

**Northern Lights Library Network
Governing Board Meeting
June 20, 2026
Minnesota State University Moorhead
Comstock Memorial Union
and Online**

NLLN Officers:

- President: Joe Gould
- Vice President: Chizuko Shastri
- Treasurer: Karen Qualey
- Secretary: Christine Ayala-Zierke

Present:

- Kathy Enger, Executive Director, NLLN
- Joe Gould, President, Kitchigami Regional Library (KRLS) Representative
- Chizuko Shastri, Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) Representative
- Karen Qualey, Academic Library Representative
- Bethany Hait, Public Library Representative
- Glenn Heinecke, School Library Alternate
- Linda Schell, LARL Alternate
- Sandra Melby, Northwest Regional Library Representative
- Kayla Kami-Decker, Special Library Representative
- Hailey Kreft, Viking Library System Representative
- Jacquie Peebles, Public Library Alternate
- Candice Wachter, Custom Transformations
- Aleta Sanford, Minute-taker

Absent:

- Christine Ayala-Zierke, School Library Representative
- Cheryl Matzke, Northwest Regional Library System Alternate
- Nanette Albright, Viking Library System Alternate
- Keri Youngstrand, Academic Library Alternate

1. Call to Order.
 - a. 10:01 A.M.
2. Oath of Office. A warm welcome to Linda Schell and Sandra Melby.
 - a. Linda and Sandra signed the oath of office.
3. Election of Officers. Joe Gould, President; Chizuko Shastri, Vice President; Karen Qualey, Treasurer; Christine Ayala-Zierke, Secretary.
 - a. Motion to elect officers:

- i. Kayla, Chizuko MCU
- 4. Approve Agenda, Minutes, Financial Reports.
 - a. Motion to approve agenda:
 - i. Bethany, Karen MCU
 - b. Motion to approve minutes:
 - i. Karen, Kayla MCU
 - c. Financial reports:
 - i. NLLN will likely have some money to put into reserves at the end of the fiscal year. The final amount will be known after the audit is completed in August.
 - ii. NLLN has a healthy reserve that will enable the organization to operate for one year. The guideline for how much non-profits should keep in reserves is increasing. NLLN's reserves are sufficient.
 - iii. Motion to approve financial reports:
 - 1. Chizuko, Kayla MCU
- 5. Executive Director Annual Review. Candice Wachter Presentation.
 - a. Kathy left the room and Candice reviewed the annual review process with the board. The board asked Candice questions about how to increase the participation rate next year, since only four board members submitted the survey this year.
 - b. Motion to approve the annual review and a 2.5% increase to the Director's salary:
 - i. Karen, Chizuko MCU
 - c. Kathy returns and strategies for next year's annual review are discussed. Namely, Candice may be needed to act as a third-party data collector to increase participation in the survey and providing board members with time during a board meeting to complete the survey (approximately 20 minutes and questions will be shared beforehand to allow time to prepare). Kathy will introduce the review questions at the March 2027 board meeting for consideration and the review will be due in June.
- 6. Review and approve the following for Fiscal Year 2027:
 - a. Minnesota State Operating Grant MCMT Aid Application.
 - b. FY2027 NLLN Governing Board Meetings.
 - c. Note: Meeting Dates FY 2027: September, December, March, June.
 - d. NLLN/MSUM Lease.
 - i. Materials on these items were provided to board members ahead of the meeting. The lease increased by a modest amount, but MSUM will now cover phone and internet access.
 - ii. The June board meeting date may be adjusted to the following Saturday, as the currently scheduled date falls on the Juneteenth holiday.
 - iii. Motion to approve the FY2027 items:
 - 1. Kayla, Chizuko MCU

7. Review and approve FY2027 NLLN Budget and MCMT MDE FY2026 Budget.
 - a. The NLLN budget is similar to the prior year, except for the 2.5% increase to the Director's salary and the elimination of staff wages. The next Director may wish to hire an employee, perhaps to coordinate programs and services, but Kathy does not intend to do so at this time. As a result of outsourcing bookkeeping, accounting costs have increased, along with some other associated line items.
 - b. NLLN would like to provide additional support to Native American libraries in the region. Board members may bring forward ideas for how to do that.
 - c. The NLLN budget will be submitted to MCMT MDE once approved by the board.
 - d. Motion to approve the budget:
 - i. Sandra, Bethany MCU
8. Approve Strategic Plan Draft.
 - a. Board members received a copy of the survey questions Kathy plans to distribute to collect the quantitative data for the strategic plan. She has analyzed the qualitative data the board submitted and used a phenomenological approach to develop the survey questions. NLLN must submit a strategic plan to the state every five years.
 - b. Motion to approve the Strategic Plan draft:
 - i. Karen, Kayla MCU
9. Old Business.
 - a. Policy Updates.
 - b. MCMT Tuition Support.
 - i. The \$1 million set aside by the legislature to support the education of future media specialists is now being used to pay nine students' tuition at St. Cloud State University. Thus far, \$24,000 has been expended.
10. New Business.
 - a. NLLN Life Achievement Awards. Lina Belar and Charlie Lindberg.
 - i. Neither Lina nor Charlie were able to attend the meeting, but Kathy has spoken with both and presented engraved items to each along to celebrate their extraordinary service to libraries in the NLLN region.
 - ii. The text of each award is in the Director's Report.
 - b. Metro Surge Discussion. Bethany Hait.
 - i. The board discussed the role of libraries during this time of heightened immigration enforcement and what resources could be provided to library patrons to support and protect their communities.
 - ii. NLLN will contact a legal firm for guidance in developing materials and resources that can be shared with all libraries in the NLLN region that they can then share with their patrons if they so choose. The materials will also be made available on the NLLN website.

c. Reports from the Region.

- i. Chizuko: the Crookston Library started a learning lab for homeschooled students and their families, along with other community members. It includes materials and hands-on modules on electrical circuits, critical thinking, computer programming, and more. The summer reading program is ongoing. The new Moorhead Library opened in April and has seen a surge in patronage over the previous year. For example, 950 new library cards were issued in the first month the new building was open.
- ii. Linda: At the most recent LARL board meeting, they discussed how libraries are more utilized during difficult economic times and are a source for both resources and community. Many county commissioner and city council members are not planning to run for re-election, and many of those not planning to run again have been super supporters of libraries. Please be conscious of how you vote this year and where each candidate stands on libraries.
- iii. Karen: MSUM has been working on their five-year vision plan and having lots of AI literacy conversations. The university is also working on an Open Pedagogy initiative to provide students with ways to learn outside of the classroom. For example, they have purchased Coursera for students to take self-paced courses on many topics. They are also working on an academic innovation center or lab on the second floor of the library to have hands-on learning opportunities for things like AI, AR/VR, 3-D printing, and robotics. Karen is currently writing some grants for that.
- iv. Bethany: TRF's summer reading program currently has about 150 kids signed up. They recently had a beekeeper come present to the children, as the reading theme is "Plant a Seed, Read." Next week, Conductor Jack is hosting a dance party. The Pennington County Fair is next month, and the library will be in the parade and have a booth for one of the days at the fair.
- v. Sandra: The NWRL board has come a long way in the last year. They have recently opened a link site in Middle River, which has already become very important in the community.
- vi. Joe: Bemidji and Blackduck libraries are ramping up their summer reading program. The Blackduck library is expanding their building to add more quiet spaces for reading or music lessons. Recently, the Kitchigami board decided to let two employees go for misconduct. They currently have an interim director until a new director is hired. The Pine River headquarters location is selling some land to a housing development. The system is struggling with the 40% budget cut and has eliminated 2.5 positions and are unable to operate on the weekends. Many positions that are up for re-

election are running unopposed. However, there will be an opposition candidate against the county commissioner who approved the 40% budget cut. She was motivated to become a candidate due to that budget cut and is very pro-library.

- vii. Kathy: Make sure you read the Director's Report for the NLLN updates. One upcoming event of note is the Electronic Library of Minnesota (ELM) Expo, which will be held on August 11, 2026. See the NLLN News page on the website for additional details: <https://nlln.org/nlln-news.html>

11. Adjourn: 12:14 P.M.

- a. Karen, Bethany MCU