

Metropolitan Library Service Agency Joint Trustee Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 26, 2024
Maplewood Library
3052 Southlawn Drive, Maplewood, MN
11:30am-1:30pm

Trustee Members Present:

Anoka:	Julie Jeppson (virtual)	Ramsey:	Victoria Reinhardt
Carver:	Matt Udermann	Saint Paul:	Beth Burns
Dakota:	Laurie Halverson	Scott:	Jody Brennan (virtual)
Hennepin:	Debbie Goettel	Washington:	Karla Bigham

Advisory Board Members/Representatives Present:

Anoka:	Colleen Haubner	Ramsey:	
Carver:	Jodi Edstrom	Saint Paul:	
Dakota:	Margaret Stone	Scott:	Jen Schultz (virtual)
Hennepin:	Scott Duimstra	Washington:	Jacquie Kramer

Staff Present: Abigail Dillon, Gina Goetl, Kathleen James, Susan Marschalk, and Mona Scott

I. Call to order

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

II. Introductions and Public Comment

III. Approval of Agenda

Add a round table at the end of the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda by Bigham. Second by Udermann.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

IV. Introduction of Sherry Anderson Wichitchu, new Executive Director of MELSA

V. Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of meeting minutes (June 20 and August 14, 2024)
- b) Approval of June, July, August disbursements and financial statements

Motion to approve meeting minutes and June/July/August disbursements and financial statements. Motion by Reinhardt. Second by Bigham.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

VI. Discussion/Action Items

- a) Approval of Sherry Anderson Wichitchu as a check and contract signer

The new Executive Director, Sherry Wichitchu, will be added as a check signer for the U.S. Bank checking account, with access to the 4M Fund accounts, beginning October 7.

In addition, Wichitchu will assume financial responsibility for signing contracts and approving purchase requests as submitted by MELSA staff. (All purchases over \$1,000 require prior approval.)

Motion to designate Sherry Wichitchu, MELSA Executive Director, with the authority to sign checks and contracts and to approve purchases as submitted by staff. Motion by Burns. Second by Udermann.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

- b) Approval of the FY2024 RLBSS report on results and expenditures

Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) is MELSA’s primary source of revenue through a state program designed to provide support for public libraries and a base of equitable access to library services through the regional library system structure. MELSA expended approximately \$6,265,588 in the state fiscal year 2024 with funding from this program.

The narrative portion of this report provides an overview of some of the activities

performed by MELSA using RLBSS support funds from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. New RLBSS revenue allowed for increases in these budget areas, as requested by the library systems: the shared e-collection, funding to support library operations, library staff training, and youth services programming, among others. The expenditure report documents payments made by MELSA for RLBSS-related activities.

Motion to approve the submission of the FY2024 RLBSS report of results to State Library Services. Motion by Bigham. Second by Udermann.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

c) Approval of the FY2024 RLTA final report

The FY2024 Regional Library Telecommunications Aid (RLTA) report was distributed in the meeting packet. This report includes Priority One—internet access and data transmission costs, and Priority Two, funding to be used for E-rate eligible equipment and/or the “improvement of internet access and access to technology with items that are not e-rated, including, but not limited to, digital or online resources.”

In FY2024, the total Priority One RLTA request for reimbursement is \$159,985.04. Priority One funds are earned and distributed based on the balance of costs not reimbursed by E rate, the federal telecommunications aid program. Priority Two allocations to the regional systems are calculated with a formula using population, relative broadband access, and relative poverty. MELSA received \$316,182.43 which was distributed to the member systems using a formula with base and population factors. Details of Priority Two expenditures by the systems are included in the report.

With information received from the member library systems MELSA submitted the report to State Library Services by the September 15, 2024 deadline. Once the MELSA Board of Trustees approves the report, the signature page will be submitted again to SLS with the Board President’s signature. Reimbursement checks will be distributed to the member library systems after the final payment is received from SLS in October.

Motion to approve the submission of the FY2024 RLTA final report to State Library Services. Motion by Reinhardt. Second by Udermann.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

DCL - aye SPL - aye
Motion carried.

d) Approval of the FY2025 RLTA application

The FY2025 RLTA application for the period covering July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 was distributed in the meeting packet. MELSA will submit this application to meet the October 21, 2024 deadline, and approval from the MELSA Board of Trustees is needed to complete the application process.

Motion to approve submission of the FY2024 RLTA Priority 1 application to State Library Services. Motion by Reinhardt. Second by Bigham.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

e) Finance Committee report

(i) MELSA budget overview

The Overview of the MELSA Budget Process document was reviewed by the Finance Committee, distributed in the meeting packet, and was presented at this meeting by Beth Burns, Treasurer. The money in the MELSA budget falls into three categories: money MELSA uses to run MELSA and cooperative programs, money for collective resources such as OverDrive and other e-resources, and money distributed directly to the member libraries.

Goettel entered the meeting at 11:51 am.

(ii) Proposed CY2024 budget adjustments

The Committee reviewed proposed adjustments to the 2024 MELSA budget and recommends the adjusted budget to the Board of Trustees for approval with two modifications: increase E-rate consulting line by \$2,500 for additional E-rate applications for library systems as a result of new hotspots eligibility and increase Consulting line in budget by \$20,000 for interim executive director Sept-Oct, including onboarding for new executive director. The Committee also recommends an approval for up to an additional \$3,000 for the contract with the consulting firm managing the executive director search process.

Motion to approve the 2024 budget adjustments as presented at the 9/26/24 board meeting. Motion by Goettel. Second by Bigham.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

ACL - aye	HCL - aye	SCL – aye
CCL - aye	RCL - aye	WCL – aye
DCL - aye	SPL - aye	

Motion carried.

Motion to approve an up to \$3,000 increase in the contract for the executive director search process, no budget adjustment necessary. Motion by Bigham. Second by Reinhardt.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

ACL - aye	HCL - aye	SCL – aye
CCL - aye	RCL - aye	WCL – aye
DCL - aye	SPL - aye	

Motion carried.

(iii) MMKR one-year extension and quote

Committee members discussed and supported a suggestion for a one-year extension for MMKR services for the 2024 audit, especially with a new MELSA executive director starting in fall 2024, assuming the pricing was reasonable. An RFP process may be discussed in 2025. MELSA staff shared the quote received from MMKR of \$23,900. This is an increase from a cost of \$22,750 paid for the 2023 audit and reflects additional work for the new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements for leases and Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs) and overall market rates.

Motion to approve that MELSA contract with MMKR for the 2024 audit at the quoted price of \$23,900. Motion by Bigham. Second by Goettel.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

ACL - aye	HCL - aye	SCL – aye
CCL - aye	RCL - aye	WCL – aye
DCL - aye	SPL - aye	

Motion carried.

f) Personnel Committee report

Since the Executive Director has been hired, the Transition Committee will be dissolving, and the Personnel Committee can focus on other personnel issues such as onboarding the new director and an office space assessment.

- g) Acquisition of ConsumerReports.org for MELSA electronic resources collection

The regional e-resources collection does not include a consumer resource. What is available, either locally or through Minitex, is frequently unable to address customer needs as reported by library reference staff.

Member library reference staff have had trial access since mid-April. Staff have highly endorsed CR.org as the best option to meet user information requests.

There is \$130,000 available in the Electronic Resources budget for new acquisitions. ConsumerReports.org is a third-party resource available through EBSCO. Because we are bringing all eight systems into the subscription we receive a 50% discount on individual subscription pricing. They also guarantee not to exceed 3% increase for renewal years 2 & 3. They have seen 5 to 7% increases in the last few years.

SYSTEM PRICING YEAR 1	
Anoka	\$15,837
Carver	\$7,386
Dakota	\$26,399
Hennepin	\$38,142
Ramsey	\$12,316
Saint Paul	\$15,837
Scott	\$7,386
Washington	\$12,316
1-year Total	\$135,619

Regional Pricing	
Year 1	\$67,810
Year 2	\$69,844
Year 3	\$71,940
3-year Total	\$209,594

Jeppson and Brennan left the meeting at 12:15pm.

Motion to approve the acquisition of ConsumerReports.org for the MELSA electronic resources collection by Reinhardt. Second by Burns.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

- h) Distribution of Library System Allocations Fund (LSAF) to member libraries

Earlier in 2024, the Board of Trustees approved significant changes with the funding MELSA provides to member systems to support library operations and technology, previously referred to as Formula and Phase funding.

In March, Trustees approved a new formula for the \$1.5 million allocated to the Formula program with these factors: the Operations portion of the funding, \$1.225 million, is calculated at 70% base and 30% population, and the Equity portion, \$245,000, is calculated at 50% base and 50% Poverty (population below the federal poverty level). The Equity portion is intended to “provide funds for member library systems with the goal of identifying and removing barriers to library services informed through connections with communities who have experienced historical marginalization.” Developed by the Advisory Board, the formula was refined by the Finance Committee to include 2% from the total reserved for annual assignment by the Governing Board. In 2024, the 2% is allocated to Ramsey County Library.

In June, Trustees approved an Advisory Board recommendation to combine the \$500,000 in budgeted Phase funding and \$1.5 million in Formula funds into one annual allocation renamed Library Systems Allocations Fund (LSAF). The new formula factors (and 2% reserve of the total) will apply to the combined allocations. There are no request or usage requirements for the Operations portion of the LSAF and restrictions for prior Phase balances have been eliminated. A procedure for requesting the Equity portion of the LSAF will be developed for the purpose of sharing uses and outcomes of the funding with other systems. In addition, Trustees approved \$38,745 from the fund balance to hold three systems harmless on a one-time basis for the impact of the Phase component of the combined allocations.

Motion to approve the release of the 2024 Library Systems Allocation Fund as distributed in the meeting packet. Motion by Bigham. Second by Reinhardt.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

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

Motion carried.

i) Equity Fund guidelines

A subcommittee of the Advisory Board developed criteria for qualifying projects, services and programs to be funded through the equity portion of the LSAF. A draft document of these guidelines for the use of the Equity funds was approved by the Advisory board in February 2024 and included in the meeting packet for the Trustees’ consideration and approval.

Motion to approve the MELSA Regional Equity Fund guidelines by Burns. Second by Reinhardt.

All in favor signified by saying aye.

ACL – not present HCL - aye SCL – not present

CCL - aye RCL - aye WCL – aye

DCL - aye SPL - aye

Motion carried.

Bigham left the meeting at 12:22pm.

j) Advisory Board report

Haubner provided the Advisory Board report, covering the last board meeting. The new accessibility standards were discussed, and the directors are working with their IT providers to address these standards, as well as the MELSA Tech Team. The MLA conference is coming up at the end of October (October 24 and 25) and some of the directors will be attending. Haubner invited the Board of Trustees to attend. Edstrom will send the details to the Board of Trustees. The Advisory Board plans to bring in guests to their meetings, such as representatives from Minitex and State Library Services. They had the MLA lobbyist visit their meeting during the summer. OverDrive completed a recent diversity audit of the MELSA collection.

There was discussion about the digital media lawsuit, and the high cost of digital materials for libraries (and lack of ownership over these titles). Library directors mentioned this is a federal-level issue. The American Library Association advocacy division has been very involved on a legislative level. The Advisory Board will continue to update the Board of Trustees about this issue. Burns will coordinate with Sally Lederer, MELSA Communications Manager, about working with the Minnesota Star Tribute literary critic on creating a feature to inform readers about the issues with digital media access and cost.

VII. Reports

a) Executive Director Report

The executive director report was distributed in the meeting packet. This is Susan Marschalk's last Board of Trustees meeting as interim director.

b) Round table sharing

The Friends of the SPPL is having their fundraising event, Opus & Olives, on October 13th.

HCL has started a new literacy initiative called Let's Read this year, which includes a reading assessment and tutoring. Goettel shared about a senior citizen who was grateful for the added service that HCL offers of mailing library materials to people who are homebound.

WCL is almost ready to roll out their first extended access site.

Ramsey County's service centers have changed over time due to COVID – many of the service centers are either in the library buildings or in public spaces such as the Maplewood Mall.

Next year's MELSA board schedule will go back to the approximately every other month schedule and will be discussed at the October meeting.

CCL is also introducing extended access to one of their branches in 2025. They will be launching a new program to provide virtual library cards to students in their county.

ACL is looking at getting a new catalog interface. They will also be doing a remodel at Johnsville, hopefully in 2025. They have also been making some accessibility improvements as a result of an accessibility grant.

DCL is hosting their second artist-in-residence, Marlina Myles, a Native American artist.

SCL will be doing an expansion at their Belle Plaine library in 2025. They will also be launching their 6th and final location for extended access.

Halverson adjourned the meeting at 1:24pm.