

# Lac du Flambeau Public Library

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## INTRODUCTION

At its regular meeting on June 16, 2021, the Town Board split its vote (2 approve, 1 abstain) on a motion to approve a recommendation submitted by the chair of the public library board for Chris Mayer to serve on the library's Board of Directors ([Agenda](#), [Audio](#), [Minutes](#)). Town Board Supervisors, Gloria Cobb and Bob Hanson, asked that in the future the process for appointing members to the library board be clearly defined in writing and that pertinent information on candidates be shared with the Town Board.

As the title implies, [Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees](#), provides just about everything one needs to know about the operations of a public library in Wisconsin. Section 18 addresses library board appointments and composition.

## BACKGROUND

The origin of the Lac du Flambeau Public Library dates back to 1964, when Vilas County voted to join the Multi-County Library System. At the request of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, bookmobile service was established in Lac du Flambeau in January 1965. On March 1, 1967, the Town Board of Lac du Flambeau passed a resolution ([resolution & minutes](#)) establishing a Community Public Library for which several hundred books were provided by the Multi-County Library System ([Wisconsin Library Bulletin, July-August 1970, pages 201-202](#)).

On March 15, 1967, the Town Board approved members to the new Library Committee: William Plath, Robert Patterson, Frank Gauthier, Dorothy Stewart, and Miriam Guthrie ([Minutes](#)).

The [Town of Lac du Flambeau Comprehensive Plan](#), page 35, states that "The Ben Guthrie-Lac du Flambeau Public Library is owned and maintained by the Tribe...".

The library is governed by a five-member Board of Directors which includes one representative of the public school, two representatives of the Town Board, and two representatives of the Tribe. The library has a director who is employed by the Tribe.

The Public Library must function according to [Wisconsin Statutes, Chapter 43, Libraries](#).

The Lac du Flambeau Public Library is a member of [Northern Waters Library Service](#), a federated public library system which includes all 29 public libraries in eight participating counties, including Vilas County.

According to [libraries.org](#), the library has 16,640 volumes and an annual circulation of 9,827 transactions, and it serves 3,453 residents.

The Lac du Flambeau Town Board has been budgeting [\\$7,000 annually](#) to support the public library. The Tribal budget proposed for FY 2018 includes just over \$190,000 for the library.

## CHRONOLOGY 2011-2021

The following chronology documents Town Board activity related to the library since 2014. The "official" minutes are available through the town clerk's office.

**April 17, 2019.** The minutes of the Town Board meeting on April 17, 2019, include the following statement, italics added (Minutes).

*Discussion of funding request for Library presented by Jeanne M. Wolfe. Mr. Gaulke explained that the clerk had received some paperwork from Jeanne Wolfe from the Lac du Flambeau Library with regards to funding. At the time she presented the request she was unaware that this funding was already in place in the 2019 budget. This was in regards to the Northern Waters project. She also gave us an update on the project which is expected to be up and running by July 1, 2019.*

**April 16, 2019.** The following statements are in the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on April 16, 2019, italics added (Minutes).

*Various questions were asked regarding the vehicle repair costs and who does our repair, which is outside vendors, excess hauling fees which is because of the charge for metal, workman's comp expenses went down most likely due to lack of incidents, library cost up due to Northern Waters project, airport costs are based on equalized values.*

*Question regarding the funding request from the Minocqua Library. Mr. Gaulke stated this was brought up at the budget meeting and the funds available were designated to the Lac du Flambeau Library. Anyone is still able to use the Minocqua Library.*

**April 17, 2018.** When asked about the status of the joint meeting during the Lac du Flambeau Annual Electors' Town Meeting on April 17, 2018, the town chair said he would check ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#) 39:20-39:50), [Minutes](#)). [Note: as of October 2019, the topics of a joint meeting, as well as referendum noted below, remain unaddressed]

**January 11, 2018.** At its regular meeting on January 11, 2018, the Town Board discussed several issues related to the Lac du Flambeau Public Library, the Minocqua Public Library, and whether to have an advisory referendum this spring to learn the "opinion of the people" regarding a request from the Minocqua Public Library for funding. The Town Board's

representative on the Lac du Flambeau Library Board, Rob Milburn, said he will work with the Library Board to schedule a joint meeting soon to share information and discuss goals/objectives. ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#), [Minutes](#)). The [January 16, 2018, edition of the Lakeland Times](#) includes an article on the board meeting.

**December 6, 2017.** At the town board meeting on December 6, 2017, the board discussed a proposal by Town Board Supervisor Hanson to have an advisory referendum in spring 2018 enabling Lac du Flambeau residents to express themselves regarding a request by the Minocqua Public Library Board for funding ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#), [Minutes](#)). The December 12, 2017, edition of the [Lakeland Times](#) highlights details of the discussion. Minutes for the December 6, 2017 meeting include the following statement, italics added.

*Mr. Gaulke explained he received a request from Mr. Hanson regarding placing an advisory referendum on the April ballot regarding support for future funding for the Minocqua Library. Mr. Hanson presented the board with a draft of a resolution supporting that at the meeting today. Discussion was heard and with such short notice of receiving a copy of the resolution for a referendum Mr. Mayer is not ready today to make that decision. Mr. Mayer would like to see the library board and LDF tribe aware of the request. No action taken. Mr. Gaulke will place this on a future agenda.*

**November 16, 2017.** At the town's budget hearing on November 16, 2017, the town chair stated that Lac du Flambeau's budget for 2018 does not include funds to support the Minocqua Public Library ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#)).

**October 18, 2017.** At the town board meeting on October 18, 2017, the town board approved Al Bauman as the town board's representative on the public library board ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#), [Minutes](#)).

**October 17, 2017.** The Town Board held a budget workshop on October 17, 2017, to review a [draft budget for 2018](#). Mr. Roessel addressed the Town Board at the workshop indicating he was willing to work with the board on establishing a reasonable amount. The draft budget does not include funds for the Minocqua Public Library. ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#), [Minutes](#))

**September 15, 2017.** The [September 15, 2017 edition of the Lakeland Times](#) reports that Hank Roessel, President of the Minocqua Public Library Board, recently delivered a letter to town chair, Matt Gaulke, asking the Town of Lac du Flambeau to include \$32,174 in the town's 2018 budget to cover materials, resources, and services provided to Lac du Flambeau by the Minocqua Public Library. ([Copy of letter provided by Mr. Roessel](#))

**September 6, 2017.** The minutes of the Town Board meeting held on September 6, 2017 show the Town Board appointed Rob Milburn and Sandy Gauthier to represent the town on the Lac du Flambeau Library Board as member and alternate member respectively ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#), [Minutes](#)). Italics added.

*Request from the Lac du Flambeau Library board to appoint Robert Milburn as a member of the Library board and Sandy Gauthier as an alternate as town representatives. Motion by Mr. Mayer seconded by Mr. Hanson to approve Robert Milburn as a member and Sandy Gauthier as an alternate member on the Library board. Motion Carried.*

**August 18, 2017.** The August 18, 2017 [edition](#) of the Lakeland Times includes information on the Minocqua Public Library Board's intention to meet with the Lac du Flambeau Town Board regarding the funding request.

**July 19, 2017.** The [agenda](#) for the regular Town Board meeting of July 19, 2017, includes "discussion/action" regarding the appointment of Robert Milburn to the Library Board. The minutes for the meeting include the following statement. Italics added.

*This item is being tabled today due to the fact that the new Librarian is publishing ads in the paper for new members. She asked that we table this item until she is able to get back to the board. ([Agenda](#), [Minutes](#), [Audio Recording](#))*

**June 21, 2017.** [Minutes](#) At the regularly scheduled Lac du Flambeau Town Board meeting on June 21, 2017, the President of the Minocqua Library Board of Trustees, Mr. Hank Roessel, addressed the Town Board, highlighting the extent to which Lac du Flambeau residents use the [Minocqua Public Library](#) and asking the Town Board to help fund the library. Following discussion of the request as well as the needs of the [Lac du Flambeau Public Library](#), the Town Board decided to revisit the request later, likely when preparing its 2018 budget. ([Agenda](#), [Audio Recording](#), [Minutes](#)). Minutes for the meeting held on June 21, 2017, include the following statement. Italics added.

*Mr. Roessell President of the Minocqua Library Board of Trustees asked to be on the agenda today. Mr. Roessell stated that Lac du Flambeau residents use the library and borrowed 15,560 items in 2016, therefore they are looking for library funding. The town of Lac du Flambeau does have a library and the town does provide the Lac du Flambeau library financial support. Mr. Mayer stated by statute we have the responsibility to support the Lac du Flambeau Library, so do we take away from the funding we have for the Lac du Flambeau Library or find a new source of funding. Mr. Roessell stated the town would probably seek new funding. Mr. Mayer stated if anything would be done he would like to see the Lac du Flambeau library expand. Mr. Hanson suggested perhaps working with the tribe grants could be applied for. The amount of funding the Minocqua Library Board is looking for is unknown at this time. The Minocqua Library board will provide additional information and bring it back to the board if needed. Mr. Mayer stated he feels that the tribal government should also be a part of the discussion. Mr. Gaulke stated we will revisit this item at budget time. No action taken.*

**April 1, 2015.** The Town Board held a regular meeting on April 1, 2015, when the town clerk asked the board to adjust the budget. [Minutes](#) of the meeting include the following statement referencing the library, italics added.

*Clerk Edwards asked for the board's approval to adjust several budget line items to prepare the budget for presentation for the upcoming Town Meeting. Request to move*

*\$1000 from zoning expense line to Cemetery*

*\$2000 from Lake Grant line to Cemetery*

*\$13000 from road labor line to Contract plowing*

*\$1600 from library line to \$1200 Legal line and \$400 to Health Ins. Line*

*Motion by Mrs. Schwanebeck seconded by Mr. Hoover to approve the line item adjustments. Motion carried.*

**November 20, 2014.** The Town Board held a public budget hearing on November 20, 2014, during which a question was asked about the library. [Minutes](#) for the meeting include the following statement, italics added.

*Mrs. Welch asked about the budget item and figures relating to the Library line item. The library has not used the budget amount as of yet and what happens to that. Mr. Gaulke explained they will still be turning in bills and they usually do use the full budget amount.*

**September 21, 2011.** The following statement is from the minutes of the Town Board meeting held on September 21, 2011, italics added.

*Vilas County Board-Tribal Concerns Committee Meeting: The next Vilas County Board-Tribal Concerns Committee meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2011 at the Vilas County Highway Department Office. One of the agenda items is the problem with truck traffic on County D in downtown LdF., especially in the area of the new tribal police building Chairman Gaulke explained the several possible solutions that are being considered. Motion by Mrs. Schwanebeck seconded by Mr. Gaulke to advise the committee that the town would prefer the removal of the parking spaces by the police station and library and strongly recommends this option as the most cost effective. Motion carried. Supervisor Christensen will attend the meeting to convey the town's preference.*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Origin of Wisconsin's Public Library Law.](#) The Library Heritage Center has stated that,

"Wisconsin's original public library law was introduced as Assembly Bill no. 87, 1872 on January 26, 1872 by Assemblyman Alexander Graham of Janesville, Wisconsin. It was approved by the Governor on March 22, 1872. The Graham Bill was remarkably similar to a bill introduced in the Illinois Legislature on March 23, 1871 and signed into law on March 7, 1872. So similar, in fact, that there is little doubt that Wisconsin's public library law was based on the one in Illinois. A key provision is almost identical: 'Every library and reading-room established under this act, shall be forever free to the use of the inhabitants of the city or village where located, always subject to such reasonable rules and regulations as the library board may find necessary to adopt and publish ...'."

The [Digital Public Library of America](#) provides much information about public libraries, including a history of public libraries. The following text is a sample of the information for the early origins of public libraries ([History of US Public Libraries](#)).

"Benjamin Franklin also played a role in the development of the first lending library. In 1790, Franklin donated a collection of books to a Massachusetts town that named itself after him. Though the town asked Franklin to donate a bell, he determined that "sense"

was more important than "sound." Franklin residents voted for those donated books to be freely available for town members, creating the nation's first public library."

At a meeting of the [Wisconsin State Legislature Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations](#) on October 16, 2014, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction distributed a document stating, in part: "The treatment of public libraries in state statutes has posed problems for public libraries operated by tribes in Wisconsin. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has worked with a number of tribes to try to create ways for public libraries operated by a tribe to be in compliance with state statutes." [Public Libraries: Issues and Background for the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations, October 16, 2014.](#)

[Northern Waters Library Service.](#) "Northern Waters Library Service (NWLS) is a joint agency of Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, Vilas, and Washburn Counties. It is a federated public library system which includes as members all 29 public libraries in the eight participating counties. Collectively NWLS and its member libraries provide public library service to the 155,000 residents of the eight-county area." Information regarding the Lac du Flambeau Public Library is noted in various locations on the NWLS website, including several references to the Lac du Flambeau Public Library in the [minutes of the organization's meetings.](#)

[Northern Waters Library Service: 2015 Statistics & 2017 Budget Planning.](#) The NWLS Status Report is compiled annually using data from each library's annual report, including data submitted by Lac du Flambeau.

The [Vilas County Library Service Plan, 2017-2022 \(Draft\)](#) includes information such as the history of library development and planning in Vilas County, library governance, and the future of public libraries in the county. The document also includes data for the Lac du Flambeau Public Library and the other libraries in the county on topics like funding, collection size, circulation, program attendance and staffing.

As the title implies, [Trustee Essentials: A Handbook for Wisconsin Public Library Trustees,](#) provides just about everything one needs to know about the operations of a public library in Wisconsin.