

DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
Minutes of April 26, 2022 Meeting

Call to order: Chair Michelle Foshay called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Members present: Michelle Foshay, Sue Henke, Lizzy Luoma, Betty Ramsland, Matt Rosendahl, Bill Arezzo

Also in attendance: Carla Powers, Jim Filby Williams

Absent: Alex Strelow, David Sperl, Steve Welsch

Introductions: Board welcomed new member Bill Arezzo

Review and approve agenda: Motion by Ramsland, seconded by Henke, to approve agenda as drafted. Approved by consensus.

Approve minutes of March 22, 2022 meeting – Motion by Ramsland, seconded by Luoma, to approve minutes as drafted. Minutes approved unanimously.

Reports

Friends of the Library Report. Submitted by Powers and accepted.

Duluth Library Foundation Report. Submitted by Powers and accepted.

Library Manager's Report. Submitted by Powers and accepted.

Old Business

Update on library security. Ramsland inquired about the safety positions. Filby Williams noted that the urgency felt by staff for this minimum level of security is shared by leadership. He and Powers are taking steps to jump start progress on staffing and beyond, such as re-forming the library safety work team. In the past this team helped with facilities changes such as relocating the computer lab. Filby Williams is working every Tuesday afternoon at the Main Library to be present for staff and library users. The safety work team will identify more training opportunities such as mental health first aid, de-escalation and crisis response, and the general topic of preventing and avoiding harm from workforce violence in human service professions. Filby Williams stated that all options are open for discussion, including temporarily reducing hours and/or hiring off-duty police officers on overtime until the library safety specialists are in place. Henke asked whether the situation has grown worse recently, and Powers said yes. Filby Williams agreed. Powers responded to a question about staff turnover by saying that some of the people who have left recently did so due to safety concerns, but that it has not been a factor in every case. Foshay asked about what services are being provided in the city that help with the people who are downtown in need of space and services. Filby Williams noted that in the state of Minnesota,

the primary responsibility for this lies with the state and the county. As such the City of Duluth does not have the resources and expertise to fill these gaps. One solution is to create a critical mass of pro-social presence throughout downtown and including the library without the intimidating presence of a police officer. Filby Williams pointed to the need for a good redesign of the library to move into a more virtuous cycle of increased use and fewer safety concerns. Luoma inquired about safety issues at branches. Powers replied that for the most part the issues have been concentrated at Main.

Main Library facility. Filby Williams reported that the architect from Gensler will present to the library board and library staff the results of the pre-pre-design exercise that has explored the possibility of co-locating workforce development and library services in a renovated downtown library facility. Filby Williams stated that he believes the exercise provides a proof of concept that co-location is feasible and will result in both entities being in far better facilities for their services than is the case today. A renovated building would be fully renewed, inviting and welcoming. There would be synergy around service provision and safety issues due to more people on site at any given time. Also, the building would be redesigned with safety in mind. This is a very important project for the mayor, who has been thinking about how to move it forward with the values of sustainability, equity, and inclusiveness. The city is preparing to make a request to the state for up to \$20 million in Coronavirus Capital Relief funds to fund the project. If it goes forward, this partnership will be long-term. Both parties must be fully committed to making sure that this deep collaboration can work.

New Business

Bylaws review. The board last updated the bylaws in 2016. Carla will send the current version out for review and discussion at next month's meeting.

Meeting locations for remainder of 2022. With the return of in-person meetings, the board supports meeting at each branch before the end of the year, based on facility availability.

Board roster with contact information. Powers will compile a roster to share amongst the board members.

Ongoing Business

Advocacy. The next step is the meeting with staff and library leadership about the pre-pre design. Henke noted that it is critically important that communication between board members continues with the advocacy group.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.