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

STAFF PRESENT:
Susan Nemitz, Library Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Julie Neville, Building Services Manager; Lynn Wyman, Assistant Director-Human Resources; Sandy Walsh, Assistant Director-Operations; Chuck Wettergren, Automation Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:
Joe Skelly, Arnold and Mary Anne Lindberg, Friends of the Suburban Ramsey County Libraries; Jan Parker, Ramsey County Commissioner; Fran Holmes, Arden Hills City Council

CALL TO ORDER:
Weltzin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, 3025 Southlawn Drive.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:
Cox made a motion to approve the agenda for April 18, 2007 and the minutes of March 21, 2007, as presented. Williams seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

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 annually in conjunction with the budget preparation process. In 2006, the Library Board approved changes to the Library’s meeting room rental fees for for-profit groups, and adopted a $1 replacement fee for lost library cards.

A committee of library staff reviewed Ramsey County Library’s fines and fees in comparison with other MELSA libraries. The committee also evaluated default replacement costs for lost materials, which have not been updated for several years. Default costs are only used when the list price is not included in the bibliographic record. Lost charges for the majority of items owned by the Library is the actual list price of the item.

Based on the committee’s proposal, the Library Management Team approved the recommended changes to the Library’s fines and fees for Library Board approval:
1. Increase the Maplewood community room rental fee from $25/hour to $50/hour for for-profit groups.
2. Approve the updated default values as proposed.
3. Approve a procedural change to have Technical Services staff research the list price when the information is not available from the item or order record.
4. Decrease the maximum fine per item on children’s materials from $10 to $5.
5. Increase the maximum late charge on paperbacks from $2 to $3.
6. Increase the fine threshold from $5 to $10 to reduce credit card fees.
7. Review fines and fees every 2 years in conjunction with the Ramsey County budget cycle.

No changes were recommended to the daily overdue rate, since RCL currently has one of the most aggressive fees structures in MELSA.

Cox made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the fines and default replacement fees, with the Maplewood community room rental fees to be effective immediately, and all other changes to be effective January 1, 2008. Williams seconded the motion. Anderson offered an amendment to the motion, suggesting that the maximum overdue charge on children’s materials be reduced immediately, rather than waiting until January 1, 2008. Lamb seconded the amendment, which Cox accepted. The Library Board approved the amended motion by majority vote, with Norrgard dissenting.

2008-2009 BUDGET:
As detailed at the March Library Board meeting, the Library will receive a 2.5% levy increase in the 2008 budget to cover salary increases, and small increases to cover retiree health insurance and Medicare D costs. In 2009, departments will assume no increase on the levy but may receive an increase once salaries are negotiated. If no adjustment for salaries is received, the Library will be faced with cutting approximately $135,000 from its operating budget. An updated budget packet was distributed to the Library Board for discussion.

Nemitz also noted that the discrepancy in tax rates between St. Paul and suburban Ramsey County residents is even higher than previously thought. St. Paul residents pay 4.681% of their property taxes to support library services in St. Paul, while suburban Ramsey County residents pay only 2.976%. If suburban libraries received the same percentage of property taxes that the city receives, RCL’s operating budget would increase by $4.27 million dollars per year.

The Library Board discussed the feasibility of separate taxing districts for libraries. Cox noted that the possibility was investigated about five years ago by the Library Board, just prior to the State revenue shortfall. Due to the State-wide fiscal situation, the idea was not pursued. Lamb noted that taxing districts work well for small, expense-driven districts, but falter for smaller, capital-driven districts with steep fluctuations in the tax rate.

Norrgard expressed his disappointment that the staffing shortage was not featured more prominently in the Library’s budget documents. Lamb suggested that the information could be added as footnotes in the budget documents, and highlighted during the budget meeting on April 20, 2007 with the County Manager and Director of Budget and Accounting.

Williams made a motion to approve the 2008-2009 Library Budget Request as presented, with information on the Library’s staffing shortage and the tax rate discrepancy to be highlighted during the budget meeting with the County Manager. Cox seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF FORMER NORTH ST. PAUL LIBRARY:
Norrgard asked whether the Library has formally requested the proceeds from the sale of the former library in North St. Paul, to be used for deferred maintenance at the seven suburban libraries. At the time of the sale, the County Board directed that the funds be placed in the debt service fund balance, which is controlled by the Board of Commissioners. Nemitz reported that the Library’s written request is being reviewed by Ramsey County Budget and Accounting, and will be included in a County-wide report going to the Board of Commissioners in May or June.
ROSEVILLE LIBRARY UPDATE:
Nemitz, Norrgard and Wyman presented the Library’s request to fund the Roseville expansion and remodeling to the Capital Improvement Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC) on April 5. The presentation included pre-design drawings and cost estimates prepared by Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd., as well as photographs accentuating inadequacies of the current facility. Automated technologies, included materials handling systems and radio-frequency identification (RFID) were highlighted as features of the planned expansion. The presentation was well received by Committee members and County staff.

MAPLEWOOD LIBRARY FEEDBACK:
Comments about the new library in Maplewood have been largely positive with most people appreciating the upgraded spaces and amenities. Staff has been recording comments, questions and concerns to prioritize the spending of remaining resources and to assist in the planning for the remodel of and addition to the library in Roseville.

The staff is reviewing the remaining project funds and needs. Landscaping and commissioning still are being scheduled. Bike racks, some furniture pieces and several technology items are still awaiting delivery.

RFID REPORT:
The report and summary were distributed at the meeting. Wettergren reported that the Library contracted with RMG Consulting, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois to assist the Library in reviewing its operations surrounding asset management, and analyze the financial, logistical, and technical issues associated with moving from barcode technology to state-of-the-art radio frequency identification (RFID) technology.

With the planned remodeling and expansion of the library in Roseville, which houses almost 40% of the Library’s collection, every item will be touched, and a significant financial investment in updated equipment to support circulation will be made. If RCL was to migrate to an RFID system, the Roseville project would be an ideal starting point.

RFID technology has been in use since World War II. It has been used to pay tolls since 1993, and in libraries for several years. National organizations from around the world have agreed on a goal for developing a standard data model by 2008.

In the library environment, RFID tags typically hold unique identifiers (usually the 14 digit numbers represented by barcodes) that require access to the integrated library system to interpret what the item is. Access to individual account information requires a PIN number, which is not saved to the RFID chip.

Benefits of RFID include:

- Eliminates need for line-of-site scanning
- Multiple items can be scanned simultaneously
- Reduces ergonomic problem inherent with barcode technology
- Provides built-in security
- Simplifies self-check design
- Simplifies automated material handling return design
- Tags are more durable than barcodes

RMG Consulting estimated that conversion to an RFID system would cost RCL approximately $1.1 million dollars, including:
♦ $440,000 for staff workstation equipment and security gates
♦ $600,000 for initial item tags
♦ $59,000 for initial patron tags

Ongoing costs primarily depend on the type of tag used and if premium maintenance contracts are put in place. RCL typically purchases maintenance on hardware that would cause a significant impact on operations if unavailable. However, most individual RFID equipment would not fall under those guidelines, and repairs would likely be funded on an as-needed basis.

RMG’s report concludes that RFID is a stable technology with a coherent set of global technical standards. Between 200 and 300 public libraries have implemented RFID, usually in conjunction with capital improvements. As RCL continues to expand self-check and automated materials handling, conversion to RFID will make these systems more efficient and further reduce staff handling of materials.
RMG recommends that Ramsey County Library implement RFID beginning with the renovated library in Roseville, and should continue discussions within MELSA to define and establish standard practices and guidelines for RFID implementation.

2007 FIRST QUARTER REPORTS:
The Library Board reviewed the first quarter workplan, financial report, and statistics as submitted. Nemitz noted that this report is the Board’s first look at the details of the 2007 workplan. A new reference work group has been set up, and professional staff is being reallocated to meet the Library’s goals. Huge increases in circulation and customer visits were noted at North St. Paul, White Bear Lake, and Roseville during the time period that Maplewood was closed.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT:
Nemitz’s April report to the Library Board was mailed prior to the meeting. She noted that she attended Library Legislative Day with Norrgard, Wyman and Walsh.

MELSA REPORT:
No report.

FRIENDS OF THE SUBURBAN RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:
Joe Skelly, Friends Director, reported that he is finalizing his workplan for the year. Dory Lidinsky will be stepping down after two years as President of the Friends, and Nancy Guerino is President-elect.

THANK YOU RECEIVED:
Cox reported that she received a thank you from Sandra Spieler of In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre. Spieler was the artist commissioned to create the artwork for the new library in Maplewood.

NEXT MEETING: May 16, 2007, RCL-Roseville, 2180 Hamline Ave. N., 7:00 p.m.

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator