

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

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Rondo Library

461 N Dale St, St Paul, MN

11:30am-1:30pm

## **Trustee Members Present:**

Anoka:	Julie Jeppson	Ramsey:	not present
Carver:	Matt Udermann	Saint Paul:	Beth Burns
Dakota:	not present	Scott:	Jody Brennan
Hennepin:	not present	Washington:	Michelle Clasen

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

Anoka:	Colleen Haubner	Ramsey:	Pang Yang
Carver:	Jodi Edstrom	Saint Paul:	Maureen Hartman
Dakota:	Margaret Stone	Scott:	not present
Hennepin:	Scott Duimstra	Washington:	Jacquie Kramer

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

## **I. Call to order**

Chair Jeppson called the meeting to order at 11:33am.

## **II. Public Comment**

## **III. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda by Burns. Second by Clasen.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

## **IV. Consent Agenda**

- a) Approval of meeting minutes from May 15, 2025
- b) Approval of checks and financials

Motion to approve the meeting minutes and checks & financials by Udermann. Second by Clasen.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

## **V. Discussion/Action Items**

### **a) Finance Committee recommendations**

#### **(i) Approval of proposed preliminary 2026 budget**

The Finance Committee met on June 5<sup>th</sup>. MELSA staff highlighted some of the anticipated changes in revenues and expenses for the preliminary 2026 budget and the placeholders used until more information is received. Committee members asked several follow-up questions relating to the anticipated decrease in the Legacy grant and impact on the library systems, potential enhancements, costs and overall support for the smARTpass program, and the use of undesignated funds for possible staffing changes in 2026.

Wichitchu explained that MELSA’s FY2026 Legacy grant has not been confirmed yet. Options for the smARTpass program were discussed at the Advisory Board meeting and the directors voted to keep the program at its current level and re-evaluate it over the next year. The 2026 budget line for smARTpass has decreased due to this outcome. Wichitchu also explained that funds were added for flexibility with staff positions, given two retirements in 2025 and the upcoming strategic planning process.

Motion to approve the 2026 preliminary budget as reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee. Motion by Burns. Second by Jeppson.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

#### **(ii) Approval of additional year with current auditing firm**

In 2024, the Finance Committee recommended that MELSA consider a possible RFP process for auditing services in 2025. For the discussion, a history of past RFPs and auditor costs was provided to Committee members along with a possible timeline for a 2025 RFP process. Burns proposed that with upcoming staffing and board treasurer changes at the end of 2025, continuity of service may be preferred in 2026, assuming overall satisfaction with the current auditors. Committee members supported this suggestion.

Motion to support the Finance Committee recommendation to continue with the current auditor for the 2025 audit by Udermann. Second by Jeppson.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

(iii) Approval of Advisory Board recommendation regarding LSAF formula and 2% allocation

Burns provided a brief background on the 2024 Board of Trustees approval of the LSAF and new formula factors, and the decision to reserve 2% off the top of the \$2 million budgeted for library systems for review and allocation annually by the Trustees. In 2024, the \$40,000 was allocated to Ramsey County Library to assist with transition to the new LSAF formula.

At the Finance Committee meeting, the original intent of the formula changes and annual evaluation of the 2% were discussed, including examples of determining factors. Sustainability of continuing to maintain Ramsey County Library's allocation when compared to 2023 calculations under the prior formula was also considered. No consensus for allocating the \$40,000 was achieved. Committee members expressed interest in receiving Advisory Board input on the 2% allocation and if the new LSAF program was meeting goals as originally intended.

At the June 6<sup>th</sup> Advisory Board meeting, the Directors discussed the 2% of LSAF and voted to recommend that Ramsey County Library receive 1% for an additional year of transition. The remaining 1% would be split among all eight systems. Library Directors expressed support for the process used to develop the new formula and that it generally reflects a more equitable distribution of funding.

Motion to approve the Advisory Board recommendation to distribute 1% for the \$2 million budgeted for LSAF allocations to the library systems to Ramsey County Library in 2025. The remaining 1% will be distributed to the eight systems through the formula. Motion by Burns. Second by Jeppson.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

b) Approval of FY2026 Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) application

Each June 30, regional public library systems are required to submit an application for Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) funds for the next fiscal year. Amounts provided by counties/cities for operations/library services in 2024 are included in the application narrative.

In completing the budget component of the application, MELSA is using the FY2026 RLBSS revenue calculations received March 1, 2025. The numbers in this budget form are requested and presented for state FY2026, July 1, 2025—June 30, 2026. Since MELSA’s budget year is a calendar year, approximately half of each of the 2025 and preliminary 2026 budgets are used, excluding RLTA, Legacy, and most fund balance assignments. As a result, the estimated RLBSS application budget does not directly match either the 2025 or 2026 MELSA budgets.

Motion to approve the submission of the FY2026 application for Regional Library Basic System Support to State Library Services of the Minnesota Department of Education. Motion by Burns. Second by Brennan.

Brennan and Udermann expressed concerns with language in the RLBSS application narrative, suggesting that the inclusion of Equity language may have funding implications. Other trustees voiced support for the language as representing the foundational work of libraries. Wichitchu explained that the language used directly reflects the MELSA strategic plan, and budget expenditures must be justified against the current Strategic Plan for RLBSS. Further discussion will be possible during the upcoming strategic planning process.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

## **VI. Reports**

### **a) Advisory Board update**

The Advisory Board update was distributed in the meeting packet.

Topics covered in the last meeting include Legacy Fund cuts, smARTpass, the LSAF 2% allocation, and further brainstorming on the collaborative initiative project. For this project, the directors would like to mainly focus on literacy/lifelong learning, and possibly developing community connections, with a small focus on communications to bring awareness to this project.

### **b) Executive Director update**

MLA provided a legislative update this morning on the state budget, and there is a slight cut to Legacy funding, but the RLBSS inflationary increase has been retained at this time.

There is a statewide Read-In event planned for the fall for the community to come together and read and raise awareness of libraries of all kinds and the value they hold to the community.

CRPLSA is working on possible state library standards, and they are preparing a survey to be distributed to libraries surrounding the effect of state standards.

Jeppson adjourned the meeting at 12:12pm.