

## DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Minutes August 24, 2021

Sue Henke called the meeting to order at 4:33.

**Members present:** Sue Henke, David Sperl, Steven Welsh, Michelle Foshay, Betty Ramsland

**Also present:** Jim Filby Williams, Sue Schumacher, Lynn Schwarzkopf, Carmella Hatch, Carla Powers

**Absent:** Neil Glazman, Lizzy Luoma, Alex Strelow

**Review and approve agenda** – Motion by Ramsland, seconded by Welsh to approve agenda as drafted. Approved by unanimous show of hands.

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

**Approve minutes of June 22, 2021 meeting** – Motion by Foshay, seconded by Ramsland, to approve minutes as drafted. Approved by unanimous show of hands.

### Reports

The Every Child Ready Duluth team provided a report on their busy and fast summer, sharing these highlights and reflections:

- Americorps Vista member added – welcome DeeDee Grages! DeeDee's work is focused in the Lincoln Park and Hillside neighborhoods. She'll also help with storytimes and bringing greater diversity to these offerings.
- Coalition updates – the coalition started monthly meetings in April. Four groups met, and they were identified as: Ready Community, Ready Education, Ready Families/Caregivers, Ready Child. The group identified three areas of focus: community messaging, planning a community event, and diversity/equity/inclusion.
  - Community messaging: the library has contracted with Swim Creative. Swim is working on cohesive messaging and designing a wrap for Little Library Go.
  - Community event: to be scheduled in the winter, where partners can table and offer activities for kids and families.
  - Diversity/equity/inclusion: plan is to bring in training for the group
- Outreach projects and partnerships:
  - The most visible and largest attendance events (80-90 people) are the storytime and playtime events at the parks. The last event was held last Monday. These events are done in partnership with the city Parks Department and the Children's Museum. They are held in various parks across the city.
  - Goose Chase online scavenger hunt
  - Farmers markets and mobile market partnerships. This week the team is attending the First Ladies of the Hillside event.
  - Marketing department is working to target families with social media content.

- The library foundation secured grants from Rotary and Essentia Health to partner with St. Louis County home visiting nurses to give a tote bag, board books, songs and rhymes, and a pamphlet to new parents. They also developed a toddler bag.
- The ECRD team is sending letters to all childcare providers with information about outreach events and what the library offers.
- The team is collaborating with ISD 709's Early Childhood Family Education program to offer early childhood screenings at all DPL branches.
- Looking ahead, the team plans to update bus ads and renew the Dial-A-Story service, due to increasing use.
- Little Library Go:
  - Delivery of the new outreach van is expected in October. The team is planning mobile circulation and arranging for its first events
- Evaluation
  - The team has wrapped up its work strategic planning consultant Amanda Standerfer and beginning to implement the evaluation framework with Colibri (evaluation consultant firm). Colibri is also preparing a lit review for the team.
- Q&A
  - Ramsland asked if events could be held on weekends? Hatch responded that they have received that feedback and are planning outreach storytimes on Saturdays in the fall.
  - Foshay asked about having a presence at Pride. The team responded that they weren't able to organize it in time for this year. There will be an art display in conjunction with Pride this year and the ECRD team plans to attend next year.
  - Henke asked what population is targeted for home visits. Hatch responded that they are focused on the city of Duluth. Some are referred by doctors or nurses, and some families self-register for the service.

Library Manager's Report – Accepted as submitted. Powers noted the Meet the Artists Reception for Pride on September 2 that will be held at the Downtown Library on Thursday, September 2. Board members were encouraged to attend the event, and/or come visit the exhibit. Sperl asked if the State Parks Program will continue, and Powers noted that DPL staff are encouraging people to complete the evaluation which the DNR will use to determine the future of the program. Foshay asked about boards/commission meeting formats, and Powers noted that the Council plans to meet on zoom through the end of August; Filby Williams said that the city is considering extending virtual format for meetings and Powers said she'll update the board as soon as possible.

Foundation report – Accepted as submitted.

Friends report – Accepted as submitted. Ramsland noted that the Friends are working on arranging an outdoor booksale (but have also reserved the Green Room). The Friends annual meeting will be held online this year.

## **Old Business**

Update on services and staffing - Hiring one more library technician, interviews for two Librarian I positions are underway with the goal of narrowing to a pool of 3-4 for each position for final interviews that could be held as soon as the second week of September. Two library supervisors are retiring - Renee Zurn is retiring in early November and Sue Schumacher is entering a phased retirement to conclude by the end of the calendar year. There is still another Librarian II position for Adult Services, vacant for over a year, which will be the final hiring process near the end of the calendar year.

## **New Business**

Library hours – The library is implementing a change in hours compared to hours of operation prior to the pandemic. Based on input from staff (time didn't permit robust community input), and a review of previous hours, library leadership identified an opportunity to serve the community well and balance the need of staffing at the branches. The new schedule, which will begin after Labor Day, is consistent, easy for patrons to remember, and provides time before opening for staff to meet, communicate, train, collaborate, etc. Library administration will re-evaluate hours in the future based on patron response and community input.

Library security – Contracted security was on site before COVID-19. After reopening DPL has not brought security back. There have been behavior issues at Main Library, some have involved masking. Powers and Filby Williams have discussed with staff whether to bring back contracted security. Consensus is that the best solution would be to create a safety or security position within library staff. This person would greet library patrons, get to know them, and help them if they have difficulty being successful in the library. Powers and Filby Williams are proposing to reallocate some existing funding and request additional funds in 2022 to create two half-time positions. Sperl asked about partnering with Duluth Police Department community outreach efforts, perhaps including unarmed personnel to be present in DPL. Filby Williams noted that the police does not have enough staff to be a constant presence. Non-police entities could step into this area but still have a strong connection to police when emergencies warrant. Powers prefers that the person not wear a uniform (though at least wear something to identify the person as an employee of Duluth Public Library).

Strategic planning – Henke noted that the current plan is out of date, and strategic planning would be key to developing a process for engaging the community regarding the Main Library.

Main library facility – Filby Williams addressed limitations around the Main Library. He said that renovation and replacement of the library improve services and sustainability remains a top priority for city administration. The difficulty is funding what will likely be a \$30+ million project with city cash. Filby Williams does not know of a project undertaken in the last decade without state or federal support. The ARPA federal stimulus expenditure guidelines unfortunately did not permit renovation of the main library. The ongoing difficulty of the Main Library is the price tag. City administration is debating what size of a downtown library is needed, and whether it would be advisable to reduce the size of the downtown building in a way that brings renovation within

the realm of feasibility. The 2014 MSR study investigated two options - 1) stick with current size and 2) reduce to 52,000 square feet - and the advisory group recommended against the smaller footprint. An \$18-20 million project is a more feasible range. City administration is exploring engagement with the board and the broader community, seeking to identify what might be most productive. Mayor and CAO encourage leadership to look comprehensively at the capital needs across the city, not just the needs of DPL. The city's finances are tighter than most Midwest cities.

**Ongoing Business**

Advocacy - Henke, Foshay, and Rosendahl will reach out to the advocacy group regarding strategic planning and the main library needs.

**Adjournment** - Meeting adjourned at 6:03.