BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Matthew Anderson, Joan Bartell, Victoria Cox, Bruce Kessel, David Norrgard

STAFF PRESENT:
Alice-Jo Carlson, Library Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator, Lynn Wyman, Library Manager; Chuck Wettergren, Automation Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:
Jan Wiessner, Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioners; Darren Tobolt, Commissioner Assistant; Bruce Howard, New Brighton City Council; Jeanna Troha, New Brighton Assistant City Manager; Beverly Aplikowski, Arden Hills Mayor; Linda Cummings, North St. Paul Assistant City Manager; Leon Lillie, North St. Paul City Council; Cynthia Boyd, St. Paul Pioneer Press; Emily Topinka, Lillie Suburban Newspapers; Paul Gelbmann, Julie Jordan, Ramsey County Leadership Academy

CALL TO ORDER:
Anderson called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Ramsey County Library’s Administrative Offices, 4570 North Victoria Street in Shoreview.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Norrgard made a motion to approve the minutes of February 19, 2003 as mailed. Bartell seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:
Carlson’s written report for March 2003 was discussed. She noted that Booker, the RCL Mascot, has been invited to attend the Minnesota Twins baseball game on June 1st to hand out 5,000 free children’s books purchased by the Twins organization.

FRIENDS OF THE SUBURBAN RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:
Bartell sent a written report via e-mail. She noted that the Friends officers for 2003-2004 will be Arnold Lindberg (President), Mary Meyer (Vice President), Ann Haase (Secretary), and Dory Lidinsky (Treasurer). A book sale is being considered for the library in Maplewood. The Sunday hours at the Friends’ Used Bookstore will be suspended during June, July and August. The speaker for the upcoming Annual Meeting on April 26th will be Lorna Landvik. Bartell expressed her appreciation for the “Budget Fact Sheet” prepared by Laura Johnson, Library Communications Manager. She indicated that the fact sheet was very helpful to the Friends in understanding the budget situation.

RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARY FOUNDATION REPORT:
Kessel reported that the Foundation’s Annual Meeting was held March 13. David Dimond, Principal Architect with Perkins & Will, was the keynote speaker, and several new Executive Board members were present. The contract with Executive Director Tammy Hauser will be suspended effective March 31. The Foundation will hold a retreat on April 12th to determine its next steps, although it has already indicated to Library staff that they are not ready to assist with a capital campaign at this time.
The Foundation’s Treasurer submitted a check to the Library for $7,000. Of this, $5,000 came from the Kiwanis to support the early reader collections at Roseville and Shoreview, and the remaining $2,000 came from the Roseville Community Fund for teen programming. The Foundation has also committed $9,000 toward the 2003 Summer Reading Program.

MELSA REPORT:
Commissioner Wiessner reported that the MELSA Governing Board is starting work on a new Strategic Plan, and she is on the committee. The first committee meeting was held March 19. She also noted that the MELSA auditor discovered inconsistencies in the bookkeeping of the investment company hired to handle MELSA’s funds. The Governing Board will be requesting bids for services and contracting with a new firm for this function.

AUTOMATION SERVICES OVERVIEW:
Chuck Wettergren, Automation Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Automation Services Department and its role in supporting the services of the Library. He discussed future enhancements in library automation, and recent additions to RCL, including self-checkout. Trends to watch include radio frequency identification (RFID), which would replace traditional barcode laser scanners with radio frequency technology. Wettergren indicated that he is updating the Technology Plan, which should be completed in the next two months.

FACILITIES PLANNING PROCESS—BONDING PRIORITIES:
The Library scheduled a workshop with the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners on April 1st to share the preliminary design drawings and cost estimates developed by Parkins & Will for the proposed facilities projects. Library staff developed estimates for increased operating costs that would result from new or expanded facilities.

However, Carlson is recommending that the workshop be postponed. Key information on financing and bonding for the projects is needed from the Ramsey County Budgeting and Accounting Department, which is currently short-staffed due to the medical leave of the Library’s Budget Analyst, and the increased workload resulting from the state budget shortfall situation. Carlson suggested that the workshop be rescheduled for early summer, which will still allow sufficient time for the bonding process. She requested that the Library Board determine its bonding priorities so that the staff can continue gathering information in preparation for the County Board workshop.

Commissioner Reinhardt noted that the County Board has made a determined effort to stabilize the funding of capital projects, to avoid the fluctuation of property taxes from year to year resulting from capital expenditures.

Anderson stated that his proposed priorities for bonding would be Maplewood, Roseville and North St. Paul as Phase I, with a Phase II being Arden Hills and Shoreview.

Carlson indicated that the property acquisition should proceed quickly, and will not delay planning for any of the new or expanded facilities. She reminded the Board that the parking situation at Roseville is dire, and that several improvements to the Maplewood facility have been postponed so they may be included with the expansion process.

Cox stated that her bonding priorities would be Roseville, Maplewood and North St. Paul. She made a motion that the bonding priorities submitted to the County Board at the June workshop be Roseville, Maplewood and North St. Paul, with Arden Hills and Shoreview being a second phase. Bartell seconded the motion.
Carlson noted that very little study has been performed on the Shoreview facility, and further investigation would be necessary before including it with the proposal going to the County Board.

Commissioner Reinhardt suggested that Arden Hills be included with the priorities for bonding, and a discussion ensued regarding whether to include all the desired projects from the start, or attempt to divide them into phases due to funding concerns.

Arden Hills Mayor Bev Aplikowski asked that Arden Hills be included in the Library Board’s bonding priorities for Phase I. She noted that facilities planning processes can be lengthy, but being included on the list is an important first step.

Cox withdrew her previous motion, and offered new motion to proceed with bonding priorities of Roseville, Maplewood, North St. Paul, and Arden Hills, in that order. Bartell seconded the new motion.

At this point, Anderson opened the floor to comments from the members of the public present.

Commissioner Reinhardt reported that she has scheduled a meeting with officials from Washington County to discuss a potential collaboration for the library in North St. Paul. Attendees will include County Managers from Ramsey and Washington County, one commissioner from each County, and one Library Board member. Norrgard will represent the Ramsey County Library Board at the meeting on March 24.

Bruce Howard and Jeanna Troha were present representing New Brighton, which has proposed that RCL construct a new library in the northwest quadrant of their city. This area is being developed to include a mixture of retail and housing, and the City would like to partner with another agency for a theatre or library.

Leon Lillie of the North St. Paul City Council thanked the Library Board members for their willingness to think outside the box, and reiterated that the Library is an important part of the North St. Paul community.

Following the public comment, Anderson called a vote on the motion made by Cox and seconded by Bartell to proceed with bonding priorities of Roseville, Maplewood, North St. Paul and Arden Hills. The motion was unanimously approved.

**LIBRARY SERVICE IN NORTH ST. PAUL:**
Carlson distributed two letters received from the City of North St. Paul regarding zoning of the current facility and requesting support for the proposed Reading Room in the North St. Paul Community Center. She asked for Library Board action on the request for materials and equipment left behind when service is suspended at North St. Paul, and for a Library Board liaison to the City of North St. Paul regarding the disposition of the facility. Cox volunteered to be the liaison.

Carlson noted that the request includes reassignment of current magazine subscriptions to the Reading Room until the subscriptions expire. The Library is experiencing problems with the contracted periodicals vendor, which has filed for bankruptcy protection. Carlson will ask Library staff to compile a list of current magazine subscriptions received for the library in North St. Paul.

Kessel made a motion to authorize lending resources including furniture, shelving, and periodical subscriptions to the City of North St. Paul for the Reading Room in the North St. Paul Community Center. Anderson seconded the motion, and offered a friendly amendment that an agreement be
prepared outlining the Library’s level of support for the Reading Room, and this agreement be brought to the Library Board for action. Kessel accepted the friendly amendment. The amended motion was unanimously approved.

Anderson noted for the record that Commissioner Reinhardt made a motion at the March 11 County Board meeting for additional funding from County reserves to continue operations at the library in North St. Paul. The motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Wiessner, was not successful.

NAMING OF FACILITIES:
At the February 5th Budget Workshop, the Library Board requested that naming of the library facilities be reconsidered in order to promote community-wide ownership.

During the last facilities process fifteen years ago, this issue was also considered. At that time, the Library adopted as the official name of each facility “Ramsey County Library in ______________.” However, this official name has not been consistently used in library signage, newsletters, etc.

Library staff considered whether non-specific names should be adopted. Other MELSA libraries primarily use city-specific names, although some have incorporated their street name into the official name (Galaxie Library in Apple Valley, Wescott Library in Eagan).

The staff unanimously felt that non-specific names are confusing to the public, and recommended that the current policy on naming be used consistently to encourage the perception of Ramsey County Libraries versus city libraries.

The Library Board discussed the staff recommendation. Commissioner Wiessner suggested that the Library Board consider renaming the facilities according to the geographical or natural features in which the site is located. This guideline is included in the official Ramsey County Policy on Naming Facilities.

After the general discussion, during which several Library Board members expressed their desire to depart from the current Library policy on facility naming, the Board considered re-affirming the current policy and addressing the issue again later in the facilities planning process. Ultimately, the Library Board decided to let the current policy stand without reaffirmation.

2003 BUDGET SHORTFALL:
Carlson reported that Ramsey County Manager Paul Kirkwold gave a presentation to the County Board on March 11 outlining his plan, in general terms, for addressing the current year budget shortfall. A copy of the Library’s budget reduction plan, which was approved February 5, was distributed to the Library Board members.

REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION:
At the Library Board’s Budget Workshop on February 5, 2003, the Board members brainstormed ideas for increasing revenue at the Ramsey County Library. Staff met to consider the feasibility of each idea, and outlined the rationale for recommending or not recommending them for Library Board approval.

The Board members discussed demolition of the current Arden Hills facility to avoid maintenance costs. This option was not recommended by staff due to the lack of funding prior to the bonding process. However, the Board members were in favor of borrowing funds from Ramsey County reserve funds to demolish the facility, and reimbursing the County after the bond funding is received.
Norrgard made a motion to implement the revenue diversification ideas recommended by staff, with the exception of the creation of a special tax district for the Library. Also included in the motion was further study on the idea of demolishing the Arden Hills facility. Kessel seconded the motion.

Anderson questioned the staff recommendation against charging for rental of CDs and DVDs. Carlson indicated that charging for any materials, without also offering them free of charge, is contrary to the mission of the library. She also noted that customers might be unwilling to pay the fees, resulting in a decrease in circulation.

The Library Board discussed the potential of charging for interlibrary loan service, perhaps after a predetermined number of free uses. Carlson indicated that the Library’s participation in MnLINK, a resource-sharing network in Minnesota, would prohibit equitable implementation of such a fee. For example, RCL could charge its own customers, but could not charge other MELSA or out-state customers.

Following the discussion, Anderson called a vote on Norrgard’s motion to implement several ideas for revenue diversification, including further study of demolishing or deconstructing the Arden Hills facility after suspension of services at that location. Kessel seconded the motion, which was approved by majority vote with Anderson dissenting.

COMMUNICATION PLAN UPDATE:
Carlson reported that the Communication Plan was updated to incorporate the Library Board’s suggestions at the February 19 meeting. She noted that she continues to communicate with the cities of North St. Paul and Arden Hills regarding the planned suspension of services. Cox noted that White Bear Lake might become the alternate library for North St. Paul residents once that facility closes.

The Library suggested that the public hearing be changed to a public meeting, since the decision regarding the facility in North St. Paul has already been made. This public meeting could be combined with a welcome at the new North St. Paul Reading Room in the Community Center. Carlson will work with North St. Paul staff to make arrangement for this event at the May 21, 2003, Library Board meeting.

AUTHORIZATION TO PURCHASE SELF CHECKOUT MACHINES:
Self-service checkout has been used successfully by library systems throughout the world to not only add a valued service, but to address increasing business and decreasing budgets. The most successful implementations involve library systems designing buildings around self checkout, resulting in circulation percentages as high as 80-90%. Because of demonstrated benefits and the technology “coming of age,” RCL decided to conduct a pilot project using self checkout, introducing the concept to our customers and identifying critical issues and potentials for its use.

After researching manufacturers and making site visits to libraries already using this technology, RCL purchased a Codeco Mark 3 EasyCheck system and installed it at the library in Roseville. Codeco, chosen for its ease of use, low maintenance, unique look and feel, and use of non-proprietary hardware has met our expectations and more. Use of self checkout by customers has grown steadily throughout the project, with a 21% increase in use from January to February. As vacancies occur due to budget reductions, self checkout will help us to continue to deliver a high level of service.

Wettergren requested authorization to purchase three additional self checkout machines, whose initial destinations will be Roseville, Shoreview and a third location to be determined based on staffing, building layout, and circulation statistics, in order to have the biggest impact on staff workload.
Norrgard made a motion to approve the purchase of three additional self checkout units from Codeco. Cost per unit not to exceed $20,000, with a total not-to-exceed cost of $60,000 for three machines. Cox seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

**SEPARATE LIBRARY LEVY LINE ON PROPERTY TAX STATEMENTS:**
Commissioner Reinhardt indicated that she had prepared a resolution for County Board consideration for a separate library levy line on the property tax statements. The Ramsey County Library levy is already a separate levy in Ramsey County, as it is only charged to suburban County residents and not part of the County’s General Fund. The proposed change would require amending the current statutory language.

Such a change is supported by the telephone surveys conducted by Decision Resources in 1995, 1998, and 2001, which indicated that suburban Ramsey County residents would support a property tax increase to maintain library services. If the Library Board supports the proposed resolution, Commissioner Reinhardt will bring it to the County Board for further consideration.

Norrgard spoke in favor of complete separation from the County’s authority, instead of the option proposed by Reinhardt. He felt it would be confusing to the taxpayers, who may think that the separate line on the property tax statement means that the Library Board determines the levy amount.

Reinhardt noted that complete separation would not feasible, as it is unlikely to be supported by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners.

Cox indicated her support of the proposed resolution if it would benefit the Library financially. Anderson also spoke in favor, noting that it would help raise taxpayer awareness of the actual cost of library services, and also of the change in costs from year to year.

Cox made a motion to support the proposed resolution prepared by Commissioner Reinhardt regarding a separate line on the property tax statement for library services in suburban Ramsey County. Bartell seconded the motion, which was approved by majority vote with Norrgard dissenting.

**LEADERSHIP ACADEMY:**
Carlson introduced Paul Gelbmann, Ramsey County Public Health Department, and Julie Jordan, Ramsey County Corrections Departments, who are members of the Leadership Academy team studying the feasibility of library service in North St. Paul.

**NEXT MEETING:**
The next meeting of the Library Board will be Wednesday, April 16, 2003, in the Meeting Room of the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, 1670 Beam Avenue, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**
Following a motion by Kessel and a second by Bartell, Anderson adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator