

GRAL Director's Report

JULY 2022

ADVOCACY

-State Legislature (Regional Library Basic System Support et al.)

Lawmakers left St. Paul without passing major bills or making plans for a special session. This means no action on Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) or other Minnesota Library Association (MLA) legislative initiatives until next session.

-Local Elections (especially County Board of Commissioners)

The Library is locally funded by City and County property tax levies. Three County Board seats are open – with no incumbents running. The outcome of these races could influence our goal of an equitable funding scenario. I will monitor developments with Vice-Chair Martin.

-Capital Projects Fund (American Rescue Plan)

I am in contact with the Governor's Office regarding this potential funding source. At this time, there is not a clear process on how these funds are allocated or spent.

UPDATE: I have been in touch with a member of the Governor's staff. The Facilities Maintenance Manager has obtained quotes for electrical upgrades in anticipation of this grant opportunity being available.

-Arrowhead Library System Request to Itasca County

At the direction of the ALS Board, Executive Director Jim Weikum is submitting a funding request to Itasca County seeking a \$10,000 increase over the FY 2022 support amount. I will have more specifics at the 7/13 Library Board Meeting.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

-Personnel Management

Amy and I are making progress with implementing annual reviews for all Library staff. We have been meeting with staff at or near the anniversary of their hire date and have met with 4/7 so far with one employee still in the introductory period.

-Music Park Collaboration with KAXE

Concrete was poured 7/5. The instruments are on order and will ship directly to the Public Works Department – who will install them. At this time, I am optimistic for the park to be 'up and running' this summer.

-RiverFest update

I will have the latest update at the 7/13 meeting.

-"Living in 'Challenging' Times"

I attended this presentation by the Minnesota Association of Library Friends:

According to not-for-profit watchdogs, public libraries grappled with "an unprecedented" 1,500+ book challenges in 2021. That's on top of the nearly 2,900 school districts that banned at least one book from their collections between July 2021 and March 2022. The trend is receiving national attention, and the issue even received top billing in ALA's recent State of America's Libraries Report (2022).

What's the difference between a challenged and a banned book – and more to the point, why are they dominating our headlines? Is there any precedent for it? Above all, what can Friends do to help their libraries navigate this climate? MALF's summer webinar, "Living in Challenging Times: Book Banning Then and Now" will tackle these timely questions.

FACILITIES MAINTAINANCE / SPACE

-Air Conditioning

There was a major failure in the power supply for the Air Conditioning. Repairs were difficult many of the components used in the original construction of the Library are in

short supply or no longer available. The Facilities Maintenance Manager and Adam from Gartner Refrigeration (the HVAC contractor) identified a fix – a variable frequency drive (to power the AC motor). Maintenance staff drove to the Cities to pick up the part and emergency repairs made.

-Book drop

The Catholic Community Foundation has agreed to support this project! New book drop hardware is on site and the Facilities Maintenance Manager is in contact with a local mason.

-New Flag Pole

Concrete is poured and we are waiting on Public Works to install the 'new' flagpole.

-Quiet Study Project

Waiting on materials (insulation)

-Community Room Shades

Floor to Ceiling installed new shades in the Community Room on 6/20. Currently, we are using this room as the studio for Online Story Time and Artastic. The studio will clear out to make way for the space to become the precinct 2 polling place for the 8/9 primary election.

FIRE RESPONSE

I responded to 29 calls during June with 7 responses from the Library.

END OF REPORT

The First half of June Happenings in Children's!

So, I was thinking...why do a board report just once a month? Why not twice a month? 😊 In reality, I'm going to be away from the library for about three weeks, and I'm going to miss the July 1 deadline for a board report, and, heaven forbid you don't hear from me, right? So, I'll let you know what's been happening the first couple of weeks of June, and I'll fill you in on any other June matters in my August report.

Summer reading has started with a bang!! I ordered 1300 book logs in preparation of a big summer, and they are GONE! We have an emergency 300 here, with another 400 on the way. Folks are streaming in, and I am appreciating every little face we see. We are also crazy busy with, well, business. Monday, June 13 saw the Children's Library answering 45 reference questions, plus small people shared innumerable stories. (Gold star...no, gold crown, for Dion...she is handling all of this with her usual joy and professionalism. And the occasional, "walking feet" reminder. 😊)

I applied for grant funding through Children First! for Artastic at Home next school year, plus a bit for our Summer Celebration. Fingers are crossed that we will receive funding to continue this great program. Speaking of program continuation, I will continue to promote new books on KAXE through the summer. Although the hour-long program "What We're Reading" takes a summer hiatus, we are going to do 10-minute blurbs on children's books, just to keep up with all that good stuff.

I was excited to be a part of Grand Rapids' first Juneteenth celebration, but had to bow out due to an upcoming surgery. Amy Dettmer graciously agreed to take my place, and will be reading at the celebration, and has made herself available for the tables and chairs delivery. (Thank you, Amy!) In addition, we will have a bouncy house on library grounds, funded by the Grand Rapids Area Library Friends. For my part, I have chosen the book "The Year We Learned to Fly" by Jacqueline Woodson to put on our Storywalk. I hope our readers enjoy this story!

Happy Reading!