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**Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board of Trustees**  
**March 16, 2022**

**LIBRARY TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Grace Atkin, Deb Berry, Claire Chang, Sylvia Neblett, David Perry, Steve Woods.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jake Grussing, Library Director; Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Chuck Wettergren, Digital Services Manager; Maggie Soukup, Library Board Coordinator.

**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 (EGCI) Service Team; Mary Worley, Executive Director Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries; Carol Jackson, RCL-Shoreview Branch Manager; Meg Robertson, RCL-New Brighton Branch Manager; Monica Stratton, RCL-Maplewood Branch Manager; Nicole Herold, Technical Services Manager; Mickey Ladich, Building Services Manager; Jean Krueger, Director of Property Management; Jennifer McMaster, Ramsey County Project Manger.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Woods called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Perry made a motion to approve the agenda for the March 16, 2022, meeting as presented. Neblett seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Neblett made a motion to approve all consent agenda items as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call.

**OUTGOING INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Karen Saltis):**

2022 Legislative Advocacy

Thanks to those of you who contacted legislators to advocate for the Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) Funding Increase of \$2M and Formula Change: SF 1131/HF 1710. Base funding from this source has not increased since 2008. This change had bi-partisan support in the 2021 legislative session, but ultimately was not passed. Future updates will be provided on this topic.

### Forgiveness of Fines and Fees—Follow-up on Communication

This topic was discussed at our February meeting. As a follow-up, Communications staff are working closely with Library Digital Services staff to determine the timing of a public communication for the one-time fee forgiveness on adult accounts. As Digital Services works with the vendor to implement the waiver, Communications is developing messages to broadcast through both library and county channels including websites, newsletters (print and digital) and social media. Direct emails to individuals whose accounts have been affected will also be sent. Communications will connect with local media to pitch this new development following January's fine elimination announcement.

### Equity Coordinator Position

During the 2022/2023 budget process I included information regarding repurposing an existing position to act as a full-time equity and inclusion leader (Equity Coordinator) who will serve as an in-house champion and liaison to the county's equity work. This key resource will report to the director and be an active member of the library's administrative and management teams. A vacant position has recently been identified for this purpose and staff members are working with Human Resources to develop the posting. I'm confident that with the Library investing in this position equity work will significantly advance.

### Staff In-Service Day

A staff committee is currently planning the March 31st staff in-service day. The agenda and training options are still in development. Trustees are invited to attend so please mark your calendars. The event will be held in person this year and more detailed information will follow.

### Countywide Updates

#### 2023 Supplemental Budget:

A brief overview of the vision for the 2023 Supplemental Budget was provided by the County Manager's Policy and Planning Director Elizabeth Tolzmann at the February countywide Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting. The county will be moving from performance measurement to performance management, evaluation, and outcomes. Performance management is integrated into all aspects of an organization's management and policy-making processes, transforming an organization's practices so it is focused on achieving improved results and outcomes for the public. More details, expectations and instructions will be shared with department heads and leaders at the late March SMT meeting.

This topic is scheduled for discussion at the April Library Board of Trustees meeting. Since this year is not a "numbers" year, Trustee decisions will be minimal. Stay tuned for more details.

### COVID-19 Changes

County Commissioners received an update at the March 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting from County Manager O'Connor stating that based on the CDC's COVID-19 Community Level guidance, Ramsey County has now fallen to a low level and will no longer require masks be worn by employees and visitors.

Two additional items of note include the flexible work policy and public meetings governed by the open meeting law. Phase 1 employees (employees based in the courthouse, Finance, and Human Resources) will be moving out of the remote first environment as of March 21, 2022. As a reminder, Library staff has been working onsite throughout the entire pandemic.

For boards and committees governed by the open meeting law, they will return to in person meetings beginning the week of March 21<sup>st</sup> in alignment with the return to office date. Therefore, the April Library Board of Trustees meeting will be held in person.

Saying goodbye and saying hello

As I transition out of the role of Interim Library Director, I would like to send a warm thank you to the Library Board of Trustees and staff who have supported me over the last fourteen months. We've weathered many challenges together! Thanks for your grace and understanding throughout. I've learned so much about the Ramsey County Library and am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have served in this position.

Jake will begin his journey as the Ramsey County Library Director on Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022. I welcome Jake and know that with his depth of library and leadership experience he will take the Ramsey County Library to an even higher level of excellence in public service!

Until we meet again--so long...

*Karen Saltis*

### **FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT (Mary Worley)**

Friends Online Auction Exceeds Goal

The 2022 Friends Online Auction took place from February 17-24 and was a great success. Our hope for this event was to raise \$20,000 for the Ramsey County Library lending collection. This event far exceeded that goal and raised more than \$26,000!

The proceeds will add much-needed items to the lending collection, including extra copies of the most popular materials as well as new audio books, large-print books, and e-books shared online and by the public libraries in Maplewood, Mounds View, New Brighton, North St. Paul, Roseville, Shoreview, and White Bear Lake.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all the volunteers, auction item contributors, auction bidders, sponsors, fund-a-need contributors and other donors who helped to make this event possible.

Love your Library Campaign February – April 2022

The Friends launched the Love your Library Campaign by asking patrons, board members, staff, committee members and volunteers to share why/what they love about their library in early February 2022.

Respondents can answer the question online or by using drop boxes located at multiple locations at each library. We are pleased to report that we have received over 200 heart-warming comments in the month of February. Library Board members -please tell us why you Love your Library today!

## RCL-Roseville Used Book Sale May 13-15, 2022

Get ready to stock up for your summer reading! We will be hosting a used book sale featuring a huge selection of book genres, DVDs, CDs and more. Sunday will be our ever popular, \$5.00 Bag Sale. All the books you can fit into a bag for \$5.00. Mark your calendars, we look forward to seeing you!

Hours:

Fri. May 13, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sat. May 14, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Sun. May 15, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (\$5 Bag Sale)

Friends Family Fun Day: May 21<sup>st</sup>

The Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries, the Shoreview Branch Library and the Shoreview Community Center are sponsoring a scavenger hunt on Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup> from 10:00am-12:00pm to bring together Friends members, RCL library patrons and community members to enjoy an indoor/outdoor celebration of spring. The scavenger hunt will begin at the Shoreview Library, move onto the Shoreview Community Center and end at the new Shoreview destination park. For more information, go to [rclfriends.org](http://rclfriends.org).

### **RAMSEY COUNTY BOARD LIAISON REPORT:**

Commissioner Reinhardt welcomed Grussing to his new role as Library Director and expressed her enthusiasm for the future of the Board of Trustees. She reiterated how important the relationship between the Trustees and the County Board is and encouraged the continued growth between the two.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Library Director Jake Grussing gave a brief introduction and shared his vision for the future of the Ramsey County Libraries. He reiterated that he was excited to be serving as the director and looking forward to working with the Trustees.

Some highlights from his vision include the following:

1. The library exists as part of a larger host system. An obvious but often overlooked idea. Part of something bigger than library.
2. The library needs a host system, and the library cannot exist without the support of the host.
3. Libraries receive legitimacy and resources from the host/system in return, libraries create value for the community.
4. The value the libraires creates is not about the library, it is about the community it serves.

Trustee Neblett and Woods expressed their excitement to have Grussing in the permeant role. Trustee Perry shared that he too is excited for Grussing to be in his role and to learn more about how the Trustees expertise will be used in the future.

## **FACILITIES OVERVIEW**

Ladich, Building Services Manager for Property Management at the Libraries, presented the Trustees with a property management and facilities overview. Ladich detailed site overviews, departmental services provided, staffing, budget projections, and past and future projects for the various branches.

A question was asked about ADA compliance and whether the branches were complying with all regulations. Jennifer McMaster, Ramsey County Project Manager, explained that all branches took part in an ADA assessment in 2019-2020. McMaster shared that the assessment indicated that there were a few high-priority issues, but that those issues had all been resolved in a timely manner.

To view a copy of the Facilities presentation, follow this [link](#). (Found on page 40)

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE:**

Yang shared an update on the Strategic Planning process. She explained that the subcommittee, consisting of Trustees Sida Ly-Xiong and Grace Atkins, staff persons Jeff Eide, Erica Redden and herself, have been busy working with ACET, Inc. on developing the prompts for the upcoming focus groups. There are currently 7 focus groups the subcommittee has identified: 5 branches with full-time staff, staff that identify as Black, Indigenous and people of color, and part-time (evening and weekend) staff. The schedule is still being confirmed. Yang also explained that in addition to the 7 focus groups, community partners and library patrons would be involved in the process and will be able to provide direct feedback on the planning process.

Board Chair Woods asked when Trustees would be able to provide feedback. Trustee Atkins stated that the subcommittee will confirm a timeline at the next meeting and that she believes it will be sometime in May.

## **MAPLEWOOD RENOVATION PRE-DESIGN REPORT:**

McMaster presented the Trustees with an update on the Maplewood branch renovation project as well as the pre-design report. She also shared that the goals of the renovation project are to enhance the welcoming and inclusiveness of the space, provide flexible, multi-functioning spaces for patrons and staff, and recognize the existing building strengths.

Neblett shared that working on this project has been a learning experience for her. She explained that throughout the process HGA has been very helpful in ensuring the project on track, providing ample information, and prompt in their correspondences to the subcommittee. She also shared that Yang and Maplewood Branch Manager Monica Stratton have provided valuable insight throughout the process.

Neblett made a motion to approve the Maplewood branch pre-design report as presented. Perry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

## **TRUSTEE SELF-EVALUATION:**

Board Chair Woods shared the results of the 2021 Trustee self-evaluation. Woods plans to use the results as part of a larger discussion around strategic planning process. He explained that compared to past years results, we are not moving in the right direction and that there is room for improvement. Woods also proposed to not discuss this at today's meeting but rather to discuss the data within the strategic planning process to improve Trustee utilization.

Trustee Neblett suggested that matrix of Trustees expertise and skills/strength may be helpful during the planning process.

Commissioner Reinhardt shared that there are certain statements in the report regarding identifiable individuals and she stated that these comments should not have been included as an official Library Board document and requested that they be removed in any future documents.

Trustee Atkins agreed with Commissioner Reinhardt's statement and requested survey results do not include staff positions or names and that in the future they be involved with handling sensitive information.

## **OTHER:**

The Trustees discussed the upcoming April Library Board meeting and logistics around meeting in-person. Deputy County Manager Berg shared that the Open Meeting Law must be followed to ensure compliance. Berg asked that staff share any information regarding the Open Meeting Law as a refresher for all Trustees.

A motion was made by Neblett to move the April 2022 Library Board meeting to the Shoreview branch. Perry seconded the motion. The motion was seconded by Perry, which passed unanimously via roll call vote.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.**