
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board October 18, 2017

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:

Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, Hector Garcia, John Hakes, Craig Klausung, Paula Mielke, Janice Rapheal, Kim Vanderwall

STAFF PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Cyndi Cook, Friends of the Ramsey County Library Executive Director; Les Sipkema, Shoreview Resident; Bryan Olson, Falcon Heights Resident

CALL TO ORDER:

Klausung called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Program Room of the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood, 3025 Southlawn Drive.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Les Sipkema, Shoreview resident, shared concerns about the library's collection, technology, and donor plaques at the new Ramsey County Library in Shoreview.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES:

Vanderwall made a motion to approve the agenda for October 18, 2017, and the minutes of September 20, 2017, as presented. Mielke seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

2018 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.

Vanderwall made a motion to approve the 2018 Holiday Calendar as proposed. Mielke seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:Important Dates:

October 31 through November 6—Early voting at Shoreview Library and White Bear Lake Library

November 10—Library Administration and Technical Services closed

November 11—All Ramsey County Libraries closed for Veterans Day holiday

November 23—All Ramsey County Libraries closed for Thanksgiving holiday

November 24—Library Administration and Technical Services closed

November 27—Ramsey County Board of Commissioners budget hearing, Shoreview Library at 6:30 pm

In-Service Day:

The Library hosted a dynamic In-service day on October 9, 2017, with 113 staff in attendance. Library staff presented sessions on Interlibrary Loan and circulation, demonstrations of makerspace equipment, and a

showcase of diverse books that introduced audience members to dozens of diverse children's and YA titles. Staff enjoyed a book talk and discussion with Mai Neng Moua, the author of *The Bride Price*, and the day also included book club discussions on this title. The afternoon keynote speaker, Alicia Sojourner, led a workshop: "Confronting Isms Minnesota Style," which illuminated communication styles and ways to confront prejudice. The day concluded with a discussion with branch managers about the Library Use policy and how to implement this in order to maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive library environment.

Thanks to all of the Ramsey County Library staff for making this In-service day a success, from planning to set-up and clean-up, to leading and participating in sessions. This was an outstanding team effort!

English Language Learner Storytime:

Anna Haase Krueger, Children's Librarian, is piloting a new storytime at Maplewood Library. This four-week session (September 30 through October 21) is specifically for families learning English, including children ages 2-5. Adults and children read, sing, and play together while practicing English and having fun. This storytime is followed by playtime and socializing.

Board Member Name Tags:

Staff are working to obtain Library Board Member nametags for use at Library events. Stay tuned!

County Initiatives:

Boldenow recently joined Ramsey County's Youth Continuum of Care Governance Committee, which meets quarterly to eliminate disparities and improve how to coordinate investments in youth across departments. Currently, she is also serving on a number of other County teams. They include the Senior Management Team, the Racial Equity Leadership Team, the Economic Growth and Community Investment (EGCI) service team, the Sexually Exploited Youth Leadership Committee, and the Payment Card Industry Compliance Sponsors Group.

FRIENDS OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY LIBRARIES REPORT:

The 12th Annual National Friends of the Library Week is October 15-21, 2017:

The Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries is proud to be among the thousands of Friends groups across the country who work to strengthen, support, and advocate for libraries in their communities. Since the organization was founded in 1979, the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries has contributed more than \$3.5 million in grants and donations to the Ramsey County Library for a wide range of materials and programs including: the Summer Reading Program, Technology Literacy and Adult Life Skills, programming for children and teens, additions to the lending collection, and outreach to underserved populations through efforts like the new Pop Up libraries and Racial Equity programming. The Friends also provide funding support for the ExpLore Newsletter, volunteer recognition and employee development as well as leading multiple capital campaigns to enhance library facilities.

Stand Up For Stand Out Friends:

For the second year, Minnesota Association of Library Friends invited member organizations to nominate a member for the *Stand Up for Stand Out Friends* award in thanks for standout efforts in furtherance of Friends of the Library work. This year, the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries honor went to volunteer Bookstore Treasurer, Donna Andreas. Since joining Friends of Ramsey County Libraries in 2002, Donna has served as both used book sale manager and bookstore treasurer. In the latter role, she has oversight of the three year-round bookstores in the Roseville, Maplewood and Shoreview libraries – as well as the popular book carts at the Mounds View and White Bear Lake branches. She has visited each store weekly for nearly fifteen years. In recent years, she has also worked diligently with an internal audit team to optimize their revenue bookkeeping. As if that alone weren't enough, Donna is also a tireless contributor to the Friends multi-day seasonal sales.

“After working her shift, she also takes the extra step of tallying and posting the daily sales results, giving us all that added boost of encouragement,” noted board member, Nancy Guerino. *“Donna has served so well for so long – and she does everything in a manner that is so congenial. She’s just a joy to work with!”*

Shoreview Library Capital Campaign Nearing Completion:

The five botanical prints by Linda Snouffer are now installed on the west wall near the fireplace and the three mixed media pieces by Janine Olmscheid are now up in the Peacock Room designed especially for book clubs. These works are beautiful additions to the library ambiance and well worth a special trip to the Shoreview Branch. In November, Friends board members Mary Carter and Kate Huebsch are hosting a House Party to celebrate the new library and bring us over the finish line to reach the capital campaign goal of \$250,000. Jill Boldenow, RCL Director, will be the guest presenter and several Shoreview Branch staff will be on hand to talk with guests about the library and to demonstrate the 3D printer.

Book It 5K Walk/Run Results:

Despite a rocky start with dark clouds, wind, and rain—130 runners, walkers and strollers took to the course cheered on by family and friends and cohort of more than 40 volunteers and raised just over \$5,000 to support the Ramsey County Library Summer Reading Program. Thanks to the generous sponsors and community donors, more than 5,200 children and teens participated in the Summer Reading Program at the seven suburban Ramsey County Libraries this year. Reading Programs have shown that they increase student’s reading abilities, increase their time with books, increase their enjoyment of reading, and increase parental involvement in reading with their children.

Upcoming Events

- “Pop Up” Used Book Sale on October 26-28, 2017 at the Shoreview Branch
- (Rescheduled) Friends Board of Directors meeting on November 20, 2017 at the Roseville Branch
- Kindergarten Library Card Sign-Up Celebration on Saturday, January 20, 2018 with author extraordinaire Kate DiCamillo at the Roseville Branch
- Friends Annual Gala: *Whale of a Tale!* on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at the Roseville Branch

2017 THIRD QUARTER REPORTS:

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

LIBRARY BOARD 3-YEAR AGENDA:

To ensure that the Library Board is kept informed of key library services, special projects, and business-related matters, staff has created an annual list of topics to be considered by the Board at its meetings. The list is meant as a guideline to help plan agendas and balance workload throughout the year. Agenda items may be shifted during the year to accommodate time-sensitive issues or other needs as determined by the Library Board and staff.

Following a brief discussion by the Board, Mielke made a motion to approve the Library Board Three-Year Agenda for 2018-2020. Chiclana-Ayala seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

CAFÉINE THAI CAFÉ LEASE:

On July 29, 2017, Sanook, LLC owners Kumpon Boonwong and Navarat Poosansaard (owners of Caféine Thai Café at Maplewood Library) requested approval to close the café in November and December to take paternity and maternity leave. The Library approved this request. On October 10, 2017, Boonwong and Poosansaard submitted a request for the Library to waive their rent for November and December.

The owners had previously closed the café for about five weeks, from late December 2016 through January 2017, while they went to Thailand. In that instance, the Library invoiced the café for the January rent payment, but did not charge the owners for gas and electric usage that would normally be incurred if the café were open. Utility costs for the space average \$500-\$600 per month over and above the base rent cost.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

In 2014, Ramsey County Library staff negotiated a five-year lease with Sanook, LLC for 1,200 square feet and use of all the equipment within the Library. In exchange, the café owners provided a security deposit of \$20,000 and agreed to pay \$25 per square foot of space plus property taxes.

In summer of 2015, Sanook, LLC expressed concern about the financial viability of the café. After discussions with the Ramsey County Attorney's Office and with the approval of the Library Board in September 2015, the rent was reduced by 40%.

In May 2016, Sanook, LLC submitted a request to the Library Board asking for the return of 50% of the damage deposit to improve inventory and promote the transition from a coffee shop into a Thai restaurant. The Library Board declined the request in July 2016.

Boldenow indicated that she had received information from Sanook, LLC that they were considering bringing in a partner or assigning the lease to a new owner. At the current time, no official notification has been received of any change to the lease, which ends January 31, 2020.

The Board members discussed the proposal made by staff, and questioned whether the utility savings should be capped at a set amount. The Board also considered whether a policy should be created to address any future requests, and suggested that the space be included in the Library's long-range planning.

Vanderwall made a motion to authorize Library staff to invoice Sanook, LLC for rent due for November and December 2017, waiving gas and electric charges for the space during the same period. Rapheal seconded the motion, which was approved by unanimous vote.

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, per FTE, per square foot and per hour open; in visits per hour open; and in collection turnover. RCL lags behind other MELSA systems in revenue per capita, and collections expenditures per capita. RCL is second only to St. Paul in visits per capita and program attendance per capita, and to Washington County in visits per square foot of library space.

Ramsey County Library was named a Star Library by the Library Journal Index in 2016. The Index rates library visits, circulation, program attendance, and public Internet computer use to determine its ratings.

The Library Board discussed circulation of e-materials and whether it will continue to rise or has plateaued. Many e-materials have long waiting lists, so increasing the number of titles and copies owned would likely result in increased circulation.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY OVERVIEW:

Cyndi Cook, Executive Director of the Friends of the Ramsey County Library, shared a PowerPoint presentation on the Friends organization. Cook, who has been with the Friends for eight months, noted that she frequently gets calls from members of the community expressing love for their library experience, and their interactions with staff.

The Friends were founded in 1979, and currently have a membership of more than 800 households. The Friends have an active Executive Board, and more than 200 volunteers give over 8,000 hours per year. The Friends run used bookstores at the regional libraries in Maplewood, Roseville and Shoreview, and operate used book carts at Mounds View and White Bear Lake. Three part-time staff include Cook, office manager Shayne Miller and events planner Caitlin Carroll. The Friends have donated more than \$3.5 million dollars to Ramsey County Library since their inception. Current fundraising events include the final months of the Shoreview Library Capital Campaign, a pop-up used book sale at the library in Shoreview, and the annual gala in February 2018.

HOMELESS AND LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS:

Recent staff reports at Library Board meetings have touched on the Library's Community Resource Advocates (CRA) program, which in part, serves library patrons experiencing homelessness. A board member asked follow-up questions about the scope of work related to homelessness.

Boldenow reviewed the genesis and focus of the CRA program, which is the centerpiece of Ramsey County Library's work to address the needs of patrons experiencing homelessness, as well as:

- "Skills for Life" programming, which includes CRA (social services); financial and legal help; jobs and small business; caregiver and community health; and environment and sustainability.
- Other programming lines: arts and literature; history; technology; teen; kids.
- Focus on strategic programming areas.
- Growth in programs and attendance.
- Programming assignments to part-time coordinators in charge of specific themes.
- Opportunities and challenges.

Garcia suggested networking events to learn about resources available for homeless patrons.

NORTH ST. PAUL LIBRARY UPDATE:

Ramsey County Library's North St. Paul branch is located in a facility owned by the City of North St. Paul. The Library became a tenant in 2005, when the facility operated as a community center. The Library invested in design and construction to remodel the North St. Paul Library space.

The facility no longer operates as a community center, but the City has leased space to other tenants. One current tenant, Minnesota Revolution Academy, is leaving. The City of North St. Paul is considering recruiting new tenants as well as the option of selling the facility. The City is taking the Library's future into account in their planning.

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:

- Continuing noise and behavior issues in the teen area. The Library has purchased a portable desk that is placed near the teen area to better monitor the space. The Library also increased programming in the space to increase staff presence and create relationships with the teen population.
- Started planning for pre-design of facility upgrades.
- Younger patrons are considerably more diverse than older patrons.

Library Manager Bill Michel noted that the facilities planning committee has begun meeting with architects being asked to submit proposals for remodeling the Maplewood facility. The biggest issues to be addressed include noise, separation of spaces, and worn out furnishings.

Michel also noted that Maplewood partnered with Youthprise to offer meals and snacks to low-income children over the summer. Library staff distributed more than 1,300 meals and snacks.

Library Board members toured the facility to observe different areas to be addressed by the upcoming pre-design proposals.

NEXT MEETING: November 15, 2017—RCL Roseville, 2180 Hamline Avenue North, 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator