



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY
3939 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421
BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 5th, 2022

Drafted
1/6/2022

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Members of the public who wished to attend could do so in-person, by calling 1-312-626-6799 and entering **meeting ID 832 1433 7849** and **passcode 654514**, or by Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83214337849> 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 Chair Tricia Conway at 5:30pm.

Members physically present: Tricia Conway; Teresa Eisenbise; Carrie Mesrobian; Gerri Moeller; Christopher Polley; Nick Novitsky (Council Liaison). **Members remotely present:** N/A. **Members Absent:** N/A. **Also present:** Renee Dougherty (Library Director); Nick Olberding (Recording Secretary); Eliza Pope (Youth Services Librarian). **Public physically/remotely present:** N/A.

1. **Introduction of Eliza:** New Youth Services Librarian (Eliza Pope) introduced herself to the Library Board, and highlighted her library education and career, including overseeing the Createch Labs at St. Paul Public Library: a collaborative program by teens, for teens, to explore creative talents, pursue tech interests, and spark new passions, (ie. lasers, VR, arts/crafts, drones, music, programming, etc).
2. The **Minutes of the December 1st, 2021**, Board Meeting were **moved and unanimously approved**.
3. **Operating Budget Review:** \$154k remaining unspent in budget, but interdepartmental transfers have not yet taken place. The financials will not be finalized until February, but there will be a small surplus.

Community Forum: An opportunity for community input. **No Public in Attendance at this meeting.**

4. **E-mail from Jonathon Rehlander:** Jonathon expressed his dismay about the \$25/hour charge for Community Room use, and let us know that they have found a “free” venue to hold their meetings. He felt that the Community Room was an asset to the community, but the fee was a barrier to many community groups that would be interested in utilizing the space. It is difficult to gauge how many groups have been deterred by the cost, as the pandemic is likely a factor too.
5. **E-mail from Rachel James (with attachment):** Rachel sent a message to the Library and Councilmember Novitsky in support of the Library Board’s recommendation to eliminate late fees; emphasizing the inequality created by these fees, especially with children, teens, and those with lower incomes, transportation limitations, and other factors like split custody. Her family is a heavy user of the library, and inevitably gets overdue fees because life happens; they have the means to pay the fines, but many families don’t have that ability and in turn lose the benefit of checking out library materials. Included with her letter was a resolution published by the American Library Association in 2019 stating the reasons for eliminating late fees at public libraries, and asserting that monetary fines detract from the core mission of modern libraries.

Old Business:

6. **Staffing Update: Youth Services Librarian & Library Supervisor:** Youth Services Librarian, Eliza Pope (who was introduced earlier in the meeting), and Library Supervisor, Georgia Cook, have already or will start work this month.
7. **Work Session Presentation on Overdue Fine Elimination:** Included in the meeting packet was the Council letter from the work session of Monday, January 3. The resolution was intended to be on the Consent agenda of the January 10 regular meeting, but was removed to allow for additional consideration, discussion and potential public comment. The Board reiterated the reasons for wanting to eliminate late fees, primarily focused on the inequity of fines and the barrier they create to using the library. Councilmember Novitsky suggested that fines are not a barrier imposed by the library; because people get notified of due dates and have multiple options to renew material. The Board suggested that it is not the mission of the Library to teach people responsibility by punishing those that return items late. As long as materials are returned, there is no cost to the library. Fines have greater impact on lower income people and those with less access to transportation and the technology to

renew items. The Library should also strive to be consistent with other city departments, such as Utilities, in assessing late fees.

8. **Request for Reconsideration Form & Collection Development Policy:** This topic was tabled at the previous meeting. The Board stressed its importance because of the recent increase in challenges to materials, especially those addressing LGBTQ or racial issues, in public and school libraries throughout the United States. The Board reviewed staff recommended changes to the form, and agreed with updates, including involving the Library Board when a complainant appeals a staff response. The Collection Development Policy, approved last year, was included as a reference for how materials are initially selected for the collection. The Board collectively agreed that residency in Columbia Heights is required for anyone submitting a Request for Reconsideration. **A motion was made to approve the revised Reconsideration Form; it was moved and approved unanimously.**

New Business:

9. **CHPL Public Arts Sub-Committee:** No documentation was prepared for discussion. The CHPL Public Arts Sub-Committee will be **tabled until after the Board has the chance to do strategic planning and goalsetting.**

From the Floor: N/A

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made at 6:37 pm, and seconded; Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas P. Olberding
Recording Secretary, CHPL Board of Trustees