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**Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board of Trustees**  
**June 15, 2022**

**LIBRARY TRUSTEES PRESENT:**

Grace Atkins, Claire Chang, Sida Ly-Xiong, Sylvia Neblett, Steve Woods.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jake Grussing, Library Director; Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Chuck Wettergren, Digital Services Manager; Jason Lyons, Digital Services Librarian; Jenny Jackson, Digital Services Librarian; Julie Comine, Clerk Typist; Maggie Soukup, Library Board Coordinator.

**OTHERS:**

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Commissioner; Ling Becker, Director of Workforce Solutions; Mary Worley, Executive Director, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries; Les Sipkma, Shoreview Resident.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Woods called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Les Sipkma, Shoreview resident asked for more detail regarding the progress of the Maplewood renovation project. Specifically, he would like to know more about the following updates: the square footage reserved for the Service Center, the teen area location within the library and if there will be glass walls around it, how the County's plans to acquire the specific type of ceiling, and if HGA has contracted with a specific vendor to address the acoustic issues.

Julie Comine, Clerk Typist for the Ramsey County Shoreview Library, shared that the State Frontline Worker Pay, a program that is allowing Minnesotans who worked the frontline during the pandemic the opportunity to apply for pandemic-related payment, excludes the library staff. Comine reminded the Trustees that library staff provided continuous support to the community without interruptions throughout the peacetime emergency. She explained that the local unions as well as the Library Directors across the Metro area have communicated with the state officials trying to reclassify the eligibility. Comine asked the Trustees to advocate on behalf of the Library staff to their local elected officials and provided contact information.

Commissioner Reinhardt shared that Ramsey County has gone on record to declare library workers as essential workers and that the County will support the local AFSCME union in the efforts to get that message across to the state officials.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:**

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

**CONSET AGENDA:**

Neblett made a motion to approve the consent agenda items as presented. Atkins seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT, JAKE GRUSSING**  
**May Staff Updates**

We congratulate the following staff who were promoted:

- Megan Demeuse, Librarian at RCL – Roseville (working out of class)

We say farewell to the following staff who resigned:

- Pa Lor, Library Page at RCL – Maplewood

### **Maplewood Renovation**

Chair Steve Woods, Vice Chair Sylvia Neblett, and the County team of Monica Stratton, Pang Yang, Mickey Ladich, and Jennifer McMaster continue to work with Adolphson & Peterson and HGA on the renovation project. Currently, the team is validating direction for interior finishes, approving quantities and locations for equipment, and approving designs and locations for service desks. The most recent meeting was in person, and the excitement around this project is increasing as it moves from concept to reality.

### **Frontline Worker Pay**

Minnesota's Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) opened the Frontline Worker Pay application period on June 8. We shared this information with staff so they could connect residents with the opportunity.

Eligibility criteria for Frontline Worker Pay, which were set forth in the Frontline Worker Pay law, did not specifically call out public library workers. When the program was first announced, several metro area library directors advocated for the inclusion of public library workers, but those efforts did not yield the desired results. The explanation from the Department of Labor and Industry noted that public library services are in the information services sector, which was not included in the frontline sector definition.

Given that for the past two years our library workers and others across the state have demonstrated their ability to reinvent services, programs, and spaces to meet urgent community needs, the exclusion of public library workers is disappointing. I am grateful to Ramsey County for recognizing library staff as essential workers through its own pandemic pay effort.

### **Welcoming Residents to Our Spaces**

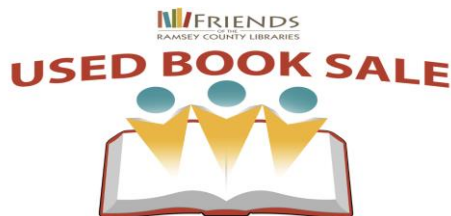
With the start of summer programming, our libraries are seeing an increase in the number of residents visiting our spaces. Some of those faces are familiar, and some are new. With that in mind, I want to share an excerpt from a message one of our staff sent me:

*It seems easy enough to explain to staff the importance of a simple greeting. And yet it continues, at times, to be shrugged off as a "given," or a "formality." But upon deeper reflection one might realize how important it is not just generally, but particularly when a patron's body language indicates (and it's often very clear) that they are visiting for the first time and, for one reason or another are experiencing discomfort. And taking it a step further, it can truly be a make or break moment for individuals who identify as immigrants, many of whom are recent arrivals likely asking themselves if and how their different culture and a language barrier, might impede their first library experience. It's at once exciting and a bit sad to see how positively these people respond to a simple, genuinely welcoming comment. Exciting because it feels like a small, invisible barrier may have disappeared in that instant, and sad because their initial trepidation tells me that they haven't always be welcomed so openly in other venues. Empathy in these encounters is not difficult to find if one would genuinely try to put themselves in these people's shoes, and try to recognize that what might seem routine to us can be (no exaggeration) an act of courage for some others.*

As residents return to our spaces, staff are working hard to truly see and welcome them with brief eye contact, a nod, a smile, and a friendly greeting. I want to thank John Bergeron, Principal Circulation Supervisor, for so

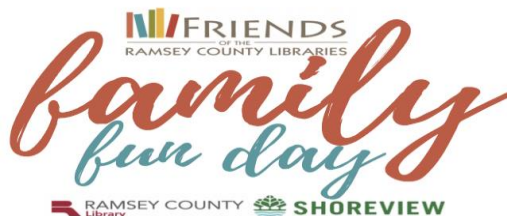
eloquently articulating what we stand to lose if we aren't intentional about doing those small things that let residents know we see them, we hear them, and we are here to help them.

#### **FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT, MARY WORLEY**



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

We hosted a used book sale at the Roseville Library Used Book Store May 13-15, 2022. A huge selection of book genres, DVDs, CDs were available for sale. Total sales were \$4,677.50 and 21 people became Friends members.



The Family Fun Day event with held in collaboration of the Friends, RCL and the Shoreview Community Center to bring all of our patrons together for an inside/outside scavenger hunt on Saturday May 21<sup>st</sup>. There were 211 children participating in the scavenger hunt who received ice cream or popsicles and over 100 adults attending were eligible for prizes. Some participants mentioned that they had never been in the Shoreview Library and a number of people registered for library cards. It was a successful event bringing together the Library staff, the Friends, the Shoreview Community Center and community volunteers.

**Legacy Circle news:** 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 – according to the executor of the estate, the unrestricted gift to the Friends of the Ramsey County Library will be around \$300,000.
2. The second gift is from Ronald Varns designated for the betterment of the Mounds View Library. Progress towards preparing the Varns house for sale:
  - An estate sale was conducted May 26<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to sell the household assets.
  - Repair of a sewage pipe was completed on May 31, 2022.
  - The baby grand piano will be stored temporarily at the Mounds View Library later this month.

We hope to have the house ready to put on the market for sale in July 2022.

We plan to hold community meetings in the Mounds View area to get input from the residents about the best uses for this generous gift.

#### **RAMSEY COUNTY BOARD LIASION REPORT, COMMISSIONER REINHARDT**

Commissioner Reinhardt shared that the commissioners are currently in the process of developing the budget. She explained that many advocates, including herself and Director Grussing, are promoting the strength of the libraries and what an asset they are to the County.

#### **DIGITAL EQUITY OVERVIEW, LING BECKER**

Ling Becker, Director of Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, gave a presentation on digital equity and an update on the Connectivity Blueprint. To view the presentation and listen to the Trustee discussion, please follow this [link](#). Ling's presentation starts at 12:02.

#### **DIGITAL LITERACY OVERVIEW, JASON LYONS**

Jason Lyons, Digital Services Librarian, gave an overview of the digital literacy overview. To view the presentation and listen to the Trustee discussion, please follow this [link](#). Lyon's presentation starts at 36.51.

#### **STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION**

The Trustees participated in an in-person strategic planning discussion led by Board Chair Woods and Secretary Chang. To listen to the discussion, please follow this [link](#). The discussion starts at 1:03.00.

See Attachment A.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

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