

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.