

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of August 23, 2022 Meeting

Attendees: Bill Arezzo, Michelle Foshay, Sue Henke, Lori Steinbach, Steven Welsh, Matt Rosendahl
Also present: Carla Powers, Jim Filby Williams, Councilor Terese Tomanek, library staff member Stacy LaVres, member of public Debbi Rasmussen
Absent: David Sperl, Betty Ramsland, Lizzy Luoma

Call to order: Chair Foshay called the meeting to order at 4:32.

New board member welcome and introductions: Newly-appointed board member Lori Steinbach was welcomed and introductions were done.

Review and approve agenda: Motion by Henke, seconded by Arezzo, to approve agenda as drafted. Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes of the May meeting: Motion by Henke, seconded by Arezzo, to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2022 meeting as drafted. Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes of the non-quorum June meeting: Motion by Henke, seconded by Welsh, to approve the notes from the June meeting where a quorum was not present. Notes approved unanimously.

Reports

Library Manager's Report. Powers added that there is also a Librarian I position that is open due to Bri Bellanger being hired as supervisor. Henke asked if there was a need for more staffing, and Powers stated the library has nearly completed hiring to refill all vacancies and that is the focus now. In the near future there might be a need for more safety staffing to be evaluated once the full time safety specialist has been hired. Safety Specialist that was hired has a background in social service. Tomanek advised to ask for another safety specialist now, in order to appropriately cover open hours.

Duluth Library Foundation Report. Rosendahl's report was accepted as submitted, with a reminder to fill out the strategic planning survey and register for Learning & Libations at the Library.

Friends of the Library Report. Ramsland's report was accepted as submitted in Ramsland's absence.

Old Business

Main Library facility update. Rosendahl, Arezzo, and Welsh shared their perspective on the Mayor's recent presentation to staff. Arezzo noted that board members were impressed by staff feedback about the project. He also stated that he felt that we were facing a much longer and unclear timeline than we had been expecting. Foshay asked Filby Williams about his sense of the project. He stated that he feels we are moving forward with momentum, including meetings with Minnesota Senators' staff and the

Mayor's presentation to the entire city leadership team. But he cautioned that the essential work to be done is to secure seed money. City leaders are seeking \$10 million of federal relief funds from the State of Minnesota (guidelines and timelines for this have not yet been issued), in addition to lobbying federal officials for support. Federal American Rescue Plan Act funds are designed to be spent by the end of 2026. Henke asked about strategic planning, wondering if it would be advantageous to plan now in anticipation of the project. Powers acknowledged that the library is overdue for strategic planning, but pointed out the demands of hiring and security work have taken priority. With support of the board, Foshay noted that it might be worth revisiting in 2023 to see what staff capacity might be for planning.

Library security. The library received a robust pool of applications for Library Safety Specialist, with the new specialist scheduled to start September 12. In the meantime, the library is continuing to have off duty police onsite, sporadically as officers pick up these extra shifts. In a review of violation reports recently, the number of serious incidents has decreased in the last couple of months, Powers reported. She noted that police presence likely helped with this. Trainings are planned for September 30 staff development day, with half of it focused on work with a consultant about trauma informed service. Staff are also planning mental health first aid training. Powers and Filby Williams are in discussion with the police department about crisis intervention training. Staff are planning to attend critical incident stress management training at Northwoods Children's Center to learn how to support each other after something has happened. Powers also will work with the consultant on reviewing and updating policies and procedures related to incidents and debriefs following incidents. The library is in the midst of a security assessment with a firm called Guidepost. Guidepost is studying the library's physical security in light of the mission of the library to welcome all people to the facility. As part of this work, the firm is interviewing staff and reviewing documentation related to security. A final report is expected in 6-8 weeks. Arezzo asked about incidents at the branches, and Powers reported that there have been very few.

New Business

Social worker pilot project. Filby Williams has worked with Human Development Center to arrange for a social worker to be at the Main Library five afternoons per week. The arrangement has been in place for approximately four weeks. It is being funded by ARPA funds. If the pilot is successful it eventually will be funded by City of Duluth general funds. Social workers walk the floor and connect with people in need of help or services. They also serve as a resource for staff. Powers reports that so far it is going well. The pilot is currently set for three years, but there is intent to continue the service in some way on a long-term basis. Filby Williams reported that the pilot has already been highly impactful for the library and for HDC's goal to serve vulnerable and unhoused people. He suggested that it might be helpful for the library board and HDC to meet in the future to discuss the pilot and the future expansion or making the service permanent. Powers will follow up with a resource about social workers in libraries for the board to review. Filby Williams noted that Powers and library staff are working exceptionally hard on safety issues and finding new and innovative ways to address the challenges staff have faced.

Circulation policy. Powers presented an updated policy with the notable change being the removal of expiration date for most library cards. Currently cards expire every three years, requiring patrons to visit in person and show identification to renew. Welsh noted he is in favor of anything to bring people in and

keep them coming in. Motion by Welsh, seconded by Foshay, to approve the policy as drafted. Motion approved unanimously.

Programming policy and Citizen Request for Reconsideration form. Powers noted that the library does not currently have a programming policy in place. A policy has been drafted to help in guiding program development and communicating with the public about programming. This current draft was created using the collection development policy as a guide. In addition to the new policy, the Citizen Statement of Concern was updated to include programming. Motion by Henke, seconded by Arezzo, to approve programming policy and Citizen Statement of Concern as drafted. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.