Metropolitan Library Service Agency
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 13, 2023
Centennial Library, Circle Pines
10am – 12pm

Advisory Board Members/Representatives Present:
Anoka: Colleen Haubner        Ramsey: not present
Carver: Jodi Edstrom          Saint Paul: Maureen Hartman
Dakota: Margaret Stone        Scott: Jen Schultz
Hennepin: Scott Duimstra      Washington: Jacquie Kramer

Staff Present: Abigail Dillon (virtual), Gina Goettl, Kathleen James, Mona Scott, and Scott Vrieze

I. Call to order

Chair Schultz called the meeting to order at 10:06am.

II. Introductions and Public Comment

Scott Duimstra is the new director of Hennepin County Library.

III. Consent Agenda

a) Approval of agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Haubner. 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 - aye

Motion carried.

b) Approval of meeting minutes (September 8th, 2023)

Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Haubner. Second by Stone.

All in favor signified by saying aye.
ACL - aye    HCL - aye    SCL – aye
CCL - aye    RCL - not present    WCL – aye
IV. Discussion/Action Items

a) MELSA budget for library staff training

Professional development allocation to systems: each system currently receives an annual allocation of $11,000 for a total of $88,000. A proposed professional development allocation was distributed in the meeting packet, which would increase the budget to $150,000 and would be a weighted distribution.

There is a separate technology training budget, and a few directors expressed an interest in adding this budget to the professional development allocation so there are less requirements regarding the type of training.

Motion to use the professional development allocation formula as presented in the meeting packet to allocate training funds and include tech training funds in the professional development allotment. Motion by Stone. Second by Haubner.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Regionally coordinated library staff training: current 2024 budget is $25,000. Several systems have expressed interest in a second round of ToP training in early 2024. Unless this is paid from systems’ allocations, this budget will need an increase of $20,000-$25,000. Most directors did not support increasing the training budget for 2024. The budget could be adjusted later in the year to accommodate new training opportunities by transferring money from the fund balance. Haubner mentioned that it might be helpful to increase the budget for this next year because regional training is valuable, and she is interested in seeing the additional training opportunities that MELSA staff are able to find.

Motion to increase the regional training budget by $20,000 for 2024 by Stone. Second by Haubner.

All in favor signified by saying aye.
DCL - aye SPL - nay
Motion carried.

b) Innovation/new projects fund discussion

i) “Proof of concept” ideas and collaboration

This piece builds on Commissioner Udermann’s thoughts on leading with “proof of concept” projects, which may or may not be adopted by others. As Maureen Hartman indicated, this approach “could be a new way of thinking about collaboration that’s different from ‘one size fits all.’ If others are intrigued, maybe we talk about how that might work.”

ii) Library basics/operations vs. innovation – purpose of funds

This discussion also builds on the discussion at the Trustee meeting on October 9th. What is the purpose of the additional funds that we have been discussing? How do we define standards elements that all libraries should share, and how can MELSA funds and activities support that?

Some discussed that a binary choice between “the basics/operations” vs. innovation is a false dichotomy, and that some of our most innovative work comes through the basics. Some directors suggested that instead of using the word innovation, it would a project-based and/or support fund. “Expanded services” was another phrase that was presented – this is a flexible phrase that could mean many different things. There is also some pressure because of the additional dollars from the legislature and wanting to show how we are spending this additional money. Another name proposed was a service project fund. Accessibility is a major need and money could be used from this fund for that purpose.

c) MLA Conference sharing

Many of the directors attended MLA and they enjoyed the breakout groups and the keynote speakers. There were some interesting sessions on book banning that were useful. The directors round table was very successful and they are planning on continuing this opportunity in the future.

d) Round table sharing

Hartman would like to have a discussion at the next meeting about Books Unbanned.

ACL is just launching an engagement platform called Patron Point. She would like to see more communication between the systems about topics like this.
CCL has a new Chaska branch manager.
WCL may be looking at a new ILS.
DCL is restarting their strategic plan and will be putting out an RFP for the community engagement portion.

V. Reports

a) Executive Director/Staff Reports

b) Program review updates

Schultz adjourned the meeting at 12:06pm.