
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board

October 17, 2018

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:

Deb Berry, Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, John Hakes, Sida Ly-Xiong, Paula Mielke

LIBRARY BOARD ABSENT:

Craig Klausung, Sylvia Neblett

STAFF PRESENT:

Jill Boldenow, Library Director; Lynn Wyman, Deputy Director; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner; Johanna Berg, Deputy County Manager; Cyndi Cook, Friends of the Ramsey County Library Executive Director; Amado Guevara, Ramsey County Property Management; Susan Morgan, MSR Design; Les Sipkema, Shoreview Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Mielke called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, 3025 Southlawn Drive.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mielke summarized a letter received from Les Sipkema, Shoreview resident, prior to the meeting. The letter shared Sipkema's thoughts on a variety of subjects including minority purchasing, the strategic plan, technology use and Facebook classes at the library, and the process for changing rental books to general circulating books.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Hakes made a motion to approve the agenda for October 17, 2018 as presented. Chiclana-Ayala seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ly-Xiong made a motion to approve the minutes of September 19, 2018 as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Important Dates – All libraries are closed October 22 for Staff In-service Day. The Friends Annual Author Talk and Luncheon with Diane Wilson is November 3. Dunn Brothers Café at RCL-Roseville is tentatively planning to close November 1-3 for facility improvements. For the Veterans Day holiday, all libraries are closed November 11; Administration and Technical Services departments are closed on November 12. For the Thanksgiving holiday, all libraries are closed November 22; Administration and Technical Services are closed November 23.

Voting – Ramsey County Library is again offering voting at several locations this election season. RCL will host early voting from October 30 through November 5 at libraries in Shoreview, Maplewood, White Bear Lake, and Roseville. RCL-White Bear Lake and RCL-Maplewood are also serving as Election Day polling places on November 6. For more details about voting options, locations, and hours in Ramsey County, visit the Ramsey County website: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting/voters/vote-election-day>.

Becoming American Film and Discussion Series – The Library will present this six-part program series from November to April with several community partners. Carol Jackson was awarded a grant to present this series—

as one of only thirty U.S. program sites. Additional funding is provided by the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries. The first program is “The Century of Immigration,” on November 8, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at RCL-Shoreview. Between 1820 and 1924, industrial expansion, the need for inexpensive labor, and mass migrations fueled an unprecedented immigration of 40 million people to the U.S. that changed the country’s makeup, culture, and social institutions. This program includes screenings of *New York: A Documentary Film* (Episode 4, “The Power and the People”) and *The Jewish Americans*, followed by a discussion moderated by Professor Dina Gavrilos.

What’s Next for Your Library – RCL will soon roll out a campaign, “What’s Next for Your Library,” to solicit public input on a new facilities master plan. The Library, Ramsey County Property Management, and MSR Design have studied existing Library conditions and hosted listening sessions with Library staff. For the next six weeks, community input will be collected to help identify desired improvements in facilities and operations. An online survey, public listening sessions, tabling, and library displays will be utilized to gather input. Listening sessions are scheduled for RCL-Mounds View on Saturday, November 10, at 1:30 p.m. and at RCL-Maplewood on Monday, November 19, at 6:00 p.m. Boldenow will also table at each Library to engage community members.

On a related note, Ramsey County is conducting a resident/service user survey at two County sites, and one of these is RCL-Roseville. This survey will glean valuable information about how to improve the accessibility of County services. This survey will be distributed at the entryway of Roseville October 18-23.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:

September Used Book Sale Wrap-Up

Thank you to everyone who made the Friends 2018 “Pop-Up” Used Book Sale in September a success. The Friends raised just over \$4,500, surpassing sales from last year. More than 30 dedicated volunteers staffed the four-day sale supported by generous community book donations and the welcoming and friendly staff at Ramsey County Library-Shoreview.

Advocating for Ramsey County Library

The Friends Advocacy Committee reconvened in September after a hiatus of several years. This committee will focus on highlighting the many great resources offered by Ramsey County Library to local press and government entities.

Strategic Planning

The Friends Strategic Planning Committee initiated the process for establishing priorities for the next three years. Ramsey County Library Director, Jill Boldenow, is keeping the Friends Board apprised of the RCL strategic planning and facilities planning processes to ensure that the Friends planning process reflects RCL priorities.

Reading Friends

The Reading Friends partnership with Community Programs with Youth (CPY) in New Brighton will continue for the 2018-2019 school year with 12 volunteers. The Reading Friends book collection at CPY was refreshed from the September book sale at Shoreview and both the kids and reading volunteers are excited to have new material.

Upcoming Events

- **Friends Board of Directors** on January 28, 2019 at Shoreview
- **Friends Author Luncheon**, November 3, 2018 at North Oaks Golf Club
- **Friends 2019 Gala—Hats Off to the Library!**, February 2, 2019 at Roseville
- **2019 Book It 5K Walk/Run**, May 18, 2019 at Roseville

2018 THIRD QUARTER REPORTS:

The Library Board reviewed the third quarter workplan, financial report, statistics, and incident reports.

2019 HOLIDAY CALENDAR:

Each year, the Library staff prepares a holiday calendar for the upcoming year for Library Board approval. The calendar includes all the dates designated as paid holidays by Ramsey County, as well as other dates when the libraries are closed.

Since 1993, the Library's calendar has included Staff Inservice Days. These days allow time for staff training as well as facilities-related projects such as painting or shifting the collection.

The libraries may also close as needed for facility- or technology-related improvements. These closed days will be selected based on their branch needs, and publicized in advance in the Library's newsletter and on the website.

Chiclana-Ayala made a motion to approve the 2019 Holiday Calendar as proposed. Hakes seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

2019-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Ramsey County Library Board, in conjunction with the Library Director and Library staff, does strategic planning to assure that the Ramsey County Library will continue to meet the information needs of its community in the years to come. To that end, the Board and staff have been engaged for several months to produce a new strategic plan. This plan will dovetail with the Library's updated Facilities Master Plan and Technology Plan, which will be completed in upcoming months.

In this process, the Library Board has assessed Ramsey County goals and strategic priorities, Library performance measures, community surveys, and a SWOT analysis of internal and external factors. The proposed Ramsey County Library Strategic Plan 2019-2021 identifies high level strategic priorities and guiding principles. The draft plan synthesizes the Board's recent feedback regarding positive language, and expanded priorities and guiding principles.

Ly-Xiong made a motion to approve the Ramsey County Library Strategic Plan 2019-2021 as presented. Chiclana-Ayala seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

BENCHMARKING RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARY TO OTHER COMPARABLE LIBRARIES:

Jeff Eide compiled a statistical report showing comparisons between RCL, MELSA libraries, and seven other library systems across the United States with similar population size and total revenues.

Ramsey County Library remains highest in the MELSA region in circulation per capita and circulation per FTE, and second highest in visits per capita, collection turnover, program attendance per capita, circulation per square foot, and visits per square foot.

Ramsey County Library was named a Star Library by the Library Journal Index in 2017. The Index rates library visits, circulation, program attendance, and public Internet computer use to determine its ratings.

The Library Board discussed the statistical report, which was prepared with data provided by The Institute for Library Services. Each state gathers and vets the information provided to the Institute.

LIBRARY FACILITY MASTER PLANNING – MSR DESIGN:

In 2008, the Library commissioned a Facility Master Plan spanning from 2008-2018. Plan implementation resulted in several Library construction and expansion projects as well as automation improvements.

The Library's level of business strains its resources—buildings, staff, collections, technology, furniture, and equipment. System conditions have changed since 2008 to warrant a new Facility Master Plan to guide the Library for the next decade. Similar to the previous plan, this report will be a holistic study of community, system, and facility needs. In particular, the report will provide a furniture refurbishment plan, which the previous master plan recommended. The new Master Plan will also weave in the pre-design study for RCL-Maplewood that was completed in spring 2018, based on serious concerns.

Ramsey County Property Management and Ramsey County Library commissioned MSR Design to produce the new Library Facility Master Plan. This work began in August 2018, and will conclude in early 2019. Susan Morgan, Architect at MSR Design, was present to update the Library Board about the planning process and progress to date.

Morgan noted that a series of staff stakeholder sessions were held, along with site visits to each library and demographic research. The data gathered will be used as the basis for the master planning, incorporating library trends and the focus on libraries as community commons.

The final step in the data gathering process is the upcoming public engagement opportunities. Library Board members are invited to leave feedback on a display at their library, take an online survey, table at a library with the Library Director, or attend a public listening session. Sessions are scheduled for Saturday, November 10, 1:30-2:30 p.m. at RCL-Mounds View; and Monday, November 19, 6:00-7:00 p.m. at RCL-Maplewood.

The Board members discussed the public engagement events planned, and ways to remove barriers to participation by the public. The Board suggested having the surveys available in multiple languages, as well as having interpreters at the public listening sessions. Boldenow agreed to have the survey forms available in English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali, and to provide interpreters for the same at the listening sessions.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY OVERVIEW:

Cyndi Cook, Friends Executive Director, was present to give the Library Board an overview of the Friends organization. The Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries was formed in 1979 as an all-volunteer organization to advocate for and support library services in suburban Ramsey County.

Author luncheons, book review programs, plays, concerts, lectures, Minnesota Chautauqua programs, and annual book sales are some examples of Friends' activities that have enriched the cultural life of the area. In 1994, the Friends program awarding library cards to elementary-age school children won a "Friends of the Library USA Award" for its "Sign Me Up" contest. The Kindergarten Signup Program continues today as an official component of Ramsey County Library children's programming with the Friends providing financial support.

As the library budget from public funds has grown tighter and customer needs increased, strategic fundraising has grown ever more important. In 1997, the Library Board formally invited the Friends to take on this additional fundraising role, in addition to carrying on with traditional advocacy responsibilities and successful book sale operations. The Friends now operate three used book stores and two book carts, bringing in the money to cover their operating expenses and to help fund many special library programs. The book stores are located at Maplewood, Roseville, and Shoreview, with book carts at Mounds View and White Bear Lake.

Memberships and donations to the Friends enable Ramsey County Library to offer many programs and services that would not otherwise be possible. The Summer Reading Program for children and teens, free computer classes for all ages, the Explore newsletter, family story times, book clubs, volunteer recognition, teen programs, staff training, author talks, and community outreach are examples of some of some of the programs the Friends support.

During the past 38 years, the Friends have provided funding for library equipment including PC and laptop computers, a van, audio-visual equipment, 3D printers and furniture, and have also added to the collection of library books and materials. Other funding projects of the Friends include raising additional money for construction and remodeling through successful capital campaigns at each library.

Significant changes to the organization have included the merger of the Friends with the Ramsey County Library Foundation in 2005, and the hiring of a part-time director in 2007. These decisions have enabled the Friends to enjoy increased visibility in the community and to become more effective in supporting the seven libraries in suburban Ramsey County.

As the Friends approach their 40 years of service to Ramsey County Library, the volunteer organization of over 600 member households continues to seek new members and financial support that will continue to improve library services, promote literacy, and enrich the cultural life of the area for present and future generations.

MAPLEWOOD BRANCH UPDATE & TOUR:

Trends in the Service Area

- Students of color constitute 41% of District 622's student population, with 47% eligible for free or reduced price lunches.
- 35 different languages are spoken in the homes of district students.

Library Issues and Service Trends

- In response to serious concerns, including acoustic and sightline issues, the Library and Property Management completed a pre-design plan of solutions in Q2. We hope to implement recommendations after completing a Facility Master Plan.
- The library is seeing an increase in patrons experiencing homelessness, and staff are working with county, city, and nonprofit agencies on responses.
- The Cafeine Thai Café closed in early 2018. We are seeking potential new tenants and considering other uses of this valuable space.

NEXT MEETING:

November 21, 2018—Ramsey County Library in Roseville, 2180 Hamline Avenue North, 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mielke adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator