LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:
Matthew Anderson, Beverly Aplikowski, Paula Mielke, David Norrgard, Janice Rapheal, Roberta Weltzin, Lori-Anne Williams

STAFF PRESENT:
Susan Nemitz, Library Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Sandy Walsh, Deputy Director; Lynn Wyman, Deputy Director; Julie Neville, Building Services Manager; Kristi Saksvig, Communications Manager; Carol Jackson, North St. Paul Library Manager; Judy Woodward, Protested Materials Committee Chairperson

OTHERS PRESENT:
Jan Parker, Ramsey County Commissioner; Fredrick Hoehn, UW Student; Bryan Olson, Falcon Heights resident

CALL TO ORDER:
Norrgard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the North St. Paul Community Center, 2290 North 1st Street.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Bryan Olson stated his unhappiness with the discontinuation of the microfilm collection at the Ramsey County Library in Roseville, noting that alternative sources for this information are scarce. Olson also spoke in favor of digitizing the Library Board packets to save on paper and postage costs, and make access easier for interested citizens.

Wyman noted that the microfilm collection at the library in Roseville had low usage. When evaluating the building program for the remodeling and expansion of that facility, low usage combined with the high cost of replacing the microfilm reader equipment led to the decision to discontinue the collection.

Nemitz indicated that the only stumbling block to converting the Library Board packets to digital files is the timing of the process. The Library Board will discuss this issue further in the future.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:
Williams made a motion to approve the agenda for April 20, 2011, and the minutes of March 16, 2011, as presented. Rapheal seconded the motion. Aplikowski asked to have the word ‘friendly’ removed from the last paragraph under the heading Arden Hills/New Brighton Update. Williams and Rapheal accepted the amendment proposed by Aplikowski. The amendment and the motion were approved by unanimous vote.

2011 FIRST QUARTER REPORTS:
The Library Board reviewed the first quarter workplan, financial report, statistics, and incident reports as submitted.

LIBRARY GOLD CARDS:
Rapheal made a motion to award Library Gold Cards to Assistant County Attorney Gary Davis, Friends’ members Anne Haase and Sue Thibedeau, and Library volunteers Liz Holst, Wayne Oltman, Eleanore Troxel and Peter White as a symbol of appreciation for their contributions to the Ramsey County Libraries, and to authorize the Library Board Chair to sign the Certificates of Appreciation. Williams seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

ARDEN HILLS/NEW BRIGHTON UPDATE:
The Design Team met February 17 and March 3. On February 22, the New Brighton City Council expressed interest in funding the cost of re-aligning the party rooms to create a square footprint and a better entrance for the library. The City hired HGA to estimate the cost of the renovations. Estimates came in at about $350,000. The City Council authorized spending up to $250,000 on the project. Representatives from the City, the Library, County Property Management, and HGA consulted on a conference call. It was decided that reducing the party room budget to under
the $250,000 cap would eliminate the features the City was most interested in adding. All parties agreed to abandon the party room renovation and return to the L-shaped library footprint.

The team has been working on refining that design to allow accurate pricing. The most recent renderings of elevations, floor plans, and site plans were shared with the Board members. The next meeting of the Design Team is March 17.

The Arden Hills library collection has been weeded to reflect the new gateway model of high-demand, popular non-requestable items, resulting in a collection of approximately 25,000 retained items which are boxed and currently being stored at the Arden Hills branch. A few items of furniture, equipment and supplies that will be used in the new location are stored there as well. With the help of volunteers, weeded items were processed and prepared for the Friends sale.

All computer equipment has been removed by the automation services department and will be used at other library branches as needed. Data and phone service have been discontinued to the building. Shelving not being used for the Friends sale has been dismantled and will be inventoried and reused as needed. Selected furniture and equipment items have been delivered to other branches for re-use. The Arden Hills staff has been assigned to other locations. The building is unoccupied, requiring minimal heating and no plowing.

The Friends are preparing for their large spring book and furnishings sale at the Arden Hills building. Excess furniture and weeded and donated books from other branches have been brought to the branch and organized for sale.

Robertson is leading the team that is selecting an opening day collection. Items being purchased for the New Brighton collection are being stored in the technical services department.

Ramsey County Property Management is in negotiations with Bethel University on the sale of the Arden Hills property. Bethel is having an independent appraisal done. The sale is contingent on the City of Arden Hills changing the zoning of the property. The terms of the purchase agreement are being developed.

Walsh reported that the plans for the library in the New Brighton Community Center have been submitted to the Rice Creek Watershed District for approval. She attended the New Brighton Planning Commission meeting, where they approved the special use permit with 12 contingencies, to be carried out by the Library and the City.

The Library Board discussed the Planning Commission contingency that called for the auxiliary parking lot to be constructed immediately, rather than a year later following a parking study as approved in the lease terms between New Brighton and the Ramsey County Board. Nemitz noted that additional spots are needed at the Community Center.

Aplikowski recommended that the Library follow the terms of the lease, and wait until the year has elapsed before funding the auxiliary parking. The amount of the additional parking is $160,000, and the funding is included in the project budget. Commissioner Parker indicated that adding the auxiliary parking is inevitable, and the Library should request the release of funds immediately. Nemitz suggested that the Library Board meet April 6 to discuss the issue, if the contingencies are required by the New Brighton City Council. Williams made a motion to table the discussion to April 6 if needed. Rapheal seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The Library Board and Commissioner Parker discussed the signage plan for the new library, both on the exterior monument sign and in the interior of the Community Center. The list of add alternates and fundraising opportunities for the facility are being developed.

Aplikowski made a motion to recommend approval to the County Board of the Phase II agreement with Adolfson & Peterson Construction. Williams seconded the motion, and offered a friendly amendment, making the approval contingent upon the provision of appropriate operating funds. Aplikowski declined the friendly amendment. The motion was approved by majority vote, with Williams and Rapheal opposed.

**2012-2013 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Ramsey County Budget and Accounting Department issued its 2012-2013 Budget Instructions on February 16, 2011. The County’s instructions ask the Library to take a six percent reduction in County Revenue (made up of property tax revenue and State funding) in both 2012 and 2013 and to absorb any other expected cost increases or revenue losses.
It is expected that State aid to counties will be reduced in the 2011 fiscal year. The Library will absorb the 2011 cuts through fund balances.

Ramsey County Library will meet with the County Manager and Budget and Accounting staff on May 4, 2011, to discuss the consequences of the budget target. The County Manager’s preliminary proposed budget will be issued on or about May 20, 2011. Department hearings with the County Board of Commissioners will take place in August and early September, and the maximum property tax levy will be certified on September 13, 2011.

Nemitz has been working with staff to evaluate budget reduction options, and developed three approaches to meet the budget target. The first approach features across the board cuts to every work unit of the Library. The second approach cuts library branches, and the third features a multi-pronged effort that includes increase late fees and printing fees and strategic reductions to services but does not meet the budget target. Nemitz explained the impacts of each budget scenario, including the difficulties in making the projections without solid data.

The Library Board members discussed the scenarios outlined by Nemitz. The three smallest libraries in the system are currently open 35 hours per week. The minimum hours for eligibility for State funding are 20 hours per week, and the Library Board’s Facilities Master Plan calls for 40 hours per week minimum. Closing libraries saves on facilities costs, but is more final and targets a geographic area. Reducing hours at several locations allows for the possibility of restoration in the future, but requires deeper cuts to achieve the needed savings without facilities costs.

Rolling back the additional hours funded in the 2008 budget was an option considered, as well as raising revenues, and shifting expenses to MELSA. Anderson suggested closing Mondays at all seven libraries, partnering with schools, or giving libraries back to cities to operate. Norrgard noted that significant funding reductions will have implications with MELSA and the state borrowing compact.

Merger with other libraries was briefly discussed as a potential. Nemitz noted that Ramsey County Library shares the same integrated library system (Horizon) and cataloging system (Dewey Decimal) with the Anoka and Washington County libraries, but they would not be the most likely candidates for merger with RCL.

Norrgard stated that during his almost 10 years on the Library Board, he has seen a steady decline in the books budget, and he cannot bear to see further cuts. He also noted his extraordinary reluctance to reduce hours at any location, as the Library Board worked hard to achieve them. He would rather see a library branch closed than offer poor service at any of them. Weltzin concurred, but noted that the scale of reductions being considered would necessitate closing multiple branches.

Nemitz noted that due to the timing of the budget meeting and the release of the County Manager’s proposed budget, the May 18 Library Board meeting may be cancelled. Additional budget meetings may be scheduled in June, July and/or August to determine how actual reductions will be achieved once the Legislature has approved the State budget.

LIBRARY 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. Revenue from fines and fees also reduces the suburban property tax levy. The Library Board reviews fines and fees every two years, in conjunction with Ramsey County’s budget process. Comparative information from the Twin Cities’ library systems was collected to determine if changes to the fines and fees structure would be appropriate. Based on the information gathered from the other MELSA libraries, RCL’s daily overdue fees are at the top of the scale. Any fee increases are not likely to produce significant increases in revenue.

Ramsey County Library’s maximum overdue charge for adult items has been capped at $10 since 2000, while children’s items have been capped at $5 since 2007. Both adult and children’s overdue charges cannot exceed half the replacement cost of the item. The cost of print materials has increased significantly since these limits were set, while the budget for purchasing library materials has decreased by more than 30%. Staff recommended that the maximum charge for adult items be increased to $15 per item. In addition, maximum charges for both adult and children’s materials would be capped at the replacement value of the item or the maximum overdue charge, whichever is less.
Aplikowski made a motion to set the maximum fine for adult materials at $15 and the maximum fine for children’s materials at $5. Anderson seconded the motion, and offered an amendment increasing the children’s maximum fine to $7.50 per item and offering an amnesty day once a year. Following a brief discussion of his proposal, Anderson withdrew the amendment language pertaining to an annual amnesty day. Aplikowski accepted the amendment to her motion, which was approved by majority vote with Rapheal abstaining. The amended motion was approved by unanimous vote.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION:
Julie Neville, Building Services Manager for the Library, reviewed the written report she submitted to the Library Board prior to the meeting. The report highlighted projects accomplished in 2010 in addition to day-to-day responsibilities, most notably the reopening of the library in Roseville. Projects scheduled for 2011 will focus on building exteriors. Rapheal complimented Neville on the new parking lot at the library in White Bear, while Aplikowski commended the hiring of a developmentally delayed intern during the summer of 2010.

PROTESTED MATERIALS OVERVIEW:
Judy Woodward, Chairperson of the Protested Materials Committee, was present to review the role of her committee in handling objections from library customers over materials available in the Ramsey County Libraries.

The Protested Materials Committee is an ad hoc committee of librarians that meets whenever a library patron makes a formal challenge to any of the materials provided by the Ramsey County Library. The committee studies the situation and makes a report to the Library Director. As part of the report, they recommend whether a protested item should be retained, removed or reclassified in response to the written Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials.

The committee relies on the following guidelines when responding to complaints:

1. Everyone deserves a fair and respectful hearing. The library belongs to the public, and each resident is entitled to make his or her opinion known.

2. Everyone deserves to find something they like at the library, but no one is entitled to find only things they approve of. The broad spectrum of ages, backgrounds, tastes and values in our community insures that patrons have widely differing information needs. To buy only what is universally appealing is to fail in our overall mission. Something appeals to each patron, but nothing will appeal to all patrons.

3. Our job as librarians is to balance all the competing interests and needs among our patrons in the fairest, most comprehensive fashion possible.

4. More is almost always better, and the patron has the right to choose among competing ideas. Incomplete or one-sided information should not be removed, but should be supplemented with opposing points of view.

When investigating a patron complaint, the committee performs the following steps:

1. Read the patron’s Request for Reconsideration form, and contact the patron for additional information, if this seems advisable.
2. Examine the protested work carefully.
3. Check reviews and circulation statistics.
4. If necessary, get expert opinion. Is something outdated?
5. Ask for additional info from ALA’s Office of Intellectual Freedom, if appropriate. Have other libraries handled a case like this one?
6. Apply the principles of our Selection Policy, customary library standards & practices, the Library Bill of Rights etc. to the specific issues raised by the protest.
7. Prepare a final report for the approval of the Library Director.
8. Be ready to support the Library, should the final recommendation be appealed to the Library Board or beyond.

VIDEO GAME COLLECTION EVALUATION:
The Library began a pilot project offering rental and circulating video games at Maplewood, Roseville and Shoreview in March 2010. The Library Board requested staff to report on the project after one year.
Collection Overview:
- Video games were purchased with revenue from rental DVDs; no tax dollars were used.
- Selections were limited to Children and Teen games; Mature games were not purchased.
- Circulating and rental games were added to White Bear Lake earlier this year.

Circulation:
- 594 video games circulated a total of 9,059 times in 2010.
- Non-rental games averaged 21 checkouts per game (compared with an average circulation of 4 checkouts per year for books).
- Rental games averaged 11 checkouts per game with some titles circulating 40 or more times.

On April 4, the Library’s Management Team recommended:
- Make video games an on-going library collection.
- Continue to offer both rental and circulating games.
- Modify the rental game purchase strategy to focus on more popular titles.
- Continue to purchase Children and Teen games.
- Add rental and circulating games at Mounds View.

Wyman also noted that rental fees for video games were initially set at $1 per day. This fee was lowered by the Library Board in July 2010. An additional $15,000 in rental DVD proceeds was allocated to fund the start-up collections at White Bear Lake and Mounds View, as well as the purchase of additional titles for 2011.

ARDEH HILLS/NEW BRIGHTON UPDATE:
The Design Team has been working on refining the design to complete Phase 1 activities and allow accurate pricing. Adolfson & Peterson Construction has submitted a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) in the amount of $987,873 for the Phase 2 portion of the Project. The Design Team is currently working on selecting finishes, furniture, and equipment.

On April 12, the County Board of Commissioners approved the change in name to Ramsey County Library in New Brighton. Previously, the County Board approved the project budget, schedule and financing plan, authorized a Phase 1 contract with Adolfson & Peterson Construction, and authorized the County Manager to approve and execute contracts, agreements, change orders, and amendments for Phase 2 provided the cost is within the Project Budget. The County Manager also has the power to sign off on paying for additional parking and has given us a verbal indication that she is willing to do so. The City of New Brighton will bill us for the parking and the $77,000 for building improvements that are in the lease agreement.

The City of New Brighton approved the final lease on April 12; the lease will go to the Library Board Chair for his signature this week.

The Friends sale at the Arden Hills building in March drew huge crowds. Members of the Friends and Library staff worked hard to make the sale a resounding success. The Friends offered suburban Ramsey County institutions the first chance at furniture during a pre-sale. Overall the event raised $13,955 from the sale of books and $5,833 from the sale of furniture for a total of $20,652.

The Friends have formed a committee to conduct a capital campaign to raise funds for the new library in New Brighton. The campaign was launched April 16 at a New Brighton Town Hall meeting. Nemitz also attended and did a presentation on the library. The Friends are working on a grant application to the New Brighton Rotary Club. The first official meeting of the steering committee will be held April 21.

Ramsey County Property Management is in negotiations on the sale of the Arden Hills property. The potential purchaser is having an independent appraisal done. The sale is contingent on the City of Arden Hills changing the zoning of the property.

NORTH ST. PAUL LIBRARY UPDATE:
Carol Jackson, Library Manager, distributed a written report summarizing North St. Paul’s usage statistics, community outreach efforts, and programming, and the Library’s partnership with the City of North St. Paul.
DIRECTOR’S REPORT:
Nemitz’s April 2011 report to the Library Board was mailed prior to the meeting. (Available upon request.)

MELSA REPORT:
Norrgard reported that approximately 20 individuals participated in MELSA’s strategic planning meeting. Input from the Governing Board of Trustees was also discussed.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY REPORT:
Thanks to the enthusiasm of their customers, the incredibly hard work of the Friends’ volunteers, and the organizational skills of Janet Huberty, Nancy Huberty, Donna Andreas, and Bonnie Bassett, the semi-annual book and furniture sale held in Arden Hills from March 24 through 27 raised $13,955 from the sale of books and $5,833 from the sale of furniture for the New Brighton Library Capital Campaign. Forty-three people joined the Friends at the sale. Total revenue was $20,652!

April 22 is the deadline for registering for the April 30th Annual Luncheon at the North Oaks Golf Club, featuring P. J. Tracy. For the first time, the Friends have event sponsors—Minnesota Vein Center and John Czaia, RBC Wealth Management.

Tell your friends, neighbors, and co-workers to register for the second annual BookIt 5K Walk/Run being held on May 21 at the Roseville Library. The members of the Development Committee have been doing a great job recruiting event sponsors. To date they include Roseville Center, M&I Bank, Premier Bank, Minnesota Vein Center, Rosedale Chevrolet, and Roseville Visitors Association. Proceeds will be used to support the Summer Reading Program at all RCL libraries. Volunteers are needed.

The Friends will be distributing coupons to be used between May 13 and 16 at any Linder’s Flower Mart. The Friends receive 15% of the purchase price from everyone who gives a coupon to a cashier at any of the 50 Linder’s Garden Centers.

The painting to be installed over the upstairs fireplace will be finished this month. New interactive equipment has been installed in the Children’s preschool area and the toddlers love it. More engraved garden pavers will arrive in June.

On April 16, the Friends launched the New Brighton Capital Campaign by participating in the New Brighton Town Hall meeting. They have organized a campaign Steering Committee and been assisting with a grant application to the New Brighton Rotary Club.

NEXT MEETING:
Nemitz indicated that the next Library Board meeting, scheduled for May 18, 2011, may be cancelled following the Library’s budget hearing on May 4 due to lack of new information on the 2012-2013 budget. Aside from the budget, bids for the New Brighton project are being let, and no Library Board action will be required during May. Commissioner Parker noted that Williams is being honored by the North Suburban Gavel Association at the same time as the scheduled Library Board meeting, and encouraged the Board members to attend.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson,
Library Board Coordinator