

# **Metropolitan Library Service Agency Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

Friday, May 12, 2023  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
10:00am-12:00pm

## **Advisory Board Members/Representatives Present:**

Anoka:	Colleen Haubner	Ramsey:	not present
Carver:	Jodi Edstrom	Saint Paul:	not present
Dakota:	Margaret Stone	Scott:	Jacob Grussing
Hennepin:	Johannah Genett, Amy McNally		
Washington:	Jacquie Kramer		

**Staff Present:** Abigail Dillon, Gina Goettl, Kathleen James, Mona Scott, and Scott Vrieze

## **I. Call to order**

Chair Grussing called the meeting to order at 10:02am.

## **II. Introductions and Public Comment**

## **III. Consent Agenda**

- a) Approval of agenda
- b) Approval of meeting minutes (April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

Motion to approve the agenda and meeting minutes by Stone. Second by McNally.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

## **IV. Discussion/Action Items**

- a) Legislative update

Vrieze shared that the \$4 million for public libraries was included in the education omnibus bill. The amount MELSA will be receiving out of the 4 million will be calculated by State Library Services, but it should be around one million dollars.

b) Discussion of Accessibility Group scope – reports from your systems

HCL would like to explore providing ASL translation for programs by consulting with the ASL community, as well as providing services for those with hearing loss and consulting with that community.

SPPL had shared via email that accessibility is a part of their strategic plan, and they are not interested in participating on a MELSA level.

ACL is interested in exploring accessibility in general, including training for staff and making their programs more inclusive.

WCL would like to focus on facilities needs, which could take the form of auditing their spaces. They would also like to hear from the other systems to hear about what they're doing in the area of accessibility.

DCL is also looking at facilities needs and is waiting for results of a recent accessibility audit.

CCL would also like to audit their spaces for accessibility.

SCL is primarily concerned about their spaces as well. They also have recently started an accessibility team. Grussing likes the idea of an accessibility interest group.

Stone suggested sharing results of space audits with the other systems at MELSA.

Vrieze suggested that State Library Services could be helpful around looking for funding for program accessibility (such as ASL interpretation).

Several directors brought up that they would like to explore accessibility at the director level and let the systems' needs drive the discussion, rather than delegating that area to a task force. The concept of accessibility involves too many areas for a task force. Stone suggested that all interest groups could include accessibility as a goal, because this issue touches so many areas.

Grussing requested the discussion continue at the next Advisory Board meeting to decide what to do with the accessibility task force, and review website traffic statistics.

c) Consideration of requests for Phase Funds (Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey)

Requests for distribution of Phase Funds have been received from Anoka, Dakota Hennepin, and Ramsey County libraries. With the recommendation of the Advisory Board, these requests for funds will be presented for approval at the May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting. The letters describing the proposed expenditures and the corresponding amounts from the requesting libraries were distributed in the meeting packet.

Motion to recommend that the MELSA Board of Trustees approves the requests for distribution of Phase Funds to four library systems in the amounts outlined below.

Anoka County Library	\$11,400.14
Dakota County Library	\$55,175
Hennepin County Library	\$30,000
Ramsey County Library	\$25,000

Motion by Edstrom. Second by Kramer.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

d) Options on how to structure and deliver direct payments to library systems

Vrieze would like to discuss the formula payment and Phase Funds to see if we need to do things differently. Most of the directors said that the current process is working well, and they have been able to spend these funds the way they want to. The name Phase Funds could be changed to something like the Innovation Fund. A few of the directors expressed a preference for more flexibility with the Phase Funds and possibly changing the name. Stone suggested looking at the formula/Phase Funds and the possibility of adjusting the formula. It was also raised that formula and Phase Funds could be combined into one fund. They are separate bank accounts and are recorded separately on the MELSA books. Formula funds are automatic, and the systems must apply for Phase Funds. For historical information, back in 2017 the same discussion occurred, and all the directors liked the idea of keeping these funds separate and they liked being able to apply for additional funds through the Phase Fund. A small group (including Grussing, Stone, Haubner, Genett, and Scott) will continue their work on the policy document and present it to the Advisory Board for the June meeting.

e) Options for potential new expenditures based on additional RLBSS funding

Given the uncertainty about the fate of our legislation, we would like to get your informal feedback on options that have been suggested thus far, and to add any additional ideas/thoughts the group might have about priorities. For context and the purposes of this discussion, think about what we might do with an additional \$300,000 - \$1,000,000 in MELSA's operating budget.

Potential options include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Purchase of Discovery tool for all library systems (Bibliocommons?)
- Commitment to increased MELSA expenditures for OverDrive e-content

- Streaming Video subscription (Kanopy, etc...)
- Setting aside money for Innovation Fund to incentivize new projects in metro libraries
- Additional funds for Formula and/or Phase distributions
- Others?

And these are in NO order of priority, and each would also need additional development and analysis. This is just a starting point of discussion and is not ready to go to the trustees yet.

HCL prefers spending money on subscription services (databases, OverDrive content, etc). Grussing would like to dedicate time at the June Advisory board meeting to discuss this in more detail and to come up with a specific plan.

It was decided that the Advisory Board meeting for June would be moved to June 16<sup>th</sup> so more of the directors could attend.

## **V. Reports**

Executive Director/Staff Reports

Motion to adjourn meeting at 12:04pm by McNally. Second by Stone.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.