



A COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY

3939 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Drafted
11/7/2024

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Members of the public who wished to attend could do so in-person, or via Microsoft Teams at columbiaheightsmn.gov/join-a-meeting and entering Meeting ID 258 492 181 742 and passcode GWNpXW at the scheduled meeting time. For questions, please call the library at 763-706-3690.

The meeting was called to order in the Library Community Room by Rachelle Waldon at 5:32pm.

Members present: Rachelle Waldon; Melanie Magidow; Chris Polley; Carrie Mesrobian; Amina Maameri; Justice Spriggs (City Council Liaison). **Members remotely present:** N/A. **Members absent:** N/A. **Others present:** Renee Dougherty (Library Director); Nick Olberding (Board Secretary). **Public present:** N/A.

1. The Meeting Agenda was amended to include an update on unstaffed hours and was **approved**.
2. The **Minutes** of the **October 2, 2024**, Library Board Meeting were amended to include a title correction and book addition to the Board Books section of the Minutes, then **moved and approved with amended changes**.
3. **Review of 2024 Operating Budget:** 83.33% of the year and 72.37% of the budget expended.
 - a. **Gas (43830):** Due to another warm fall the gas budget for the year will likely be underspent.
 - b. **Building Maintenance (44020):** This budget line will be overspent due to some unforeseen plumbing problems, A/C system repair, and roof maintenance.
 - c. **E-Books (42183):** Still no word from Anoka County Library whether the pricing model for CHPL will be changing, but Renee will meet with their director in December.

Community Forum: Opportunity for public input. No correspondence and no public in attendance. The City website has a contact form for each Board/Commission for the public to submit questions or concerns:

https://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/government/boards_and_commissions/index.php After clicking desired group, scroll to the bottom of their page to find the contact form.

Old Business:

4. **Staffing Update:** Two new Pages began training on October 21st; Naati is a student at Columbia Heights High School who is bilingual in English and Oromo; Gordon comes with experience at St Paul libraries and Anoka County and is bilingual in English and Korean.
5. **2025 Budget Presentation to the City Council:** Renee gave a 2025 proposed budget presentation to the Council on October 7. The library's 2.5% increase over 2024 is a smaller percentage than some other departments, mainly due to the departure of two long-term employees earning at the top of the pay scales and replacement hires lower on the scales. Additionally, there were cuts to the physical print/audiobook budget due to decrease in demand in favor of e-books/e-audiobooks. Additional dollars were budgeted for youth programming after the loss of the federal 21st Century grant; replacement of five-year old staff computers; and increased City administration costs. The Council did not recommend any changes.
6. **New Website:** The new Library website (chplmn.org) quietly went live last Friday. The Board was excited to see it and were happy with the appearance. Staff will be trained on editing and updating the page later this month. The Board was advised to send thoughts, concerns, and suggestions going forward. They asked us if we would be soliciting feedback on website use; no current plans yet. Training will hopefully include access to analytics to understand the most popular sections of the new website. Redirects on the City website worked, but the link to the Library page of the City website in Google search results was broken; Renee will bring this to the attention of Communications staff who managed the site build.

New Business:

7. **Approve 2025 Library Holiday/Closed Dates:** The Board was presented with a list of the proposed closed dates for 2025 with the verbal addition of Saturday, July 5th (Anoka County Library notified us this week that they will be closed that day, so Heights will also close for consistency). Also of note, even though it is still a city holiday, the Library intends to be open on Good Friday in 2025. The Board had no concerns about the proposed closed dates for next year; they **moved and approved the list with amended changes.**
8. **Discussion of Prayer Space and Equipment at the Library** (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/religionqa>): Amina wondered about the amount of demand for prayer space during open hours, and whether the Library could have several prayer rugs on hand to use in the building. There are occasional requests for a private room for prayer which are generally accommodated when space is available. She noted that patrons sometimes silently pray in the open spaces as well. The discussion included thoughts on what is expected in a public space like a library; expectations for privacy and ways of providing it; tax funding; religious materials; reflection spaces; and nursing spaces. The Board will consider policy needs, signage, and examples of other libraries that have these types of amenities. The discussion was tabled to allow the gathering of more research on what other local libraries are doing. The ALA states that libraries may provide religious texts and/or materials but should not prioritize or favor any specific faith or religion, and items of this nature should reflect its community.
9. **Approve 2025 Library Board of Trustees Meeting Dates:** The Board was presented with a list of the proposed meeting dates for 2025 continuing the standard of 5:30pm on the first Wednesday of each month, except for January 1 (which falls on New Year's Day) which was pushed to January 8. Members decided to cancel the July meeting, as has been tradition for the last several years. A **motion to approve the 2025 Library Board Meeting Dates with the amended cancellation of July was moved and approved.**

Director's Update:

10. **September Board Report:** Provided as a FYI.
 - a. **Jane Austen Tea:** It was mentioned that this looked like a very awesome event.
11. **Board Books:**
 - a. Justice: *A People's History of the Supreme Court: The Men and Women Whose Cases and Decisions Have Shaped Our Constitution* Peter Irons
 - b. Chris: *Everyone's Awake: Read-Aloud Bedtime Book* Colin Meloy; *Cuckoo* Gretchen Felker-Martin
 - c. Carrie: *The Familiar* Leigh Bardugo
 - d. Melanie: *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal* Rachel Naomi Remen
 - e. Renee: *North Woods* Daniel Mason
 - f. Rachele: *The Namesake* Jhumpa Lahiri; *Fahrenheit 451* Ray Bradbury
 - g. Amina: *Hold Onto Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More Than Peers* Gordon Neufeld/Gabor Maté MD
 - h. Nick: *I, Robot* Isaac Asimov

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas P. Olberding
Recording Secretary, CHPL Board of Trustees