



**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
3939 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MEETING MINUTES**  
Wednesday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Drafted  
10/8/2021

**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; Christopher Polley; Teresa Eisenbise; Carrie Mesrobian; Gerri Moeller; Nick Novitsky (Council Liaison). **Members remotely present:** N/A. **Members Absent:** N/A. **Also present:** Renee Dougherty (Library Director); Nick Olberding (Recording Secretary); Marlaine Szurek (CHPLF President); Sharon Shedlov (CHPLF Treasurer); David Larson (CHPLF Member). **Public remotely present:** N/A.

1. The **Minutes** of the **September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021**, Board Meeting were **moved and unanimously approved**.
2. The **Bill Lists** were reviewed, **moved, and unanimously approved**.
3. Operating **Budget Review**: Some lines are overspent but it's the bottom line that matters. At 75% through the year, 59% of total budget has been expended, not including September payroll and utilities which haven't yet cleared on monthly expenditure report.

**New Business:**

4. **Conversation with CHPL Foundation** (President Marlaine Szurek, Treasurer Sharon Shedlov, Member-at-Large David Larson)  
All Library Board members are relatively new and unfamiliar with the Foundation's governing board, so introductions were made around the room. Chair Conway asked the Foundation to share information about its history and purpose. She explained that the Library Board set up the conversation in order to learn more about the Foundation and better understand how both groups might better serve the Library and the citizens of Columbia Heights. The Foundation was founded as a 501(c)3 organization in 2001 with the goal of advocating and funding quality library service and facilities within the city of Columbia Heights. The Foundation has supported a number of projects at the library over the years including:
  - **2012 – \$6,500** for a library space needs assessment for the City of Columbia Heights
  - **2016 – \$65,000** for RFID technology for collection management and security (tags for collection, hardware for staff workstations, software, security gates, and self-check kiosks for customers)
  - **2017 – \$37,600** for the new building's lobby interior finishes
  - **2017 – \$3,000** for play and learning fixtures within the children's area (with a supplement of **\$1,500 in 2019**)
  - **2017 – \$500** for the purchase of large-print books
  - **2019 – \$5,550** to upgrade the Windows Operating system in three Bibliotheca self-check kiosks
  - **2019 – \$3,300** to underwrite a U.S. Citizenship class delivered by Metro North Adult Basic Education at the Library
  - **2020 – \$5,700** to upgrade Windows Operating System on the TechLogic Automated Materials Handler (AMH)
  - **2020 -- \$14,700** to the Columbia Heights Police Department to work with the Constitution Center to create a curriculum at the MetroNorth Adult Education Center for English Language Learners and new immigrants.

In response to inquiries from the Council Liaison, the Foundation's Board described their meeting schedule and process for recruiting new trustees. Board Chair Conway asked what programs or initiatives were most exciting to the Foundation, and if there were any aspects of the Library they were most interested in funding. President Szurek deferred to the advice of the Library Director. Another person brought up public art, which was a major interest of previous members of the Library Board. Foundation President Szurek reminded the Board that it has a formal process for requesting funds. There was discussion of procuring or commissioning a sculpture for the Library property. Board Member Eisenbise mentioned that there is an artist group in Columbia Heights which might collaborate with or help design a process for commissioning art with a local connection. In closing, the

Board expressed appreciation for the Foundation's willingness to converse and expressed their continued interest in public art with a preference for work to enhance the interior of the building. They also expressed interest in resurrecting the Board's Art Subcommittee to select pieces or design a process for commissioning art. Foundation member Larson expressed happiness with the Board's drive and enthusiasm for the Library's work.

**5. Report from the Library Director:**

**Staffing Updates:** Two Library Pages resigned over the summer, so the position was advertised. Twenty-one applications were received; seven people were interviewed; two conditional offers of employment were extended. If the candidates accept the offers and pass a background check, they will begin training in mid-October. Youth Services Librarian Brianna Belanger announced her resignation to accept a position with the Duluth Public Library. This open position will be advertised soon. Positions at the Library are posted on the websites of the City of Columbia Heights, Metronet, the Minnesota Library Association and the League of Minnesota Cities.

**City Projects:**

- The City is currently undertaking a compensation study and pay equity audit for all staff; recommendations from the study may impact future library budgets in the personal services area.
- The City also commissioned a technology audit during 2021. A primary recommendation from the technology audit was to restructure and augment the IT Department, which will allow it to be more forward-thinking and proactive rather than reactive. A restructured department may be able to deliver more timely and effective technology support and planning for library staff and patron needs.
- The City's document management and archival system, Laserfiche, is being upgraded to include more automated retention and functionality.
- The City's outdated accounting software is being migrated to an enterprise resource planning system. The new system will change how purchase requisitions, invoice payment, payroll, and financial reporting happens. Monthly bill lists and budget updates presented to the Board will look different soon.

Library staff are involved in all of these projects in evaluating, planning, learning and implementing new procedures. Although this work puts pressure on library staffing and accomplishing regular public service in the short-term, the long term impact will be greater efficiency and transparency for staff and customers.

**For Your Information:**

- 6. August Operational Reports:** Included in Agenda Packet for informational purposes; no review.

**From the Floor:**

- 7. Letter from Patron:** Resident Paul Cram sent a letter to the Board about the importance of the Library as a meeting place for the community, and the lack of public meeting space during the pandemic. He urged the reopening of the study and meeting rooms. The rooms were reopened August 23 so Chair Conway will reply letting him know of the room re-opening and thanking him for their interest and passion. Cram mentioned that he has volunteered at the Library in the past leading ESL conversation circles which use the rooms in question. The Board also proposed that future meetings include a "Public Comment" period.
- 8. NYPL Fine-Free/BookRiot Fine-Free Article:** Trustee Moeller mentioned that New York Public Library has recently gone fine-free and also eliminated existing fines from library accounts. She mentioned that "BookRiot" recently published an article on the subject of fines which cites a professional study of impact.
- 9. November meeting:** Conversation with the Friends of the Library, and discussion of future plans for the CHPL Arts Subcommittee.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made at 6:36 pm, and seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas P. Olberding  
Recording Secretary, CHPL Board of Trustees