LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:
Beverly Aplikowski, Robert Lamb, David Norrgard, Burton Nygren, Janice Rapheal, Roberta Weltzin, Lori-Anne Williams

STAFF PRESENT:
Susan Nemitz, Library Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Lynn Wyman, Deputy Director; Julie Neville, Library Facilities Manager; Bill Michel, Roseville Library Manager; Sandy Walsh, Deputy Director; Meg Robertson, Arden Hills Library Manager; Kristi Saksvig, Communications Manager; Chuck Wettergren, Automation Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:
Jan Parker, Ramsey County Commissioner; Arnold & Mary Anne Lindberg, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries

CALL TO ORDER:
Williams called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Library Administrative Offices, 4570 North Victoria Street in Shoreview.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None.

2010-2011 BUDGET:
Environmental Scan - The Library Board discussed the environmental scan worksheet developed by Nemitz, to help them get to common ground on the economic forecast for Ramsey County. Norrgard noted that Ramsey County is almost fully developed, with limited potential growth in the tax base. The Board members discussed the potential for revenue growth in the future, whether the current economic status was the beginning of a downward trend, whether it was a temporary situation, or whether the budgets would continue to go up and down without predictability.

Nemitz indicated that the Library has to compete with other Ramsey County departments for limited tax dollars, and urged the Library Board members to work with the County Board on a plan to step down services over the coming years. Quality library services would still be offered, but fundamental changes would be made to address the lack of revenue growth. She also noted that the Library must decide whether to be customer centered or staff centered.

Lamb stated that actions taken in other jurisdictions affect business in Ramsey County. Nemitz concurred, noting that weekend closures in other library systems increases usage at RCL on those days.

Participation in MELSA – Nemitz noted that the Library receives both one-time and recurring funds from the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA). Only the recurring funds are considered projectable revenue in the Library’s budget. The actual amount received from MELSA in 2008 was almost $370,000, of which $195,307 was considered operating revenue. MELSA also funds many digital resources for the libraries in the Twin Cities. The Ramsey County share of these resources is valued at almost $150,000. Norrgard noted that MELSA functions as a joint purchasing program for its member libraries.

The disparity between operating revenues and one-time or capital revenues also applies to County funding. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners has invested almost $25 million in capital improvements to the Library facilities in North St. Paul, Maplewood and Roseville over the past five years.

Lamb noted that suburban Ramsey County residents bear a higher burden for library funding than those from other library systems, noting that our registered borrowers include higher levels of non-residents. Williams stated that the benefits we receive from our participation in MELSA outweigh the higher costs. Crossover usage is reimbursed using a
formula approved by all the member libraries. Nemitz indicated that the crossover issue is primarily between the St. Paul and Ramsey County library systems. Norrgard urged the Library Board members to be careful about adopting policies detrimental to St. Paul residents, noting that four members of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners represent St. Paul. This crossover usage helped the Library obtain funding for the Roseville project, which serves as a regional resource library. The average customer does not realize the difference between a St. Paul library and a Ramsey County library.

**Revenue Enhancement Ideas** - The Board discussed the list of revenue enhancement ideas considered by the Library over the past several years. Nemitz stated the difficulty in projecting new revenues, without hard data to back up the estimates. For example, increasing the adult overdue fine from 30¢ to 40¢ per day (33%), would generate about $114,000 per year assuming no changes in customer behavior. However, fine revenues typically drop immediately after a rate increase, as customers are more careful to return items on time.

Norrgard noted that the Library already has some premium services, such as the rental collections of best seller books and DVDs. Printing and copying also have user fees, and could be considered premium services. Nemitz cautioned the Library Board about charging for services, noting that such a practice could drive away low-income customers who can't afford to pay.

Nygren indicated that the Library needs to run a more efficient system, and live within our budget constraints. He felt it would be better to have fewer sites than reduce or eliminate weekend hours. Nemitz suggested that the Library could request bridge funding from Ramsey County in order to implement the portal solution. Raphael noted that the current economic situation makes this the ideal time to implement changes.

The Library Board discussed video games as an additional rental collection, whose profits could be used to subsidize the materials budget. Lamb suggested charging for reserves, an idea Nemitz felt was contrary to the Facilities Master Plan approved by the Board in 2008, and unfairly penalizes customers of the smaller libraries.

**Basic & Premium Services** – The Board members gave Nemitz their checklists of potential premium services to compile for future discussion.

**Administrative Merger** – The Library Board discussed the possibility of merging administrative functions with another entity. There are many possibilities, including St. Paul, Anoka County, or Washington County. A larger, northeast metro library district might generate the most savings. The Library could also become a separate taxing district. Nemitz indicated that funding will be a perennial problem, as libraries are funded locally, but serve many customers who reside outside their taxing districts.

Lamb suggested that reducing hours at the smaller libraries would affect fewer customers. However, reducing hours at the larger libraries is directly opposite of the Strategic Plan. Norrgard made a motion stating that reducing hours at the larger library branches be the last resort for balancing the 2010-2011 Budget. Aplikowski seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

**NEXT MEETING:**
Depending on whether new information regarding the budget is available, the June 17 Library Board meeting may be cancelled. If so, the Library Board's next meeting will be held July 15, 2009, at the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

**MEETING ADJOURNED 8:15 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson,
Library Board Coordinator