public were invited to return to the open session of the meeting.

**Motion by Brent Norman, seconded by Jeremy Engholm to end the closed session and re-open the public session of the meeting at 7:22 p.m.** Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, George Deiss, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Neil Tobiason, Mary Koep, Donald Johnson; via Zoom – Cecil Reams, Murlyn Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Input

Carol Christensen, Pine River Library Branch Manager, read a statement to the KRLS board.

**Summary:** The Board feels they need to respect the recommendation of the KRLS-hired attorney to avoid potential litigation. They need to have distinct grounds to make a dismissal, and when their attorney has said discipline was not warranted, the board feels they cannot make a dismissal. Director Whatley had put together a performance improvement plan. She will document weekly meetings and report these to the personnel committee, who will review and make decisions going forward from there. There are several policy items that will be worked on. 1) A weapons policy. 2) A staff vehicle policy regarding the KRLS -owned staff vehicle and its permissible and non-permissible use. 3) A policy regarding paid / unpaid administrative leave. 4) If the director has future need to hire an attorney, they will need to have board approval to do so. The board asked Director Whatley to be strict in following policy. If employees do not follow policy, the director will have full board support to discipline, as needed.

**Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Donald Johnson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m.**

Yes: In-person -- Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, George Deiss, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Neil Tobiason, Mary Koep, Donald Johnson; via Zoom -- Cecil Reams, Murlyn Kreklau. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Svetlana Maria Lang.

Minutes signed by Board Secretary Brent Norman



Date

9-18-25