
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board May 20, 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; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Carol Jackson, Shoreview Library Manager; Meg Robertson, New Brighton Library Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner

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:

Ly-Xiong requested that the Library Board discuss the County Manager's proposal to create County service centers in the three regional libraries. Chiclana-Ayala made a motion to approve the agenda for May 20, 2020, as revised. Chang seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Modified Library Services – Ramsey County Library continues to deliver a number of modified services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Library staff are meeting the steady resident need for physical, virtual, and phone-based resources. The Library's service approach prioritizes access and safety through contactless circulation and phone and digital access.

The Library is tracking new metrics based on its modified service portfolio. Curbside checkout service is a very busy experience for the staff delivering this. While circulation numbers are lower than they would be under normal circumstances, the current numbers reflect a robust, labor-intensive service process. Virtual programming is largely new for us, and we are excited by the high number of program views and our ability to reach as many as 800 views of a single program. Home Delivery is the most recent addition; this service has enrolled 85 eligible patrons and delivered a significant number of items. Patrons have increased their use of e-materials—with e-book circulation increasing about 40% and e-audiobooks about 50% above normal levels. The Library and MELSA have shifted and added collections funding to support this increased digital demand. Staff are developing plans for a phase two service model to address the need for computer access and additional curbside pickup options.

Week	Date Range	Items Checked Out Curbside at RCL-Roseville	Items Checked Out Curbside at RCL-Maplewood	Items Checked Out Curbside at RCL-Shoreview	Items Checked Out Digitally (E-Books, E-Audiobooks, E-Magazines)	Virtual Programs	Total Views of Virtual Programs	Home Delivery Patrons Served	Items Provided by Home Delivery
1	3/23/-3/29	2,112	1,083	1,841	11,776	2	1,597	N/A	N/A
2	3/30-4/5	2,891	1,538	2,469	12,225	3	1,612	N/A	N/A
3	4/6-4/12 (closed 4/12)	2,792	1,443	2,011	14,556	3	1,635	N/A	N/A
4	4/13-4/19	3,289	1,542	2,483	13,101	4	910	N/A	N/A
5	4/20-4/26	3,403	1,722	2,382	13,447	3	1,093	57	188
6	4/27-5/3	3,267	1,618	2,413	12,459	3	957	22	60
7	5/4-5/10	4,163	1,859	2,842	13,721	4	2,839	37	130

Frequently updated public health information can be found at ramseycounty.us/coronavirus. For information on modified Library services and access to digital resources for kids, teens, and adults, visit rclreads.org.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARY REPORT:

The Friends staff and volunteer planning committees continue to work remotely and our used bookstores remain closed.

The first week of May we joined nonprofits across the state in raising funds in concert with the #GiveAtHomeMn campaign and secured nearly \$6,000 towards our \$36,000 commitment to the RCL Summer Learning Program. We are grateful to the many members and donors who helped to make that happen!

We are in year two of our three-year membership drive. More than 130 new members have joined the Friends since June 2019 for a total of 803 member households. We aspire to be 1,000 members strong by April 2022.

The Friends Retail Sales Committee is actively exploring options for managing RCL weeds, gearing up for increasing online sales, and potentially arranging for curbside pick-up of bags of books if a traditional fall sale is not feasible. A pod has been rented temporarily for book storage at the Roseville Library. This enables Friends bookstore volunteers to access books for online sales without entering the library building or coming into contact with others.

The Friends and RCL worked together to get weeded books to the newly set up Ramsey County shelter for people who are homeless and testing positive for COVID-19. This was a nice opportunity to do some good during difficult times.

Roseville in Bloom is a free public art installation sponsored by the Roseville Visitors Association featuring twenty large rose sculptures throughout Roseville in the summer of 2020. The Maguire Agency is sponsoring a Rose sculpture at the Roseville Library in honor of the Friends. Activities will launch in June.

To show our support for the hardworking staff of RCL, Shayne Miller, Friends Office Manager, delivered ice cream treats at all locations—curbside with advance notice, of course!

2020 FIRST QUARTER REPORTS:

On a quarterly basis, Library staff presents several reports to the Library Board for information and discussion. The reports include:

- Workplan Report – prepared by Jill Boldenow, Library Director
- Financial Report – prepared by Mary Larson, Financial Manager

- Statistical Report – prepared by Jeff Eide, Planning & Analysis Manager
- Incident Report – prepared by Mickey Ladich, Property Manager

The Library Board discussed the first quarter reports as presented.

WORKPLAN REPORT:

Boldenow noted that almost 7,000 library accounts for children and teens were unblocked effective January 1 following a one-time fine forgiveness. During the first quarter, 667 of those accounts were used to check out almost 5,000 library materials. She also reported that BiblioCommons, the new website and discovery layer, launched during the first quarter of 2020. The website has been a great, dynamic tool for Library staff to utilize during the pandemic to keep patrons informed of new, modified library services. The new discovery layer features e-books integrated into the catalog.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Larson indicated that the financial report for the first quarter of 2020 is very routine. Projected revenues from Library Fines were decreased for 2020 based on the Library's decision to no longer collect late fees on youth library materials, along with the one-time waiver of fines on youth accounts effective January 1.

The Library Board discussed the effects of the pandemic on projected revenues and expenses, which have been absorbed by the Library's operating budget to date. Pandemic-related expenses are being tracked for potential reimbursement from federal disaster relief funds.

STATISTICAL REPORT:

Eide noted that statistics for the first quarter were impacted by the pandemic. The libraries closed to the public on March 17, but business was also impacted earlier both by program cancellations and modifications to public computing spaces. Circulation of electronic materials increased by 14%, and accounted for 19% of total circulation in the first quarter.

The Library Board discussed statistical tracking of modified library services during the pandemic. The State Office of Library Services provided direction on statistics to track, including checkouts via curbside, hours of curbside service, and participants of virtual programs. RCL is also tracking home deliveries and telephone reference service (using standard MELSA guidelines). Patron visits for computer usage will be tracked when computing service by appointment begins during the second quarter.

INCIDENT REPORT:

A total of 23 incidents were reported in the first quarter, a decrease of 34% from the fourth quarter of 2019.

LIBRARY SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19:

Ramsey County Library has been actively engaged in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for two months, and has seen a tremendous growth in the number of curbside checkouts. Staff are working on streamlining internal processes and taking steps to keep items moving. The curbside service model requires a significant amount of time managing circulation processes.

Boldenow reported that a plan is being developed to begin offering public computing by appointment at the three regional libraries starting June 1, pending the availability of supplies. The spaces will be set up for social distancing. With assistance from Ramsey County Property Management, public computers and workspaces will be disinfected between appointments. Tech tip sheets will be provided for patrons, and assistance will be available via phone. Printing will continue to be available via staff, a service currently offered curbside.

RAMSEY COUNTY RESIDENTS FIRST SERVICE CENTERS:

Ramsey County Manager Ryan O'Connor spoke with the County Board of Commissioners about the next steps in his plan to open County service centers in the three regional libraries, as well as in the Government Center East and the Plato Building. The proposed service centers would open in the near future, and could be set up with a small or large footprint. Small centers could be a single, trained navigator who meets with County residents by appointment to provide assistance with County services. Large centers could include several workstations. Classes may be offered in Library Community Program Rooms by Workforce Solutions as part of the proposal.

A coordinator has been appointed by Ramsey County to oversee the project. The coordinator has toured the proposed sites to determine space availability. Commissioner McGuire noted that the County Board will be holding a workshop to discuss the proposal, which was first proposed by the County Manager in 2019.

The Library Board members expressed support for the service centers, and asked about the decision-making process and the relationship between the Library Board and the County Board. Members felt strongly that the Library Board, which is responsible for Library services and represents the suburban community, should be more involved in the discussion. The Library is funded by a suburban-only tax levy restricted to library operations. Capacity of the Community Program Rooms was also a concern. Commissioner McGuire indicated that Boldenow was notified about the proposal, which is still in the early planning stages. She noted that the Library facilities are County-owned buildings. Commissioner McGuire encouraged the Library Board members to participate in the upcoming workshop on the proposal, and will promote communication between the County and the Library Board.

NEXT MEETING:

June 17, 2020—6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Following a motion by Berry and a second by Chiclana-Ayala, Neblett adjourned the virtual meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator