Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board  
November 15, 2006

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:
Matthew Anderson, Victoria Cox, David Norrgard, Burton Nygren, Roberta Weltzin, Lori-Anne Williams

STAFF PRESENT:
Susan Nemitz, Library Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Lynn Wyman, Assistant Director; Bill Michel, Roseville Assistant Library Manager; Jeff Eide, Mounds View Library Manager; Therese Sonnek, White Bear Lake Library Manager; Julie Neville, Building Services Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:
Bruce Kessel, former Library Board Trustee; Mary Anne Lindberg, Friends of the Suburban Ramsey County Libraries; Jack Poling, Lynn Barnhouse, Joshua Stowers, Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle Ltd.

CALL TO ORDER:
Norrgard called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Ramsey County Library in White Bear Lake, 4698 Clark Avenue.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:
Cox made a motion to approve the agenda for November 15, 2006 and the minutes of October 18, 2006, as presented. Anderson seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION:
At the October 18, 2006, meeting, the Library Board approved a certificate of appreciation for Bruce Kessel, who resigned from the Library Board in July after serving as a Trustee for seven years.

Norrgard presented the Certificate of Appreciation to Bruce Kessel, as a symbol of appreciation for his contributions to the Ramsey County Libraries as a member of the Library Board from 1999-2006. Nemitz also thanked Kessel for facilitating a contribution of wireless access points from the St. Paul Port Authority.

ROSEVILLE ARCHITECT SELECTION:
Following interviews with three architectural firms held on November 7, 2006, the evaluation committee recommended that the Library Board contract with Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd. (MS&R) to develop a schematic design for the expansion and remodeling of the Ramsey County Library in Roseville. Copies of MS&R’s proposal and PowerPoint presentation were distributed to the Library Board prior to the meeting.

Williams served as the Library Board’s official representative on the evaluation committee, while Anderson and Norrgard, along with Ramsey County Commissioner Jan Parker, joined the committee for the finalist interviews and selection of the recommended firm.

Nemitz stated that MS&R has a long history of major remodels of libraries. They have made ugly buildings into beautiful, elegant buildings, and have been able to work well within limited budgets.
The Roseville project will be difficult, but the evaluation committee felt that MS&R’s proposal did a superb job addressing all the key factors identified by the committee.

These key factors include the use of merchandising to highlight the library’s collection, making the library less cluttered, and bringing the outdoors inside. MS&R also proposed making the entryway, the first impression of the library, more impressive, and had interesting ideas for retail space management. The expanded and remodeled Roseville facility will include a coffee shop and space for a retail used book store run by the Friends of the Suburban Ramsey County Libraries.

Jack Poling, project lead from MS&R, gave a presentation that highlighted several library remodels done by MS&R. Local remodels that have done include the Hennepin County Library at Ridgedale, the Saint Paul Public Library Central Library, and the Minneapolis Public Library Franklin Community Library.

The Library Board discussed the committee’s recommendation. Nygren questioned how suggestions and feedback from the Library Board and staff would be handled. Poling responded that feedback from the Board and staff is welcomed, and incorporated whenever possible.

Anderson asked how the design is developed without an established budget. Poling stated that MS&R will make an overall recommendation based on the needs identified, but several “what if” scenarios will be included as deducts if necessary to meet the available funding. Nemitz noted that benchmarking data will be useful in “selling” the concepts developed by MS&R to the County Board of Commissioners to obtain 2007 bond funding.

Cox made a motion to approve the selection of Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle Ltd. (MS&R) as the architect to develop a schematic design for the expansion and remodeling of the Ramsey County Library in Roseville. Nygren seconded the motion. Anderson offered a friendly amendment, "subject to contract negotiations," which was accepted by Cox. The motion was unanimously approved by the Library Board.

**BENCHMARKING RCL TO OTHER COMPARABLE LIBRARIES:**
Jeff Eide, Library Manager at the Ramsey County Library in Mounds View, compiled a statistical report showing comparisons between RCL and other library systems of similar populations served and total income. The information for this year’s report is gathered from the Public Library Data Service Report for the year 2005.

Continuing a trend from the past several years, RCL far exceeds the other library systems in North America and the other MELSA libraries in several key factors: size of collection, circulation per capita, visits per capita, collection turnover (number of times each item is checked out), and circulation per total FTE.

Hennen’s American Public Library Ratings (HAPLR) were recently released for 2006. Introduced in 1999, this formula-based rating system is based on 15 weighted criteria. Libraries are grouped by population size, with 329 libraries in RCL’s size category. For 2006, RCL was not ranked as a top 10 library system. Previously, RCL had been in the top ten in 2005, 2004, 2002, and 1999. The current year’s rating is actually based on data from 2004, the most recent year that the data is available at the national level. The Library’s book budget decreased significantly in 2004 as a result of the State budget shortfall.

The Library Board discussed the cost of print materials versus electronic versions of the information. Cost savings versus access is something the library staff considers every time a reference resource is
purchased. Nemitz noted that federated searching, which simultaneously searches the library’s catalog, electronic databases, MnLINK partners, and the Internet, will soon be available.

Eide noted that circulation has increased by 43 in the past 10 years, without an increase in staff. Nemitz noted that it is difficult to ask for funding for additional staff, when the staff is coping, and patron surveys show that customer service continues to be rated highly. The Library Board discussed workload capacity. Nemitz noted that the Library will see increasing numbers of retirees, as 30 staff members will be eligible to retiree within the next few years.

**MAPLEWOOD CONSTRUCTION UPDATE:**
No add alternates were approved for the building project in Maplewood since the October Library Board meeting, and no additional funds will be removed from the contingency budget until 2007. Extra irrigation, site lighting and commissioning will be decided at that time.

Sale of the current facility on Beam Avenue was terminated. It will be on the market again in December, most likely with a commercial real estate agent. It is unlikely at this point that the facility would be re-used by Ramsey County.

**ROSEVILLE EXPANSION PLANNING:**
The draft building program for the expansion and remodeling of the Ramsey County Library in Roseville was distributed. Comments on the building program can be directed to Nemitz through mid-December.

Nemitz noted that although the County Board has funded the land acquisition and pre-design planning, bond funding for the construction process is not guaranteed. The Library Board must use the designs being developed by MS&R, their cost estimates, and the benchmarking data to persuade the County Board to authorize bond funding. In order to keep the County’s tax rate somewhat level, the Library may need to phase its funding request over two years. Nemitz noted that, in additional to capital funding for the construction, the Library Board will also need to ask for extra staff once the facility is completed. The new staff will primarily be maintenance and janitorial staff to compensate for the increased size of the facility.

**CAPITAL PLANNING—WHAT IS THE LIBRARY WILLING TO GIVE UP TO ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS?**
The Library Board agreed to postpone this discussion until January, when there will be seven members.

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**
Nemitz’s November report to the Library Board was mailed prior to the meeting.

**WHITE BEAR LAKE LIBRARY BRANCH REPORT:**
Therese Sonnek, White Bear Lake Library Manager, reported that her staff is busy planning for the increased business that is anticipated while the library in Maplewood is closed. The meeting room will house part of Maplewood’s collection, and White Bear Lake will have temporary Sunday hours while Maplewood is closed. A self-checkout machine will be added to White Bear Lake for the first time, and requested materials will be moved out from behind the circulation desk, so patrons can retrieve their own requests.

The library has developed a successful partnership with Lake Country Booksellers, an independent book store in downtown White Bear Lake. Because the book store does not have space to hold author book signings, they have been using the library’s meeting room, and giving the library a percentage of book sales during the signings. Recent authors hosted at White Bear include John Sandford, William Kent Krueger, and PJ Tracy.
FRIENDS REPORT:
No report.

MELSA REPORT:
No report.

NEXT MEETING: December 13, 2006, Library Administrative Office, 4570 North Victoria Street, 7:00 p.m.

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator