

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of Virtual Meeting
January 25, 2022

Sue Henke called the meeting to order at 4:40

Members Present: Neil Glazman, Sue Henke, Stephen Welsh, Betty Ramsland, Matt Rosendahl, Alex Strelow, Lizzy Luoma, David Sperl, Michelle Foshay

Also Present: Jim Filby Williams, Duluth Library Foundation Executive Director Erin Kreeger

Absent: None

Review and approve agenda: Agenda approved by consensus.

Public comments: There were no public comments received in advance of the meeting.

Approve minutes: Motion by Ramsland, seconded by Luoma, to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2021 meeting. Motion passed unanimously by show of hands.

Reports

2021 DPL Year in Review

Report distributed before the meeting. Powers highlighted the restoration of full services, rehiring the remaining staff that had been laid off in 2020, creating a walk-up window for continued curbside pickup, and services in the Partnership Center. Space changes included the mural at Mt. Royal branch. At the Main Library, changes included consolidating and moving the adult collections as well as adding staff offices, new toy collection cabinets and network cables. Kaleidoscope and City Sounds programs resumed, reaching over 1000 and 500 attendees respectively; in-person programs were offered outdoors and storytimes were offered over Zoom. Other programs were offered in COVID-safe ways, for example Goosechase scavenger hunts and a walkthrough Halloween party for teens at Mt. Royal. Twenty-three teens have joined the Teen Advisory Board. ECRD launched storytime at the parks and Baby's First Books, as well as hosting a webinar with Dr. Anton Treuer. Eighteen new staff members were hired and trained. The library began a project to invest in and improve workplace culture, and implemented a new organizational chart. Over 557,000 items were checked out in 2021. There were 323,111 uses of library databases. Nearly 14,000 people attended events. Over 14,500 patrons used the computer center. Board members praised the report and encouraged it to be shared widely. Foshay requested that Powers share the new organizational chart with the board in the future. The organizational culture work is being carried forward by a culture committee, with support from the consultant who is also providing supervisory training. This group is developing activities and learning opportunities for staff.

Library Manager's Report

Accepted as received. Henke congratulated Powers for the safe workplace recognition received during the pandemic. Henke asked about the Library Technician position and Powers reported that it has been filled by Steph Lorek, who has a background in early childhood outdoor education. The board discussed the functionality, and content availability, on Hoopla.

Duluth Library Foundation Year in Review

Rosendahl shared the report prepared by Duluth Library Foundation Executive Director Erin Kreeger.

Old Business

Update on services and staffing

Powers noted the first paragraph in her report, that services continue during the Omicron surge. She doesn't expect any changes to in-person services, though some in-person programming has moved online.

Powers shared a summary regarding staffing:

- Lori Crocker was promoted to Branch Supervisor
- Jason DeShaw was hired as Support Services Supervisor
- Youth Services Supervisor will be reposted in May and Sue Schumacher will continue half-time for the time being
- Adult Services Librarian II is posted through February 6
- A Technical Services Librarian II will be vacated on January 24
- Interviews for an Adult Services Librarian I position will take place in early February
- Steph Lorek began as Library Technician for ECRD
- The library is backfilling two .5 technicians, filling a Senior Library Technician on leave by hiring a substitute from within existing staff, and backfilling for whoever is chosen as the Senior Tech substitute from the Civil Service list

Update on library security

Powers reported that she and Filby Williams are drafting a job description for this new position with the city. Ramsland asked how this person will be trained, and Powers noted they will need CPR training and use of the AED machine, as well as de-escalation strategies. The library will not partner with the Clean and Safe team to staff this position, but Powers noted that she will look into contacting them regarding training.

New Business

Main Library facility

Mayor Larson sent a memo to the board via Powers in advance of the meeting regarding her thoughts about the future of the downtown library facility. It puts forward an option to co-locate library and workforce development services at the facility in order to procure more funding than a stand-alone library project could garner. Henke recommended that the board reply to the memo. Ramsland asked if

building rehabilitation would be limited to just the workforce development aspect. Filby Williams said that it will be focused on comprehensive rehabilitation. Glazman asked if there is a current space the library could move into during construction. Powers responded that this would need to be created as part of a planned renovation. Filby Williams noted that the Mayor referenced that the two entities should further explore this concept and they are doing so by engaging a library architect to investigate what co-location in a renovated building would look like. He predicts there will be robust provision for the design team and staff to solicit input from the board, patrons, and the community as to what a design should accomplish. Ramsland asked how much square footage each service area needs. Filby Williams said he will be investigating that with Workforce Development. There are 72,000 square feet in the main library and the Workforce Development Center currently has 21,000 square feet in their existing facility. Filby Williams expects that each entity will need to decrease their overall square footage (perhaps by as much as 20% each) and engage some shared space (for example for computers and/or meeting spaces). He added that the process will need to be focused on the downtown facility, in order to develop a preliminary concept in a timely fashion. Strelow asked what the next steps for the project will be. Filby Williams responded that one next step is for a “pre-pre design” study within eight weeks to enable review at a March library board meeting. This study will include the leadership teams of both the library and workforce development, as well as Facilities Manager Erik Birkeland.

Ongoing Business

Advocacy - Henke and Rosendahl will draft a response to the Mayor as soon as possible.

The meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022