

Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board

September 18, 2019

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:

Deb Berry, Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, John Hakes, Craig Klausing, Sida Ly-Xiong, Sylvia Neblett, Gwen Willems

STAFF PRESENT:

Jill Boldenow, Library Director; Lynn Wyman, Deputy Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Meg Robertson, New Brighton Library Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner; Johanna Berg, Deputy Ramsey County Manager; Jolie Wood, Ramsey County Policy Analyst; Kristi Saksvig, Ramsey County Communications Manager; Cyndi Cook, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries Executive Director; Les Sipkema, Shoreview resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Neblett called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in Room 218 of the New Brighton Community Center, 400 – 10th Street N.W.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Sipkema commented on printing at the library, tax form availability, Library Board online documents, and the upcoming driveway construction project at Roseville.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Willems made a motion to approve the agenda for September 18, 2019, as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Klausing made a motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2019 as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Important Dates – All libraries are closed October 21. The Friends Annual Author Talk and Luncheon with Sarah Stonich is November 9.

New Digitizing Equipment – With support from an LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant awarded to Jenny Jackson, the Library recently acquired more digitizing equipment. This includes a flatbed scanner for 35mm slides, 35mm film strips, and 6x22cm film strips; an additional FastFoto duplex color scanner; an additional VHS to digital converter; a cassette digitizer; and an 8mm/Super 8 film digitizer. The photo and slide scanners are especially popular. One patron reported that he has digitized over 2,500 photographs so far, and other patrons have returned over multiple weeks to work through boxes of media.

Robust County Partnerships – To advance our goals, the Library collaborates with over 150 community partners each year, including several Ramsey County departments. Here are some highlights:

Charles Mosner, who coordinates jobs and small business programs, has expanded our work with **Ramsey County Workforce Solutions**. Together, we're offering a variety of opportunities this fall to assist jobseekers. A job fair was held at RCL-Roseville on September 13 with a range of professional, technical, and service opportunities. Beginning in October, career navigators will be available on a drop-in basis at RCL-Maplewood,

providing services such as career pathways exploration, resume and cover letter writing consultation, and employment resource connections. We'll also host workshops for older jobseekers transitioning into new lines of work.

Therese Sonnek, who coordinates sustainability-themed programs, partners with **Ramsey County Environmental Health** to offer the hugely popular Fix It Clinics. Therese also worked with them and the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program to offer new classes this year on vegetable and herb gardening, planting for pollinators, and pest detection.

Branch managers at RCL-Roseville, Shoreview, and White Bear Lake are all working with **Ramsey County Elections** to help make voting more accessible to residents. Eligible voters may vote at these libraries October 29-November 2 and on November 4.

As part of Judy Woodward's portfolio of history programs, she regularly cosponsors events with the **Ramsey County Historical Society**. Upcoming programs at RCL-Roseville include: *The Story of George Bonga*, on September 26, and *John Diers, 1,100 Streetcars: The Rise and Fall of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company*, on October 24.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:

Friends "POP-UP" Used Book Sale – The Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries is hosting a Used Book Sale at the Ramsey County Library in Shoreview, 4560 North Victoria Street. Thousands of books, DVDs, and CDs from all seven Ramsey County Library branches, as well as private donations, will be sold. Most items sell for \$1 or less. Friday and Saturday are ALL DAY BAG SALE DAYS...all the books you can fit into a bag for \$5.00!

NEW THIS YEAR...the first 100 people in line on September 25 for the sale will receive a Friends Book Tote!

MALF Workshop at White Bear Lake: Storming the Forts: Library Services on the Move – We will be co-hosting a Minnesota Association of Library Friends (MALF) workshop at White Bear Lake on October 4, 2019 from 11:30-3:30. The keynote speaker will be Nick Dimassis, director of the Beloit (WI) Public Library who will focus on ways that Friends organizations can assist their library along the journey to "service excellence." The event is free and open to all Friends members and library staff or board members who are interested. Contact Cyndi Cook at ccook@rclfriends for more information.

Registration Now Open for the 40th Annual Author Talk and Luncheon – Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries is hosting our 40th annual Author Talk and Luncheon at the North Oaks Golf Club on November 9, 2019. Proceeds will help expand the collection of large print, audio and electronic materials available at the seven Ramsey County Library locations in Maplewood, Mounds View, New Brighton, North St. Paul, Roseville, Shoreview and White Bear Lake.

The Author Talk features Sarah Stonich, award-winning author of internationally acclaimed books *Vacationland*, *These Granite Islands* and *The Ice Chorus*. Ms. Stonich won the 2019 Minnesota Book Award for Best Novel with her latest book, *Laurentian Divide*. Returning to the northern Minnesota town of Hatchet Inlet, *Laurentian Divide* picks up the story where *Vacationland* left off, providing a poignant portrayal of life on the edge in border country.

Friends members and their guests receive discounted registration but membership is not required to attend. Registration is \$28 for members and their guests, \$38 for non-members. Visit rclfriends.org/events/luncheon to register online or print a mail-in form. You can also pick up a paper form from any Ramsey County Library location or Friends Used Bookstore.

Upcoming Events

- Pop Up Book Sale, September 24-28, 2019 at Shoreview
- MALF workshop, October 4, 2019 at White Bear Lake
- Author Luncheon, November 9, 2019, at North Oaks Golf Club
- Friends Board of Directors, November 18, 2019 at Roseville
- SAVE the DATE—Friends 2020 Gala—*Hats off to the Library—Welcome to The Roaring 20's!* February 1, 2020 at Roseville

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE RETIREMENT OF ADELE MORRIS:

Librarian Adele Morris has announced her retirement, effective September 26, 2019. A resolution honoring Adele for her 34 years of service was shared at the meeting.

Berry made a motion to approve the Resolution Regarding the Retirement of Adele Morris, and to authorize the Library Board Chair to sign the document. Willems seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

WRITE OFF UNCOLLECTIBLE DEBT:

According to the Library's Accounts Receivable procedures, when an account is determined to be uncollectible, the account may be written off the Library's financial accounting records and no longer recognized as an account receivable for financial reporting purposes. The write-off of a receivable should be considered only when one or more of the following criteria have been met:

- At least six years have elapsed since the debt was incurred;
- All reasonable and appropriate collection efforts have been exhausted;
- The Library determines that further collection efforts are not in the best economic interests of the County;
- No reasonable expectation of payment can be expected.

The Library shall obtain approval from the County Attorney's Office to write-off uncollectible accounts of less than \$1,000.00. The Library shall document the reasons for the write-off and make such documentation available for review by the County Attorney's Office. Write-off of debts \$1,000.00 or more must be approved by the Library Board. The County Attorney will send an opinion of collectability along with the Library's letter of request to write off receivables to the Director of Finance. After recommendation by the Library's budget analyst and the approval of the Finance Director, the charges will be written off the Library's integrated library system (ILS).

Writing off a debt is an accounting transaction and does not cancel the legal obligation of the debtor to pay the debt. Collection of the account receivable may be pursued after the account has been written off if information comes to light that makes further collection efforts worthwhile.

Patrons owing \$25 or more are considered for the Revenue Recapture Program, a program that began in 1980 when legislation authorized the Minnesota Department of Revenue to intercept—or recapture—taxpayer refunds and apply them to debts the taxpayers owe to other state agencies, the University of Minnesota, and to certain local government units. The Library has recovered over \$1,000,000 in debt since it began utilizing Revenue Recapture in 1995.

The Library identified 5,696 patron accounts meeting the criteria for write-off, totaling \$108,878.48. No accounts exceed the \$1,000 threshold requiring Library Board approval and 54% are \$10 or less. The proposed write-offs will be forwarded to the County Attorney's Office and Finance Department as outlined in the Library's Accounts Receivable procedures.

Klausing questioned whether the write offs affect Library revenues received. Staff indicated that the write offs are included in revenue projections for each year.

Hakes made a motion to authorize the Library staff to forward the proposed write-off of uncollectible debt in the amount of \$108,878.48 to the County Attorney's Office and Finance Department as outlined in the Library's Accounts Receivable procedures. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

FINES AND FEES POLICY:

Public policies are brought to the Library Board every year on a scheduled basis. The Fines and Fees Policy is under consideration this month. The revised policy states that as of 2020, the Library will not charge daily overdue fines for youth materials (except for youth Interlibrary Loans and youth rental items). The policy adds additional language to clarify that all lost or damaged items, including youth and adult materials, are subject to a replacement fee. The fines table incorporates the youth materials fines change, adds new item types, and reduces the DVD daily fines rate. The County Manager's recommended budget included additional levy revenue to offset the elimination of daily overdue fines on youth materials. The County Board will approve the 2020-2021 budget in December.

Boldenow reviewed the proposed changes to the policy, which support youth literacy and provide consistent loan periods across different types of materials. Saksvig outlined the communication plan for the proposed policy change. County and Library communication channels will be utilized, as will local school districts via the digital backpack notification system. Two major library events held each year in January, the kindergarten card party and the history day program, will also be used to communicate the policy change. The Library Board reviewed the changes, and discussed the \$10 service threshold.

Willems made a motion to approve the updated Fines and Fees Policy, contingent upon Ramsey County Board approval of the proposed Library budget for 2020-2021, with an effective policy date of January 1, 2020. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

RAMSEY COUNTY NAMING RIGHTS POLICY:

Ramsey County Deputy County Manager Johanna Berg and Ramsey County Policy Analyst Jolie Wood were present to discuss the draft Ramsey County Naming Policy. Berg noted that Ramsey County restructured in 2015, forming four service teams supported by a strategic team.

The collapse of the Vadnais Sports Center in 2018 and the need to secure funding for a new facility raised the issues of County principles guiding naming in general and corporate naming rights in particular. Additionally, the names of buildings and parks elsewhere have come under scrutiny in light of their historical context and present impact on diverse communities. At a February workshop on corporate naming rights, the County Board requested a comprehensive review and update of the Naming Rights Policy, with a 21st century perspective that includes considerations of racial equity and ensures robust community engagement.

Berg and Wood are meeting with community advisory groups and boards including CIPAC, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Library Board, to gather input on the draft policy. The final policy will go to the County Board for approval by the end of 2019.

Boldenow requested that the Library be allowed to offer naming of areas or rooms within facilities as a fundraising mechanism. She noted that the current draft of the policy presented to the Library Board does not allow for naming rights, a practice the Library has used with great success for fundraising and community engagement and involvement. A list of approved naming rights for Library rooms and spaces was distributed. Berg noted that the new policy would not undo any current naming agreements in place.

Cyndi Cook, Executive Director of the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries, indicated that the ability to offer naming rights has led to long-term relationships and follow-up donations from several groups. The funding raised provides amenities and flexibility in building projects that can't be achieved through County funding alone. Cook stated that it has been a successful tool for 10 years, and the Friends would like the opportunity to continue using it.

The Library Board discussed the draft policy, and whether donors would contribute at the same level without the incentive of naming rights. Neblett indicated that donors would support the Library without the option of naming rights, while others felt that naming rights are a major incentive for donors. Chiclana-Ayala expressed concern that the draft policy would take away the Library Board's authority to grant naming rights.

Wood noted that County staff are also in the process of developing a Community Engagement Policy, a Racial Equity Policy, and a Donor Policy, which will all tie into the Naming Rights Policy. Library Board members were encouraged to share their opinions on the draft policy with Berg and Wood via email by September 23, 2019. Ly-Xiong asked Berg and Wood to share the revised draft policy, incorporating feedback received from the Library Board, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and CIPAC.

NEW BRIGHTON BRANCH REPORT:

Trends in the Service Area –

- The New Brighton Elementary redevelopment project (plans released April 2019) will result in medium to high density housing in an area near Old Highway 8 and 5th street. This area is within walking distance of the library.
- 12.7% of New Brighton residents are foreign-born with 14.8% reporting home language other than English spoken, 6% of Arden Hills residents are foreign-born with 8% reporting home language other than English spoken.
- 10.8% of New Brighton residents have a disability, and 30.5% of New Brighton adults 65+ have a disability. 8.8% of Arden Hills residents have a disability.
- 32% of New Brighton households (owned and rental combined) are cost-burdened. 18.4% of Arden Hills households (owned and rental combined) are cost burdened.
- *Demographic information for New Brighton and Arden Hills is from mncompass.org. New Brighton residents dominate the service area, but Arden Hills residents form a sizeable patron base.*

Library Issues and Service Trends –

- RCL—New Brighton continues to serve many patrons from outside the geographical service area due to co-location with the community center.
- There are plans to add English language support programming at this location.
- Increasing outreach—this year we had a popup presence at Stockyard Days and Farmer's Market.
- Small library footprint and no private rooms impact library usability.

Robertson noted that New Brighton has been able to provide more programming with an additional librarian hired this year. New Brighton also has a new children's librarian, Anna Smithberger, replacing Tami Lee after her transfer to Maplewood.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND SALARY REVIEW:

The Library Board went into Executive Session to discuss the 2019 performance appraisal and salary review for Library Director Jill Boldenow. Following the conclusion of the Executive Session, Neblett made a motion to award Boldenow a merit increase of 2% added to her base salary, plus a one-time 1.5% compensation supplement, effective September 12, 2019. Klausung seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

October 16, 2019—Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, 3025 Southlawn Drive, 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ly-Xiong adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator