
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board
February 16, 2022

LIBRARY TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Grace Atkin, Deb Berry, Claire Chang, Sida Ly-Xiong, Sylvia Neblett, David Perry, Steve Woods

STAFF PRESENT:

Karen Saltis, Interim Library Director; Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager, Chuck Wettergren, Digital Services Manager; Maggie Soukup, Library Board Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT:

Victoria Reinhard, Ramsey County Commissioner and Liaison to the Library Board of Trustees; Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager of Economic Growth and Community Investment (EGCI) Service Team; Melitta Drechsler, Ramsey County Attorney's Office; Mary Worley, Executive Director Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries; Tony Lutgen, EGCI Accounting Manager; Mary Larson, Accounting Support Supervisor; Carol Jackson, RCL-Shoreview Branch Manager; Meg Robertson, RCL-New Brighton Branch Manager; Monica Stratton, RCL-Maplewood Branch Manager; Nicole Herold, Technical Services Manager; Kristi Saksvig, Communications Manager; Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, Former Library Board Trustee; Jake Grussing, Incoming Library Director

CALL TO ORDER:

Woods called the virtual meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Neblett made a motion to approve the agenda for February 16, 2022, as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote. Ly-Xiong was not present for roll call vote.

CONSENT AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Perry made a motion to approve all consent agenda items as presented. Chang seconded the motion. During discussion, Neblett asked a question on bullet #3 of the statistical report. Eide clarified downloadable electronic materials were about 200,000 including e-books and audio books. Subsequently, motion was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

A. Approval of January 19, 2022 Minutes

B. Director's Report – Karen Saltis, Interim Library Director

Correctional Facility Work: In September I reported that staff was working collaboratively with Community Corrections to offer services to residents of the correctional facilities. As an update, in our first week of service which was January 28th, we processed and delivered *99 books to 28 residents* which was four gray bins full!

Residents were exceedingly excited and grateful to receive their books. Outreach workers Carly Sanft and Rebecca Cooper received many, many thank you's - from both residents and staff alike. As Carly stated, "I think it is safe to say this new partnership and service will be the highlight of many residents' week".

In addition to Carly and Rebecca, a huge thank you goes out to Alyssa Stevenski, Meg Robertson, and Ann Wahlstrom for the roles they play in making this a successful partnership.

Xcel Energy Request: Xcel Energy has contacted Property Management regarding locating a regulator station on the property of the Ramsey County Library-Roseville. This structure would be an above ground regulator station replacing an old underground one across the street. Above ground stations are safer and they don't have the ability to place an above ground station at the current location. Property Management believes this new station would benefit our gas service at this location.

The proposal includes installing a fence around the station and they will work with us on the aesthetics of that enclosure. A fee will be negotiated for Xcel's use of this portion of the property. The work will commence sometime this spring/summer. A temporary use of an additional stretch of land north of the building along the street is also requested during the construction period.

IT Consolidation: The remaining consolidation work has primarily been focusing on updating infrastructure behind the scenes. The initial scope of consolidation is expected to be largely finalized by April. Some of the larger recent projects include:

- Moving the physical network (routers, switches, and cabling) used by the public at the library in Roseville to updated County equipment. This move will be completed on February 13th. This is the final (and largest) location requiring this work.
- Virtualizing and centralizing servers used to manage public computing and printing located in each library branch. These servers are being centralized at the library in Roseville. This work was completed February 3rd.
- Installation of several updated public access computers for real-world testing at the library in Roseville. Testing will begin the week of February 21st. Currently the library has 177 computers available for walk-in use that will begin being replaced in March (pending successful testing). Pre-COVID, the library had 335 computers available to patrons, so as supply chains and COVID restrictions lessen more computers will be added throughout the year.
- Migration of the Library's security cameras to the system used by Ramsey County Property Management. This work will be completed by February 11th.

Other pending work includes moving management of the material handling systems, digital signage, and security gates from the library network to the county network.

Surplus Computer Project: As part of their surplus efforts, the Digital Services Team provided a considerable amount of equipment to an organization called PCs for People. Through electronic reuse PCs for People provides the opportunity for low-income individuals and nonprofits to benefit from the life changing impact of computers and mobile internet. PCs for People's model contributes to

environmental sustainability by intercepting usable computers before they reach landfills and refurbishing them for reuse.

A thank you message from the company's Business Development Manager was sent to applicable Ramsey County department contacts. According to the note, the company's overall demographics continue to be similar to prior years and include the following statistics:

- 100% of recipients are currently experiencing poverty (under 200% of the Federal Poverty line-roughly \$50,000 for a family of 4) with an average income of \$16,000.
- 41% of the families served had never owned a home computer.
- For families enrolled in the low-cost internet program, the average increase in income the first year is 15%

RCL is proud to support this national leader in digital inclusion!

Countywide Update:

2022-2024 Bargaining: On February 1st, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved the three-year contract of nine AFSCME bargaining units. The two bargaining units representing RCL staff were included in the contract approval. A few bulleted highlights are listed below:

- Wage adjustments are 1.5% - 2022, 2.25% - 2023, and 2.25% - 2024.
- 2022 lump sum payments in recognition of pandemic work. For those required to work on-site, \$1,000 will be paid. All other staff who were not required to be on-site will be paid \$500.
- Subsidies will be given to minimize the impact of insurance increases.

C. Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries Report – Mary Worley, Executive Director

Friends Year End Appeal Results

We sent out a year-end appeal to increase Friends memberships and financial donations. The Friends Board of Directors generously provided a \$6,200 matching grant opportunity to support the year-end appeal. The result of the appeal was as follows:

Number of Donations: 209

Total Donations: \$39,270.25

New Members: 81

Lapsed Members: 34

Thank you to all who contributed to the year-end appeal.

Friends Online Auction February 17-24, 2022

Please check out the Friends Online Auction from February 17th- 24th, 2022 and invite your family and friends to have fun shopping while helping us fundraise for new items for 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, themed gift baskets and a book club party with Library Board Trustee and author, David Perry.

Love your Library Campaign February – April 2022

The Friends launched the Love your Library Campaign – asking patrons, Board members, staff, Committee members and volunteers to share why/what they love about their library and the Friends on February 8, 2022. Comments are being requested by e-blast, on social media, on the website and from drop boxes at the 7 libraries. Respondents can answer the question online or by using drop boxes located at multiple locations at each library. There will be an incentive to participate. The responses 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. **Within 24 hours, we received 19 online responses to the Love your Library Campaign.**

Friends Family Fun Day May/June 2022

We will be hosting 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. We are meeting with Shoreview General Manager and the Shoreview Library Branch Manager next week to begin planning the Friends Family Fun Day 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.

D. Ramsey County Board Liaison Report (verbal)

None.

E. 2021 Fourth Quarter Reports

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

- Workplan Report – prepared by Karen Saltis, Interim 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

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING LIBRARY BOARD TRUSTEES:

Ramsey County Library awards gold cards to volunteers and other individuals whose contributions have enhanced services to our library patrons. Library Board Trustee Marisol Chiclana-Ayala completed her second consecutive term in December 2021. To honor her service on the Library Board and her contributions to the Library and the community, a gold card is proposed for Chiclana-Ayala. Library Board Trustee Gwen Willems completed her 3 years of service at the end of 2021. To honor her service on the Library Board and her contributions to the Library and the community, a gold card is proposed for Willems.

Neblett made a motion to award a Library gold card to Trustees Marisol Chiclana-Ayala and Dr. Gwen Willems. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

2021 YEAR END ENCUMBRANCE LIST

At the end of each fiscal year, all Ramsey County departments are required to submit a list of unpaid invoices and planned expenditures. Any Library funds not expended or encumbered at the end of the fiscal year fall into the Library's fund balance, which is separate from the County's general fund balance as required by Minnesota Statute.

In 2021, Library tax revenues ended with an unexpected surplus of approximately \$159,000, which offset projected shortfalls in Library-generated revenues due to the pandemic. The anticipated loss of revenue would have reduced the availability of unexpended funds for year-end reserves. A summary of the Library's available funds and proposed reserves was detailed by Larson.

Woods asked for clarification on the ability for the new Library Director to make changes to the proposed year-end reserves. Larson explained that the reserves must be used for capital projects and that changes are uncommon.

Neblett made a motion to approve the 2021, 2019, and the 2018 year-end reserves as proposed. Chang seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

WAIVER FOR ADULT FINES/FEES

During the 2022-2023 budget process, with support of the Library Board of Trustees, staff recommended, and the county board approved eliminating future fees and fines for adults. Fees and fines create access barriers and have a racially disparate impact on community members. Eliminating adult fines and fees was taken into consideration as a part of the overall budget process and \$190,000 in projected lost annual collected revenue was covered through other budgetary adjustments.

To support the strategic priority to "facilitate access by removing barriers" staff strongly supports the forgiveness of all existing fines and fees on adult patron accounts except for charges related to lost or damaged items. The total dollar amount recommended to be forgiven is approximately \$415,000 and lost or damaged charges recommended to be retained is approximately \$490,000. This one-time action removes the suspension of borrowing privileges from nearly 13,000 patrons and allows them to use library services once again.

Perry asked what the process is for notifying patrons to let them know that their borrowing privileges have been reinstated. Larson shared that in the past, there was not an official notification to patrons instead it was publicized by local news stations, the Library website and social media accounts. Saksvig offered to create a notification plan. The plan will be shared with the Trustees.

Perry made a motion to approve the forgiveness of approximately 13,000 patron accounts. Atkin seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

LIBRARY BOARD POLICIES

During 2021 as part of a broad effort to improve policy management and compliance, the Ramsey County Manager's Office coordinated a comprehensive review of county policy documents, including the Administrative Code. During this review it was discovered that a

library board policy conflicted with county board resolution 85-549 which grants authority to the Library Board of Trustees the ability to accept unconditional cash gifts in the amount of \$5,000 or less as well as to accept donations of books, other materials and equipment with the stipulation that the Trustees furnish a list of suggested uses for which they would recommend. No delegation of authority to the Library Director was granted by the Ramsey County Board.

The Ramsey County Attorney's Office reviewed the situation and confirmed that Minnesota Statute 134.15 requires a library board to obtain the consent of a county board to accept any gift. To reconcile the discrepancy related to gifts, a revision to the Library Board of Trustees Policies is proposed.

Additionally, the County Attorney's Office has given the opinion that grants are also covered by the statute. Therefore, the Library Board does not have the authority to accept grants over \$5,000 (such as from the Friends) and cannot delegate such authority to the Library Director.

The following two changes are proposed to the Executive Policies, Policy B Financial Authorizations:

1. Strike delegated authority to the Library Director for gift acceptance.
2. Strike delegated authority to the Library Director for grant acceptance.

No formal action was taken at the January 2022 Library Board of Trustees meeting related to Library Board policy revisions. Subsequently, staff was asked to propose changes in consultation with the County Attorney's Office.

The Trustees discussed the importance of reconciling the discrepancy but expressed concern with the low dollar amount. Woods suggested that in the future a percentage is used for determining what amount could be accepted. Saltis shared that she would pass along the concerns of the Trustees to the policy committee.

Neblett made a motion to approve the policy changes as presented. Perry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

GIFT POLICY

Library Board of Trustees' policies were updated through the previous action item. To align the Library's Gift Policy with the revised Trustees' policies and County Board Resolution 85-549 which states that gifts \$5,000 and over must be brought to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners for appropriate action, an updated policy (attached) is recommended by staff.

Ly-Xiong expressed concern for the low dollar amount stating that there are a number of very generous donors that give large gifts directly to the Library. Saltis explained that the library administration staff regularly encourage donors route donations to the Friends of Ramsey County since they are registered as a 501(c)(3) organization. She also reiterated that the change in policy will align with the previous action item.

Perry made a motion to approve the policy change as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager, presented an update on the strategic planning process. Samples of peer library Strategic Plans as well as a proposed timeline were included in the Trustees packets for informational and discussion purposes.

Eide shared that the process is still in the developmental phase and that the core team, Jeff Eide, Pang Yang, Erica Redden, and Trustees Atkin and Ly-Xiong, will meet the first week of March and their focus will be on community engagement and aligning the planning with the on-boarding of the new library director. Eide explained that conversations have not been had regarding what the entire process will look like or what the end goal is.

The Trustees discussed what their role as a trustee will look like throughout the planning process and what they would like to see in the final product.

MAPLEWOOD RENOVATION UPDATE

In 2018, pursuit of Maplewood Library's renovation began. A pre-design of the facility was developed and published. On July 14, 2021, Requests for Proposals for the Maplewood renovation project was issued with a pre-solicitation meeting scheduled on July 29, 2021. On November 16th, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved and finalized Adolfson & Peterson and HGA to provide the design build services for the Maplewood renovation project.

Pre-design for the renovation project ends on March 25, 2022, following the schematic design, which provides additional information offering rough construction drawings and cost estimates. The schematic design ends in June 2022, leading into design development: analyzing and finalizing the schematic design. Construction documents are to start in September of 2022 and continue for 20 weeks with physical construction to start at the beginning of 2023 and continue through the end of 2023. A library board sub-committee was created, inclusive of trustees Sylvia Neblett and Steve Woods, who attend these meeting along with library staff Monica Stratton, Pang Yang and Ramsey County's Director of Planning and Project Management, Jennifer McMaster for the renovation.

Currently in the pre-design phase, library staff have made recommendations and comments for large area space planning, such as children's area placement, creation of a maker space, and meeting space for patron use. Library staff and trustees provided input for community engagement partnerships, and existing engineering mechanicals and electricals were reviewed. The next meetings will include updated furniture layouts based on previous recommendations, and discussions around acoustics and bird safety.

In addition to providing the renovation update and timeline, Yang shared with the group a preliminary pre-design mockup. Yang cautioned that the pre-design is exactly that, a pre-design and that many things could change by the time the design has been finalized.

The Trustees discussed the participants of the renovation committee, and it was confirmed that both Trustee Woods and Neblett were involved. Maplewood Branch Manager Monica Stratton explained that she has continually consulted with Maplewood staff and patrons during this process. Stratton explained that the complaint she hears most often is regarding the acoustics.

Ly-Xiong suggested that a priorities list for the renovation be created to help better illustrate the needs of the renovation as assist with decision-making.

ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion by Ly-Xiong and a second by Perry, Woods adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.