

# DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

## Notice of Meeting

**DATE:** April 27, 2021

**TIME:** 4:30 p.m.

**NOTICE:** The Duluth Public Library Board will be holding a special meeting in August by other electronic means pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021 in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Members of the Board will be participating through video conference. Due to the COVID-19 emergency and the closure of City facilities, public comment will not be taken in person. However, members of the public can monitor the meeting and provide public comment on agenda items through WebEx Events. Visit <https://duluthmn.gov/live-meeting> to access the meeting. The public is also encouraged to submit written comment to Library Manager Carla Powers prior to the meeting. Please include "Library Board Agenda" in the subject line, and include your name and address and the agenda item you are speaking to. Please note that all public comment is considered Public Data.

### AGENDA

Call to order

Review and approve agenda

Public comments received in advance of meeting

Approve minutes of March 23, 2021 meeting

#### Reports

Library Manager's Report – Powers

ECRD Report – Carmella Hatch

Foundation Report – Rosendahl

Friends Report – Ramsland

#### Old Business

Update on restoring services and staffing

#### New Business

Main Library recabling project

#### Ongoing Business

Advocacy

Adjournment

Next regular meeting: May 25, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. via WebEx.

## DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Draft Minutes March 23, 2021

Sue Henke called the meeting of the Duluth Library Board to order at 4:30

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

**Also Present:** Carla Powers, Jim Filby Williams

**Public Attendees:** Debbi Rasmussen, Dennis McManus

**Absent:** Betty Ramsland

### **Review and approve agenda**

Motion by Sperl, seconded by Welsh, to approve the agenda as drafted. Motion passed unanimously by show of hands.

**Public Comments:** Powers received a question about book donations. No donations are being accepted at this time. The library is still holding onto donations from 2020 and there is no room for more. The Friends will not hold their traditional book sale in 2021.

### **Review and approve minutes from February 23, 2021**

Motion by Rosendahl, seconded by Sperl, to approve the minutes as drafted. Motion passed unanimously by show of hands.

### **Reports**

#### Library Manager's Report – Powers

A hiring committee interviewed seven candidates for Librarian II position and an offer to the top candidate is in the works.

A posting to fill seven vacant Library Technician positions will go up as soon as approval is secured to fill the positions.

Research by appointment has been underway with some use of this service.

Grab and Go is being rebranded as “Library Express.”

#### Foundation Report – Rosendahl

Rosendahl encouraged board members to follow the Duluth Library Foundation on social media <https://www.facebook.com/DuluthLibraryFoundation/>

Library Giving Day will take place on April 7, and there is information on the Foundation's website: [www.duluthlibraryfoundation.org](http://www.duluthlibraryfoundation.org)

#### Friends Report—Ramsland

Written report was reviewed with no new updates.

### **Old Business**

Update on restoring services and staffing:

Eight library aides are being called back to work beginning the week of April 5. The branches will reopen for Library Express service, which includes accessing the collections and self-pickup of holds. Plans are in the works for Mayor Larson to announce this new phase of service in a press conference during National Library Week. The press event is scheduled for Thursday, April 8 at the West Duluth Branch. Library Express service will begin April 12.

### **New Business**

2020 annual report: New fields this year captured all of the virtual programming and curbside services that were added or changed due to the pandemic and closures. Motion by Glazman, seconded by Luoma, to approve the report as drafted. Motion passed unanimously by show of hands.

Election of officers: Rosendahl volunteered to take over as secretary. Henke is willing to continue as president and Ramsland as vice president. Motion by Sperl, seconded by Glazman, to approve the slate of officers. Motion approved unanimously with show of hands.

### **Ongoing Business**

Advocacy: In partnership with Foundation and Friends, some board members will be meeting with Mayor Larson and CAO Schuchman on April 9 (which happens to be the Friday of National Library week). In addition to expressing gratitude for support, they will highlight ECRD goals moving forward, advocate for library reopening, and future building renovations at main.

There was a suggestion to consider an in-person outdoor meeting in June.

Adjournment at 5:46 pm.

Next regular meeting: April 27, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. via WebEx.

## **Manager's Report to Library Board**

### **April 2021**

**Hiring Update.** A total of 133 people responded to the posting for Library Technician. Next week the hiring committee will conduct interviews with 32 of them. The size of the interview pool is determined by Civil Service rules. As in the past, it was a very strong pool of applicants. We will be filling seven vacancies.

**Mt. Royal Art Project.** An artist has been selected for this Legacy-funded project. The artist's name is Sarah Agaton Howes. Sarah is an Anishinaabe-Ojibwe from Fond du Lac. She is the CEO of Heart Berry, which designs, manufactures, and sells Ojibwe designed products. She teaches cultural art classes and builds tools such as books and tutorials for learners. She also creates custom art for organizations, tribes, and architecture firms. Some of Sarah's work can be found on the windows of the Ordean Building across the avenue from the Main Library. In her application Sarah said "My interest is to bring our beautiful Ojibwe designs, art, and stories out into the light. Our work reflects a value system, aesthetic, and sense of place that benefits everyone." The library's Diversity Action Group will be working with Sarah to plan her library project.

**Bundles of Adult Materials (BAM!).** Adult services staff have just launched a new service. Called Bundles of Adult Materials (BAM! for short), it allows patrons to fill out a short online form and order a librarian-selected bundle of up to five items based on the patron's interests. People indicate on their form whether they want fiction or nonfiction, what topics or genres they like, and where they want to pick up their items. A few days later they'll receive a notification that their items are ready for pickup. More information can be found on the library's website at:  
<http://www.duluthlibrary.org/adults/bam-reader-s-advisory/>

**Sklaris Innovation Fund.** This spring the Library Foundation will be issuing its first disbursement from a new fund established to support innovation at the Duluth Public Library. The Sklaris Innovation Fund came about because of donor Janet Sklaris's wish to memorialize her husband, Frank, by setting up a special Foundation fund in his name. The first project funded by the Sklaris Innovation Fund will be virtual reality equipment and games for library programs. Staff member Heidi Harrison, who pitched the idea, owns a VR headset and was very enthusiastic about the technology. It has appeal for all ages and can be used remotely outside the library in addition to inside the buildings. The library's leadership team felt this purchase fit perfectly with the vision of the Sklaris Innovation Fund. The foundation will disburse the money in mid-May, and we hope to have the equipment in place before in-person programs resume.

## Every Child Ready Duluth April 2021 Update

In the last couple months here's what we've been working on:

- Starting up Action Teams with community partners to decide on collaborative activities we can do to work toward strategic plan goals. We've had 16 community members participate across 3 different Action Teams so far, with one more meeting to go for April. The coalition and action teams are a work in progress as we find what works best with our community partners.
- Spring programs
  - Rainy Day Play Day 0-preK Goosechase: Using the Goosechase virtual scavenger hunt platform, we created a game for parents/caregivers to help their children birth-age 5 complete missions of finding and using objects around the house and incorporating early learning skills like counting, patterning, singing, and movement activities. So far 15 families are participating. Event goes for 1 week.
  - Story Strolls: In coordination with the One Book Northland title, we are doing a story stroll with the book "Hands Up!" which celebrates Black joy and reclaims the phrase "Hands up". We're holding the stroll at the Hillside Sport Court on Saturday 4/24 and Harrison Park Wednesday 4/28
- Little Library Go: Working with Fleet, we were able to order a Ford Transit cargo van, which will have a rear lift and interior customized so we can strap in book carts and other supplies. The van will be ready around October. Next steps will be ordering and coordinating exterior designs and ordering the carts, books or checkout, and supplies for mobile circulation.
- Baby's First Books: The Foundation received grant funding so we can partner with the St. Louis County Universal Home Visiting program and provide early literacy kits for the families they work with. We are creating 200 total kits (100 for newborns and early babies and 100 for older babies/toddlers). Each kit includes 2 age-appropriate board books, song/rhyme cards, dancing scarves (older kit only), information about applying for a library card, and information about reading with your baby. The program was supposed to begin in June, but will likely be delayed due to staff and structure changes within the UHV program, but we are building the kits and preparing for that whenever they are ready.
- Virtual storytimes: We're continuing to provide virtual Baby & Toddler storytimes on the ECRD Facebook page. These will likely end at the end of June unless publishers extend their copyright permissions.
- Dial-a-Story: We're continuing to record picture book readings and favorite songs for the Dial-a-Story line
- Early Literacy presentation to ECFE: Lynn and Carmella will present about early literacy at a virtual ECFE class for parents.
- Partner meetings: ECRD staff have been participating in meetings for other relevant community groups including the Duluth Youth Agency Coalition, Safe Baby Court Team, Family Home Visiting Advisory Board, and MN Dept of Ed Kindergarten Transition Communities of Practice Team
- Summer program planning: We are busy coordinating summer outreach activities including:
  - Weekly storytimes and story strolls in neighborhood parks across the city, possibly with partner organization participation.
  - Possible outreach to farmer's markets
  - Possible outreach storytimes to child care providers

## **Duluth Library Foundation Report April 2021**

The Foundation provided its first Sklaris Innovation Fund disbursement. This is a directed fund to help the library provide new and innovative services and resources. Thanks to this fund, the library is acquiring VR (virtual reality) gear and content!

Library Giving Day was a great success this year. The Foundation set a goal of raising \$25,000 on April 7, and total contributions came in at \$38,708.

The Foundation Board is going to discuss enhanced advocacy efforts during our May meeting. The group is interested in inviting more groups and individuals in the city to get involved with the advocacy efforts that we have cooperatively been pursuing for more than the past year.

*Submitted by Matt Rosendahl*

## **Friends of the Library Report April 2021**

The Friends newsletter will be printed and mailed at the beginning of May to 177 members. It will include a photo of the \$5,000 check given by the Friends to DPL on April 7, Library Giving Day. The newsletter will also advise that the branches are open for library express service. Diane Carlson will be retiring; she has worked as part of the book sale volunteers (garage sorting group, etc.) for 20 years. Discussion followed on honoring her at the Friends annual meeting on Sept. 21, 2021. There will also be speakers and approval of updated bylaws at that meeting. Carla advised that the branches have a strict capacity limit (due to Covid), now that they are open. An art project for the Mt. Royal branch has been approved with art funding from the State. DPL is buying a van "little library go" in September to give remote access to library materials. The Friends sales tax exemption is in the process of being reinstated.

*Submitted by Betty Ramsland*

SUSAN HENKE  
1907 MELROSE AVENUE  
DULUTH, MN 55803

April 14, 2021  
Mayor Emily Larson  
Noah Schuchman, CAO  
City Hall  
411 W 1st St, Duluth, MN 55802

Dear Mayor Larson and Mr. Schuchman,

Thank you for meeting with us regarding the Duluth Public Library on April 9<sup>th</sup>. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss the progress of Every Child Ready Duluth (ECRD) initiative, the need to fully restore essential library services as soon as possible and renovation of the main library facility.

**Looking to the future, we see the Duluth Public Library (DPL) as an invaluable partner in the City's work towards equity, community building and sustainability.** The DPL is a highly trusted source of knowledge and information in the community. Its collection, programs and services are accessible to all. Library staff and leadership have demonstrated innovation, creativity and resilience facing the challenges of the past year. We strongly encourage the City to invest in the DPL as a full partner in building a just, equitable and thriving community. Specifically, those investments include:

- **Continued City investment in ECRD is an extraordinary opportunity to work toward educational equity in our community.** We need to continue the excellent work the ECRD team accomplished during the last year. ECRD's work to address root causes of disparities and inequities is more important than ever as children struggle to recover from learning challenges of the pandemic year. Investing now in our children will have a positive future payback to the city in economic growth, improved health, reduced poverty, and increased civic engagement.
- **Maximizing community access to the library collection and programming.** As soon as health and safety concerns of the pandemic recede, it will be critical to maximize hours of operation for all facilities and to provide robust in-person programming. The experience of the pandemic year underscores how important physical access to library facilities is to the community. Despite the valiant efforts of library staff and leadership, 2020 circulation was down 63%, nearly 500,000 items, compared to 2019. Computer sessions were down 78% or 55,000 sessions. These are just statistics. They do not reflect the impact from loss of personal interactions with library staff and in-person programming. Many of the virtual innovations of the past year will continue to augment library programming, but there is no substitute for community access to in-person library services and programming.
- **Renovation of the main library facilities to improve functionality, reduce costs and create a model of sustainable building technologies and practices.** It is exciting to hear that much needed renovation to the main library facility may be possible soon. There is no question that renovation and upgrades of the facility are needed to improve function and reduce energy consumption. The renovation will also be an important opportunity to educate the community on current green building technologies and practices in a highly trafficked public building.

The City's investment in the Duluth Public Library is an investment in a strong, healthy community. It is an investment in equity, community building and sustainability. We look forward to working with you and library administration to realize the full potential of the DPL to help create a thriving, vibrant community.

Thank you again for your time and for your dedicated service to Duluth.

Best Regards,

Susan Henke  
DPL Advisory Board Chair

CC: **Library Advocacy Team**

Sherry Hall	Marcia Semerau
Matt Rosendahl	David Sproat
Patra Sevastiades	Michelle Foshay

**Library Leadership**

Jim Filby Williams	Carla Powers
--------------------	--------------