

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of Virtual Meeting
March 22, 2022

Call to order: Chair Sue Henke called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Members present: Neil Glazman, Michelle Foshay, Susan Henke, Lizzy Luoma, Betty Ramsland, Stephen Welsh, Alex Strehlow, David Sperl

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, Carmella Hatch, Jason DeShaw, Jim Filby Williams, Sue Schumacher, Steph Lorek, Councilor Terese Tomanek, Mayor Emily Larson.

Review and approve agenda: Motion by Glazman, seconded by Ramsland, to approve agenda as drafted. Approved unanimously.

Public comments received in advance of meeting: None

Approve minutes of February 22, 2022 meeting – Motion by Foshay, seconded by Ramsland, to approve minutes as drafted. Minutes approved by consensus.

Mayor Larson stopped in to say hello and thank you to the library board.

Introduce new Library Supervisor Jason DeShaw: Jason has been a part of the DPL team for about six weeks. He previously worked for Fargo Public Library. Jason is overseeing circulation and technical services.

Reports

Every Child Ready Duluth update. Hatch, Schumacher, and Lorek provided an update that included: recent evaluation activities that included event surveys, stakeholder interviews, parent focus group sessions, and a parent survey; working with Swim Creative on the school readiness messaging campaign that will include promotional video, social media content, mailings, posters, webpage redesign, and newsletter; the five characters that will be used in messaging that represent the five early literacy activities of talk, sing, read, write, and play; a preview of the Family Fun Fest debut of ECRD on April 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; 13 presentations at three ECFE sites; the creation of classes for future parents and health care professionals; new items in the toy collection; virtual storytimes, Goosechase programs, and Dial-a-Story; and the Little Library Go van that is receiving its exterior wrap next week while the library builds its mobile circulating collection and a mobile little red bookshelf containing books families can take and keep. Foshay asked how Swim Creative became involved in ECRD and Powers replied that they had developed the library's logo a number of years ago, and then extended their work into ECRD for cohesive branding.

Library Manager's Report. Henke noted the MLA conference will be held in Duluth in October.

Duluth Library Foundation Report – Accepted.

Friends of the Library Report. Accepted.

Old Business

Update on services and staffing. Powers provided the update in her report. Masking is no longer required in all city buildings, though the city does recommend masks for in-person staff meetings and the library will encourage them for in-person programs. A recent update on staffing is that unfortunately the Librarian II for youth services librarian resigned. The position will be filled after the incumbent's last day on April 8. The top Librarian II candidate for Adult Services declined a job offer due to personal goals for their work.

Update on library security. Tomanek noted that the City Council received a question about whether the hiring of security people would result in the passageway between the library and Radisson being reopened. Filby Williams estimated that safety specialists could be hired by mid-May, and at that point the library will discuss the reopening with Duluth Police Department and the Greater Downtown Council. The decision will be influenced by whether behavior and security problems in the skywalks have been alleviated. Powers noted that the job description has been approved by AFSCME, HR, and the next steps are to be approved by the Civil Service board and City Council. Powers said that they are looking into options for more staff training. DeShaw has helped to improve the alert system in the building with a standardized email template to streamline communication during incidents. Powers and Filby Williams are developing an RFP for a security consultant to evaluate the building to identify changes that could be made to improve safety. In response to questions from board members, Powers noted that incidents have continued at a same pace since the last meeting with issues related to drinking in the library, smoking and drug use in the bathroom, and a recent fistfight outside the library.

Main Library facility. The City has contracted with Gensler Architects to lead a conceptual pre-design process. The architect is meeting with library staff and with workforce development leadership, as well as Filby Williams and Erik Birkeland (property and facilities manager). Initial concepts will be shared with staff tomorrow for them to respond to and refine. Filby Williams estimated that the board could receive a report as soon as next month in order to provide input and feedback.

New Business

Approval of 2021 annual report. Motion by Luoma, seconded by Foshay, to approve the report. Powers noted some report highlights. Reference transactions were a little lower last year than in 2020 because people were able to come in and find their own items rather than calling the library to order them for pickup. Contactless visits is a new data point for the report. Powers believes 2021 was an undercount. The library will improve the process for tracking this statistic for 2022. Downloadable use remained strong. The number of virtual and recorded programs was down in 2021 compared to 2020 because more staff time was spent reopening and operating onsite services. Staffing numbers changed, notably with one fewer librarian and one

additional library technician due to a retirement in the business office and an internal re-design of the position into a library technician. The amount of physical materials decreased, particularly in the main library because staff have been carrying out a weeding project, removing items that are underused, in rough shape, or outdated. Print serials subscriptions have also decreased due to titles ceasing publication. Henke noted that computer sessions had decreased, and Powers responded that it as puzzling but might be due to the fact that computers were only available by appointment for a while in 2021 that might have caused the reduction. The report was unanimously approved.

Resumption of in-person meetings: City Council is planning to resume in-person meetings in early April, which clears the way for city boards and commissions to resume in-person meetings. The board will plan to meet in person in the gold room in April.

Election of officers - Rosendahl remains as secretary for the second year of his term. The roles of Chair and Vice Chair are open. Luoma nominated Foshay for chair. Foshay nominated Henke for vice-chair. Motion by Rosendahl, seconded by Glazman, to approve the slate of officers. Motion passed unanimously.

Henke celebrated Glazman's service to the board as he ends his 10-year term.

Meeting adjourned at 6:02.