
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board of Trustees
January 19, 2022

LIBRARY TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Grace Atkins, Debra Berry, Claire Chang, Sida Ly-Xiong, Sylvia Neblett, David Perry, Steve Woods.

STAFF PRESENT:

Karen Saltis, Interim Library Director; Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Maggie Soukup, Library Board Coordinator, Jeff Eide, Roseville Senior Library Manager; Therese Sonnek, White Bear Lake Library Manager.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner and Liaison to the Library Board of Trustees; Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager of Economic Growth and Community investment; Jennifer Otley, Human Resources Manager; Mary Worley, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries Director; Stella Zimmerman, ACET.

CALL TO ORDER:

Ly-Xiong called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Neblett made a motion to approve the agenda for January 19, 2022, as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Neblett made a motion to approve the minutes for December 15, 2021, as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Happy New Year! This month's Director's Report is abbreviated due to my vacation. I included items on this written report which occurred before leaving on January 6th. Additional verbal updates will be shared at our meeting on January 19th.

New Hours Implemented at RCL Regional Branches (Maplewood, Roseville, Shoreview): As of January 1st, 2022, Ramsey County Regional Library Branches are closing one hour earlier Monday through Thursday. The schedule on these days is now 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. All other public service hours remained the same across the library system.

Countywide Updates:

- 1. 2022/2023 Budget:** The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners adopted the biennial budget on December 21st, 2021. The Star Tribune published an article on December 30th related to our elimination of adult fines and fees as of the new year.
- 2. 2022-2024 Bargaining:** Mediation occurred the last week of December. A voluntary settlement agreement was reached. At the time of this writing, an on-line ratification vote was being scheduled by the union. If a majority of union membership votes to ratify the agreement, it will subsequently be brought to the County Board for approval.
- 3. Ramsey County Commissioner Officers and Appointments:** The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners elected Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo to serve as Chair and Commissioner Jim McDonough to serve as Vice-Chair in 2022. The County Board appointed Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt as the Ramsey County Library Board of Trustees Liaison and Commissioner Nicole Frethem as alternate. The County Board also appointed Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire to serve on the Metropolitan Library Services Agency (MELSA) Board of Trustees.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:

Friends Fundraising Campaign

We have developed a twelve-month fundraising campaign to increase Friends membership and financial donations. We have purchased a direct mail list with 10,000 names from the library's service area with the following criteria: income, age, charitable giving and book interest.

Phase 1: Two year-end appeals totaling 10,666, were mailed on December 7, 2021 to the direct mail list and our current and lapsed membership lists. The Friends Board of Directors generously provided a \$6,200 matching grant opportunity to support the year-end appeals. The result of the appeals was as follows:

Number of Donations: 202

Total Donations: \$34,633.75

New Members: 76

Lapsed Members: 33

Phase 2: Letter introducing Ramsey County Library Director and/or Ramsey County Library Board Strategic Plan highlights will be mailed to 10,666 households in the spring/summer of 2022.

Phase 3 Flashy postcard will be sent to the 10,666 households advertising fundraising/fundraising event to be determined in summer of 2022.

Phase 4: Two year-end appeals will be sent to the 10,666 household group.

Friends Online Auction February 17-24, 2022

Save the dates to have fun shopping while you help us add new items to the Ramsey County Library lending collection. The Friends Online Auction will feature items such as dining and sightseeing experiences, artwork, autographed books, food and wine, sports, travel, and themed gift baskets.

Love my Library Campaign February – April 2022

Phase 1

Beginning in February 2022, the Friends will launch a Love my Library Campaign – asking patrons, Board members, staff, Committee members and volunteers to share why/what they love about their library and the Friends. Request for comments will be requested by e-blast, on social media, on the website and with signage at the 7 libraries. Respondents can answer the question online or by using drop boxes located in the children, teen, general circulation, check out desk and Friends book store at each library. There will be an incentive to participate. Comments will be used on our website, in the Explore newsletter and on social media to promote our libraries. *We would appreciate hearing the Library Board's responses as part of this project.*

Phase 2 April 2022

Committee members and staff will interview Friends Board alumni and key stakeholders and ask why/what they love about their library to develop short stories to be used in an email marketing campaign during April – National Library Month. A story will be shared by email once a week for a 4-6 week period culminating with an ask for financial support.

Upcoming Initiatives and Events

Friends Family Fun Day May/June 2022

Host a Family Fun Day in late/spring/early summer to engage members, library patrons and community members. Details being developed – possible walk ending at the Shoreview destination park with an ice cream social. Possible collaboration with the Shoreview Library team, Shoreview Park and Recreation Department and Shoreview Mayor's Office.

State of the Library Event September 2022

Host a major donor (\$500+) and Legacy Circle stewardship event to give our closest benefactors and stakeholders the inside scoop on current issues affecting the Library in September 2022. The event will include the introduction of the new Library Director and his/her vision for the future. Depending on the location of the event, it may include a behind the scenes tour of the library with demonstrations of the automated materials handling machine and/or 3D printer.

\$10K in a Day October 2022

A day of giving in October 2022 to raise \$10,000 in one day to support the Ramsey County Library System – more details to follow.

Fall Author Talk November 2022

Fall Author Talk is scheduled for November and will be a hybrid event (in person or Zoom) depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Second Annual Ruth Palmer Award will be announced at this event.

Friends Used Bookstore and Book Carts Are All Open

We are accepting gently used donations of books and media at all seven library locations – donations are limited to two bags per visit.

RAMSEY COUNTY BOARD LIAISON REPORT:

Commissioner Reinhardt shared a reminder that COVID is not over and that the Omicron variant is highly contagious. She recommended getting and wearing N95 masks.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

As per the Ramsey County Library Board of Trustees By-Laws, Article III, Section 4: the officers of the Board of Trustees shall be a chair, vice chair, and secretary. Officers shall be elected by majority vote.

The duties of the officers, as defined in by-laws:

The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees, authorize calls for any special meetings, execute documents authorized by the Board, and generally perform the duties of a presiding officer.

The Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees shall assume the duties of the Chair in the event of the absence or disability of the Chair. In addition, the Chair may assign duties to the Vice Chair with concurrence of the majority of the Board of Trustees.

The Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for ensuring that a true and accurate account is kept of all proceedings of the Board meetings; that notices of all meetings are issued; that the minutes and other records of the Board are maintained; and that the Board of Ramsey County Commissioners is notified of any vacancies on the Library Board of Trustees.

Ly-Xiong made a motion to elect Woods as Chair of the Ramsey County Library Board. Perry seconded the motion. Woods was unanimously elected as the Chair for 2022 via roll call vote.

Chang made a motion to elect Neblett as Vice Chair of the Ramsey County Library Board. Ly-Xiong seconded the motion. Neblett was unanimously elected as the Vice Chair for 2022 via roll call vote.

Neblett made a motion to elect Chang as Secretary of the Ramsey County Library Board. Ly-Xiong seconded the motion. Chang was unanimously elected as the Secretary for 2022 via roll call vote.

ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS:

The Ramsey County Library Board currently meets at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month.

Additional meetings may be scheduled on the first Wednesday of a month or any other date as necessary.

Neblett made a motion to approve the 2022 Annual Schedule of Library Board Meetings as presented. Chang seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

LIBRARY BOARD THANK YOU:

Board Chair Sida Ly-Xiong drafted a message to the library staff thanking them for their dedication and tireless care of their patrons over the last year. Ly-Xiong shared that the Libraries have continued to provide high-quality programming and valuable essential resources to our community throughout the pandemic.

Ly-Xiong made a motion to approve the Library Board Thank you message to staff as presented. Neblett seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

LIBRARY BOARD BY-LAWS AND POLICES:

Interim Director Saltis shared that while the by-laws and policies have been presented with no changes, updates should be made to the by-laws incorporating the foundational agreement. In addition to updating the by-laws, Saltis suggested that the policies be updated to align with the Ramsey County Administrative Code as it relates to gifts and grants.

Saltis suggests in the future, that she and Woods will evaluate the need to form a sub-committee to review both the by-laws and policies.

LIAISON AND LIBRARY BOARD COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:

As per the Ramsey County Library Board of Trustees By-Laws, Article VI, Duties of the Board of Trustees: the Library Board will maintain a liaison to the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries board. The Library Board makes this appointment each year. Steve Woods has served in this role since 2021. Woods expressed his interest in serving as the liaison for 2022.

Chang made a motion to approve Steve Woods as the liaison to the Friends of Ramsey County Library board. Perry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENT:

A joint task force concluded in late 2021. A memo dated December 30th, 2021 from the County Manager makes official the commitments and foundational agreements made by all parties.

Woods explained that the agreement is a result of a voluntary joint effort between the Library Board and the County Board and serves a starting point. Woods reiterated that a key component of this agreement is to keep an open line of communication between the Trustees and the County Board.

Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager of Economic Growth and Community investment, agreed with Woods and the Trustees and reiterated that communication is important and working together to identify roles and responsibilities will provide clarity during the hiring process.

Perry made a motion to approve the foundational agreements negotiated by the task force and accept the memorandum from the County Manager dated December 20th, 2021. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE:

Senior Library Manager Jeff Eide shared that at the December Library Board meeting, the Trustees approved the hiring of ACET to assist with the strategic planning process. Stella Zimmerman, President and Founder of ACET, joined the meeting to give a brief overview of ACET and an update on the planning process. Zimmerman shared that ACET is based in Minneapolis and currently employs 12 individuals. ACET has worked with various organizations throughout the state and surrounding areas and has worked with the community to gather feedback to assist with strategic planning, program improvement, or develop other actionable items.

Currently the process is in the planning phase, securing a realistic timeline and identifying deliverables.

WHITE BEAR LAKE BRANCH UPDATE:

Trends in the Service Area

- While the White Bear Lake/Township area is becoming more racially diverse, it is much less diverse than the county overall. Overall is 61.1% white, not Hispanic, WBL is at 86.7% and WBT is at 92.6%
- 2016 Election went for Clinton 65% in Ramsey County, to 49.15% in Districts 38B and 43A
2020 Election went for Biden 71.5% in Ramsey County, to 56.5% in Districts 38B and 43A
- The City and community has created a program: Many Faces, Many Stories – to welcome all and educate all. manyfaceswblarea.org/
- The Purple Line BRT, formerly known as the Rush Line, has now received Federal funding and is progressing through plans. However, there is some organized opposition in WBL.
<https://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project> <https://norushline.com/>
- WBL has a new mayor in 2022, Dan Louismet. Jo Emerson was mayor for the past 12 years.
- WBL Farmer's Market moved to the adjacent Clark Avenue parkway, bringing more people here.

Library Issues and Service Trends

- Closed March 17, 2020 to the public. Curbside started here June 1, 2020. We re-opened to patrons April 26, 2021 with modified services.
- There have been longer vacancies than usual for WB with a retirement of a longtime librarian and two Library Page staff getting promotions to other locations. Many substitutes have changed the face of services here. One full-time Page has been hired, we will hire a reference person soon.
- The Seed Library was available remotely and has since returned when the library re-opened.
- Seed Talks, Mystery Book Club, and WBLAHS History Programs have all been on Zoom. Trying Hybrid Mystery Book Club with some success. Attendance is strong with online programs.

2019: average attendance – Note: two programs canceled because of weather

Seed Talks - 9.5

Mystery Book Club - 11.7

WBLAHS - 51.1

2021 average attendance

Seed Talks – 23

Mystery Book Clubs - 12.25 (Hybrid 14.25)

WBLAHS - 57.1

- Fewer children have been seen coming in without live storytimes, but drop-in programming has helped.

Library Services and Events

Number of weekly storytimes, book clubs or other on-going programs

Make and Take Fridays – started every week since October 2021.

Outdoor storytimes at Tamarack, Farmer's Market, and a Firetruck visited the library in 2021.

Our children's librarian recorded several storytimes and Dial-a-Story readings

We held two Plant Swaps, one in Fall 2020, one in Spring 2021

Paws to Read dogs and handlers returned in Fall 2021.

WB Mystery Book Club – monthly

Seed Talks – 10 per year

White Bear Lake Area Historical Society programs – 11 per year

What is special and important about the library

In a very walkable, established downtown in a small city – less suburban feel

There has been a library on this corner since 1914

Open and accessible layout

Many meeting spaces of various sizes for the size of the building

Clerk Gordon McCue created the Post-it note Snoopy – alerting the public to service changes

Collection Highlights

Seed Library - 3,116 packets of seeds found new homes in 2021 – compared to 2079 in 2019.

12 laptops are available for use in the building

Large New Books display

Work Plan Project(s)

Building a more diverse collection – Children’s Librarian conducted a partial diversity audit

Hired a new BIPOC Library Page

Enjoy seeing the faces of people learning they no longer have fines!

Key Partnerships

Seed Librarian and Horticulturist Pam Frink

WBL Area Historical Society – History programs and passive geocaching (126 finds in 2021)

Ramsey County Master Gardeners for Sustainability Programming and Plant Swaps

Paws to Read dogs and handlers – three pairs of them!

LIBRARY DIRECTOR HIRING PROCESS UPDATE:

Jennifer Otley, Human Resources Manager shared that the first-round interviews concluded last week, and that second-round interviews are scheduled to begin the week of January 26. Otley continued that 43 applications were received, and it is a competitive pool of candidates.

Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager of Economic Growth and Community investment, asked that Otley send an email update to the Library Board about the hiring process and the Trustee’s role in the process. Berg asked that all questions related to the search be directed to her or Otley.

MAPLEWOOD RENOVATION UPDATE

Yang shared that three high-level goals have emerged in the forefront for the renovation: enhancing welcomeness and inclusivity in the library spaces, providing flexible, multi-functional spaces for use, and building on the strength of the building that is already existing.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday and Yang is planning on discussing the large spaces and how they will be used as well as community engagement. She explained that there are currently three events planned.

2022-2024 ANNUAL AGENDA ITEMS

Saltis explained that the proposed document gives a 3-year outlook for upcoming meetings. Some agenda items coincide with County processes like budget review. Due to the uncertainty of the future meetings and the ability to meet in-person, this calendar remains in draft form.

CLOSING REMARKS

Neblett thanked Ly-Xiong for her service, dedication, and leadership as the Board Chair.

ADJOURNMENT

Neblett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm. Perry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.