



The meeting was called to order in the History Room by Chair, Catherine Vesley at 5:30pm. **Members present:** Catherine Vesley; Patricia Sowada; Tricia Conway; Stephen Smith; Christopher Polley; and City Council Liaison, Connie Buesgens. **Also in attendance:** Renee Dougherty (Library Director), and Nick Olberding (Recording Secretary).

The **Minutes** of the **August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019** Board Meeting were **approved**.

**Bill Lists** dated **August 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019** were reviewed. Each was moved, seconded, and **approved**.

The **Accounting Sheet** was reviewed, and **approved**. Thus far at 56% spent in 67% of the year.

Questions and discussions based on Bills and Accounting:

- **Audiobooks:** Are these still popular? Yes, they are, especially for trips and commuting. There are waiting lists for these titles just as there are for print books, only shorter.
- **Overpayment Refund:** \$20 refunded to patron who paid off \$400 in Collection fees from lost items. Anoka County had adjusted the processing fee between the time her total was assessed and the bill was paid.

### Old Business:

- **Additional Information on Columbia Heights Library Cardholder Debt:** Columbia Heights has approximately 20,000 residents, and currently 12,534 registered library cards (10,191 adults & 2,343 juveniles)—44% have fines of 1¢ and up; 75% are adults (4,151) and 25% (1,389) are juveniles. 39% (2,174) of the 5,540 with fees are over the \$10 threshold, and are not eligible to check out material at this time.
  - Catherine cited a few articles she found recently:
    - Duluth Public Libraries eliminating their overdue fees in hopes that it will remove the roadblock that keeps patrons away, and alleviates some perceived disparity/inequality.
    - Op-Eds from each side of the Overdue Fees debate: One side argues that overdue fees unfairly affect minorities and low-income individuals. The other side argues that overdue fees are fair in that it's a patron's responsibility to return material on time, the individual's income-level and ethnicity are irrelevant.
  - Automatic Renewal used in some library systems can be a detriment. It is good for patrons because it can alleviate fines, but it can make it easier to forget they have the item; from the library's perspective it increases our uncertainty of whether the item is coming back (currently after 21 days an item is late, 30 days after that the system assumes it's lost; if items auto-renew 4 times, then it's up to 105 days before the item is considered late...at which point there is a greater chance the patron forgot and less chance of recovery).
  - Do overdue fees accrue interest? No.
  - Potential alternatives to alleviate patron debt:
    - Amnesty Month- time period for patrons to return items with no questions or penalty
    - More Read-Down opportunities
    - Volunteer your time to work off library fees (would require a background check)
    - Request and accept donations for the purpose of paying down debt for the less fortunate
- **Strategic Planning:** The planned Strategic Planning session scheduled for Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> has been **cancelled**; now the plan is to focus on the Strategic Plan at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting (October 2, 5:30pm), and continuing the planning the following Saturday (October 5, 11am-1pm).

- The Board members are encouraged to reach out to Renee to ask for data and information that will help in the strategic planning process.
- A copy of the previous Strategic Plan (2012-2016) will be sent out to members to review and build from.
- Homework for the next meeting for each member is to write up what they envision for a new Library Vision, Mission Statement, and 3-5 key objectives that the library should strive for.

#### **New Business:**

- N/A

#### **Items from the Floor:**

- **US Citizenship Course:** In partnership with the North Metro Adult Education Center, we are holding a 14-class citizenship course in the community room this fall. Students will register and test into the class via the Adult Education Center (4111 Central Ave NE). More information available at 763-706-3833. **Currently we have 12 people registered.**
- **Foundation Spaghetti Dinner:** Most of the Board is volunteering, and the event will take place next Wednesday.
- **Carolyn Porter "Author Talk":** Focused on her book "Marcel's Letters". It's based on her research of a WWII soldier's letters home from the war, which she discovered in a Stillwater antique shop.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made at 6:19pm by Patricia Sowada, and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas P. Olberding  
Recording Secretary, Library Board of Trustee