

LIBRARY TRSUITEES PRESENT:

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Jake Grussing, Library Director; Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Ann Wahlstrom, Branch Manager, Children's Facilitator; Maggie Soukup, Library Board Coordinator.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nicole Joy Frethem, Ramsey County Commissioner and backup Liaison to the Library Board of Trustees; Mary Worley, Executive Director, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries; Les Sipkema, Shoreview Resident.

CALL TO ORDER:

Woods called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Les Sipkema, Shoreview resident, commented to the Library Board how it was great that the meetings were being held in person and how wonderful it is to have vaccines and boosters available for everyone. Sipkema recommended that the property manager have a qualified building inspector to verify the square footage of the Shoreview branch and seek a refund for every square foot under 38,000 (footage listed on the purchase document) and put the funds towards the Maplewood renovation project.

Sipkema also asked that in future self- evaluations that names and specifics are recorded so that those who are unfamiliar with the details can have a better idea what/who is being discussed.

Sipkema noted that the through the entire pandemic the library staff provided and maintained excellent service for all patrons.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Perry made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Neblett seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Neblett made a motion to approve the consent agenda, less the meeting minutes. Perry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

MEETING MINUTES:

Perry made a motion to amend the March 16, 2022 meeting minutes to reflect the following corrected statement:

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.

Neblett seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

DIRECTORS REPORT (Jake Grussing):

March Staff Updates

Please join me in welcoming the following staff to Ramsey County Library:

- Nasteho Ahmed, intermittent Library Page
- Flint Devine, Library Associate II at RCL – New Brighton
- Say Khang, Library Associate I at RCL – White Bear Lake
- Levelyn Lattimore, Library Page at RCL – Shoreview

And please extend congratulations to the following staff who were promoted:

- Abeni Hill, promoted to Library Associate I at RCL – Roseville and Digital Services

Staff In-Service Day

Thanks to those of you who attended the In-Service Day on March 31. Trustee Sylvia Neblett's opening remarks, including a heartfelt welcome and a reading of the Land Acknowledgement, set the tone for this in-person event. Mary Worley shared exciting news from the Friends of Ramsey County Libraries, and Monica Stratton recounted the many personnel transitions that have occurred over the past two years. The focus of the morning was a Race Equity in Action session, presented by Antonio Montez, one of the County's Racial and Health Equity Administrators. His interactive and highly engaging presentation ensured that everyone present developed a common understanding of our collective commitment to and role in advancing racial equity. Credit for planning and executing such a successful day goes to the In-Service Day team: Carol Jackson, John Bergeron, Abeni Hill, Jennifer Jackson, Marcus Lowry, Alyssa Stevenski, Monica Stratton, Andrea Strobush, Heidi Temple, and Pang Yang.

2022 Legislative Advocacy

The Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) funding increase and formula change language is included in the House Education omnibus bill (HF 4300). It is not currently in the Senate Education omnibus bill, but I am hopeful that the language will survive conference committee to emerge in a shared omnibus bill.

Congressionally Directed Spending

I have been working with Ramsey County and City of Saint Paul government relations staff, as well as the Saint Paul Public Library Director, on an opportunity to pursue congressionally directed spending to create technology-rich spaces in our libraries. Here is the proposal the City of Saint Paul submitted to Congresswoman McCollum's office:

Public libraries provide critical access to community resources that support education and work. Ramsey County and the City of Saint Paul request funds to support technology-rich spaces in public library meeting/programming rooms across Saint Paul and suburban Ramsey County. Enhanced technology in these community spaces will help advance equitable educational opportunities, including for K-12 youth who use libraries for afterschool and summer learning. This includes outlets, projectors, video capability and more to facilitate homework help, schoolwork, STEM programming, and collaboration with community partners. These upgrades would be a launching pad for collaborative programs with afterschool program providers and also potential career pathway connections with local schools.

The primary beneficiaries of this project are expected to be K-12 youth in Saint Paul and suburban Ramsey County. I will provide updates on the status of this request as they are available.

Ramsey County Care Center Job Fair

Following the decision to wind down operations of the Ramsey County Care Center (RCCC) in the coming months, the County Manager shared a clear message with all Ramsey County employees: no Care Center employee will see their employment end with Ramsey County unless they make a choice to move their career in a different direction. On April 6, Marcus Lowry and I represented RCL at an internal job fair for RCCC employees. The job fair gave RCCC employees the opportunity to learn more about other County departments and express their interest in joining those departments in the future. While there are more details to work out in this process, I am happy to report that Marcus and I met with many employees who expressed passion for the work of public libraries and strong interest in joining our team. I expect to have more to share in future updates.

Open Meeting Law/Accessibility Update

As requested at the March meeting, library staff are investigating solutions for hosting future Library Board meetings in a hybrid setting similar to the County Board. I expect to have a solution in place by the June meeting at the latest.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT (Mary Flynn Worley):

This month we would like to share the four components of the Friends strategic plan and explain our strategic priorities.

Vision: Have a bigger and bolder impact with Ramsey County Library into the future.

Strategic priorities are:

1. Go to the next level of friend raising and fundraising.

a. I'd like to share our fundraising and friend raising results and plans for the future:

Year-end Appeal was very successful with the Friends Board providing a \$6,200 match. From a fundraising perspective, we received 229 donations in the appeal and netted \$34,492 in donations. From a Friend Raising perspective, we gained 90 new members and over 30 people renewed their lapsed Friends Membership.

We have a membership goal of 1,0000 members by the end of 2022 and we currently have 902 donors. If you are already a Friends donor – thank you for support! If not, please consider joining the Friends!

b. Our most recent fundraiser was the **2022 Online Silent Auction**. With special help from the Friends bookstore volunteers and your support, we netted over \$26,500 from the online auction.

c. RCL-Roseville Used Book Sale May 13-15, 2022

We will be hosting a used book sale at the Roseville Library Used Book Store 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, 11a.m. - 5p.m.

Sat. May 14, 11a.m. - 5p.m.

Sun. May 15, 1p.m. - 5p.m. (\$5 Bag Sale)

d. Exciting Legacy Circle news: The Friends Legacy Circle was developed to ask the friends of the Ramsey County Library to consider leaving a gift to the Friends in their estate. Special credit goes to a many people including, Sue Gerhz, Cindy Cook, Frank Harris, Kate Huesbch, Ann Trapnell, Friends Board Members and the Development Committee. I am pleased to announce two estate gifts that the Friends will be receiving in the near future:

1. An estate gift from Eileen Adams – we are waiting for the sale of her home but the unrestricted gift to the Friends of the Ramsey County Library will be in excess of \$150,000.

2. The second gift is from a long- time patron of the Mounds View Library, Mr. Ronald Varns. Mr. Varns was a bachelor and worked at Land O Lakes his entire career. Mr. Varns passed away in March 2022 and left 85% of his estate to the Friends of the Ramsey County Library directed solely to the betterment of the Mounds View Library. We will be liquidating some of the assets, such as his home and have started that process. The estate gift from Mr. Varns will be between \$1.7-\$2 million dollars.

e. We are planning a State of the Library meeting on September 15, 2022. This will be a stewardship event for our major donors and Legacy Circle (people who have designated an estate gift with the Friends). Our key note speaker will be Jake Grussing, who will share his vision of the future of the Ramsey County Library. It will give our greatest benefactors and volunteers the inside scoop on where the Ramsey County Library is headed.

2. The second Strategic priority is Create powerful messages about the Library and the Friends Impact

a. This is an ongoing project with multiple points of interest:

- We are working closely with the Pana Lor to share social media messaging about Friends upcoming events and initiatives;
- We write a bi-monthly article in the Explore newsletter;
- We plan to evaluate the Friends communications and branding this year to develop better messaging, tag lines, elevator speeches and central communication themes.
- We developed the Love your Library Campaign with your help to get feedback from our patrons and began sharing the messages weekly by email and on our website during the month of April. To date we have received over 400 comments. Please take time to look at some of the comments from the patrons on our website: rclfriends.org.
- In the past the Friends has published an Annual Report in the summer – we are currently reevaluating this and are looking at issuing an impact report with financial information rather than an annual report to be better stewards of our financial resources.

3. Engage the general community in new and fun ways to build a stronger library community.

a. We are planning a collaborative Family Fun Day event with the Friends, RCL and the Shoreview Community Center to bring all of our patrons together for an inside/outside scavenger hunt ending at the new Shoreview destination park on Saturday May 21st from 10:00am-12:00pm. There will be prizes – a Kindle, Used Book store coupons, logo bags for new members and treats. Special thanks to Carol Jackson, Kristin Roemhildt, and Angie Miller for their help with planning this event. Please let me know if you'd be interested in volunteering for this community event.

4. Bring to life one or more big ideas that were jointly envisioned by Friends and RCL.

a. In November, we held an online Author Talk featuring Nancy Pearl with a panel of interviewers from RCL – thanks to librarians Ann Wahlstrom, Carol Jackson and Andrea Hermanson for providing a lively discussion and making the event so special.

b. We are currently planning an October Author Talk. Thanks to Paul Lai for providing ideas about possible Minnesota authors and topics to explore.

RAMSEY COUNTY BOARD LIASON REPORT:

Commissioner Nicole Joy Frethem reported that Ramsey County is heavily advocating at the Legislative level for additional support for the Ramsey County unhoused population. Without additional support, by the end of June the funding currently in place will run out.

Commissioner Frethem encouraged everyone to watch the recording of last week's morning session, specifically the session on the energy initiative piece looking at potential buildings around the County that would be compatible for solar energy panels.

Lastly, Commissioner Frethem reported that Ramsey County recently hired a new Law Library Director, Shannon Stoneking. Commissioner Frethem suggested that Director Grussing and Director Stoneking connect and discuss the possibility of partnering in the future.

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE STATE:

In Minnesota, local governments are primarily responsible for funding and administering public libraries, but there are other partners who create a multilayered approach to public library service delivery. Regional public library systems, like the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), and state government play important behind-the-scenes roles in supporting local library service. Jake Grussing will share information about Minnesota public library structures to provide context for the annual report to the state.

State Library Services, a division of the Minnesota Department of Education, coordinates a statistical survey on library usage, collection size, staffing distribution, etc. for every library in Minnesota each year. Libraries are required to submit their annual data to the State Library Services Office no later than April 1.

Policymakers, library administrators, and the general public use the statistical data to plan and evaluate library development and services. Data for public, academic, and state library agencies is available from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Director Grussing is requesting that Board Chair Woods to sign the 2021 Minnesota Public Library Annual Report Approval Form to the Office of State Library Services as mandated.

A motion was made by Neblett to authorize the Library Director and the Library Board Chair to sign and submit the 2021 Minnesota Public Library Annual Report Approval form to the Office of State Library Services as mandated. Atkins seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

NORTH SAINT PAUL LIBRARY UPDATE:

**Branch Library Report
North St. Paul**



**April 20, 2022
Report to the Library Board**

TRENDS IN THE SERVICE AREA

- Population in North St. Paul remains at previous levels and currently stands at just under 12,400 residents.
- Demographics indicate a predominately white (66.8%) population with 12.5% Asian, 8.7% African American/Black, 6.2% listed as "Two or more races", and 6% listed as Hispanic or Latino. 13% of the population speak a language other than English, the most popular being Hmong and Spanish.
- The population is relatively stable with 95% of available housing units retaining occupation. About 67% of the population in North St. Paul own their residence. The remainder live in rental housing, Section 8 housing, or senior housing.
- The medium household income remains firmly planted in the lower middle-class bracket, averaging at \$64K per annum.
- The 2020 Census showed that 93.7% of households report having a computer in their home and 89.2% report having a broadband internet subscription.
- Despite the fact that the census indicates the overall population in North St. Paul is approximately 67% white, the most recent ISD 622 demographics (2019) indicate that the district as a whole is more diverse with 34% of the students self-identifying as white, 19% as black, 23% as Asian, 15% as Hispanic, 8% as multiracial, and 1% as American Indian. The district reports more than 57 different languages are spoken at home across the district.
- ISD 622 reports that about 56% of their students qualify to receive free or reduced-price lunch.
- The local charter school that visits our library on a weekly basis, North Metro Flex Academy, remains very diverse with recent demographics showing over 75% of students self-identify as BIPOC, 15% identify as English learners, and 78.8% of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

LIBRARY ISSUES AND SERVICE TRENDS

- We continue our partnership with North Metro Flex Academy, who visit us weekly classroom-by-classroom for school checkouts. On average, we have 250 visits/checkouts per month from the North Metro Flex Students.
- The library children's room, new in 2018, has been very well received and families have enjoyed the added space, expanded collections, and interactive wall panels. We are seeing a huge uptick in use since summer 2021 and families have expressed excitement to have a free place to bring their children out in public.
- Kokoro Volleyball Club continues to rent the bulk of our building with families attending this club sport from all over the east side of the metro, including Wisconsin. Pre-pandemic, they generously allowed the library to hold summer programs in their lobby space and with program attendance in the low 100s, we appreciated this partnership. They also allow staff to use their elevated walking track on breaks. Kokoro Volleyball Club will most likely vacate the building by the end of 2022, and their partnership will be missed.

- The City of North St. Paul is studying many options for this building and space after Kokoro Volleyball Club moves on and as the new City Manager and City Council determine community needs. However, the library lease will be maintained and the City has indicated they are anxious to keep our library in the community.
- The City of North St. Paul is hoping to capitalize on their location between Minneapolis and St. Paul and attract new residents by both downtown revitalization plans and building a large townhome development within .5 miles west of the library on McKnight and Hwy 36.
- The library introduced a new informal meeting/studying space near the children's room, with photocopier/scanner and self-service coffee, prior to the pandemic. The space was used by many to both work alone and have small meetings. Use of this space is slowly coming back as the pandemic wanes and people gain confidence being out.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND EVENTS

- Number of weekly storytimes, book clubs or other on-going programs
 - One weekly Family Storytime pre-pandemic
 - Family Storytimes have been held on ZOOM since last November and will resume in-person Summer 2022.
 - One monthly adult book club
 - Monthly "Maker Kit" activity bags for kids
 - Monthly "Storytime Starter" kids for Pre-K
- What is special and important about the library
 - Personal connection with patrons
 - Small, cozy feel which patrons appreciate – especially patrons with intellectual disabilities or those coming from group homes in the area
 - Providing the charter school in the area with a library they can call their own
 - Convenience to low income housing and downtown North St. Paul
 - Partnership opportunities with ISD 622, a high-poverty district within our service area
 - Ability to provide in-depth reference or computer assistance without interruption
 - Notary on-site
- Collection Highlights
 - Popular magazines with current issue available for checkout
 - Children's room
 - Newer collection with many popular titles
 - Engaging book displays frequently changed
- Key Partnerships
 - Independent School District 622
 - St. Peter's Catholic School
 - North Metro Flex Academy
 - Kokoro Volleyball Club
 - City of North St. Paul
 - Ramsey County Parks & Rec

NORTH ST PAUL AT A GLANCE

YEAR BUILT	2005
SQUARE FEET	3,288
DAYS OPEN	Mon 10 a.m – 5 p.m. Tues, Thu 1 p.m. – 8 p.m. Wed, Fri, Sat 10 a.m – 5 p.m. Sun closed
HOURS/WEEK	35

NUMBER OF PUBLIC COMPUTERS	6 + 3 laptops
COLLECTION SIZE	18,985

STAFF FTE	2.5
TOTAL STAFF	
VOLUNTEER HOURS	0

	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOTAL CIRCULATION	95,693	92,626	31,093	39,084
CHILDREN'S CIRCULATION (TOTAL # AND % OF TOTAL CIRC)	33,059 35%	31,519 34%	10,962 35%	14,490 37%
REFERENCE	16,510	13,520	7,917	5,642
COMPUTER HOURS USED	12,871	11,182	2,236	1,416
WIRELESS USERS	5,423	3,955	1,907	1,899
ANNUAL VISITS	35,014	39,806	8,524	11,676
CHILDREN'S PROGRAM ATTENDANCE	7,634	5,720	715	187
ADULT PROGRAM ATTENDANCE	133	52	0	0

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE:

Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager, gave a brief update on the strategic planning process. He shared that ACET, Inc. is currently gathering feedback from several stakeholder groups. Both internal and external individuals are participating in the feedback sessions. Eide shared that there are three main groups of individuals that are providing feedback: employees, patrons, and the community at large (specifically community groups that RCL does not have a relationship with). The patrons will have the option to provide written feedback at their branch of choice. The employees and community members will participate in a facilitated discussion.

MAPLEWOOD RENOVATION UPDATE:

Pang Yang, Deputy Director, shared that the post-it feedback gathered from March 17-28 provided very valuable information and the event held on March 23 was very well attended. She explained that the committee is currently evaluating furniture needs and they will be reviewing the mechanicals up next. Board Chair Woods shared that he is pleased with progress and was impressed with the acoustics presentation at the last meeting.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE:

Director Grussing gave an update on the Library's current public policies. He shared that reviewing the public policies will be put on hold for the time being. He explained that while the public policies are important, there are more important things that he would like staff to focus their attention on. Secondly, several policies are directly in contradiction of current or emerging Ramsey County policies so Grussing would like to wait until the County is done reviewing the current policies. Finally, Grussing would like to wait to review the policies specific to the Library until the strategic plan has been identified. He is hoping to bring this conversation back to the Trustees this coming fall or early winter.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Trustee Neblett suggested inviting an individual from MELSA to an upcoming board meeting. She explained that in the past the Trustees have welcomed the Executive Director of MELSA and thought it might be a good time to welcome them back and give the new Trustees a better understanding of who they are and how they fit with Ramsey County Libraries.

Grussing clarified that he will be meeting with ACET early May to review the survey that will be going out to the Trustees gathering feedback on the strategic planning process. He is hopeful to have a facilitated conversation with the Trustees regarding the findings some time in June or July.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Neblett to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm Perry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.