

MELSA ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Friday, March 12, 2021

9:00-11:00 am

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members present:

Anoka:	Colleen Haubner and Jacquie Kramer	Ramsey:	Karen Saltis
Carver:	Heidi Hoks	Saint Paul:	Catherine Penkert
Dakota:	Margaret Stone (arrived 9:35)	Scott:	Jake Grussing
Hennepin:	not present	Washington:	Amy Stenftenagel

Guests: Maggie Snow of Minitex; Rebecca Crooks-Stratton, Chris Georgacas and Grace Rose of Understanding Native MN

Staff Present: Sarah Hawkins, Kathleen James, Sally Lederer, Mona Scott and Scott Vrieze

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Hoks called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

II. **INTRODUCTIONS and WELCOME**

III. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Agenda

Vrieze noted that item IV.D., the Presentation on the Understanding Native MN Project, might need to be moved to later on the agenda since the guests from that organization were arriving around 10:00 a.m.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes (February 12, 2021)

Motion by Grussing to approve the Consent Agenda. Second by Saltis.

A roll call of the vote was called:

ACL – aye	CCL – aye	DCL – not present
HCL – not present	RCL – aye	SPL – aye
SCL – aye	WCL – aye	

Motion carried.

IV. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

A. Request for Phase Funds Distribution (WCL)

A request for distribution from Phase funds has been received from Washington County Library. With the recommendation of the Advisory Board, this request will be presented to the MELSA Board of Trustees for approval at the March 18th joint meeting.

Motion by Grussing, second by Saltis, to recommend that the MELSA Board of Trustees accept the Washington County Library's request for Phase funds in the amount of \$42,884.

A roll call of the vote was called:

ACL – aye	CCL – aye	DCL – not present
HCL – not present	RCL – aye	SPL – aye
SCL – aye	WCL – aye	

Motion carried.

B. Minitex Update

Maggie Snow provided an overview of Minitex's statewide initiative called "Big Conversations." She provided the Steering Committee list (below) and will provide additional information as soon as it's available. Vrieze asked how to get those upcoming statewide conversations to include the wider community beyond libraries, and Snow indicated that the Steering Committee would be addressing that important goal.

Big Conversations Steering Committee

Verena Getahun, State Library Services
Johnna Horton, PALS
Tami Lee, Ramsey County Library
Cassy Leepert, Bemidji State University Library
Michele Leininger, Marshall-Lyon County, Plum Creek Regional Library
Erica Ross, Mayo Clinic Libraries
Maggie Snow, Minitex
Margaret Stone, Dakota County Library
Sara Swenson, Edina High School
Sarah Villanueva, Thief River Falls Public Library
Jody Gray, University of Minnesota

Snow also noted that it's Minitex's 50th anniversary. There's digital swag available on their website, as well as stories highlighting the original 12 libraries. (Minitex stands for Minnesota InterLibrary Teletype Experiment.)

C. Legislative Advocacy Update

The Senate Education Committee was underway during this meeting.

The group described generally positive experiences meeting with legislators, pointing out the advantages to the virtual environment for legislative meetings and sharing the sense that some good relationships were being built for the future. Penkert noted that there are still some outdated views of the public library as “charming and dated,” indicating that it would help to get the legislators into today’s public libraries and, more broadly, to update the general branding to strengthen the narrative around the libraries as community centers with a key role in economic development and equity of resources.

Hawkins, who was keeping an eye on the Senate Ed Finance Meeting in progress, reported that the testimony for RLBSS (Liz Lynch) was going well, and a fifth author had been assigned to the bill. She also noted that there was good support on the House side for the Legacy bill, but it was a little more challenging on the Senate side.

D. DNR State Park passes update

Vrieze talked with a DNR contact who suggested that HCL, RCL and SPL would be qualified to apply for the current grant on offer. There isn’t an MOU drafted yet, but it will be generic and will need to be signed by a regional system, which is where MELSA would come in. Saltis noted that the White Bear Lake branch had been part of a park pass pilot program, and the passes were very popular. She added that RCL will likely select three of its locations with populations that meet the requirements.

E. Presentation on Understanding Native MN Project

Guest Rebecca Crooks-Stratton provided a PowerPoint presentation which emphasized that the Understanding Native MN campaign (UnderstandNativeMN.org) is focused on providing resources to teachers to emphasize contributions by Minnesota Native Americans (rather than focused on legislation). Though there are MN Education requirements to cover these contributions, in practice it doesn’t always happen. The larger goal is to change the narrative around Native Minnesotans.

Penkert noted that the libraries had Legacy money available and would be willing community partners. Stone suggested that MELSA set up listening sessions for library staff. Vrieze suggested identifying key library staff to get this going. Specific next steps to be determined, but everyone agreed that there was strong mutual interest in moving this forward.

Grussing thanked Crooks-Stratton and her colleagues Chris Georgacas and Grace Rose (who were in attendance and were enthusiastic about connecting with a designated library group and the wider audience of library staff generally) for their organization’s support in Scott County.

F. Round Table Sharing

The primary discussion topics were 1) if/when systems might return to regular hours and whether any procedures have changed with the governor's most recent orders; and 2) when library staff would be able to be vaccinated.

Penkert said that SPL has let up on greeters and is lengthening computer timeslots. They are finally getting some staff vaccinated, based on the argument that since Parks and Rec staff were already vaccinated, other public service staff should be as well.

Stenftenagel said that WCL will likely be back to regular hours by summer. They are also planning some outdoor programming at some branches for summer. Youth and Teen librarians have been vaccinated, and others are currently on standby.

Grussing noted that SCL is still offering curbside pick-up and will continue to do so. Some staff have been vaccinated.

There was also brief discussion of current quarantine times, with a current range of no quarantine to up to 72 hours, with a couple at 24 hours.

V. **REPORTS**

A. Executive Director and MELSA Staff Updates

There were a couple of questions about federal funding/Erate funding. Vrieze invited Scott to explain the application process. Though applications are at a system level, MELSA coordinates the process with a third party. The new Erate funding appears to have the same rules, but there may be a special application window specifically for this funding. Scott is monitoring the situation and will share any new information.

Vrieze reminded the group that there's a joint Trustee and Advisory Board Meeting next Thursday.

VI. **ADJOURN**

Stone adjourned the meeting at 11:01 am.