

Duluth Library Board Meeting February 27, 2024

Members present: Jose Gonzalez, Azrin Awal, Carla Powers, Lizzy Luoma, Bill Arezzo, Laura Steinbach and Matt Rosendahl

Mtg brought to order at 4:33. Agenda approved.
Reports—Carla Powers, Library Director, [et.al.](#)

1. West Duluth Reimaging project. An invitation to attend the open house hosted by The Library Foundation will be sent by snail mail or email for the event on March 11 from 5-6 pm.
2. The staff is in the process of designing a new website. Changes will be to the way this website is navigated.
3. Changes are being made on Libby app to expand collection. The hope is that the holds will move through the system more quickly. Priority is given to Duluth Library patrons. Money is coming from (Cirrus) sale --\$200,000 to expand collection.
4. Playaways have been popular.
5. Plans for use of remaining dollars that were set aside for community engagement. Carla stated that the building project is going forward in a different way. A set of questions has been about barriers and activities for kids for users of the library to answer.
6. The half time library technician has been filled and the safety library specialist has been posted.
7. The Mayor has agreed to be a special reader for Wiggles with Littles on Apr. 13.
8. The Library Foundation is going to issue a letter of support for the Mayor's bonding request that saying the Foundation supports further investigation into designing a new library.
9. 2028 is the goal for new library.
10. Discussion of the Library Foundation wanting to be more visible in community. The Foundation had an Olga Walker event recognizing people who have supported the library.
11. The library book sale will take place on June 10 and 13th. In August, the Whole Foods Coop will round up for the library.

Old Business

1. Work Force lease was discussed.
2. Privacy policy has been updated.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25.

Submitted by Sally Larson

Library Board Meeting January 23, 2024

The meeting was held on Jan 23, 2024 in the Gold Room at the main library. Present were: Susan Henke, Chair Michelle Foshay, Lizzy Luoma, Jose Gonzalez, Lori Steinbach, Matt Rosendahl, Bill Arezzo, Azrin Awal, Ellen Hatfield and Carla Powers.

The chair, Michelle Forshay, brought the meeting to order at 4:32. Minutes were approved from the Nov. 28 meeting.

The first item on the agenda was a report from the library manager, Carla Powers: Work will be completed next on the West Duluth Library next month with an open house in early March, Wifi hotspots are now in use. There are 25 of them spread across the 3 branches.

Beginning this month, the DPL is working with two participants from the Workforce Center. Funding is paid by the Workforce Center.

There have been "Swatting" threats at many libraries in Minnesota and one in the Arrowhead System. Law Enforcement is investigating.

December 2023 library programs were well attended. Staff are still looking to hire a .5 Library Technician. A .5 Library Safety Technician is being sought. Friends of the Library will receive round-up money from the Whole Foods Coop in August.

A combined board meeting of the 3 boards associated with the library (Library Board, Library Foundation and Friends of the Library went well.

Under old business, a lengthy discussion was held about the plans for the Main Library. The City Council on Monday the 22 heard members of the public on the issue of the Main Library. Most public comments were very supportive of the library. Disappointment was expressed by the Library Board that the plan worked out under Mayor Larson has been set aside. A new plan will be developed working with the new Mayor, Roger Reinert. Ideas about additional use for the library were put forward, ie: housing, Workforce Center space.

Next, a new privacy policy was reviewed. It has more detail than the present one. Concerns were expressed about the language of some of the items and Carla will rework it and bring to the board next month.

There have been requests brought from Health Equity Northland and the County to have Naloxone available for use for library patrons who were experiencing drug issues. Staff at present have Narcon and it has been used. Issues brought forth about having it available were discussed. Narcon used by staff is facilitating harm reduction, according to Carla Powers. Questions were raised about how it would be distributed and if staff at legal risk. Carla pointed out that The Good Samaritan Law would cover them. Availability of fentanyl strips was also brought up.

It was agreed that it would be a good idea to invite staff to attend board meetings.

The meeting was adjourned after 6: 30.

Submitted by Sally Ockwig-Larson

Duluth Library Board
May 23, 2023

Manager's report:

Main Library Reconfiguration includes moving the Computer Center to the area beside the Reference Desk, which means that two staff members are available to manage the space and assist patrons.

The Nostalgic Newsstand sale raised over \$1100.

Port Cards are back and available to every student in the Duluth school district.

Lake Superior Zoo is providing 15 zoo passes for check out to library patrons.

Summer hours: the Main library will be closed Saturdays from May 27 through September 2.

Library Foundation report:

Books and Baseball Summer Reading Kick-off on June 3 from 10 – 1130 am at Wade Stadium. In addition to signing up for the Library Lynx Summer Reading Program, attendees can enjoy stories read by Huskies players, get autographs from the team, meet Harley Huskie, and more. This event is free.

Recruitment of two new Library Advisory Board Members: several applications have been filed and the selection process is underway.

Safety update: Funding continues for off-duty police officers to be present at the main branch. Funding for a second security specialist position has been requested. Additional security cameras will be installed.

Strategic Planning update: Copies of the updated Strategic Plan were provided to Board Members and approved with suggestions for minor tweaks. This plan is not brand new, but takes the previous plan to the next level.

Main Library facility update: Estimates have been received for potential Main Library renovation, expansion on site, or replacement. This information will be presented to city administration and plans made to move forward.

Unattended Child Policy: The policy was last updated in 1996. The new draft was approved.

Submitted by
Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting February 28, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm at the Main Library.

Manager's report:

1. Over the past several months, the library's supervisory staff created a person-in-charge (PIC) model of service at the Main Library. The PIC carries a City-issued cell phone that staff use to report safety issues, disruptive behavior, problems with the building, or other situations that require support at a higher level. The PIC at Main can also assist branch staff if needed.
2. A full-time Library Technician position will be available March 25. The process of filling that position is beginning. A 0.5 Library Technician position will remain vacant for now due to budget needs elsewhere in the city. This is a temporary pause, not a permanent cut.
3. Many great programs and events have been going on including: a plant swap at West Duluth Branch, a life-size Candyland game at Mt. Royal Branch, and Putt Putt mini golf at the Main Branch.

Friends Report: There will be a Nostalgic Newsstand sale on Saturday, May 6, from 10 am to 4 pm featuring old magazines that are being removed from the library's collection. The Friends Board is completing bylaws revisions and nominating officers. Their annual meeting will be on Tuesday, May 16, 4 pm at the Main Branch.

Recruitment of one new Library Advisory Board Member: application process is active online.

Safety update: Funding has been designated for off-duty police officers to be present at the main branch at various times to help with low-level concerning behavior. The presence of a full-time safety specialist has proved very helpful as well.

Strategic Planning update: Community input revealed concerns about hours and staffing at the library and about safety. Staff input suggests a desire to see more diversity in staff so that it matches the diversity of library users. Meetings continue to move forward with this idea and to further engage the community. The goal is to build on the strengths of the previous plan rather than drop it and start from scratch.

Main Library facility update:

1. City Council approved the engagement of an outside firm to elicit community input into planning and to build trust between the city and diverse segments of its population.
2. City Council approved an outside firm to work on library design. A local firm will also be engaged.

Art Exhibit Policy Change: The original policy was meant for more temporary displays. The change addresses longer-term displays and is worded to match the policy in place over concerns raised about library materials.

The meeting concluded at 5:40 pm.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting January 24, 2023

The meeting was held at the Main Library Branch at 4:30 pm.

1. Minutes of a special meeting held on December 20, 2022, to review documents related to completion of the DPL Strategic Plan update and the State Bonding pre-design process for building renovation were approved.
2. Manager's report: The new Easy Access cards are now in use, allowing patrons who come to the library without proof of their current address to check out up to four items at a time and gain access to the library's electronic resources; ERCDC continues its good work into the new year with numerous programs; History Day Hullabaloo took place on Jan. 7, allowing students to get help with in-depth research for their history day projects; the hiring process continues as DPL is nearly fully-staffed.
3. Friends of the Library Report: The Friends gifted \$10,000 to the library this month.
4. Board Recruitment: A seat on the Library Advisory Board will be open this spring. Applications will be available as soon as the current seat is officially vacated. Ideas were shared concerning recruitment strategies to encourage applications for this position.
5. Strategic Planning Update: The steering committee has met and planning is underway to promote community engagement in updating DPL's strategic plan.
6. Main Library facility update: Work moves forward in the effort to secure funding for facility renovation. Requests are now out for design proposals and ideas to promote community engagement in this effort. January 27 is the deadline for proposals. The Library Foundation has approved investing in the project up to \$150,000.
7. Erin Kreeger, DPL Foundation Executive Director, presented the Foundation's strategic plan for 2023-2025. The plan, available to the public at the Foundation's website, duluthlibraryfoundation.org, sets up momentum for the Foundation to continue strong fundraising for the library. Since its inception, the Foundation has gifted over one million dollars to the library, and now makes six figure gifts annually.
8. Advocacy: The budget for library materials has not increased since 2009. Increasing costs of materials diminishes DPL's ability to purchase materials. The board advocates for an increase of \$50,000 for materials in the upcoming city budget. Council member Noah Hobbs was present and participated in the discussion with a favorable response to this request.

The next scheduled Board meeting will be on February 28, 2023, at the Main Library.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting November 22, 2022

The meeting was held in person at the Main Library Branch at 4:30 pm.

1. Library staff presented a proposed change to the circulation policy, renaming “temporary” library cards “Easy Access Library Cards,” and making them available to persons who have valid, government issued ID, but no proof of current address. Currently, people in this situation are unable to use library materials. The Easy Access card would allow them to check out up to 4 books at a time and use other library resources. The card would be good for one year. Staff noted that they turn away one or two individuals a day under the current policy. The new policy would increase accessibility to the library for the unhoused, newcomers to the library, and Little Library Go patrons. The Board approved.
2. Manager’s Report: 1. Carla presented the library’s 2023 budget request to the City Council on November 15, 2022. The board notes that budgeting for library materials has been flat for around twenty years which means fewer materials can be purchased as inflation increases. There was discussion about whether any avenue exists to increase that budget for the coming year. It was noted that budget planning should start earlier in the year in order to focus on this issue.
3. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library reports were presented. The Friends will sponsor the “Littlest Book Sale” at Mt. Royal on November 29, 30 and December 1.
4. Main Library facility report: A co-location plan between the library and the workforce department is moving forward at the city level. Funding would be sought to redesign Main Library space in the current location to house both entities, with some shared space such as meeting rooms. An application for state bonding in 2024 must be submitted in 2023. DPL will develop a “pre-design” to show what space is necessary and how it could be arranged. Staff and community input will be sought, as well as the help of the Library Foundation. The Board agreed that a special meeting might be necessary next month in order to keep abreast of developments.
5. One vacant Board position is anticipated in the coming year.

The next scheduled Board meeting will be on January 24, 2023, at the Main Library.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting September 27, 2022

Manager's report:

- Saturday hours have resumed at the Main library
- New Baby Story Time at Mt. Royal has been huge success
- Little Library Go outreach events engaged more than 1000 people this summer and resulted in 25 new library card sign-ups
- DPL has a new mascot, a gray lynx wearing an orange DPL t-shirt (costume provided by the Duluth Library Foundation). A naming contest is underway.
- All 3 library branches will close on Sept. 30 for a staff development day.
- Staffing: library positions are filling with only 3 open positions left.

Foundation report:

- Learning & Libations event raised \$50,000 to be used to upgrade the West Duluth Branch entry.
- Strategic planning retreat to be held on Oct. 1.

Friends report:

- \$25,000 has been presented to the library.
- Discussion underway about management of free book carts at the Main branch.

Old Business:

- Kaitlyn Tillman, the new Library Safety Specialist, was introduced to the Board. She has a social work background, and circulates in the Main library talking with patrons, intervening to defuse situations when necessary, and helping to connect people in need with services. She is also a resource for staff.
- Social Worker Pilot Project: staffing issues at the Human Development Center (HDC) has reduced the number of social workers available to the library, but the project is still underway.
- Facility update: the city is still working with the congressional delegation to secure funding sources for library upgrades. Further planning is on hold pending identification of funding sources.

New Business:

- The Board approved a revision to the DPL Programming Policy that was presented at the last meeting. The revision spells out criteria for library program selection.

The next regular Board meeting will be October 25, 2022.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting August 23, 2022

Manager's Report:

- Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources extended the MN State Park Pass program through June 2025.
- In partnership with the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition, DPL has installed a legal kiosk computer at the Main Library to provide free legal information for people who lack a computer or internet access.
- 2023 City budget process has begun. Target operating budget includes continued support for Every Child Read Duluth (ECRD). Further details to follow. DPL budget presentation to City Council will be Monday, November 14 from 5:30-5:45.
- Much progress made in staffing but not 100% yet. Interviews are in progress.

Library Foundation Report:

- Foundation is conducting a survey for its strategic planning effort. Watch for this and share widely!
- Approved September quarterly disbursement to ECRD of \$9,880.
- Registration open for Learning & Libations on September 17.

Friends of the Library Report: donation of \$25,000 to the library.

Main Library facility planning continues in discussion with City officials.

Library Security:

- There was a good response to the posting for library security position. Individual was hired with social services background, to begin in September.
- Main library continues to have off duty police personnel on site from time to time.
- Number of serious incidents in the library has decreased over the last couple of months.
- DPL is conducting a security assessment at the main facility through a professional firm. Report expected in 6 – 8 weeks.

Social worker pilot project: Social workers present at main library weekday afternoons to walk around the facility, talk with people, offer assistance with resources as needed. So far the program is going well.

New circulation policy approved by board. Major change is elimination of library card expiration in most cases. Exceptions spelled out in the policy.

Programming policy approved by the board. This new policy is based on policies for book selection/deselection and art displays in the library. Spells out how proposed programming will be evaluated and approved. Identifies means for public comment/concern.

The next meeting will be on September 27, 2022 at the library.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library Advisory Board Meeting March 22, 2022

The meeting was conducted virtually.

Mayor Emily Larson joined the meeting briefly to offer her thanks for its hard work on behalf of Duluth Public Library.

Jason DeShaw, the new Library Supervisor, was present to meet the Board. He will oversee circulation and technical services.

The Board heard a quarterly report from Every Child Ready Duluth (ECRD). The team continues to work with an outside consultant to develop program evaluation tools. A school readiness messaging campaign is underway, targeting parents and caregivers. The goal is to share simple ways to increase school readiness. The Little Library Go van is ready for action! The team plans to focus on under-resourced communities. The team is recruiting for an AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer.

Library Manager's Report: City administration has lifted its mask requirement for city buildings. Most staff and many library patrons continue to wear masks anyway. Progress continues in filling vacant positions, though there are still a number to be filled. The Minnesota Library Association Conference will take place in Duluth, in-person, October 27-28.

Update on library security: The job description for security personnel is going through the approval process and has been fast-tracked. Options are under consideration for more staff training. An improved alert system is in place to make staff quickly aware of any situation that arises. A proposal is being developed to have an outside consultant look at library security issues. There are still incidents occurring in the library, mostly related to behaviors such as drinking in the facility, drug use, smoking in the bathrooms.

The annual report was presented and approved by the Board. Of note: physical circulation rebounded nicely in 2021. E-book and audio book usage remain strong.

New Board officers were elected.

In-person Library Advisory Board meetings will resume in April barring any unexpected change in the COVID situation.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Library Advisory Board Meeting February 22, 2022

The meeting was held virtually. Terese Tomanek was present as the new City Council representative to the Library Board. The Foundation reports that Library Giving Day at Hoops will occur on April 6, 2022, from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Additional events are planned. Friends of the Library report that \$10,000.00 was given to the Library this month.

Library Manager's Report:

- Masks are recommended for patrons inside the library facilities, but no longer required. Employees are still required to wear masks.
- This month the library's new virtual reality system will be put into use with a series of orientation programs.
- The Little Library Go van has arrived and is being outfitted for use.
- Every Child Ready Duluth remains busy, although some activities have had to be rescheduled because of Covid. Program evaluation is underway in conjunction with Colibri Consulting.
- The library's PR staff is inviting library patrons and supporters to express their love during February by writing a note or posting a message on social media. Notes are on display at all three library locations.

Library staffing continues to progress.

There was lengthy discussion on library security. It was noted that since last month there has been an assault on a library staff member over mask issues. Currently a job description is under development for two half-time positions for security personnel to cover most open hours. The position is intended to increase security for staff and patrons by providing a welcoming atmosphere, observing, and helping to de-escalate any problems that arise. The individuals who fill these positions will have authority to call 911 if necessary. Ideally, they will have some experience in street social work and possibly in law enforcement. They will not be armed. It will probably take a couple of months to finalize the job description and hire for the positions.

Main Library Facility update: a contract has been developed with an architectural firm to conduct a study of library needs. Work on the study has begun.

New board officers will be elected at the next meeting, March 22, 2022.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting of November 23, 2021

The Board continues to meet virtually.

1. Erin Kreeger, the new executive director of the Duluth Library Foundation, introduced herself and provided a report on the last Foundation Board meeting.

2. Manager's Report:

a. DINOvember is in progress this month featuring dinosaur themed activities for children and youth.

b. Upcoming virtual winter activities are in the works.

c. On December 9 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., celebrated scholar and racial equity advocate Dr. Anton Treuer will present a free online seminar made possible by Every Child Ready Duluth (ERCD).

d. On January 1, DPL will launch Hoopla, a new streaming service to provide simultaneous access to digital media, available only to cardholders who live within the City of Duluth.

e. On Saturday, January 29, 2022, ERCD will hold a free community launch event at the Depot from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Twelve community partners and a team of volunteers will provide activities for children, parents and caregivers. More information to follow in January.

3. Friends Report

a. Various activities related to fundraising described.

b. Poet Laureate program on hold for reorganization.

c. Donation of \$8,000.00 made to DPL.

d. Mt. Royal Foods planning a "round up" event to support Friends of the Library.

3. Old Business

a. Work on staffing continues.

b. Security: Clean & Safe partnership probably not the best choice for the library. Creation of a position within the library is now under consideration.

New Business

Carla Powers presented DPL budget concerns before the City Council on Nov. 8.

Ongoing Business:

Need for an updated strategic plan. Representatives from the Library Board, Foundation, Friends and City Council met with the mayor to present needs, concerns and DPL accomplishments. Discussion was productive, focused on difficulty of finding funding for capital projects and possible alternatives.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Library Advisory Board Meeting October 26, 2021

1. The meeting began with a report from Kristy Nerhaugen, Youth Services, and Stacy Lavres, Adult Nonfiction, on anti-racism work at the Duluth Public Library (DPL). Nerhaugen began by noting that this is lifelong work and that racism doesn't happen in a vacuum – other “isms” must be taken into account as well. The goal is to provide youth programming that is as inclusive and diverse as possible. DPL youth program staff try to organize programming around three overall ideas: 1) Books as mirrors. Children should be able to see themselves in books through characters that look like them. 2) Books as windows. Children should be able to see how others live through books. 3) Books as sliding glass doors. Children should be able to “step into” books, become fully immersed. Activities related to selected books are planned to offer this immersion. Lavres then reported on her work on a diversity audit in the adult nonfiction collection. Data is collected on various points, such as the diversity of communities represented, to assure that the adult nonfiction collection reflects the diversity of the DPL community. She also notes check out and request data for books in the collection, as well as baseline demographic data to help achieve a broad approach to diversity. Lavres noted that her specialty is adult nonfiction, but that similar data collection would be beneficial in the fiction collection and other areas as well. Following the above report, the library manager noted that although Duluth demographics overall reflect a 90% white population, DPL patronage demographics are much more diverse.
2. Manager's Report:
 - a. September Staff Workshop. The September 29 workshop went well. Staff gathered off-site for a mixture of conversation, self-reflection and team building.
 - b. The new mural has been installed at Mt. Royal, and a media event to celebrate it took place on Tuesday, October 19. The mural depicts the importance of connection and stories. It serves as a beautiful and bright focal point located right behind the service desk.
 - c. Staff member Heidi Harrison, who does a lot of work with teens, is setting up a teen advisory board at the main library. The goal is to create a sense of ownership for teens at the library, get their input on library materials and programs, provide them with an opportunity to build skills and give them a chance to gain volunteer experience. Harrison has received thirteen applications so far from interested teens.
 - d. The 2022 One Book Northland project is in the planning stages. The committee has narrowed the list of possibilities down to two finalists. An announcement of the choice will follow soon.
 - e. The library's 2022 budget presentation to the City Council is scheduled for their virtual meeting on November 8 at 5:45 p.m.
3. Friends of the Library Report:
 - a. There will be a book sale on December 7, 8 and 9 in the hallway at Mt. Royal
 - b. The Friends' newsletter will be out in November
 - c. A new laptop was purchased for the Friends' office
 - d. The Friends currently have \$18,500 in general funds.
4. Old Business
 - a. Update on Library Staffing and Services: New staff is getting started. Library supervisor positions are being filled. A Library Technician position will be posted soon. A Librarian 2

position remains to be filled. Library services continue to be mostly outdoor programs at present and will probably be virtual when weather requires.

b. Update on Library Security: A proposal to hire two Clean and Safe part time ambassadors was given to City Council. These individuals would be based at the Main Library. Their mission would be to help patrons use the library successfully. They would serve in ways such as greeting, giving library tours, and intervening in potential behavioral issues if necessary.

5. Advocacy: There seems to be a common feeling among Library Advisory Board members that strategic planning to update library facilities is unclear. A suggestion was made that a few Board members go to the City Council and simply ask how the Council and the Advisory Board can work together to develop a plan, possibly including a survey of the community again to update needs and ideas. What has been learned from the pandemic situation? The Board notes that Every Child Ready Duluth needs to continue and work on the physical facilities needs to be addressed. Would there be a place for an outside consultant to assist in planning a community survey? And what is the City Council willing to commit to in terms of funding new plans?

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting of August 24, 2021

The Board continues to meet virtually.

1. The quarterly update from Every Child Ready Duluth (ECRD) was provided. The project has come to the end of its “coaching” process with the strategic planner. Staff is beginning to implement the evaluation process while moving forward with outreach into the community and activities for families with young children. ECRD is working with numerous community organizations and care providers as well the Duluth school district. Staff anticipate initiating the Little Library Go Van soon with help from the Foundation fundraiser in September.
2. The manager’s report contained the following information:
 - a. The City of Duluth has reinstated a mask requirement for all city buildings including library buildings.
 - b. A network recabling project at the Main Library has been postponed until fall due to delays in obtaining needed equipment.
 - c. The Mt. Royal art project has been delayed as the artist considers the best way to mount the work.
 - d. A new art exhibit has been hung on the top floor of the main library in conjunction with Duluth/Superior Pride activities. It will remain on display until October 14.
 - e. DPL was one of a few public libraries that the state selected to receive Minnesota State Park passes for checkout. The four available passes are available on a first come first served basis and have been in nearly constant use since the program began in June.
 - f. Outdoor programs have been a huge hit during the summer.
3. The library’s security contract ended when the buildings closed for the pandemic. It was not reinstated as the library gradually reopened, but staff are now considering options to resume a security plan as usage increases and some behavioral issues have been observed.
4. Strategic planning: The library was not a recipient of federal funds awarded to Duluth through the American Rescue Act. The current strategic plan for library repair/renovation is out of date and will need to be reworked.
5. The Foundation’s signature fundraiser, Learning & Libations, will be a virtual event again this year in September. Friends of the Library have book sale fundraisers coming up between now and the end of the year.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library (DPL) Board Meeting, June 22, 2021

The meeting was held virtually.

1. Six new library technicians have been hired and are in training. Approval to hire 2 Librarian I vacancies is pending. That will leave one vacancy for a Librarian II position which will be filled in the fall. DPL is also in the process of hiring a 13-hour delivery driver and filling the remaining library aide vacancies.
2. Installation of the Mt. Royal Art Project has been delayed but will be complete by the end of June. Plans for the unveiling and a media event are in progress.
3. On June 15, library staff participated in the 4th Street Wellness Festival at the Damiano Center. The Every Child Ready Duluth (ERCD) team gave out children's books and information about library events. Other staff answered questions about library services and provided brochures with information about how to access various social service resources in Duluth.
4. Summer events are underway including the summer reading program for all ages, story times and story strolls at Duluth parks. Kaleidoscope performances will begin in July, and band concerts on the plaza are scheduled for every Thursday evening from July 15 through August 12.
5. Early on Wednesday, June 16, two windows near the book returns on the Superior Street side of the library were vandalized. An arrest was made with felony charges. Repairs are in progress and will cost \$1400.00. The incident took place around 3 am. No staff or library patrons were present.
6. Main Library rearrangement and construction continue. Feedback from patrons has been positive on the relocation of adult fiction. New staff offices have been completed. Two closets to securely house computer networking equipment and a small room for patron use are under construction.
7. The first two weeks of re-opening at the Main library have gone well. Masks are encouraged, and many comply. Hours will increase as staff expands.
8. Computer access is now available at the branches. Outdoor programming is also starting at the branches. A vaccine clinic was held at Mt. Royal, staffed by St. Louis County Public Health.
9. It is uncertain whether money from the American Rescue Plan (ARA) will be available to DPL as there are restrictions on the use of these federal funds. Advocacy continues concerning DPL capital needs whether or not ARA monies can be used.
10. The next library board meeting will be in August and will be in person. Location to be decided.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

The Library Board met virtually on April 27, 2021.

1. Hiring for seven library tech positions is in progress.
2. The Every Child Ready Duluth (ECRD) team continues to meet with community action teams.
3. The Foundation reports receiving a gift of Virtual Reality equipment which they plan to use for in-person programming. It will not be available for check out.
4. Friends of the Library do not anticipate a book sale until 2022 and are not accepting donations at this time. There is a possibility of conducting “mini book sales.” Plans for these are not firm.
5. Library use: Library Express service started on April 12 at the branch locations and is going well with no difficulty in managing numbers of patrons even without appointments. Curbside pickup is down slightly since the branches opened. About 22 people per day are coming in to use computers, and research appointments are going well.
6. Library services: Delivery services are not up and going yet, as home delivery relies heavily on volunteers. Library Express is the higher priority at present. In person programming will probably be last to come back, although some amount of outdoor in person programming may be possible.
7. New internet cable will be installed at the Main Library this summer with sixty percent of the cost reimbursed by federal funding through capital improvement monies.
8. Advocacy: An advocacy group representing the Library Board, the Foundation and Friends of the Library met with city officials, including the Mayor, concerning capital needs in particular. It was a very positive meeting although the fact of multiple needs throughout the city is a clear reality. American Rescue Act money from the federal government will help. ECRD seems to be intact for the next fiscal year as well as continued movement toward getting services up and running. Next steps might include inviting other groups to join in library advocacy.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library Board meeting - February 23, 2021

The Board continues to meet virtually. The meeting opened with a detailed presentation by Every Child Ready Duluth (ECRD) staff. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, this program is growing in the community. Staff have built and maintained contacts with local leaders and community groups. They have provided support to parents and made reading materials available to children in various ways. Development of a strategic plan going forward has been the major focus. This began with defining what school readiness means in our community and what factors promote it. Working with a steering committee that includes individuals with diverse professional expertise and community members, the ECRD staff has established a strategic directive and set goals for the program. They are preparing to launch their plan to the wider community on March 23.

Opportunities for community members to volunteer in a variety of ways will be available at that time.

The library manager reports that curbside pickup at the Main Branch remains busy. Some incremental steps toward opening the library to careful in-person use will be explored, although this will take time. Many materials that were checked out before the pandemic began have been returned now. However, many are still out. Their return is critical to having sufficient books available to meet current requests. Patrons are encouraged to return any outstanding materials now, keeping in mind that they are accountable for them.

Library staff hope to make research assistance available by appointment at the Main Branch for people who need specific research materials that are not available online. The possibility of making tutoring available for public school students is being discussed. Computer access continues to go well.

Advocacy for the library continues to focus on promoting ECRD, library staffing and funding as well as on efforts toward safe reopening of library facilities.

The Duluth Library Foundation reports that plans are underway for a major September fundraiser in some form.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library Board - January 26, 2021

The Duluth Public Library Board met virtually on January 26, 2021. Meetings have continued on a regular basis since the beginning of the pandemic.

All permanent library staff are now back at work, and the library can start to bring back 13-hour staff. Filling vacant positions is on hold for now.

Strong library usage continues. Policies concerning computer use by appointment were tightened in November because of the surge in COVID-19 cases locally, but the service is still available during curbside pickup hours. An average of 17 people per day participate.

Curbside pickup usage remains strong, with about 175 people using the service each day. Saturday service is scheduled to begin soon.

With the branch libraries closed, staff have been busy cleaning up, rearranging space and doing other organizational work. Plans to initiate “grab and go” services at the branches are in progress.

Maintenance and remodeling work has also been underway at the Main Library. Staff continues with a heavy weeding of adult non-fiction and moving adult fiction to the top floor. This is in preparation for a recabing project scheduled later this year. This work will allow for youth services to expand its footprint and in the meantime allows for better use of space.

Every Child Ready Duluth started off strong in 2020. Work was stalled when the library closed. However, staff were able to meet the challenge creatively. Continued contacts with community members, development of a Facebook page with resources for parents, caregivers and community partners, and story times on Facebook are among other accomplishments of last year. Strategic planning continues and priorities for 2021 are identified. These include increased community messaging and communication systems, relationship building with child care providers, parents, and St. Louis Country home visiting nurses.

The library manager presented an updated collection development policy, the first update since 2011. Changes reflect the library’s mission to stress the importance of diversity in the collection in order to meet the needs of everyone in the community. The policy provides guidance to librarians in selection and deselection of materials. It is also a guide for handling questions from the public concerning the collection.

Advocacy for the library continues with a focus on plans to safely reopen, support for Every Child Ready Duluth, and budget planning.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting: January 28, 2020

At the main branch: repairs have been completed on the elevator and new public restrooms on the lower level are now open.

This month the Rural Aids Action Network (RAAN) began a regular presence in the Partnership Center at the main branch. RAAN staff are present at the same time as St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services staff. RAAN is offering free Narcan distribution and one-on-one training in its administration.

A new art display can be viewed in the Computer Center. It's a sampling of work from visual arts students at Choice Unlimited, a nonprofit that supports adults with disabilities and people experiencing other barriers to employment and community inclusion.

Every Child Ready Duluth is progressing. The library is in the process of hiring a library technician to join the librarian already at work on this program. In addition, an application will be made for an Americorps/Vista position to complete the goal of three staff members for ECRD. Framework and development for the program is in progress with the help of a hired consultant. Community outreach and coalition building is underway.

The library's 2020 goals were reviewed with the Board.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Library Advisory Board Meeting, November 26, 2019

1. The Duluth Public Library filming and photography policy was updated and approved to include individuals from the public who wish to take pictures or films.
2. The City of Duluth open meeting law was reviewed with the board by city personnel.
3. The circulation policy was updated and approved to reflect the library's new fine free status.
4. The new early childhood literacy librarian was introduced to the board.
5. Board members were encouraged to attend the December 16 City Council meeting at which the new budget will be debated and approved. Opportunity will be available to speak up for library funding.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting, October 22, 2019

1. The Race Card is underway with excellent participation. This national project encourages people in our community to share their honest experiences of age and thoughts about race, giving voice to emotions that aren't often talked about. All members of the community are invited to pick up a Race Card, complete it and return it to the library.
2. The first art exhibit organized by the library's Diversity Action Group is on display on the top floor of the main library. The exhibit features photography by children who live at AICHO.
3. The early childhood literacy program, Every Child Ready Duluth, was launched with a press conference on Wednesday, October 30, at 10:40 am. The event was held in the youth services department and featured statements by Library Foundation members, library management and Mayor Emily Larson.
4. Two new half-time library technicians have been hired, one for the main library and one for Mount Royal. In addition, an early literacy librarian has been hired to begin work in November.
5. The Public Restroom Project continues with a projected completion date of late November or early December. Other maintenance projects include the installation of new lights and controls in the Green Room.
6. A new library policy concerning photography at library events was presented and approved.
7. The successful Port Card project is undergoing some revision in the contract between the library and the school system and is so currently on hold.
8. There was discussion of the direction Library outreach might take in the coming year. Building maintenance issues at the main library and parking at the West Duluth branch continue to be among topics of conversation.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Library Advisory Board Meeting: September 24, 2019

The Learning & Libations fundraiser for 2019 went very well. Good news is that it has outgrown library space so that part of the event was held outdoors.

Changes in how the city processes applications for openings on boards were reviewed. There is one opening for the Library Advisory Board. Both the library and the city are looking to reflect the diversity of the library community in filling it.

There has been a very positive response so far to going fine-free. Many long overdue books are coming back. A small increase in the fee charged to for-profit groups that use library meeting rooms was approved. Use of rooms by non-profit and community groups remains free.

The city budgeting process was reviewed. The mayor's proposed budget, which includes funds for an early childhood literacy program, has been presented to city council. Final approval of the budget won't occur until December.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library, August 27, 2019

The Foundation's "Case Statement in Support of an Early Childhood Literacy Program in the Duluth Public Library" was presented to Mayor Emily Larson and CAO Noah Schuchman on July 5 with a favorable response from both. The Foundation is hopeful that funding for this initiative will be included in the 2020 budget to be presented to the City Council on September 9. The Foundation is offering to partner with the City to get the program started this fall.

The Duluth Public Library is going "fine free" effective September 4 when a press event will be held. The goal of this initiative is to increase library access to all members of the community.

Construction of the new public restroom facilities in the basement of the main library is expected to begin the week of August 28 and to last eight to twelve weeks. During this time programming at the Main Library will be limited and the Green Room will not be available for use by outside groups.

The summer reading program wrapped up on August 16 with participation slightly higher this year than in 2018.

Also, of note was the very high use of student Port Cards over the summer. Library staff are delighted and note that giving kids control over their own library account and using a virtual card made it easier for them to use the library.

The annual Gathering of Associated Library Advocates (Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, and the Library Board) is scheduled for October 1. This is a time for the three Boards to share their own roles in library advocacy and to look together toward advocacy strategy in the coming year.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Duluth Public Library Board Meeting, May 28, 2019

Comments/questions offered by a community member concerning the West Branch of the library were addressed during the public comments portion of the meeting.

The Library Manager's Report was presented and accepted. The report noted that new computer space in the Main Branch is being well used and that both patron and staff have been positive. Social workers are now available for consultation on a drop-in basis at the Main Library for a few hours a week. So far this arrangement is working well. A Board member has resigned leaving an open seat on the board. Applications for this position are taken at the City Clerk's office. A new secretary was elected by the board.

The Library staff proposal to eliminate overdue fines is moving forward. Next steps to implement the plan will be presented to the City Council. As an outgrowth of the work of the Diversity Action Committee, a Policy Art Exhibit in the library is being developed. A proposal was shared with the Board, but not accepted at this meeting after feedback suggested further work was needed by the committee.

Library advocacy remains a major focus of the Board. An update on communication with the City Council was reported.

Submitted by. Debbie Rasmussen

Library Advisory Board, March 26, 2019

Elections were held for board officers. Sue Schumacher presented a detailed discussion of the library youth staff's vision for an early literacy program based at the library. This included specific ideas that could be initiated once a dedicated early literary staff person is hired. It was noted that the Library Foundation has expressed interest in helping to make this position a reality. A draft letter to the City Council was read and discussed. The intent of this letter is to encourage the start of focused dialog between the City Council and the library concerning development of a clear plan to address implementation of the strategic plan (already approved by the City Council). The letter notes priorities identified by the Duluth community which the library can work on. The annual report to be filed with the state was reviewed and approved. The report details usage, staffing, and expenditures by the Duluth Public Library.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Library Advisory Board, February 26, 2019

Library advocacy was a major topic of discussion. Monthly letters to City Council advocating for funding to support the strategic plan for the library (which was unanimously approved by City Council some time ago) have continued. Discussion at this meeting focused on each of three aspects of the strategic plan: facilities and programming overall; early learning; and enhancement of West Duluth Branch programming. The Board agreed that more pointed advocacy is in order to address each of these areas. For example, a specific proposal to initiate an early learning program may be more fruitful than simply advocating for early learning. The Board expressed interest in partnering with local experts in this area to develop a specific proposal for early learning and will begin to look into this.

The Board approved updated policies related to circulation and to provision of library cards for employees living out of state. 2014-2018 library usage statistics were reviewed, including use of student Port Cards provided through schools. Port Cards allow students to check out books without a personal library card. The use of this service is growing.

The Board discussed the possibility of dispensing with at least some library fines and has asked appropriate library staff to develop a proposal concerning this.

Submitted by Debbi Rasmussen

Library Advisory Committee, January 22, 2019

The status of library facilities continues to be a major focus of discussion. Of particular interest is that a grant of \$8,000 has been approved for use at the main library building. These funds will be used to move the computer lab upstairs and install bathrooms on the first floor. Funding is still being pursued for the computer lab updates, lighting, and controls. The new bathroom will meet the capacity needs for the building. Construction will begin around April and continue for a few months.

Submitted by: Debbi Rasmussen