

## Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board April 21, 2021

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**LIBRARY TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

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

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Karen Saltis, Interim Library Director; Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Carol Jackson, Library Manager; Meg Robertson, Library Manager; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner and Liaison to the Library Board of Trustees; Lynn Belgea, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

Willems called the virtual meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

New Library Deputy Director Pang Yang was introduced. Yang came to Ramsey County Library after 17 years with St. Paul Public Library, most recently as manager of the Arlington Hills Library. Her background includes project management, community engagement, and racial equity, diversity, and inclusion experience.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No public comment.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Neblett made a motion to approve the agenda for April 21, 2021, as presented. Willems seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Neblett made a motion to approve the minutes of March 17, 2021 as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**Service Delivery Redesign:** Ramsey County Library-Roseville and Ramsey County Library-Shoreview have now expanded service delivery to include browsing. New Brighton, North St. Paul and White Bear Lake plan to expand their service delivery offerings as of Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. Maplewood and Mounds View will follow shortly thereafter on Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Public Health, Property Management, Service Centers and Library staff continue working collaboratively to address all applicable details to ensure safety for patrons and staff. Patron feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with the expansion of services.

**Ramsey County Library-Shoreview Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project Close-out:** A balance of \$757,019.44 remains in the Shoreview CIP account. On May 6<sup>th</sup> staff plans to recommend to the Capital Improvement Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC) that this remaining balance be transferred to the RCL-Maplewood renovation project to close the Shoreview project. Subsequently an equal amount would be returned to the Library Operating Fund as this source funded Phase 1 of the Maplewood Project. Pending support of the CIPAC, next steps include a request for county board action for formal approval of this close-out recommendation. The County Board approves all CIP projects and funding plans.

**IT Consolidation Update:** The moving of staff PCs onto the county network was completed at the library in New Brighton. New Brighton was the initial "Proof of Concept" site where replacement PCs were installed and functionality testing for library business applications initiated.

Some minor issues are remaining, but we are finding no reasons to delay. The staff PC consolidation continued with Mounds View and North St. Paul the week of April 12<sup>th</sup>. The remaining schedule includes:

- Week of 4/19 – White Bear Lake on 4/20 and Maplewood, start on 4/22
- Week of 4/26 – Shoreview 4/27-4/29
- Week of 5/3 – Roseville 5/4-5/6
- Week of 5/17 or 5/24 – Final VoIP phone number cutover

Following the consolidation of staff PCs and the VoIP cutover, work will focus on updating library business applications and public computing.

**Joint Proposal to Shoreview Community Foundation:** In partnership with the City of Shoreview, Ramsey County Library-Shoreview submitted a grant proposal to the Shoreview Community Foundation for the purchase and installation of four outdoor bicycle workstations with tire pumps and repair tools. The proposal seeks to provide these stations in key locations in the trail system, including the Ramsey County Library in Shoreview. If selected for funding, the City of Shoreview will take on the responsibility for installing, maintaining, and repairing these stations. Ramsey County Library-Shoreview will provide programming that will build strong community partners and active engagement around the bike repair stations. The total grant proposal is \$7,400. Notice of grant awards is expected at the end of April.

**Staff news:** Below is an email from a Shoreview patron. Positive feedback has been reported at Roseville as well. It's nice to hear positive words during this challenging time!

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021 10:07 AM

**To:** Jackson, Carol L <[Carol.L.Jackson@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US](mailto:Carol.L.Jackson@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US)>

**Subject:** Feedback

Hello Carol,

*I wanted to send you feedback regarding the staff working at Shoreview Library this past Tuesday.*

*As Covid has made people weary of each other, customer service has gone down the drain at many places, and it seems people have forgotten common courtesies, we were blown away at how wonderful the staff at Shoreview Library were. We were happily (not obligatorily) greeted upon our arrival. We had two people eagerly help us obtain our library cards (we are new to the area), and we had multiple other employees engage in conversation, compliment us, and say how wonderful it was to have patrons back in the library. We love libraries and have dearly missed them over the past year. This experience of neighborly people interacting made our experience that much more fantastic. Their hospitality reminded us what community should feel like and how good a simple helping hand can feel.*

*Please pass along this praise to the employees and let them know what they do really makes a big difference in our community.*

#### **Countywide Updates:**

1. The Service Delivery Senior Advisory Council and Operations Advisory Council are currently meeting. The Senior Advisory Council has been focusing on the vision, roadmap and scope of this group. Additionally, the group is discussing the current service catalog and the need for consistent updates. Two members of the community are part of this Council.

The Operations Advisory Council is comprised of members representing all county service teams as well as having community representation. The priorities of this team will be cross-county collaboration, role refinement, service onboarding and integration, and training. This team will begin with a current state assessment.

2. Libraries are providing space at the Roseville and Maplewood locations for Community Healing Circles to occur in-person throughout the month of April. Residents are invited to attend a series of virtual and in-person events that provide welcoming, safe and supportive environments for participatory dialogue, building connections and addressing community trauma caused by the killing of George Floyd last summer, the civil unrest that followed in our neighborhoods and the ongoing trial. These circles are led by cultural healers who are embedded in the community and who use their lived experiences, expertise and training to facilitate conversations that get at shared healing. RCL is supportive of these events and is grateful that we can offer these safe and trusted spaces within our community.
3. Property Management presented two major projects to the Capital Improvement Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC) on Thursday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. These projects include library specific building changes as well as changes that support county service center operations at RCL-Maplewood and RCL-Roseville. Decisions regarding these projects are expected in the summer.

Saltis acknowledged Administrative Professionals Day, recognizing Mary Larson, Andrea Strobush, and Amber Soler of the Library's Administrative Office staff.

She also reported that RCL has been awarded four passes for checkout at Ramsey County Library in North St. Paul as part of the Minnesota State Parks Pass program. Passes will be available weekly beginning June 1, 2021. This program piloted at the Ramsey County Library in White Bear Lake in 2019.

All staff members have been offered COVID-19 vaccinations through Ramsey County Public Health.

**LIBRARY GOLD CARDS:**

Ramsey County Library awards gold cards to volunteers and other individuals whose contributions have enhanced services to our library patrons. Due to the pandemic, the volunteer gold cards were not awarded in last year, so this year the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries have nominated volunteers from both 2020 and 2021:

2020

Sandi Riach  
Cathy Croghan  
Greg Bromen

2021

Susan Miller & Peggy Biernat  
Kerry Kleyman  
Kate Huebsch

Neblett made a motion to award Library Gold Cards to Sandy Riach, Cathy Croghan, Greg Bromen, Susan Miller and Peggy Biernat, Kerry Kleyman, and Kate Huebsch as symbols of appreciation for their contributions to the Ramsey County Library and to authorize the Library Director to sign the Gold Card certificates. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**2022/2023 BUDGET APPROVAL:**

The Library is part of the Economic Growth and Community Investments (EGCI) Service Team and has developed a draft 2022-2023 budget proposal using the base plus budget target provided by the Ramsey County Core Budget Team, which is based on the 2021 adjusted levy. Departments were directed to submit a budget meeting the target and include a narrative in the overview document outlining additional budget needs. Since last month's meeting, the deadline for budget submission has changed from April 23 to May 6, allowing departments more time to develop their budgets.

As staff developed the budget proposals, the emphasis was on developing budget proposals that focus on sustaining countywide strategic initiatives that support countywide goals; bringing to scale initiatives and programs that build stronger communities; building on what we've learned as an organization in the past two years and during the pandemic; fostering collaboration within and across service teams; tethering and making progress on performance measures; and demonstrating innovation, creativity, or efficiency.

Steps Taken to Meet 2022 and 2023 Base Plus Targets:

- Align with historic spending;
- Reduce collections budget which was previously supported by fund balance;
- Include revenue from anticipated reimbursements for telecommunications costs;
- Utilize grant funds to cover annual maintenance costs for BiblioCommons and Horizon software;
- Permanently eliminate adult fines;
- Reduce staffing costs by implementing a combination of the following to be determined through additional engagement: reductions to hours of operations/reduce programming/eliminate vacant position(s)/additional increase to vacancy factor.

Saltis outlined the factors facing the Library for the upcoming two-year budget period, and noted that the Library is looking at all options to reduce staff costs if needed, including minimum staffing levels, use of substitute staff, etc. She noted that if additional revenue does not become available from the State or County, input would be gathered from the Library Board, staff, and the public to determine where service reductions should be made.

The Library Board discussed service priorities and concerns regarding the proposed 2022/2023 budget request as presented. Trustees encouraged Library staff to focus on equity goals, and compare statistics on costs for different library programs to determine potential areas of reduction. The Trustees were in agreement in support of equity initiatives, although the timing of permanently eliminating adult late fees was discussed. The proposed reduction in the Library's collections budget for new materials was a unanimous concern among the Trustees.

Neblett made a motion to approve the proposed base plus budget as outlined by staff and to authorize the Library Director to submit the budget and overview including additional needs for the 2022-2023 budget. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**TASK FORCE UPDATE:**

Ly-Xiong indicated that representatives from the Library Board will participate in a facilitated meeting to discuss the revised Roles & Responsibilities chart, prior to the Joint Meeting with the County Board. The Trustees discussed the process for the facilitated meeting, which will include a Ramsey County Attorney in the discussion. The changes introduced in the document were discussed, along with the County's alignment goals.

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR SEARCH UPDATE:**

The timeline for the hiring process was briefly discussed. The process will kick off following the upcoming joint meeting with the County Board to finalize the Roles and Responsibilities chart.

**NEXT MEETING** – May 19, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Following a motion by Neblett and a second by Chang, Ly-Xiong adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson  
Library Board of Trustees Coordinator