
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board
October 18, 2023

LIBRARY ADVISORY PRESENT:

Grace Atkins, Marissa Kirby-Stofferahn, Kami Miller, Andrea West, Dawne Brown White

STAFF PRESENT:

Pang Yang, Deputy Director; Maggie Soukup, Library Board Coordinator

OTHERS:

Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager; Rose Lindsay, Ramsey County Director of Communications and Public Relations; Pa Na Lor, Communications Associate; Mary Flynn Worley, Executive Director, Ramsey County Library Friends

CALL TO ORDER:

Atkins called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

APPROVALS

October Agenda

Atkins amended the agenda to include an announcement before the presentations. A motion was made by Kirby-Stofferahn to approve the amended agenda. West seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

June 21, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Kirby-Stofferahn made a motion to approve the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. West seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Atkins shared that Stephen Fitze had submitted his resignation earlier this week. Fitze stated in an email to Atkins that the time commitment to the board no longer worked with his schedule. Fitze's term was scheduled to end December 31, 2023. Given the timing of his resignation his seat will not be filled.

Secondly, Atkins shared that they are canceling the December board meeting. Atkins explained that they are confident that the board members can complete the remaining tasks during the November meeting and that the December meeting often has low attendance due to holiday commitments.

PRESENTATIONS

Rose Lindsay, Ramsey County Director of Communication and Public Relations and Pa Na Lor, Communications Associate, shared a presentation on the efforts to modernized library communications. The presentation detailed the rationale for sunsetting the paper newsletter and what the plan is for moving forward. Lor explained that not only is the paper newsletter expensive and time consuming, but it is also no longer reaching all suburban Ramsey residents. Lor went on to explain that by moving to digital/virtual communications they can target specific areas with localized and relevant promotions. There will still be printed flyers, brochures, and calendars available with branch specific programs and events.

Lindsay shared that the last printed newsletter will be distributed to branches the first week in November. She explained that the newsletter will include instructions on how to sign up for the electronic newsletter and other relevant information.

UPDATES

Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager

Berg shared that the 2024-2025 proposed budget has been published on the Ramsey County website and the first of two public hearings has been completed. She explained that the County Board will vote on the budget on December 12. Berg will send an email update to the board members after the vote takes place.

Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County Board Liaison

Commissioner Reinhardt shared that she is not seeking re-election next year and that after the November board meeting, she will no longer serve as the County Board liaison. She expressed her appreciation to the current board members and commended Chair Atkins on their leadership through the transition from a governing board to an advisory board.

Pang Yang, Ramsey County Libraries Deputy Director

Yang shared that earlier this week the library held fall in-service day. She explained that all staff (full time and part time) are invited to attend the paid, day-long training. She added that the theme for the years training focused on antiracism, disability allyship, and de-escalation training.

Yang shared that there is a lot happening around the branches: Maplewood grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, November 4 at 10:00am, the mural in the teen section at the Shoreview branch was recently completed, and that the virtual programming continues to be extremely successful with Dungeons and Dragons remaining the most popular!

Mary Flynn Worley, Ramsey County Library Friends

Worley gave an updated on the status of the Ramsey County Library Friends. She shared that they had recently completed an external audit, staff completed and distributed the 2022 financial impact statement, and that the Friends board is currently working on updating its policies. Worley reminded the board that the used book sale is taking place October 26 through October 29.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The board reviewed and discussed updates presented by the subcommittees. Both the bylaws and the community engagement charter are being updated to reflect the new charge of the Library Advisory board. West shared that the community engagement subcommittee had identified five recommendations for the board: move forward with hiring a director, reconcile the relationship with the Ramsey County Library Friends, adding flyers/promotional materials to utility bills throughout suburban Ramsey County to reach new residents, semi-annual strategic priorities updates for board members to track progress or recalibrate if necessary, and find ways to gather feedback from the community.

Atkins asked board members to review the updated bylaws and to send any feedback/edits to them. They also asked that the board be ready to discuss further and vote at the November meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Atkins asked for a motion to adjourn. Kirby-Stofferahn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. West seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.