
Minutes of the Ramsey County Library Board June 17, 2020

LIBRARY BOARD PRESENT:

Deb Berry, Claire Chang, Marisol Chiclana-Ayala, Sida Ly-Xiong, Sylvia Neblett, Gwen Willems, Steve Woods

STAFF PRESENT:

Jill Boldenow, Library Director; Jeff Eide, Senior Library Manager; Mary Larson, Library Board Coordinator; Carol Jackson, Shoreview Library Manager; Chuck Wettergren, Digital Services Manager; Lynn Wyman, Deputy Director

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner; Cyndi Cook, Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries Executive Director

CALL TO ORDER:

Neblett called the virtual meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. via Zoom video conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chang made a motion to approve the agenda for June 17, 2020, as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Willems made a motion to approve the minutes of May 20, 2020 as presented. Berry seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Racial Justice and Equity – Recent and past injustices, including George Floyd's death at the hands of police, have prompted renewed commitments to racial justice and equity here and globally. The Library upholds that commitment and support for Black communities and colleagues. We have work before us as a community and as a public organization to reflect and contribute to change. In the immediate term, we are leaning in to an area of strength—providing access to relevant information. Staff are purchasing and promoting anti-racist titles and related resources, monitoring high demand, and reallocating funds to reduce hold times on these valuable resources. Staff have developed recommended reading lists for youth, adults, and parents to be highlighted on our website and social media. We will explore how to further engage residents in accessing and having dialogue on these resources to better understand the historical context and future solutions to combat racism and white supremacy. We will continue examining the Library's role, Board policies, and practices to align with goals and solutions. We ask everyone—the Board, staff, community and colleagues—to help us forge a path of racial justice and equity ahead.

Summer Learning Program – On June 8, we launched *Summer Break @Home with your Library* programs for kids and teens. Highlights of the kids' program: registrants all receive a participation bag and free book; several types of *Read. Make. Do.* kits may be picked up to guide at-home activities beginning July 1. Teen program highlights: teen reviews of books and activities; free books and *Maker Teen @Home* kits may be picked up; prize drawings; and virtual book clubs. Congratulations to children's and teen librarians for launching a whole new way to support learning, and welcome to all participants in Summer Break!

Modified Library Services Update – In the last month, we added curbside checkout at all libraries and launched computer use at three libraries.

Date Range	Number of items checked out: curbside and digital								Virtual Programs		Home Delivery	
	RCL-RV	RCL-MP	RCL-SV	RCL-WB	RCL-MV	RCL-NS	RCL-NB	(E-Books, E-Audiobooks, E-Magazines)	#	Views	Patrons Served	Items
3/23-3/29	2,112	1,083	1,841					11,776	2	1,597		
3/30-4/5	2,891	1,538	2,469					12,225	3	1,612		
4/6-4/12 (closed 4/12)	2,792	1,443	2,011					14,556	3	1,635		
4/13-4/19	3,289	1,542	2,483					13,101	4	910		
4/20-4/26	3,403	1,722	2,382					13,447	3	1,093	57	188
4/27-5/3	3,267	1,618	2,413					12,459	3	957	22	60
5/4-5/10	4,163	1,859	2,842					13,721	4	2,839	37	130
5/11-5/17	4,652	1,746	3,094					12,579	5	1,160	25	94
5/18-5/24	4,479	2,036	3,510					13,093	5	1,199	47	112
5/25-31 (closed 5/25)	3,382	1,388	2,561					12,326	2	343	31	21
6/1-6/7	4,836	1,988	3,446	226	274	111	192	13,295	3	357	42	168
TOTALS	39,266	17,963	29,052	226	274	111	192	142,578	37	13,702	261	773

AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS CONTRACT EXTENSION:

Ramsey County Library obtains the bulk of its DVDs and music CDs through a primary audio-visual materials vendor, currently Baker & Taylor. The term of Baker & Taylor’s contract will expire on July 31, 2020, with no renewals remaining.

In accordance with Ramsey County policy, Library staff asked the Procurement Office to prepare a solicitation for audio-visual materials vendors. However, the Procurement Office is inundated with solicitation requests utilizing Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, which addresses the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ramsey County Procurement Manager advised that the Library Board has the authority to extend the current contract for another year with the same terms, which Baker & Taylor has agreed to do.

Willems made a motion to authorize the Library Director to approve the extension of the primary audio-visual materials contract with Baker & Taylor for a one-year period to run from August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021, with all terms and conditions of the original contract to remain in force. Chang seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

2021 LIBRARY BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on County revenues, the County Manager will propose a modified 2021 budget. Departments in each service team are asked to accommodate a reduction in spending for 2021. In addition to the work on the 2021 budget, the Library has also drafted a performance measures report as required by all County departments.

Boldenow recommended that the Library achieve any budget reduction targets using unexpended salary and benefit funds and year end reserves. The Library Board concurred with her recommendations.

RAMSEY COUNTY RESIDENTS FIRST SERVICE CENTERS:

The Library Board discussed the Residents First Facilities Plan presented to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners by County Manager Ryan O'Connor on June 9, 2020. A second workshop is tentatively scheduled for June 23 to continue the discussion.

Boldenow reported that staff are involved in planning for the service centers and learning more about the concept and how it will be implemented in Library facilities. She noted that the Library has been offering the Community Resource Advocates program for the past few years, and almost applied for a grant to imbed a social worker in the Library. The service center model is similar, but utilizes a navigator familiar with all County services rather than a social worker.

The Board members thanked Commissioner McGuire for mentioning the Library Board and its concerns during the workshop, and expressed reassurance after learning more details of the plan. Library Board members shared some uneasiness about mission drift for the Library, and negative associations related to other County functions. Commissioner McGuire thanked the Library Board for listening to the workshop, and assured them that the County Board is very conscious that the suburban-only levy for Library operations cannot be used to fund the service centers.

Neblett reported that County Manager Ryan O'Connor offered to attend a future Library Board meeting to have a conversation with the Board members about the Residents First Facilities Plan and to address Library Board questions and concerns. Staff will invite the County Manager to the August Library Board meeting, and include planning for the meeting on the July agenda.

Boldenow noted that Ramsey County Property Management and Ramsey County Information Services are working with Library staff to install additional infrastructure and safety features to support the service centers. Increasing use of curbside service is straining staff capacity, prompting consideration of patron pickup of requests inside the buildings. No date is scheduled at the current time to fully open buildings, though we are continually adding services.

LIBRARY ROLE IN THE CONTEXT OF RACIAL EQUITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH CRISES:

The Library and the County have been engaged in advancing racial and health equity. The need to address both of these is particularly pronounced today in the context of COVID-19, George Floyd's death, and persistent racial inequities. These crises cannot be addressed in one discussion session, but Boldenow asked the Library Board members' to share their insights on what community members need, and what is the Library's role in being part of the solution.

Boldenow noted that the Library has increased purchasing of library materials on anti-racism, to meet public demand and to provide current resources on the subject for all ages. The Library Board members suggested programming, partnerships, curated lists of resources for the public, and providing community spaces (when it is safe to do so) as other mission-appropriate responses for the Library. Staff training on local issues and resources was advised, particularly for mental health issues. Programming should encourage community dialogue on issues facing suburban Ramsey County. Commissioner McGuire suggested that the Library Board meet with Ramsey County's new Racial Equity and Community Engagement Team, which is meeting with staff and community groups.

NEXT MEETING:

Due to availability issues on the scheduled July 15 meeting date, Chiclana-Ayala made a motion to change the next meeting date to July 22, 2020. The meeting will be held virtually, starting at 6:30 p.m. Willems seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously via roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT:

Neblett adjourned the virtual meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Larson
Library Board Coordinator