

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

September 28, 2021 Minutes

Betty Ramsland called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Members present: Betty Ramsland, Neil Glazman, Michelle Foshay, Lizzy Luoma, Alex Strelow, Neil Glazman, Steven Welsh, David Sperl

Also present: Library manager Carla Powers, library staff members Kristy Nerhaugen and Stacy Lavres

Absent: Sue Henke

Review and approve agenda: Ramsland called for additions, received none, and determined the agenda was approved as posted.

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

Review and approve minutes: Motion by Welsh, seconded by Luoma, to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2021 meeting. Approved unanimously by show of hands.

Staff Presentation:

Kristy Nerhaugen from youth services and Stacy Lavres from adult services presented on some anti-racism training they took recently and the work they are doing as a result.

Nerhaugen talked about the goal of youth programming to be as inclusive and equitable as possible, and said that staff is re-centering on that goal for their event planning. She presented the model of books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, where children can see themselves in books and programs as ways to see themselves represented, and ways to learn about other people. Recent outreach youth programming included Brodini at Lincoln Park Middle School, where DPL could connect with families accessing the meal service site.

Lavres took a class about valuing, auditing, and diversifying collections. She is conducting a diversity audit on the adult non-fiction collection, to gather data and build a collection that is representative of the community and inclusive of traditionally underrepresented voices.

This anti-racism work benefits everyone in the community.

Reports

Library Manager's Report – Accepted as submitted.

Friends Report – Ramsland reported that the group is discussing a November newsletter and the Littlest Holiday Booksale December 7-9. The Friends have \$18,500 in general funds.

Old Business

Update on services and staffing – Programming is still taking place outdoors. Storytime and kids programs will likely be virtual when it becomes too cold, due to vaccine availability for that age group.

In terms of staffing: a group of employees has been interviewing candidates for three library supervisor positions. Seven candidates will move forward to an on-site interview within the next three weeks or so. This round of interviews will allow candidates to meet with staff and the leadership team, and to tour all three locations. In further staffing news, DPL is posting a library technician opening for Every Child Ready Duluth. Two technicians started at West Duluth yesterday, and two librarians begin work at Main on Monday. There remains a Librarian II position that is vacant in adult services. This position will be filled after supervisor hiring is complete. The city HR office helps support the hiring process, but DPL staff are very involved in reviewing applications and engaging interviewees through activities like tours.

Update on library security – A proposal for a Clean and Safe presence in the library was delivered to the Greater Downtown Council, to hire two positions at the main library during most open hours. This would be the same type of work that the Clean and Safe team does outdoors in downtown. They would also help educate patrons on how to use the library successfully, rather than trying to make them leave. Greater Downtown Council is considering this, but there is no indication on the timeline for action. Jim Filby Williams is working on funding.

New Business: None

Ongoing Business

Advocacy – The board discussed the need to address the main facility, as well as the strategic plan which has expired. A small contingent of the advocacy group that are Library Board members – Sue Henke, Matt Rosendahl (also a Foundation representative), and Betty Ramsland (also a Friends representative) – have requested a meeting with city leadership to ask for a vision for the main library facility. Getting direction from leadership will enable the board and the advocacy group to determine the course of future advocacy efforts, and will be essential to preparing to initiate a new strategic planning process that will engage the community through surveys and other means.

Adjournment at 5:26 p.m.