

Bemidji library to cut staff, hours following County Board budget cuts

KAXE

Published March 20, 2026 at 2:07 PM CDT



Larissa Donovan

/

KAXE

The Bemidji Public Library on a sunny Sept. 10, 2025.

Bemidji Public Library will shift from being open six days a week to four, as well as reduce its staff by two employees.

BEMIDJI — The Bemidji Public Library is cutting its hours and reducing its staff following budget cuts from Beltrami County.

Effective March 30, the library will be open fewer hours and fewer days each week. The new hours will be 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday.

The library is also losing Children’s Librarian Michael Lyons and Outreach and Adult Programming Coordinator Kate Egelhof. Their last day will be Friday, March 27.

“These changes would not have occurred had the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners not cut the library’s budget by over 40% despite public outcry,” stated a library news release. “If you disapprove of this decision, please contact the [Board] and urge them to restore library funding.”

Last fall, [Beltrami County commissioners introduced](#) and ultimately adopted a budget with a significant reduction of its previous funding to the [Bemidji and Blackduck libraries](#).

In 2025, the Beltrami County Board budgeted more than \$437,000 for the Bemidji and Blackduck libraries, but for 2026, the board budgeted \$265,000 — which is the minimum maintenance of effort for local governments to contribute to regional libraries.

“The way that the funding is done is that the state Legislature mandates that every funding source fund a minimum level of funding in order to participate in the Minnesota Regional Library System,” explained Branch Manager Sherry Warren in a previous interview. “Those numbers were set in 2011 based on budget numbers from 2009.”

Since Blackduck already operates near the state’s minimum standard of at least 20 hours per week, most of the cuts are coming out of the Bemidji library.