

Minutes for Monday, October 22, 2018

Grand Marais Public Library

Call to Order: 5:35 PM at the Grand Marais Library

Present: Jan Sivertson, John Books, Steve Harsin, Helen Muth, Judi Johnson, Jay Arrowsmith DeCoux, Gwen Danfelt, Hillary Freeman.

Absent:

Introductions of visitors

Duane Hasegawa- Friends of the Library

Consent Agenda

- October 22 Agenda
- Minutes from September 24, 2018, meeting – attached
- Bills submitted for payment on: 10/4, 10/5, 10/16 – attached

***Motion to Approve: Johnson, Second: Books, Passed Unanimously**

Director's Report – see attached

In addition:

-Wasp holes in exterior wall have been patched, gutter work is possible, but subject to weather, inside work is still awaiting final bids (Assistant Director office, Lactation space)

-Harsin reported working with Sundew Tech to find a resolution with the software that wipes the computer of personal information following each session. He feels confident this will be resolved in a timely manner. This is the final hurdle for installation of the new computers purchased last year.

-Harsin recommended to the Board that the Library participate in the “We’re Thankful for You! Fine/Fee Free Initiative” for the month of November as recommended by the Arrowhead Library System.

***Motion to engage in this event: Freeman, Second: Johnson. Passes Unanimously.**

-Harsin and St. John proposed *Socio-economic Diversity, Inter-Generational Diversity, and Latinx.*

Suggestions were made for *Homelessness/Affordable Housing/Poverty, Youth, Basic Living Needs, Latinx, and Immigrants/Immigration.*

Motion to set diversity priorities for 2019 to be *Basic Living Needs (including housing), Latinx, and Teens/Tweens.

-Harsin shared a potential partnership with “Lighthouse for the Blind” to create a few videos potentially including Grandpa Lyle reading to groups while using assistive devices. There was strong support for the idea and to use it as marketing for other storytimes and to preserve the legacy of Grandpa Lyle.

-Harsin mentioned that he is likely going to close the Library on Christmas Eve.

Friends of Library Liaison Report

-Next FOL Board meeting is next week. A few new people seeking board positions.

-FOL is working on archiving records/photos/etc with the Historical Society. Johnson suggested potentially an exhibit at Johnson’s Heritage Post.

Committee Reports

- Financial Committee: It will be confirmed whether or not the Library Financial Committee will be expected to make a budget presentation to the County Board.
- Policy Committee: No report. See New Business.
- Personnel Committee: No report. Need to meet regarding director review.

Unfinished Business

- Review Strategic Plan
 - Very good progress seen in the plan. Harsin and St. John have requested a more conservative strategic plan for 2019.
 - *Motion to commend outstanding work on the ambitious strategic plan by the staff of the Grand Marais Library. Motion: Freeman, Second: Johnson. Passes Unanimously.**
- Nominating Committee- Held until January when elections are due.

New Business

- Succession discussion – board self-governing:: Muth provided list of Board member responsibilities for consideration and discussion at November meeting. Proposal was made to revisit the presentation by City Administrator Mike Roth and County Administrator Jeff Cadwell. Muth proposed having Leonard Sobanja (former Library Board chairperson) come and tell the Board the story of the Library’s Joint Powers Agreement. Comment was made that this would be an ideal discussion for after the New Year when new board members have been seated.
 - *Motion to organize an educational presentation including Leonard Sobanja and Administrators Roth and Cadwell to educate board members of the history and current situation of the Joint Powers Agreement for the Library after the New Year, once new board members are seated. Motion: Arrowsmith DeCoux, Second: Danfelt, Books, Arrowsmith DeCoux, Johnson. Sivertson. Ayes: Freeman, Sivertson, Nays: Muth.**

Meeting adjournment 6:55pm

Attachments:

Minutes of September 24, 2018
 Bills of: 10/4, 10/5, 10/16
 Director’s report
 Strategic Plan Update
 September balance sheet

Next Library Board meeting is: November 26, 2018

Mission Statement: The Grand Marais Public Library increases knowledge, inspires creativity, removes barriers, and builds community across Cook County.

EXPLORE. LEARN. CREATE. CONNECT.

Director’s Report:

Director report, October 2018:

Staff meeting 10/16 to discuss action plan for 2019.

Talking about engaging Tom Knudson to assist with library technology work, including re-setting the Wi-Fi cloud key, installing the remaining public terminals.

I plan to attend a Lighthouse for the Blind meeting on Oct. 24, and the COMPASS meeting in Mt. Iron on Oct. 31.

MLA Conference – keynote speakers were outstanding. Thursday speaker, Dorothea Salo, presented “We, surveilled and afraid, in a world we never made,” a discussion of just how much surveillance we are under (hint: it’s a LOT worse than we think, or even than we fear) and what that means for us as libraries and staff, and little things we can do to make life better for our users. Also, an acknowledgement there is a power differential in play that makes it seemingly impossible for us to be a game changer for our users, ourselves, or anyone. What’s called for is regulation, and our leaders seem completely out of touch in regard to the threat; for the time being, the Library is in the role of attempting to provide a modicum of support for our users. The Friday speaker was Gina Millsap, Director of the Topeka (KS) Public Library. Her presentation was titled “Librarian evolution: Libraries thrive when we change.” Millsap spoke somewhat to the themes of Salo, but spent more time talking about meeting our patrons where they are. In her library that meant boosting the number of story times, boosting support for book-mobiles, and raising the profile of the library significantly to imprint on the minds of every Topeka citizen the value of the library and why they should use it more. (In regard to the latter, see the video presentation I sent out to everyone.)

Also, a valuable presentation by Ann Hokanson, whose presentation I have printed out for anyone who might care to review it (it’s worthwhile). She talked about library advocacy, and started with the premise that everyone thinks libraries are valuable, but may have different opinions on the level of support needed for a library. She mentioned a book “The Righteous Mind,” which we own in Grand Marais, as being a good starting point for forming a solid foundation from which to become strong advocates. That information has been shared. Besides the copy we own, there are 5 other copies of the book in ALS that could easily be obtained for anyone who might wish to read it.

I also attended the MALF (Minnesota Association of Library Friends) session where they gave their awards. Mike Schelmeske was recognized. His information is not yet posted on the MALF website. I learned of some interesting things other Friends groups around the state are doing, and forwarded that information to our Friends group in hopes they might find inspiration there.

Saint Paul Public Library has partnered with the State Law Library to provide 3 hours daily of law library services in their library branches. They are busy, and SPP patrons,

particularly those who cannot afford the services of an attorney, are finding the service to be valuable. Most common topic: Issues with a landlord. We've been contacted by the law library at the County – there may be room for some kind of cooperative effort here.

I attended a session on project management and how to achieve desired outcomes. This is a useful reminder and prompt for projects we are facing this winter. Also, in regard to those projects, I spoke with a woman from the TC who does space assessment. We have it in the strategic plan to hire someone for this service in regard to the remodeling projects, and I've asked her to follow up with me.

A session titled "Whole Person Librarianship" emphasized the role of library staff in working almost like social workers in the sense that we have to use soft skills to interact with a patron to understand what they truly seek, and also, at times, to manage challenging behaviors. Some larger libraries have even gone so far as to hire social workers to be on staff and tasked with dealing with issues of homelessness, mental illness, etc.

Also a session on issues of being a supervisor. Always good to get a brush-up. And a session on new, and free, tech tools that are available for us to use. (Interesting, after the keynote, these almost all were Google tools, which were noted to be heavy surveillance applications!) And a session by the State of Minnesota Dept. of Education about getting to library measures that matter – a move toward more measuring of outcomes vs the standard measuring of outputs that we do in regard to our library annual report. It's a challenging move. And a session on Library Advocacy about the importance of choosing your words wisely and well – our ability to express ourselves well about our work can have a positive effect in preventing misunderstandings.

There was a session about meeting our users where they are, meaning, using online tools to teach information literacy. In the digital world, we are being called upon to do more distance work with our users rather than face-to-face interactions. We are especially aware of this in regard to tech needs of our user base, and are exploring ways to do more basic tech instruction through our web interface. They presented a workbook that is many pages long, and that might be overkill, however, a copy has been retained for our reference since it may be useful as we move forward.

UMD is undertaking an initiative whereby they are using materials available via Creative Commons, making it accessible to their faculty, and encouraging them to pull the resources students need for their coursework from those shared resources. The library is then gathering the material together into a single file tied to the course that can be retrieved by as many students as need it, for as long as they need it, in lieu of using text books that cost money many students cannot afford. This is innovative and valuable, and many academic libraries are exploring initiatives along these lines. It may one day affect small public libraries, as well.

And of course, the most valuable part of the conference is often meeting the vendors. I made connections with several that might help us advance toward goals.