
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board April 15, 2020

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:

Deb Berry, Claire Chang, Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, Sida Ly-Xiong, Sylvia Neblett, Gwen Willems, Steve Woods

STAFF PRESENT:

Jill Boldenow, Library Director; Lynn Wyman, Deputy Director; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Carol Jackson, Shoreview Library Manager; Monica Stratton, Maplewood Library Manager; Meg Robertson, New Brighton Library Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner; Cyndi Cook, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries Director

CALL TO ORDER:

Neblett called the virtual meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Willems made a motion to approve the agenda for April 15, 2020, as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chang made a motion to approve the minutes of February 19, 2020 as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

ANNUAL REPORT TO STATE:

State Library Services, a division of the Minnesota Department of Education, coordinates a statistical survey on library usage, collection size, staffing distribution, etc. for every library in Minnesota each year. Libraries are required to submit their annual data to the State Library Services Office no later than April 1.

Policymakers, library administrators and the general public use the statistical data to plan and evaluate library development and services. Data for public, academic and state library agencies is available from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The 2019 report will be available electronically after the data has been vetted by State Library Services.

Chang made a motion to authorize the Library Board Chair and Library Director to sign and submit the 2019 Minnesota Public Library Annual Report Approval Form to the Office of State Library Services as mandated. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ramsey County Library staff have addressed new, difficult challenges due to COVID-19. This quickly unfolding pandemic has impacted everyone in various ways, both inside and outside of the workplace. In response to the call for a new model of library service delivery, this team has been amazing, generous, thoughtful, and creative. We have worked together to learn from experts in Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health and to adopt new, safe practices in our workplaces and elsewhere. We have sustained and redesigned valuable services for the community. We know that there is a long road ahead of us. Ramsey County Library could not deliver any of its services without the efforts of each remarkable staff member.

Ramsey County is committed to providing efficient, effective, and equitable operational approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ramsey County Library launched the modified services outlined below on March 23.

- Ramsey County Library buildings are closed to the public.
- Curbside holds pickup service is available at three locations; please call ahead. RCL - Maplewood, 651-724-6003, Press 3; RCL - Roseville, 651-724-6001, Press 3; RCL - Shoreview, 651-724-6006, Press 3. Pickup times are Monday through Thursday, 10am-9pm; Friday and Saturday, 10am-5pm; and Sunday, 12-5pm. Patrons with items on hold at Mounds View, New Brighton, North St. Paul or White Bear Lake may call those libraries during business hours to have items transferred to one of the pickup locations.
- Libraries in Maplewood, Roseville and Shoreview also offer curbside pickup of printed materials, including tax documents, social service applications, online forms, website information, and more. Contact one of these libraries by phone or email to access this services.
- Home Delivery is available for residents of suburban Ramsey County who meet one of the following eligibility requirements: an individual over the age of 60; an individual who is self-quarantining due to COVID-19; or an individual with a health, transportation, or disability barrier that precludes them from using curbside pickup service. For more information and to enroll in the Home Delivery program, please call RCL – Roseville at 651-724-6001, Press 2.
- Book returns are closed. Due dates for all items have been extended and items will not accrue fines.
- A Library account providing instant access to electronic resources may be obtained by phone.
- Reference, tech help and reader’s advisory services are available by email and phone.
- Virtual programs are available. Join us Monday and Friday at 10:30am for Family Storytime and Wednesday at 10:30am for Baby Storytime on Facebook Live!
- Libraries in Maplewood, Roseville and Shoreview have drop boxes for County documents.

Frequently updated public health information can be found at ramseycounty.us/coronavirus.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARY REPORT:

Things have changed dramatically for the Friends as the COVID 19 crisis has evolved. In keeping with the Governor’s orders, the Friends office has been closed since March 27. However, staff are working our regular schedules from home and the Friends Board and all of our committees are meeting virtually and moving forward on our strategic priorities for 2020-2022.

The Friends used bookstores are also closed and we are in the process of taking up some new strategies to offset the resulting revenue losses. For example, GiveMN—the home of the annual Give to the Max campaign—will be hosting an online fundraiser to help support nonprofits and schools all across Minnesota. This event, #GiveAtHome, will take place for a full week from May 1-8. More info to come on how to support the Friends through this campaign!

We are also actively promoting the modified services implemented by Ramsey County Library on social media and have been continually impressed with the creative ways that RCL is working to meet community needs during these times of extreme social distancing. We salute you!!

LIBRARY SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19:

Ramsey County has been actively engaged in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for several weeks. All County facilities closed to the public on March 16, 2020. The Library and other departments developed modified service plans that were launched as of March 23. These service delivery plans are aligned with Governor Walz’s Executive Order, which calls for local governments to deliver essential services. The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution declaring the essential, priority services of the County (including Library services) and that all county employees are integral to supporting these services.

Boldenow reported that Ramsey County Library has completed three weeks of modified library services, which began March 23. The three regional libraries, located in Maplewood, Roseville and Shoreview, are doing robust business via curbside, contactless delivery. Library materials are placed in plastic bags, with the patron's hold slip on the outside of the bag. Patrons pick up their requested materials from tables in front of the library entrances. Checkouts average about 1,000 per day via this labor-intensive process. RCL has also seen a great increase in usage of electronic materials, including e-books and e-audiobooks. Reference services are available via telephone or email, and document printing is also available. Staff are also working on virtual programming, with events available via the Library website, Facebook, and Youtube. The Summer Learning Program had already planned to utilize Beanstack, the online tracking app for reading and other activities.

Home delivery service recently started, with suburban Ramsey County residents meeting specific criteria eligible:

- Over age 60.
- Quarantining due to COVID-19.
- Individual with a health, transportation, or disability barrier that precludes them from using curbside pickup service.

Due dates for all library materials have been extended, and no fines are being charged while library facilities are closed to the public. The Library just began accepting returned library materials at Roseville, with items being quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours before check in for safety.

The majority of Library staff are working onsite, with some working from home and others utilizing COVID leave provided by Ramsey County for those with the virus or underlying health conditions, those quarantining following potential exposure or travel, and those with childcare issues. All staff have been declared essential by Ramsey County, with no furloughs occurring. Some staff may be deployed to work for other Ramsey County departments during the pandemic. Staff working in the libraries are observing social distancing guidelines.

Boldenow is working closely with Ramsey County staff on the development of an incident command structure, communicating changes in the service delivery model to the County Manager each week. The financial impact is being closely tracked, with COVIDI-related purchases reported to Ramsey County for potential reimbursement from federal emergency funds. Expenditures to date have been minimal, and could be absorbed with significant impact if reimbursement does not cover the additional costs. Boldenow has also been meeting regularly with the other MELSA library directors, looking ahead at service model changes.

Staff noted that library patrons have been extremely grateful for the curbside and remote services being offered. The Library Board members expressed their admiration and gratitude to library staff members for the rapid development of the new service model, and for their dedication in serving library patrons during a stressful, emotional time.

KANOPY VIDEO STREAMING SUBSCRIPTION:

At the February meeting, the Library Board authorized staff to pursue procurement and contracting with the preferred video streaming provider, Kanopy, at an annual cost not to exceed \$35,000. Following that meeting, Ramsey County Library closed to walk-in services on March 17, 2020, and a Stay at Home order was issued by Minnesota Governor Walz effective 3/28/20 that remains in place through at least May 4, 2020.

Ramsey County Procurement approved an emergency procurement request for a one-year subscription to Kanopy, based on the pandemic and the County-wide efforts to provide as many remote services as possible in order to serve the residents of Ramsey County while maintaining social distance protocols.

The original sales quote from Kanopy was received more than six months ago, and expired before the emergency procurement request was approved. Kanopy's new quote for same subscription plan is now \$40,000 for one year based on increased usage projected due to the pandemic. A reduced plan for the original \$34,000 amount would limit patron usage of the service to a smaller number of credits each month.

Subscription details include:

- One year contract for \$40,000.
- Contract allows simultaneous access for library patrons.
- Patrons are issued 10 credits per month, with a flat fee deducted from the contract amount for each use.
- There is no penalty for exceeding the deposit amount.
- Any unused funds rollover to the next contract year.

The contract has been reviewed and approved by Ramsey County Procurement, Information Services and the County Attorney's Office.

Chiclana-Ayala made a motion to authorize the Library Director to contract with Kanopy for a one-year video streaming subscription at a cost not to exceed \$40,000. Chang seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

NEXT MEETING:

May 20, 2020—6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Following a motion by Berry and a second by Chiclana-Ayala, Neblett adjourned the virtual meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator