LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Matthew Anderson, Victoria Cox, Bruce Kessel, Bridget Murray, Roberta Weltzin, Susan Wolsfeld

LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:
David Norrgard

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:
Alice-Jo Carlson, Library Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Laura Johnson, Communication and Programming Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:
Jan Parker Wiessner, Ramsey County Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER:
Cox called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at the Ramsey County Library in Arden Hills, 1941 West County Road E-2.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Anderson made a motion to approve the Library Board minutes of January 21, 2004 as amended to reflect that Cox moved the resolution regarding Decision Resources Ltd., and to approve the Strategic Plan workshop notes of February 10, 2004, as mailed. Wolsfeld seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:
Carlson’s written report for February 2004 was mailed to the Library Board prior to the meeting.

MELSA REPORT:
There was no MELSA report due to the late arrival of Commissioner Wiessner.

METRONET REPORT:
Lynn Wyman, Library Manager, submitted the Metronet Governing Board report.
- The Minnesota Library Council continues to focus on the hiring process for the Minnesota director of Education Support—the state librarian position. The most recent job posting for the position has been extended for an additional two weeks.
- Sue Hall of the Milestone Group met with the Metronet Board to present a summary report on Metronet’s Strategic Planning process and a draft of the 2004-2006 Strategic Plan. Metronet will seek member input on the plan before it comes back to the board for a final vote. The plan includes new mission and vision statements and five major goals.
- The Exemplary Librarians DVD has been completed and is being distributed to libraries and schools. One copy will be added to the collection of the Ramsey County Library in Roseville.
- Work is proceeding on the update to the original School Media Census.
- Library Legislative Day was February 11-12. The four topics in the legislative platform developed by the Minnesota Library Association (MLA) and the Minnesota Education Media Organization (MEMO) are public library facilities; library and school telecommunications; the state library agency; and school media specialists.
The Metronet Board met in executive session to review Susan Baxter’s performance appraisal and 2004 compensation.

FRIENDS OF THE SUBURBAN RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:
Murray reported that the Friends February meeting primarily discussed the recent E.M. Pearson Foundation grant of $300,000, and potential uses for the funding. Book store volunteers were also recognized with a letter of appreciation and a punch card good for items in the Friends’ used book store.

RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARY FOUNDATION REPORT:
Kessel indicated that the Foundation has not met since the last Library Board meeting. The Foundation’s Annual Meeting will be held March 16, 2004, in the home of Foundation member Melanie Mogg.

FACILITIES PLANNING UPDATE:
Carlson met with Ramsey County Property Manager Jolly Mangine to develop a draft project budget and project schedule for the capital projects in North St. Paul, Maplewood and Roseville. The Maplewood and Roseville budgets and schedules will be incorporated into a Request for Board Action to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners on March 9, 2004, to issue bonds for those library projects.

Carlson noted that the draft project budget developed by Mangine is slightly less than the cost estimates provided by Perkins & Will, the architects retained by the Library. Mangine’s proposed decreases were in the area of professional services.

Anderson asked whether attorney services were included in the budgets, since considerable attorney time may be required for the land acquisition via eminent domain in Roseville. Anderson reiterated his concern that the appraised value of the land does not reflect the land trust presently in effect, which should significantly decrease the value of the land, as development is currently prohibited.

Wolsfeld questioned the apparent lack of a contingency budget for the Maplewood project. Carlson will work with Mangine to ensure that attorney services and a contingency budget for Maplewood are both included in the amounts approved by the County Board for the Library’s capital projects.

REQUEST TO ISSUE BONDS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS:
Anderson made a motion to authorize the Library Director to submit a request to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners to issue bonds in the amount of $9,711,500 to fund the design, construction, and technology of the expansion and remodeling at the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, and for the land acquisition and design fees for the expansion and remodeling at the Ramsey County Library in Roseville, subject to increases for attorney’s fees and a contingency budget for Maplewood if necessary. Wolsfeld seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Library Board.

LAND ACQUISITION FOR EXPANSION OF THE LIBRARY IN ROSEVILLE:
Carlson worked with Ramsey County Property Management Director Jolly Mangine to develop a draft project budget and timeline for the design and land acquisition of the library in Roseville. The schedule delineates land acquisition beginning in March, with a completion date of October 2004. In order to provide for a smooth and timely process, Mangine requested that the Library Director be authorized by the Library Board to be able to take steps necessary to acquire the land. The Library Director would then work with Ramsey County Property Management and the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office on the land acquisition process with regular reports to the Library Board.

Anderson made a motion to authorize the Library Director to take any and all steps necessary for land acquisition of the property north of the library in Roseville for the library expansion, with the frequent and timely communication by the Library Director to the Library Board. Wolsfeld seconded the motion.

After the Library Board discussed whether a dollar limit should be included in the motion, Anderson suggested amending his motion to read, “…up to the maximum appraised value of the property.” Cox indicated that Carlson and the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office are aware of the Library Board’s
concerns regarding the impact of the land trust on the property’s value, and of the budget available for the land acquisition. With these factors in mind, and the frequent and timely communication provision already in the motion, the Board’s concerns should be adequately addressed. Anderson agreed to withdraw his amendment, and the original motion was approved unanimously.

HOURLY USAGE PATTERNS FOR RCL-ARDEN HILLS:
At the January Library Board meeting, the Board asked to review the hourly traffic patterns based on circulation at the Ramsey County Library in Arden Hills. Carlson worked with Chuck Wettergren, Automation Manager, to use the statistics from Horizon, the Library’s online system, to track the hourly business at Arden Hills for the month of January.

The Library Board discussed the traffic patterns for January, noting that Saturdays are the most consistently busy day of the week. Wiessner requested that the information be prepared for all six libraries in suburban Ramsey County, for comparative purposes. Carlson will ask Wettergren to prepare the requested information, which will be included with the monthly statistics provided to the Library Board.

STRATEGIC PLAN WORKSHOP FOLLOWUP:
Kessel contacted Bruce Miles of Big River Consulting Group in St. Cloud, who quoted a price of $1,500 to help the Library Board develop a new strategic plan. Public meetings would incur additional expense. Kessel did not question Miles about donating his time to the Library as a non-profit organization.

Wiessner recommended Sue Hall of the Milestone Group, currently working with Metronet, or Jill Goski in the Ramsey County Human Resources Department.

The Library Board members discussed the need for a facilitator, particularly for any public meetings. The Board agreed to meet one more time in March without a facilitator, then consider bringing the facilitator in for meetings with the staff and public. The Board also debated the value of public meetings or focus groups, with some expressing concern that focus groups do not represent a random sample of the community, or negative public perception if recommendations of the focus group are not implemented. The Board members also expressed concern about whether there would be adequate public interest and attendance to justify holding a public meeting solely for that purpose. Anderson suggested that the focus group be comprised of representatives from local government, city councils, library support organizations, etc. Wolsfeld suggested that a mailed survey would be more effective and likely to have a higher response rate.

Carlson will contact the consultants previously suggested to determine their costs and availability, and report to the Library Board members with the results before the next steps are determined.

EVALUATION OF MARKETING STRATEGIES:
Laura Johnson, Communication and Programming Manager, submitted an evaluation of the marketing strategies and programming for 2003, based on the Marketing Plan prepared last spring. The report evaluated three key components for 2003:

- The six goals identified in the Marketing Plan (based on the Strategic Plan);
- The implementation timeline for 2003 and 2004;
- The programming goals and objectives.

The Library Board discussed the merchandise program, which included the opening of the ExpLORE Store at the library in Roseville in September 2003. The primary objective of using the merchandise as a marketing tool has been successful, and costs have been recouped, but revenues from merchandise sales did not meet the 2003 target of $10,000 net profit. Johnson suggested that the merchandise program be continued through 2004, with a comprehensive evaluation early next year.

The Board also discussed the newsletter costs, which were also a goal of the Marketing Plan. Several suggestions for affordable local printers were offered, as well as ideas for a regular newspaper column.
and the inclusion of user statistics by city in news release, to show that each library serves the entire suburban Ramsey County community, not just residents of the city where it is located.

The programming focus for 2005 was briefly discussed. Johnson proposed that the quarterly programming themes tie in with the book club selections offered at each library. Cox was in favor of the suggestion, which allows our programming to make a better connection to literacy.

2003 YEAR END RESERVE LIST:
Cox made a motion to approve the 2003, 2002 and 2001 encumbrances as proposed by library staff. Murray seconded the motion.

Anderson questioned the significant amount of revenue from the sale of surplus books that is being carried over from prior years. Carlson noted that the libraries save their book cart revenue for special projects that could not be funded within the constraints of the operating budget. For 2004, the book cart revenue is considered operating revenue and will be used to support the book budget.

Kessel also inquired about the funding for a facilities planning consultant, which is remaining from 2002’s encumbrance list. Carlson indicated that the funding might still be necessary this year to pay invoices before the bond proceeds are available.

The Library Board also discussed its Fund Balance, which did not meet County guidelines in 2003. The proposed encumbrance list increases the Library’s Fund Balance by over $85,000.

Following the discussion, the motion previously moved by Cox and seconded by Murray was approved unanimously by the Library Board.

2005 BUDGET TIMELINE:
The 2005 Levy Target and Expense Guidelines are scheduled to be distributed to Ramsey County departments on February 20, 2004. The budget request will be due March 29, 2004, and will need to be approved by the Library Board at its March 17 meeting. Budget hearings with the County Manager will take place in April, and with the County Board in August and early September, prior to certification of the maximum property tax levy on September 14, 2004. Official adoption of the 2005 budget will occur on December 14, 2004.

FINES AND FEES:
Library fines are charged to encourage customers to return materials in good condition and in a timely manner, making them available for other customers. The Library Board reviews fines and fees annually in conjunction with the budget preparation process. In 2003, the Library Board approved an increase in the adult daily overdue fee from $0.25 to $0.30 per item, and also approved lowering the fine threshold from $10 to $5. Library staff recommend that the current fine structure be reaffirmed.

Anderson made a motion to reaffirm the current library fines and fees. Weltzin seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Library Board.

GIFT ACCEPTANCE:
In accordance with the Library Board Policies, gifts exceeding $5,000 in cash or personal property, as well as gifts with conditions or restrictions, are to be brought to the Library Board for appropriate action.

Each year, the Friends of the Suburban Ramsey County Libraries entertain funding requests from the Library for various initiatives. For 2004, the Friends approved gifts for programming, marketing, and the Booker literacy project, which were accepted by the Library Board in October 2003. The Friends also approved a gift of $15,000 for books and other library materials in the subject area of arts and crafts, including woodworking, home decorating, how-to and handicraft books. This funding will be divided among the six libraries based on their 2003 circulation statistics.
Anderson questioned whether the funds should be strategically disbursed to increase circulation at the smaller libraries, rather than based on circulation figures. However, Johnson noted that whenever a significant contribution for a particular subject area is received, a booklist is created that is available at all Ramsey County Libraries, to maximize use of the new materials and give recognition to the donor.

Wolsfeld made a motion to accept the gift of $15,000 from the Friends of the Suburban Ramsey County Libraries for books and other library materials in the subject area of arts and crafts. Kessel seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
The Library Board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel-related issue.

**NEXT MEETING:**
The Library Board’s next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 17, 2004, in the Administrative Conference Room, 4570 North Victoria Street, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**
Following a motion by Anderson and a second by Wolsfeld, Cox adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator