

**Kitchigami Regional Library System
Board Meeting, November 20, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Kitchigami Headquarters Building, Pine River, MN**

Board members present: Jamie Lee (Crow Wing Co.), Jeremy Engholm (Park Rapids), Lynn Eaton (Bemidji), Tom Krueger (Hubbard Co.), Brent Norman (Pine River), Scott Bruns (Cass Co.), Mary Koep (Brainerd), Murlyn Kreklau (Wadena), Neil Tobiason (Longville), George Deiss (Wadena)

Board members present by interactive technology: Cecil Reams (Cass Lake), Joe Gould (Beltrami Cty.)

Board members absent: Donald Johnson (Blackduck, alt.), Jerecho Worth (Walker, alt.)

Others present, non-voting: In-Person: KRLS Director Melissa Whatley, Admin Asst. Svetlana Lang, Judy Schrupp, Allison Royce, Melissa Dingman, Sherilyn Warren, Barb Mann, Hallie Pond, Members of the Public (approx. 12).

Interactive Technology: Tami Beto (HQ Tech Manager), Dan Touchette, Alison Edgerton, Patricia Miller, Thyra, Dee, Amy, Sue O Br, Jim Mayne, TJ Rhodes (BJ Pioneer), Val

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

KRLS Oath of Office None.

Approval of Agenda Chair Krueger presented several changes to the agenda:

- Item 10.a – KRLS/AFSCME 2026-2028 Contract was struck from the agenda and will be addressed at a special meeting in December 2025, date to be decided.
- Item 10.c.iv – MN Paid Family Medical Leave will be addressed at a special meeting in December 2025, date to be decided.
- Item 10.d – 2026 Updated Wage Scale Approval was struck from the November 20, 2025, agenda.
- Item 10.j – City of Wadena Capital Appropriation Request was added to the November 20, 2025, agenda.

Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Jeremy Engholm, to approve the agenda as amended. Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss, Mary Koep; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Public Input Five members of the public spoke to the board: Sherilyn Warren, Bemidji Public Library Branch Manager and KRLS NW Regional Manager, spoke; Allison Royce, KRLS Regional Programs Coordinator, spoke and

Public Input (cont.)

presented documents to be added to the record; Barb Mann, Pine River patron, spoke; Allison Daily, Pine River resident, read a statement.

Closed Sessions:

- Director Evaluation
- Review HR Information
- Union Negotiation Updates

Motion by George Deiss, seconded by Jamie Lee, to move the meeting into closed session at 6:18 p.m. Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Mary Koep, Scott Bruns, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Brent Norman, to re-open the meeting at 7:28 p.m. Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Mary Koep, Scott Bruns, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Krueger gave a summary of the closed session discussion – Evaluation for Director Melissa Whatley was 3.38 out of 5. A special meeting to take place in a closed session was discussed for setting the 2026 wage scale and discussing the KRLS/AFSCME union contract.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Jeremy Engholm, to approve the consent agenda Items A-E.

- a. **Minutes: September 18, 2025**
- b. **Bills: September – October, 2025**
- c. **Financial Statements: 2025 YTD**
- d. **Legacy / ACHF FY24 & FY25 Financial Reporting Form**
- e. **Director’s Report and Circulation Statistics**

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Old Business --

2026 City County Budget Responses

Director Whatley gave an overview of the responses she had received to the 2026 KRLS budget requests, most of them positive. There will be discussions regarding what could be done to meet the MOE and levy amounts.

New Business --

AFSCME Notice of Intent to Negotiate

Chair Krueger called for a special meeting on 12/18/2025 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the KRLS/AFSCME union contract negotiations and the 2026 wage scale. He noted that board members can attend virtually provided one member attends in-person.

Bank Authority Updates

Director Whatley explained the need for updating the staff members with signing authority on the KRLS bank accounts. George Deiss also noted that his term as treasurer would expire at the end of 2025 and

that a treasurer pro tem would be needed before the board could appoint a new treasurer at the 01/15/2026 meeting. This will be discussed at the 12/18/2025 meeting.

Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by George Deiss, to approve updating the signing authority on KRLS Bank Accounts.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Policy Updates & Drafts

Director Whatley presented policy updates and answered board members' questions regarding details. Policies discussed were:

- i. Visitors in the Workplace
- ii. Travel & Vehicle Use
- iii. Materials Use & Fees
- iv. MN Paid Family Medical Leave - This will be discussed at the 12/18/2025 meeting.

2026 Updated Wage Scale Approval

Struck from the agenda.

CD Renewal Confirmation

Motion by Jeremy Engholm, seconded by Scott Bruns, that the board accept the CD renewal decision of the Board Chair & Treasurer.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Network and Hardware Upgrade Projects

A member of the public, Hallie Pond, interrupted the meeting with a question. After several board members answered the question, the meeting proceeded.

Motion by George Deiss, seconded by Murlyn Kreklau, to approve the release of funds to complete network and hardware upgrade projects.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Herreid & Assoc. Workplace Assessment Proposal

Director Whatley described the workplace assessment Herreid & Associates would do, using interviews and feedback from the staff, making recommendations, and implementing a plan to improve the workplace for KRLS employees.

A member of the public, Hallie Pond, interrupted the meeting again and asked to be considered as a consultant, as well. She was told she could submit a proposal, but there was no certainty of being hired.

Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Scott Bruns, to hire Herreid & Associates as a consultant to perform a Cultural Assessment, Option 2.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams. No: Brent Norman, Neil Tobiason; virtually – Joe Gould. **Motion carried.**

- 2026 HQ/Regional Budgeting Requests
 - i. EAP Benefit for Employees
 - ii. HQ Facility Security Updates

Director Whatley informed the board of two items that she will be requesting the budget committee add to the 2026 budget: an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) Benefit and security system updates for the HQ building. Chair Krueger suggested tabling this until the December meeting when more information is available.

- 2025 Audit CLA Statement of Work

Motion by George Deiss, seconded by Jeremy Engholm, that the Board approve the required signatures for the 2025 Statement of Work from CliftonLarsonAllen for the 2025 Audit.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. George Deiss abstained. **Motion carried.**

- Wadena Capital Appropriation Request

Motion by Jeremy Engholm, seconded by Lynn Eaton, that the Board approve the release of remaining funds from the Capital Appropriation Reserve to the City of Wadena for capital improvements to the Wadena City Library's HVAC system.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams. Joe Gould abstained. **Motion carried.**

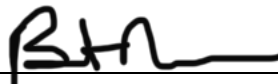
Chair Krueger thanked Treasurer George Deiss for his service of nine years on the Board.

Motion by Lynn Eaton, seconded by Jeremy Engholm, to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

Roll call vote was taken. Yes: In-person -- Jamie Lee, Jeremy Engholm, Lynn Eaton, Tom Krueger, Brent Norman, Scott Bruns, Mary Koep, Murlyn Kreklau, Neil Tobiason, George Deiss; virtually – Cecil Reams, Joe Gould. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Svetlana Maria Lang.

Minutes signed by Board Secretary Brent Norman



Date

