

Columbia Heights Public Library

Library Board Report – January 2026

BUILDING

- Northland Refrigeration maintained building and snowmelt boilers throughout the month despite numerous malfunctions. New boilers will be installed at the end of the heating season.
- The fire alarm system panel began to randomly alarm at the end of the month.

TECHNOLOGY

- Software updates were made to the Bibliotheca self-check kiosks.
- A new keyboard was installed for public computer #6.
- An upgrade to the Sirsi-Dynix integrated library system software was installed.
- Five staff desktop computers were replaced with laptops and docking stations.
- The cost of printing black and white documents increased to \$0.20 per page. The cost for copying should have increased too but took additional time to implement.

COLLECTION

- New books were selected from reviews in the July, August, September or October issues of *Booklist*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*. Standing orders and other items not received in 2025 were reordered. Youth requests and replacements included additional books from the *Pig the Pug* series, a book by local Minneapolis author Trung Le Nguyen *Angelica and the Bear Prince*, additional manga titles in the immensely popular *Blue Lock* series, and books from a variety of “Best of 2025” lists.
- Weeding started in adult mysteries, continued in youth picture books, and was completed in adult audiobooks.
- Adult displays featured “short reads for short days,” books by Palestinian authors or about Palestine, international and world language films, job seeking books, and exercise or strength training books. Youth displays highlighted science fiction books and immigrant stories

PROGRAMS AND SELF-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES	DATE	AUDIENCE	ATTENDANCE
English Language Conversation Circle	1/3	Adult	4
Community Craft Night	1/5	Adult	0
EL Conversation Circle	1/5	Adult	4
EL Conversation Circle	1/7	Adult	5
Daycare Storytime	1/9	Children (0-5)	15
EL Conversation Circle	1/10	Adult	3
EL Conversation Circle	1/12	Adult	5
Tinker Time: Watercolor Winter Forest	1/13	Children (6-11)	18
EL Conversation Circle	1/14	Adult	3
Mayor’s Book Club: <i>The Power of Bridging</i>	1/14	Adult	7
Active Agers Book Club: <i>Saturday Night at the Lakeside Supper Club</i> (Murzyn Hall)	1/16	Adult	7
EL Conversation Circle	1/17	Adult	4
Library Book Club: <i>The Lager Queen of Minnesota</i>	1/21	Adult	9
EL Conversation Circle	1/21	Adult	2
Fulcrum Health: Pain Management with Chiropractic	1/22	Adult	0
EL Conversation Circle	1/24	Adult	3
EL Conversation Circle	1/26	Adult	3
EL Conversation Circle	1/28	Adult	3

Mayor's Book Club	1/28	Adult	6
EL Conversation Circle	1/31	Adult	3
Making Whisk Brooms with the Textile Center	1/31	Adult	12

STAFF

Elizabeth Ripley, Adult Services Librarian:

- Met with the Friends of the Library.
- Met with Sam Sleeman of Faith Community Nurse Network on health outreach possibilities for seniors in the community.
- Met with the MELSA adult programming interest group.
- Co-facilitated (with Mayor Amada Márquez Simula) a book club centered on the Bush Foundation book club, *The Power of Bridging* by John A. Powell.
- Began Winter Reads, a self-directed program for all ages, on January 5. Participants receive a card which is stamped/punched every time they visit the library, check out books, or attend a program. Once the card is completed, adults receive a bookmark or a MELSA-provided hat or earmuff. Adults can also enter a grand prize drawing. Youth participants receive a snowflake bookmark and sticker upon completion.
- Made four deliveries to At-Home patrons.

Renee Dougherty, Library Director:

- Attended regular meetings of city division heads, communications committee, library staff, the Anoka County Library Public Service team and the Minnesota Library Association Board of Directors.
- With HR Director Kelli Wick, I interviewed six finalists for the Library Supervisor position. Two were invited for a second interview.
- Met with the city manager about policy and procedures surrounding Immigrations and Customs enforcement activity within the library.
- Met with the ACL Director.
- Facilitated the adult book club discussion of *The Lager Queen of Minnesota* by J. Ryan Stradal.
- Participated in webinars on filing the 2025 Minnesota Public Library Annual Report and preparing for ICE enforcement within the library.
- Attended the retirement party for recreation director Keith Windschitl.
- Met with Youth Services Librarian Eliza Pope for her annual performance review.

Eliza Pope, Youth Services Librarian:

- Worked with staff at Valley View and Highland Elementary Schools to plan field trips to the library for kindergartners. Trips were cancelled because of weather and immigration and customs enforcement activity in the city. Both will be rescheduled later in the spring.

Matthias "Rin" Gorman, Library Supervisor, resigned his position.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Anoka County Law Librarian John Murphy held office hours on January 22.
- Numerous incidents resulted in calls for police assistance including
 - A physical fight in the lobby on January 7.
 - Shawn Pioske was trespassed from library on January 17 for creating a public nuisance (yelling, swearing, using xenophobic and racially charged language, spitting/coughing in

faces of library and police personnel.) He returned on January 17, and when reminded that he had been trespassed and needed to leave the building, started yelling about his first amendment rights being violated. He was arrested and removed a second time.

- Evidence of drug use was found in the men’s restroom.
- A citizen called about an individual wielding a machete or ax in the area, and police entered the library to search.
- Conversation Circle leaders noted a decrease in attendance, especially from Spanish speakers.
- Nine adult volunteers donated 29.25 hours. One teen volunteered for 2 hours.
- There were weather-related newspaper delivery issues.
- Immigrations Enforcement agents staged in the parking lot on January 10.

