

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Notice of Meeting

DATE: September 22, 2020

TIME: 4:30 p.m.

NOTICE: The Duluth Public Library Board will be holding a special meeting in August by other electronic means pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021 in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Members of the Board will be participating through video conference. Due to the COVID-19 emergency and the closure of City facilities, public comment will not be taken in person. However, members of the public can monitor the meeting and provide public comment on agenda items through WebEx Events. Visit <https://duluthmn.gov/live-meeting> to access the meeting. The public is also encouraged to submit written comment to Library Manager Carla Powers prior to the meeting. Please include "Library Board Agenda" in the subject line, and include your name and address and the agenda item you are speaking to. Please note that all public comment is considered Public Data.

AGENDA

Call to order
Review and approve agenda
Public comments received in advance of meeting
Approve minutes of August 25 meeting

Reports

Library Manager's Report – Powers
Every Child Ready Duluth Report – Powers
Friends Report – Ramsland

Old Business

Restoring in-person services

New Business

New board member

Ongoing Business

Advocacy

Adjournment

Next regular meeting: October 27, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. via WebEx.

**Duluth Public Library Board
Minutes of Virtual Meeting
August 25, 2020**

Call to order: Sue Henke called the meeting of the Duluth Library Board to order at 4:35 on August 25, 2020.

Members present: David Sperl, Matt Rosendahl, Stephen Welsh, Neil Glazman, Sue Henke,

Also present: Carla Powers (Library Manager), Arik Forsman (City Council Liaison), Jim Filby Williams (Director of Property, Parks and Libraries), Bridgit Maruska (Public citizen), Dennis McManus (public citizen)

Absent: Lizzy Luoma, Betty Ramsland, Michelle Foshay

Review and approve agenda: Motion by Sperl, seconded by Glazman, to approve the agenda as drafted. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: No public comments received.

Review and approve minutes from July 28, 2020: Motion by Sperl, seconded by Welsh, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Reports

Library Manager's Report (Powers)

The Minnesota Department of Education organized a collaborative meeting with public libraries and schools this week. There were three attendees from within the Arrowhead library system but no one from the schools. There will be another meeting scheduled in a couple of weeks and DPL staff will try to attend again in hopes of having an opportunity to connect with schools.

Last week NAACP did a free mask handout and also did voter registration at the same time. About 55 people participated. When the library is open under normal operations the library usually provides voter registration information, and additionally patrons use computers to find information about the election. Glazman mentioned that League of Women Voters might be a good partner to provide voter registration information on the outside of the building. Powers will check into this.

Friends Report (Powers)

The Friends discussed fundraising ideas given that they were unable to have a book sale this year. One idea was to encourage people to make a donation equal to the amount of money they saved by using the library, which is on the bottom of their checkout receipt. President Marcia Semerau was contacted by the Bookworm Garden Club, the group that planted and maintained flowers around the library, which is considering disbanding. Carla is looking into ways to support that group and keep them going.

Foundation report (Rosendahl)

Libations at Home fundraiser will happen September 19. Rosendahl encouraged board members to sign up. He shared that fundraising has been exceptional for Every Child Ready Duluth, and is strong for general library support as well.

Old Business

Every Child Ready Duluth Update (Powers)

Henke mentioned that she attended one of the community planning sessions. Several suggestions came up, and as it turns out the library is already doing much of what was suggested. There has been good attendance at Story Strolls - the largest attendance is 104, but generally averages 20 to 40 per event. Community Schools Family Open House was a great event where staff spoke to over 100 people, and made a contact with the assistant superintendent at ISD709. The Port Card program might come back as an opt-in, rather than the preferred opt-out program.

New Business

2021 Budget

First the 2020 budget was discussed. Filby Williams reported that the Mayor and CAO have expressed their appreciation for the Library Board's proposal to restore in-person services. The budget is less of a concern at this time than the increase in Covid cases locally. City administration wants to avoid potentially calling staff back from layoff only to have to lay them off again due to the pandemic ramping up again. City Hall remains open to the public on a limited basis, but administration is considering closing it again for health and safety reasons. Filby Williams expressed that perhaps by October 1 enough will be known about the Covid trajectory to begin restoring limited in-person services at the Main Library. There was a question about calling back staff for other services, such as interlibrary loan, that do not require opening the building to public visits. Powers will discuss this with Filby Williams

The city's budgetary picture for the remainder of 2020 and 2021 appears better than it did initially. Between the temporary wage concessions from some bargaining units and federal aid, along with the willingness to dip into cash reserves if necessary, it appears likely that the City has sufficient funding to support full staffing for the remainder of this year and into next year. In the coming months the issue driving restoration of library services will be public health considerations more than money. Filby Williams expects 2022 to be a difficult year due to labor concessions ending and federal funding being exhausted.

The preliminary 2021 draft budget assumes that the city will fulfill its commitment to Every Child Ready Duluth. The administration is cautiously optimistic that the 2021 budget will support pre-pandemic levels of staffing once it is safe to do so. The Mayor will present her 2021 budget at the September 10 City Council agenda session. We will drill deeper and develop more detail as the fall proceeds. There could be a strong need to pivot based on how the societal conditions may change.

Ongoing Business

Advocacy

Since the July meeting a core group has formed, including members from the Foundation and Friends, who have met with all city councilors as well as the Mayor and CAO. There was a discussion of next steps. A suggestion was made to send councilors a letter after the presentation of the 2021 budget in order to continue the conversation. It would be good to follow up after September 10 but before the max levy vote on September 14. We could also share comments before the session when the library budget is presented - that will happen tentatively Monday, November 9 at 5:30. The public can still speak at a council meeting even when it's held via WebEx.

A question was raised about the facility study. So far Sara Weiner from Gensler has led a discussion around various concepts for how the space can be configured in the building. The next steps will be for TKDA to look at the building infrastructure. There also has been a consultant brought in to look at the data infrastructure. Existing data cables are getting quite old and grew out of needs that have come up. A consultant came in to look at switch closets that could reach through the long and skinny building. Concepts were passed along to TKDA. Filby Williams mentioned that the Main Library facility is still on the Mayor's mind. He said she is looking forward to a time when we have the renewed financial strength to take on a large project.

A question was raised about filling the vacancy on the board. Powers was told the clerk's office has only received an application from one person. She said she will circle back to another person who expressed interest and make sure that this application was submitted for consideration as well.

Meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

DRAFT

Manager's Report to Library Board September 2020

Employee Callbacks. Last Friday, three Library Technicians received a letter calling them back to work as of September 28. This was not related to any increase in service. Rather, it was done because the level of work that we're already doing has become unsustainable for our current small staff. More staff will be called back once we begin the phased reopening to in-person service by appointment.

Union Agreements. In July I reported that the two unions representing library employees had reached an agreement with City administration that included, among other concessions, some unpaid furlough days on which the library would be closed. Since then the City's financial situation has improved. Administration has drafted a new memorandum of agreement that will eliminate the furlough days. If the MOA is approved by the unions and the City Council, the library will no longer be closed on November 25 and December 31, 2020, nor will there be closed days due to furloughs in 2021.

Facility Planning. After some initial discussion about ideas for how to arrange various spaces in the Main Library, attention has turned to the building infrastructure. Options for replacing the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, windows, roof and exterior cladding are being explored in order to get an updated cost estimate.

Curbside Pickup Update. Our current no-appointment curbside pickup service began just over three months ago, and daily usage continues to increase. We started with an average of 75 pick-ups daily. Now we serve an average of 157 patrons each day, 20 to 30 of whom are new to the service. Since no-appointment curbside began on June 15 there have been more than 9603 interactions with over 2844 different patrons. Almost 35,500 items have been checked out. The week after Labor Day was particularly busy, with two days of over 200 interactions each. The remaining two days were significantly above average as well.

Curbside Pickup Window. With curbside pickup likely to be in demand even after we open for in-person use by appointment, staff has been exploring ways of continuing the service. We are getting a new window installed along the Superior Street side of the building, similar to the ones used for fast food drive-up. Once the window is installed we will no longer need to set up tables outside and use the entry doors to deliver items. Patrons will walk up to the pickup window, where staff at the circulation desk will retrieve their items, check them out, and pass them through the window. Having a pickup window will free up the entry doors for use by the public.

Every Child Ready Duluth Update to Library Board September 2020

Community input and Strategic Planning. The ECRD team is wrapping up community input sessions for the strategic plan. A total of 31 community members participated and follow up meetings are being scheduled with the folks who registered but did not end up attending a session. The feedback has been great, and there is lots of interest in continued partnership on the initiative from several participants. Next steps will be for Amanda Standerfer, the strategic planning consultant, to compile the feedback data, make changes to the strategic plan outline and begin an activity plan for the team to work on before asking the Brain Trust for feedback.

Evaluation. The team met with an evaluation consultant from Rainbow Research and her colleague to discuss options for further assistance with the evaluation of ECRD activities. The team is asking for a proposal from the evaluation consultants that can be presented to the Foundation.

Early Literacy Kits. Materials for the kits are being ordered, and suggested early literacy activities to accompany the items are being created.

Toys for checkout. ECRD staff has begun making lists of potential toys, games, and puzzles to add to the library's current collection of toys for checkout. Especially given that many children are at home rather than in preschool or daycare, we think it will be beneficial to parents for us to provide fresh ways for them to engage their children in thoughtful play.

Free books and craft kits. Kits have been distributed to some of our partner organizations including SONA, AICHO, Center City Housing, and the Lincoln Park Children and Family Collaborative. The team is developing a plan for expanding our partnerships and strategizing how often to give these free items.

Story Strolls. This popular no-contact program will continue into the fall, with ECRD and youth services staff working together. A new story will be set up at three different parks each month for September, October, and November. The Parks Division will bring Pop-up Play equipment to three different events. Free craft kits, books, and suggested activities are provided at each event.

Dial-a-Story. The team decided to use ECRD funds to purchase a subscription to this service. It is a Covid-safe way of providing stories to families who don't have an internet connection.

Virtual Storytimes. Baby and Toddler virtual storytimes continue on Facebook.