
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board September 15, 2021

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; Chuck Wettergren, Digital Services Manager; Monica Stratton, Maplewood Library Manager; Carol Jackson, Shoreview Library Manager; Carrie Watts, Roseville Library Manager; Fay Cushman, Roseville Library Circulation Supervisor; Meg Robertson, New Brighton Library Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Ly-Xiong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Library Board trustees received written comments from Les Sipkema, Shoreview resident.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Willems made a motion to approve the agenda for September 15, 2021, as presented. Neblett seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Neblett made a motion to approve the minutes of August 18, 2021 as presented. Chiclana-Ayala seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

In addition to her written report, Saltis noted that the Library's budget hearing with the County Board was held on September 13, 2021. The hearing can be viewed via the Ramsey County website. George Hardgrove and Tony Lutgen from the EGCI Finance Team will attend the October meeting to discuss the finance consolidation. The Ramsey County Service Center is moving into the former Dunn Bros. Coffee location at Roseville on October 4. The RFP for new self-checkout equipment was released today and will come to the Library Board for contract approval at a future meeting.

New Staff: Four Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP) staff started on Tuesday, September 7th. Ramsey County Library (RCL) is also hosting two Right Track Plus interns. This career pathway internship program focuses on serving young adults impacted by the pandemic. Right Track Plus interns (ages 18-24) will be completing a 15-week paid internship. Right Track Plus is a partnership between Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul and is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act. RCL is pleased to be able to provide a rich work experience for these young people.

All Staff In-Service Day, Monday, October 18th, 2021: All Library buildings will be closed for the staff in-service day. Plans are being developed to accommodate a partially virtual program whereby staff will be physically present at one of the three regional libraries and linked virtually. Part of the session will connect all staff through technology and part will provide in person onsite activities. A focus will be placed on valuing staff and attending to their well-being.

Correctional Facility Work: Staff is working collaboratively with Community Corrections to offer temporary library cards and reference help using software with a chat function to residents of the correctional facilities. They are also working to provide a seamless transition when these individuals are released from incarceration. Access to resources makes a big impact on the lives of these individuals and showcases how truly valuable libraries are to *all* community members.

Staff News/Kudos: Sharing recent praise from patrons regarding wonderful work happening within our RCL system!

The praise below relates to a Legacy children's program.

Sent: Friday, August 13, 2021 11:49 AM

To: Wahlstrom, Ann <Ann.Wahlstrom@co.ramsey.mn.us>

Subject: Re: Creative Pastels: School of Fish - Legacy Survey

Hi Ann,

I left a review but also wanted to reach out and say a huge thank you for this wonderful course. My son absolutely loved it and I am amazed at how great of a job he did! His drawing turned out great!! We are so lucky to have access to so many great resources through the library.

Thanks again!

The positive email below showcases work of a couple branches. These remarks are representative of those given to other branches within our system.

Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 8:41 AM

To: District 2 Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire <District2@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US>

Cc: Saltis, Karen A <Karen.A.Saltis@CO.RAMSEY.MN.US>

Subject: appreciation for Ramsey County Libraries

Commissioner McGuire and Ms. Saltis –

Good morning! I wanted to pass along my family's gratitude for the Ramsey County Library system. Our kids have always enjoyed going to the library and the COVID-19 pandemic only increased our appreciation. In short, the library has been a life-saver for our family during this difficult time. The ability to pick up books from Roseville during the stay-at-home period, and then later our local library in New Brighton, was key to keeping our four kids ranging in age from 4 to 11 entertained and learning. We used many of the free "Read, Make, Do" kits, grab bags, etc. the list goes on. I remain so impressed with the staff, programming, availability of books, and how successfully the staff pivoted to meet challenges during the pandemic.

A special shout out to the staff of our local library in New Brighton – they've made a difficult time easier to get through.

Countywide/Service Team Updates:

1. 2022/2023 Budget Presentations to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners wrapped up on Tuesday, September 14th. Members of the Ramsey County Library Management Team, Library Board Trustees, and Friends of the Ramsey County Library were invited to view the Library presentation live on Monday, September 13th. A link is provided here to additional information [2022-23 Budget Information & Schedule](#).
2. As part of the 2022/2023 Economic Growth and Community Investment (EGCI) Service Team Budget, a consolidated Finance and Accounting Division is being created. George Hardgrove, EGCI Controller, and Tony Lutgen, Accountant IV, will be invited to the October Library Board meeting to discuss the benefits of this change and the effect it has on RCL and other EGCI departments. Stay tuned for more info.
3. Work on preparing the former Café space within the RCL-Roseville to serve as a Ramsey County Service Center is nearing completion. Service Center staff are expected to move out of the atrium and into their new location by the end of September. Branch, property management, and service center leadership have been working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:

Welcome Mary Worley!

We are delighted to welcome our new Friends Executive Director, Mary Flynn Worley! Mary comes to the Friends with a strong background and proven track record in non-profit development and leadership. She is a strategic thinker with a successful performance history raising support for a variety of non-profits. The Friends team is excited that Mary will bring her wealth of experience, gifted leadership, enthusiasm (and passion for reading!) to support the Ramsey County Library!

Plans are in the works for our November Author Talk:

Don't miss this chance to connect with Friends Board Members and hear from author Nancy Pearl on November 10! Zoom opens with Welcome Session starting at 6:10 pm, Program from 6:30-7:30 pm.

Members of the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries' Board will be providing updates from the organization and announcing the winner of the inaugural Ruth Palmer Award, then we'll hear from guest speaker Nancy Pearl.

About the author: Bestselling author, librarian, literary critic, and devoted reader Nancy Pearl regularly speaks about the importance and pleasure of reading at libraries and other groups around the world. She can be heard on NPR's *Morning Edition* and KWGS-FM in Tulsa, Oklahoma, discussing her favorite books and making book recommendations. Her monthly television show on the Seattle Channel, *Book Lust with Nancy Pearl*, features interviews with authors, poets, and other literary figures. Nancy even has her own action figure – the Archee McPhee Librarian Action Figure was modeled after her!

Proceeds support Ramsey County Library's programming for adults, children and teens.

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE RETIREMENT OF LYNNETTE POUND:

Neblett made a motion to approve the Resolution Regarding the Retirement of Lynnette Pound, and to authorize the Library Board Chair to sign the document. Chiclana-Ayala seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

FUTURE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS:

On September 10, 2021, Ramsey County shared updated guidance regarding formal meetings of boards and committees. Previous direction from July 2021 provided that formal advisory body meetings were to be conducted in-person. However, due to the Delta variant and substantial increase in transmissions, there have been questions surrounding how formal advisory body meetings should continue to be conducted while spread remains at the CDC level of substantial or high. This change in guidance reflects the evolving nature of the ongoing pandemic and requires boards and committees to be flexible, nimble, and adaptable while prioritizing the health, safety and well-being of residents and staff in Ramsey County.

Ultimately, it is in the best interests of each committee or board to make the best decision to protect the health, safety and well-being of their membership based on the most up to date and accurate public health information provided. Each formal advisory body chair and their members should make the decision if their meetings will be held virtually, or in-person based on applicable Ramsey County policies and/or requirements. While transmission rates are in the substantial or high CDC category (**Ramsey County is currently designated as "high"**), Ramsey County is encouraging staff and residents to meet virtually if possible due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The advisory body's final decision should be communicated back with the county staff coordinator and the deputy county manager for awareness. The County Board has moved to a virtual meeting setting during this period, as well, to demonstrate leadership in balancing public health safety with business needs.

If the advisory body chooses to meet in-person, the advisory body must adhere to the following requirements established by Saint-Paul Ramsey County Public Health, Property Management and Human Resources:

- Adhere to meeting and conference room capacity. Please follow county policy and posted signage and do not exceed recommended room capacities.
- Ramsey County staff and visitors must wear face covering when in public or shared indoor county spaces per the mask policy.
- Social distancing (6 feet apart) when in building, workspaces and outdoors when meeting per the mask policy.
- Public or outside organizations use of county meeting rooms is not allowed at this time.
- The Countywide COVID Preparedness Plan has also been updated for reference.

The Library Board trustees discussed whether to decide on virtual or in-person meetings on a month-to-month basis based on the County Board's actions, or to plan on virtual meetings through the end of 2021. Commissioner Reinhardt noted that Ramsey County's flexible workplace policy for employees will be implemented November 1. Saltis indicated that the County Attorney's Office will advise when to return to in-person meetings to comply with Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

Neblett made a motion to hold virtual Library Board meetings for the remainder of 2021 unless otherwise advised. Chiclana-Ayala seconded the motion, which was passed by majority roll call vote, with Woods dissenting.

ROSEVILLE BRANCH UPDATE:

Carrie Lyons, Library Manager, and Fay Cushman, Circulation Supervisor, were present to give the Library Board an overview of the Ramsey County Library in Roseville. Lyons noted that the Roseville staff have been incredible leaders during the last 1.5 years, receiving many public kudos for their services and embracing the challenge of providing service during the pandemic.

Trends in the Service Area:

- Roseville Area Schools, Independent School District 623, approved a masking requirement for the start of the 2021/2022 school year.
- Roseville Area Schools' student ethnicity: 43% white, 20% Asian, 16% Black, 14% Hispanic, 7% Multiracial, 1% American Indian.
- Roughly ¼ of jobs in Roseville are in the retail and food & accommodation industries, and those sectors have seen the greatest job losses in the past year, although retail has been able to recover more quickly than food & accommodation once restrictions were eased in the fall.
- Roseville has an unemployment rate of 4.1%. The US average is 6.0%.
- Roseville has seen the job market increase by 1.8% over the last year.

Library Issues and Service Trends:

- Business continues to increase. The Roseville Library is currently averaging approximately 325 visitors per day and circulating more than 2,200 items per day.
- Dunn Bros. briefly opened for drive thru and then walk-in service but closed shortly after due to financial difficulties.

Library Services and Events:

- The library is incrementally moving toward in-person teen and adult programming.
- Roseville began offering weekly e-reader and tech help labs this week. Circulation of E-resources is currently 24% of all transactions, about 50% higher than in a typical year. Roseville Children's Librarians will be offering some outdoor programming in the Reading Garden in September and October. This is the first in-person children's programming since March of 2020. With the exception of Paws to Read, indoor children's programs will remain virtual for the time being.

What is special and important about the library:

- Roseville staff displayed exceptional initiative and fortitude every step of the way during the past year and a half; they helped develop and implement curbside delivery service, public computing by appointment, grab-and-go, and Express Service.
- Two Roseville staff were redeployed to other positions during the pandemic. Librarian Jenna Emmans was offered -- and accepted -- a temporary assignment working with the Ramsey County COVID19 Incident team on food security. Kaylee Hockbein-Bryse was redeployed as a County Navigator for over a year. Both are back working at Roseville.
- Roseville Library served as a polling location for about a quarter of the year in 2020.
- Faram Kamdar donated \$4,000, in honor of her last husband Andre, to purchase a log cabin structure for the Children's Reading Garden.

The trustees and Commissioner Reinhardt thanked Lyons and Cushman for the hard work of the Roseville staff during the pandemic.

BUDGET HEARING UPDATE:

Commissioner Reinhardt noted that the Library's budget presentation on September 13 was very well done, and that the budget addenda will include funding to maintain the current days of service at all locations.

TASK FORCE UPDATE:

Ly-Xiong reported that the next facilitated meeting with Ramsey County management will take place on October 1.

MAPLEWOOD RENOVATION UPDATE:

Pang Yang, Deputy Director, reported that Ramsey County Property Management is leading the Maplewood renovation project. The Request for Proposals was issued July 14, 2021, with proposals due on August 19, 2021. Monica Stratton, Maplewood Library Manager, has been part of the team reviewing the proposals. Interviews with the top-ranked design-build teams will take place during the next week, with the design phase scheduled to begin in October. Woods and Neblett will represent the Library Board on the project team once the vendor is selected.

The Library Board trustees questioned how the use of minority owned contractors and subcontractors will be tracked. Commissioner Reinhardt noted that Ramsey County construction contracts require documentation for targeted vendors and also for prevailing wage requirements. In response to Library Board questions about the parking lot and grounds, Stratton noted that the project does not include any upgrades to the exterior but may be included in the budget for the Maplewood Service Center in the vacant coffee shop space.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE:

Yang reviewed the draft Statement of Work she created to outline the upcoming strategic planning process. The Library Board trustees discussed the budget for the process, which includes Ramsey County Community Engagement grant funds. Stakeholders were reviewed, as well as the Library Board's involvement and adoption of the finalized strategic plan. Comments on the draft Statement of Work should be sent to Saltis by September 24, and the solicitation will go out to the master contract list of vendors in early October.

NEXT MEETING –October 20, 2021, 6:30 p.m., online via Zoom communication software.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ly-Xiong adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Mary Larson
 Library Board of Trustees Coordinator