

Metropolitan Library Service Agency Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 7, 2025
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
10:00am-12:00pm

Advisory Board Members/Representatives Present:

Anoka:	Colleen Haubner	Ramsey:	Pang Yang
Carver:	Jodi Edstrom	Saint Paul:	Maureen Hartman
Dakota:	Margaret Stone	Scott:	Jen Schultz
Hennepin:	Scott Duimstra	Washington:	Jacque Kramer

Staff Present: Abigail Dillon, Gina Goettl, Kathleen James, Mona Scott, and Sherry Wichitchu

I. Call to order

Chair Edstrom called the meeting to order at 10:01am.

II. Introductions and Welcome

III. Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of agenda
- b) Approval of meeting minutes (February 14, 2025)

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

Roll call vote:

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

Motion carried.

IV. Discussion/Action Items

- a) Support for Fund Balance assignments

Haubner entered the meeting at 10:04am.

There is an upcoming Finance Committee meeting later in March, and discussion is needed regarding whether there is support from the Advisory Board on three

areas: ongoing programs, collaborative initiatives, and an increase in assignment for contingencies.

Ongoing programs:

OverDrive: We have been able to include \$300,000 from the fund balance for additional OverDrive content the last several years, released twice a year, half in March and half in September after approval by the Advisory Board. Last year, there was a discussion about the shared OverDrive collection at the February Advisory Board meeting that included a request for additional funding and was approved by the Advisory Board, then sent to the Finance Committee.

For consideration: Does the Advisory Board want to continue to add an additional \$300,000 of funding for the OverDrive collection? If so, do we want to continue the practice of approving two releases of funding throughout the year or have it released in one sum?

Motion to recommend assigning an additional \$300,000 for additional content for the e-book/audiobook shared collections, to be released in March, and the funds will be spread out over the rest of 2025. Motion by Stone. Second by Hartman.

Roll call vote:

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

Motion carried.

Collaborative initiatives:

The following summary was drafted for the March Finance Committee meeting: Due to past uncertainty about RLBSS funding, especially the volatility of the equalization component of the RLBSS formula, MELSA has assigned a portion of the fund balance as an “RLBSS stabilization fund” to cushion the library systems against funding decreases that began in 2016. When the legislature passed the RLBSS increase in 2023, this risk was reduced and the MELSA Board of Trustees approved reassignment of some of these funds in March 2024 to increase a prior collaborative spending assignment that originated during the planning process for the 2022-2025 strategic plan. Discussions to identify an impactful collaborative initiative were tabled in 2024 until a new executive director was hired.

Beginning in January 2025, the MELSA Advisory Board has had several discussions about joint purchases and projects that would offer benefit to all systems and meet shared patron needs. Suggestions have included a regional purchase of a discovery tool/catalog, an electronic resource, furniture and equipment that expands accessibility

options and improves youth spaces, additional training for library staff, and an increase to the Equity portion of the LSAF. Opportunities for broadening community partnerships, aligning with state legislative priorities such as broadband access, and addressing the response to opioid use at libraries were also briefly discussed. Additional discussion is needed by the Advisory Board to determine the collaborative initiative(s) that achieves MELSA's and systems' strategic goals, provides the most value for our investment, and best illustrates tangible outcomes from the increased state funding for libraries.

Motion to recommend renewal of the fund balance assignment for a collaborative initiative. This initiative will be developed by the Advisory Board and MELSA staff to address a goal common to the MELSA library systems, with flexibility for implementing the initiative based on local system or community needs. This initiative may require a multi-year commitment of funds, and progress updates are planned for upcoming joint board meetings. Motion by Kramer. Second by Haubner.

Roll call vote:

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

Motion carried.

Contingencies:

The following summary was drafted for the March Finance Committee meeting: Due to recent federal government developments regarding the possibility of funding freezes and government departments being positioned for dissolution, MELSA staff believes that it is prudent to have a contingency fund that is higher than our standard budgeted number. This would be re-evaluated in the 3rd quarter of 2025.

Motion to support an increase to the MELSA fund balance assignment for contingencies with available funds until the impacts of potential federal funding reductions for member library systems, and other library organizations providing resources and services to MELSA and the library systems, are known. Motion by Stone. Second by Kramer.

Roll call vote:

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

Motion carried.

b) Discussion on E-rate and hotspots

Hartman has been looking into E-rate issues, especially after the presentation by State Library Services, which mentioned that there is possible legislation for E-rate funding to be removed and a current bill in the House and Senate that would remove hotspots from the E-rate program. Wichitchu's impression from her visit to Washington DC is that the hotspot bill is likely to pass if it comes up for a vote. It doesn't appear to be high on the list of priorities, so it is difficult to know if this bill will be coming up for a vote in the near future. It may be necessary in the future for the Advisory Board to come together and draft a letter about how E-rate has benefited our systems and what would happen if hotspot and total E-rate funding ceased. Wichitchu requested that the Advisory Board send her their views on this subject to put together a letter from MELSA. Wichitchu will keep the group updated and will provide an update in her director's report to the Governing Board so they are aware of this issue.

- c) Round table sharing
 - (i) Responding to federal law enforcement

Duimstra entered the meeting at 10:54am.

SPPL - the city gave guidance to department directors including that federal law enforcement cannot come into the staff room. Staff do not have to answer questions and will refer them to the library director or deputy director.

DCL – documentation was distributed to library staff. Law enforcement needs a warrant to see personal data and is not allowed in staff areas.

This is an existing policy and no changes were made.

HCL – They are keeping their existing policy, which is similar to DCL. ACL is in a similar situation; they have reiterated their existing policy to staff.

RCL's policy is similar to DCL and HCL. Similar to other systems, all communication around this topic needs to go through the county attorney first.

ALA has an upcoming webinar on this topic on March 18th, and the link was distributed in the meeting chat.

Duimstra will send more information about the recent supervisor training they had at HCL. The training involved handling criticism or abuse from staff and the importance of self-care in these situations. DCL shared their debrief process, and SPPL shared their after-action review process. SPPL has had some success with Dispute Resolution Center.

V. Reports

- a) E-resources Team request for craft & hobby – tabled until the May meeting

b) MELSA Legacy Community Connections Fund update

The proposed summer schedule for The Rex & Mr. Fox Show was distributed in the meeting packet. In addition to these events, story walks are also planned. Promotion will take place primarily at system level, and a QR code will be used on system websites and signage for program evaluation.

c) E-collection Task Force update

The task force met with Wichitchu several times to discuss the expectations of the Collection Development Team. They would like to draft a team charter. They have a task force meeting to discuss next week which Dillon will join, and then the task force will meet with the Collection Development Team. Once they meet with the team, the task force will bring their updates to the Advisory Board.

d) Collection Development Team report

Old holds revisited:

To follow up on Advisory Board's request for a communication plan for deleting holds older than 4 years, the Collection Development discussed several options, including putting up a banner on OverDrive for a month prior to the deletion. However, all the libraries felt that a broad announcement of this shift won't make sense to most folks and might cause confusion. It also could be poor press to announce that we have holds that old, especially when we are struggling with long waitlists. Additionally, our contact at OverDrive has done this service for other libraries who haven't made broad announcements to their patron base, and he has not heard any negative responses back.

The Collection Development Team all felt that it would be better to have talking points prepared to share with all frontline staff to answer questions that may come up. The team voted to have OverDrive remove holds older than 4 years on a quarterly basis from now through December 2025. In January 2026, the team will evaluate if this practice should cease or continue, with or without modification to either removal interval or age of holds being deleted. In order to communicate effectively with patrons regarding the deletion of old holds, the Collection Development Team will put together talking points for frontline staff to answer questions patrons have after the deletion of holds. The team voted unanimously to approve this proposal.

Motion to follow the new proposal from the Collection Development Team by Duimstra. Second by Haubner.

Roll call vote:

ACL - aye

HCL - aye

SCL - aye

CCL - aye

RCL - aye

WCL - aye

DCL - aye

SPL - aye

Motion carried.

e) CRPLSA meeting planning

The Advisory Board will meet with CRPLSA for the April meeting (April 4th). The original speaker about rural library issues is unavailable. Hartman recommended Tommi Laitio as a possibility to speak virtually. He is a specialist in public spaces and has talked about the role of public libraries in public spaces and developing the tolerance to friction that comes up when spaces are shared. Another option could be someone on the library conference circuit, perhaps someone outside of Minnesota that people haven't heard from before. Another helpful topic would be about how to build our skills around advocacy, the purpose of libraries, and the common fights that librarians are faced with. Stone suggested the state demographer, Susan Brower. She might have some helpful data to share with the group. Duimstra suggested John Chrastka as a speaker to discuss how to work with legislators and how to develop advocacy skills.

Edstrom adjourned the meeting at 11:54am.