

Ramsey County Library Advisory Board
November 19, 2025
Ramsey County Library – Roseville
2080 Hamline Ave N. Roseville, MN 55113

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Action Items**
 - a. Approval of the November Agenda
 - b. Approval of 2025 October Meeting Minutes
 - c. 2025 November Gift Acceptances
- III. Discussion Items**
 - a. Library Advisory Board Evaluation
 - b. Letter to Ramsey County
 - c. Library Director's Report
- IV. Adjourn**

Library Advisory Board
Sandy Doubek
Molly Jansen
Marissa Kirby-Stofferahn, Chair
Alex Kovarik
Kami Miller, Vice Chair
Andrea West
Dawne Brown White

Ramsey County Library Advisory Board Meeting
October 15, 2025
Ramsey County Library – Maplewood
3025 Southlawn Drive Maplewood, MN 55109

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD PRESENT: Sandy Doubek, Marissa Kirby-Stofferahn, Alex Kovarik, Kami Miller, and Andrea West

NOT PRESENT: Molly Jansen, Dawne Brown White

STAFF PRESENT: Ray Lockman, Library Deputy Director; Melissa Nykanen, Executive Director, Ramsey County Library Friends; Monica Stratton, Branch Manager; Pang Yang, Library Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Melissa Nykanen, Executive Director, Ramsey County Library Friends

CALL TO ORDER

Kirby-Stofferahn called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of the October Meeting Agenda

West made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Kovarik seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Approval of the 2025 September Meeting Minutes

West made a motion to approve the September 17 meeting minutes. Kovarik seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Approval of Gift Acceptances

Discussion regarding two recent donations to the large type collection and to undesignated funds ensued. Miller inquired after the cost of large type items. Yang informed the board that large type items are approximately \$10-20 more per item. They are a popular item in the library collection and are primarily published only in hardcover format. Yang also shared that the conversion to e-books has been beneficial serving patrons with type size font needs since with the Libby platform users can set the font size to their choice. West made a motion to acknowledge two recent donations to the Ramsey County Library Friends. Doubek seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2026-2027 Ramsey County Library Budget

Director Yang invited questions from the Director's Report regarding the 2026-27 library budget.

Yang encouraged board members to view the recording of County Manager Becker's budget presentation to the County Board. This has been recorded and can be viewed online.

Yang clarified some priorities that came with the proposed budget, highlighting the need of immediate budget needs versus long term needs and the reality of where we are now. The county has had to respond to growing fiscal pressures and uncertainties due to some actions taken by the federal government. As outlined in Manager Becker's budget report, the county will be eliminating 43 positions. These include a nearly 5 FTE staffing cut to the library. However, the library is able to eliminate positions that are currently vacant and therefore avoid any staff layoffs. The county will be eliminating not only staff positions but two departments – Enterprise Services and the County Detox Center. The count will prioritize five budget themes: county core responsible services, operating as One Ramsey County, investing in organizational excellence, advancing partnerships, and supporting long-term fiscal health. Due to the budget cuts, the library will be focusing on its delivery of core services over the next two years. Director Yang thanked a core team of staff members who assisted with the 2026-2027 library budget proposal: Ray Lockman, Mary Larson, Tom Och, and Mike Coogan. She also thanked the Library Board for their contributions and work as well as the 140+ library managers and staff members who do the work of connecting with the community. She emphasized that library work over the next two years will focus on core services and the library's strategic priorities. One increase the library will see in spending is to the rental book collection which will see a 25 cent per day increase to 50 cent per day. Since this is a self-funding budget, this does not affect the library's annual budget, but it is an increase that patrons will experience. The library's annual budget expenditure reduction is \$590,000 which is approximately 5% of the staff budget and 2.7% of the annual budget. This includes the elimination of vacant staff positions as outlined earlier as well as closing the Shoreview Library location on Fridays. Yang reported that no Shoreview Library staff would have a reduction in their hours and that Deputy Director Lockman and Shoreview Manager Marcus Lowry is working to adjustments schedules and reallocate employees that work on Friday.

Other budgetary items that were mentioned involve funding to remodel the Mounds View Library as well as a long-term plan to remodel the Roseville Library. The library in North St. Paul is also in flux and decisions will need to be made about this library location.

Recent news that the library's primary materials vendor, Baker & Taylor, is going out of business.

Kirby-Stofferahn appointed a subcommittee of Kirby-Stofferahn, Kovarik, and Miller. They will draft a letter and present at the November board meeting for approval.

Library Director's Report

Director Yang gave an overview of her submitted report to the board.

Additional items from the report were issued:

- To save costs, the library will be going paperless for notices to patrons about overdue and lost materials. This will save on costs of printing, costs of mailing and staff time.
- The federal government shutdown may impact Ramsey County residents who receive benefits. In Ramsey County, 1-in-3 residents depend on a variety of public support. Library staff may experience higher amounts of patrons who request assistance with finding food or other resources.

ADJOURN

Doubek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. West seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Request for Library Board Action

Meeting Date
November 19, 2025

Action Requested
Acknowledge

Presented By
Pang Yang,
Library Director

SUBJECT:

2025 November Gift Acceptances

Donor	Purpose	Branch	Amount
Kay Hanson & Peter Hanson in memory of Janet Bentley Lenz	Undesignated	RV	\$50.00
Dennis Callahan	Undesignated	RV	\$150.00

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Review and acknowledge and accept donations of up to \$5000 made to the Ramsey County Libraries during the month of September:

Please indicate your level of satisfaction for the Library Advisory Board in the following areas:

	Very dissatisfied 1	Dissatisfied 2	Neutral 3	Satisfied 4	Very satisfied 5
Structuring discussions and presentations to keep our conversations at a strategic level during board meetings.					
Fulfilling our advisory duties (acting in the best interest of the organization, adhering to appropriate laws, etc.).					
Fostering an environment that builds trust and respect among board members.					
Allotting sufficient time for questions, participation, and discussion during board meetings.					
Board Chair and Vice Chair receptivity to your ideas or concerns.					

Comments:

Please indicate your level of satisfaction in the following areas:

	Very dissatisfied 1	Dissatisfied 2	Neutral 3	Satisfied 4	Very satisfied 5
Your understanding of our history, mission, strategies, and values.					
Your sense of contribution in furthering the strategic priorities of Ramsey County Library.					
The extent to which we are utilizing your skills and experiences.					
The extent to which you find serving on the Library Advisory Board a satisfying and rewarding experience.					
I feel welcomed and respected as a board member by library staff and library administration.					

Comments:

1. What do you like best about serving on this board?

2. What changes might you suggest to make the board meetings more informative, motivating or enjoyable?

3. What are the two or three key areas the board should focus on in the next year to improve its performance?

4. Are there any areas in which you feel you could add more value? What would need to happen for that to occur?

5. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Honorable Members of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners:

We write this letter in response to the recommended funding cuts to the Ramsey County Libraries in the proposed 2026-2027 biennial budget. We represent the current members of the Ramsey County Library Advisory Board and have significant concerns about suggested cuts and the impacts to members of our communities.

Members of the Library Advisory Board acknowledge counties across the state, including Ramsey, are experiencing substantial financial challenges impacting budget allocations. We understand the complex decision-making processes that lead to those difficult decisions and realize they are not made lightly. This is a massive undertaking, and that county administrators and Commissioners are balancing many priorities which are critical to Ramsey county residents.

Library Board members also know that our libraries are essential to the health and well-being of Ramsey County citizens. The overall impact on the quality of life and daily functioning of many individuals in the community will be immense. Libraries are an all-around safety net for our communities and often serve as the primary system of prevention for isolation and other devastating social impacts for many. This cannot always be accounted for in initial data but will be felt by the most vulnerable members of our communities in many essential ways, including feeding their families, access to social supports, and accessibility to information many take for granted.

While we understand tough decisions must be made and appreciate the library administration's intentionality in looking for solutions that are equitable and reduce harm to the most vulnerable, these cuts will be devastating to our Ramsey County communities. At their core, these cuts are about privilege. The critical services libraries provide-such as access to benefits, prevention of social isolation, educational support, and many others-are often underappreciated until they become the only remaining options. Particularly in times when individuals are facing economic hardships and cuts to social supports, free access to information, technology, and community space is imperative.

We fully support measures to restore full library budget funding as a priority for the County Board of Commissioners. Should cuts to the library budget be made, we ask that the Board consider equity and socioeconomic impact in the communities of different library branches. The Ramsey County social vulnerability index pinpoints areas in our county which are more at risk when cuts are made to social programs and the inequitable impact

this would have on the communities surrounding library branches of North St. Paul, New Brighton, and Mounds View.

The Ramsey County Library Board is dedicated to tackling equitable access to information and reduction of disparate outcomes in our communities through the critical services provided by libraries. We ask for your support in achieving this mission when making your budget decisions.

Sincerely,

Members of the Ramsey County Library Advisory Board

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 2025

November Staff Updates: Hired: Kelsey Lied, RCL Digital Services

Important Dates: All Libraries will be closed on Thursday, November 27, 2025, in observation of Thanksgiving.
Libraries will remain open for public Library service on Friday, November 28, 2025. Administrative offices will be closed on Friday, November 28, 2025 in adherence to Ramsey County holiday schedule.

Federal and state funding changes

Ramsey County departments Financial Assistance Services, Public Health, and Workforce Solutions partner with state and federal partners to help residents access programs that support food, nutrition and financial stability – including SNAP, WIC and MFIP as well as many others. While the federal shut down has ended, food shelves remain strained and have shared anecdotal higher usage of resources. Ramsey County will be hosting a food and resources drive that started on November 14, and will end on December 15, 2025 at Ramsey County Library Maplewood, Roseville, and Shoreview. Ramsey County's initial partnership is with three food shelves: Keystone Community Services, Open Cupboard, and White Bear Lake Area Food Shelf. These food shelves will receive all collected food and resources during this drive.

Ramsey County Library Friends

On November 17, Ramsey County Library made a request to Ramsey County Library Friends for the amount of \$150,000 to commit towards library programs and resources. Annually, in prior years, Ramsey County Library has made a request for \$130,000, to invest \$30,000 towards the Library collection, and \$100,000 towards programming. For 2026, the additional \$20,000 will be committed towards Library investments in facilities.

The investment towards the Library collections help Ramsey County Library keep up with patron requests, replace old editions of standard titles, acquire new titles, and maintain collections in a variety of print and electronic formats. Complementary to books, Ramsey County Library engages users in a myriad of ways, including a range of educational and learning opportunities for children, teens, adults, and families. This support includes take-home kits, programs such as storytime, tech help, and history programs.

The additional investments in facilities would be intended to cultivate inspiring and productive environments that promote learning, innovation and cultural engagement. These improvements may include investments into study pods, refresh art, and interactives in the library.

Welcome Kelsey Lied

Ramsey County Library welcomes a new Digital Literacy Manager, Kelsey Lied. The Ramsey County Library Digital Services Manager is responsible for a team of Librarians and Library Associates, and strategizes on the coordination of digital and electronic resources and technology. During our interviews with Lied, there were multiple themes that showed through with each of her responses: commitment to learning, commitment to collaboration and commitment to community.

Pang Yang

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