

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of Regular Meeting
November 22, 2016

Call to Order: President Bogue called the meeting of the Duluth Library Board to order at 4:34 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2016. On a motion by Katz, seconded by Luoma, the agenda was amended to include some background about the Arrowhead Library System presented by Katz. Agenda was approved with this amendment.

Members Present: Sandy Scheiber, Virginia Katz, Megan Oswald, Sister Edith Bogue, Lizzy Luoma, Matt Rosendahl

Also Present: Carla Powers, City Property & Facilities Manager Erik Birkeland, reporter John Ramos

Absent: Betty Ramsland, Neil Glazman, David Sperl

Public Comments: None

New Business:

Main Library Facility

- Erik Birkeland spoke about the current status of the building. He said that a large-scale building project would take 12 to 18 months to plan and 18 to 24 months to build. Therefore, the City needs to consider a five-year window for critical building maintenance.
- The HVAC is old, making failures more likely. City Facilities staff is doing more interventions to keep the building functional for both staff and public.
- \$40,000 has been set aside in Capital Improvement Project (CIP) funding for the library in 2017. In addition, some unspent monies from 2016 will be carried over. Birkeland estimated \$60-\$90,000 is available for building maintenance. Top priorities include:
 - Replacement of the chiller (part of the HVAC system).
 - An upgrade in the dampeners that bring in fresh air.
 - Reworking the circulation desk to make it more functional.
 - Replacing lights in the Green Room.
 - Repairing crumbling concrete stairs near Michigan St. plaza
- Bogue asked about the elevator and Birkeland replied that while the equipment is old, it is functioning currently and receives regular inspections.
- Bogue brought up issues concerning the location and accessibility of the public restrooms. Birkeland replied that it would be very costly to completely redo them. The restrooms no longer meet ADA requirements, which could become an issue for the City. One option may be to designate the Michigan St. restrooms as unisex so the stalls could be removed. However, this type of renovation could trigger new building code requirements. The building currently is grandfathered in, but renovations would require adherence to the new code.
- Katz asked if the library would need to be closed during the projects planned for 2017. Birkeland replied no, but said that a major project such as a complete remodel would require the library to operate out of a separate space during construction.
- Katz also asked if there were any concerns about air quality, and Birkeland commented that the building probably is over-ventilated because of broken dampeners.

- Birkeland projected that the 2017 renovation work could happen in the first or second quarter.
- Once the bond is voted on by Council, Birkeland and his staff decide how the money is spent. As decisions are made, Powers will keep the board posted via the manager's report.

Minutes: On a motion by Katz, seconded by Scheiber, the library board minutes of the regular meeting of October 25, 2016, were approved as amended.

Reports:

Friends of Duluth Public Library

- Written report was reviewed.
- Plans have been drawn up for the free cart at Mt. Royal. If the cart is nice, maybe the Friends will get one for the downtown library too. Space and success at Mt. Royal will determine if the West Duluth branch gets one as well.

Duluth Library Foundation

- Libations will go on again, and a list of speakers will be published in the next couple of months. The date will be Sept. 16, 2017.

Manager's Report

- The power outage happened today from approximately 2:30-2:45 and it went well. The library closed at 2:00 and was back open by 3:15.
- Rosendahl asked how the board helped with advocacy this year. Meeting with Mayor Larson was one example that Powers cited.
- In terms of Goal 5 Bogue asked how library services can be advertised more prominently (Freegal, Overdrive, etc.) The PR office is working on new methods to reach out to library users to promote the library and the services offered. Bogue suggested using Twitter to not just review past events, but also to promote upcoming events.

Old Business:

Update to Strategic Plan and Budget Approval

- Powers presented the plan to the council, and several board members attended. Sipress shared favorable comments at the council meeting about the plan and the process used to develop it.
- The approval of the plan was rescheduled for Dec. 5 at 7:00 p.m. Ideally a Friends and a Foundation member will speak in addition to someone from the library board.

Library Advocacy

- Bogue, Ramsland, and Rosendahl spoke with the Mayor on Oct. 31 regarding a staff position that currently is being left vacant and the early literacy librarian position that is not funded for 2017.
- While the board understands budget concerns, supporting the strategic plan must happen to achieve city goals such as closing the achievement gap. It was a cordial hour-long meeting and both sides understood what the other was saying.
- Mayor Larson seemed most interested in getting the Librarian II position off of hold, but the City has not received \$500,000 in Local Government Aid (LGA) that was expected in 2016.

- The Mayor wants to work with the board to restart a community conversation about the main library building. Deciding on and moving forward with plans for the downtown library is a goal of both entities.
- While the direction for this project will come from her administration and the council, the board has a role too. The board can advocate for the project using data that has been compiled.
- Referencing the previous and current strategic plans can help make the case for why improving the downtown building is important in order to allow the library to meet the needs of the community.
- She hopes to have another meeting in 6 months or so to continue the conversations. The board should focus on finding other allies.

New Business:

Confirm 2017 Meeting Dates

- Traditionally we meet the 4th Tuesday of the month excepting July and December. No holidays or any reason to reschedule.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.