TO: RPL Board of Trustees  
FROM: Patricia Uttaro, Director  
DATE: May 27, 2020  
SUBJECT: Monthly Report – May 2020

**Action Items**

**RPL Annual Report to New York State (Utтаро)**

Every public library in New York State is required to file an annual report to the NYSED Division of Library Development. This report is a statistical one that includes performance metrics, information on staffing and trustees, and financial information. A copy of the report is included in your packet. Some performance highlights include:

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<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>% Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
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<td>Door Count</td>
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<tr>
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<td>205,880</td>
<td>203,922</td>
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While most indicators showed a decline, our circulation improved by 5.67% which is a good sign. Many of our numerical performance indicators will most certainly decline this year as well, given the COVID shutdown. There has been an interesting discussion happening with staff regarding numerical performance indicators for virtual programs and social media engagement. Some of those numbers have been included in this packet.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of the RPL Annual Report to New York State.

**Update to 2020-21 Central Library Budget (Harrison)**

Since RPL Board approval of the Central Library budget in February, we have not received confirmation of the requested 1.5% increase in County operating support, with limited communication from the County on budget planning for their calendar year budget process beginning in June.

Since February, we did receive confirmation of NYS Library Aid decreases of 2.6% for the upcoming budget, which has a minor impact on Central (lower amounts for materials budgets from CLDA and Outreach) but has an impact on the current MCLS budget. As a result of current and future projections of lower NYS aid, we have recommended eliminating the proposed new full-time position in Library Automation, which was 50% shared as a system service/MCLS expense. We are also deferring a new part-time to full-time position creation in public services and have identified several expenses that can be frozen if County support is reduced.
As the City treats branch libraries and Central Library consistently from a property tax support standpoint, recent City measures to mitigate revenue losses in the current budget year and upcoming budget also impact Central. Management salaries are frozen and position upgrades proposed are deferred at this time. We have developed the revised budget independent of furloughs and job-sharing measures, as those are anticipated only through July 31 at this time. Savings here are limited and will be applied towards the anticipated reductions in fine/fee, room rental, and concessions revenues until some phased operations are restored.

There will be a hiring freeze for any new positions, and current vacancies in Central full-time staff (two FT Librarian I positions) will be filled by reductions in branch libraries, where the incumbents will transfer to said vacancies. As a result, Central has limited options if the County significantly reduces support other than future layoff scenarios, but no layoffs are proposed at this time.

Net of changes in revenues and expenses, the Central budget is reduced by $50,600 from February, for a total of $10,856,400; we are distributing a revised expense and revenue summary, which reflects the changes described.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of the amended 2020-21 Central Library Budget.

### Update to 2020-21 Community Library Budget (Harrison)

Since RPL Board approval of the Central Library budget in February, the City has requested a second round of reductions totaling $317,200 in addition to the reductions previously submitted. Additionally, management salaries are frozen at this time. A summary of the reductions proposed is included, with the full-time incumbent reduction shifting to a Central vacancy. No layoffs are proposed for branches; we have developed the revised budget independent of furloughs and job-sharing measures, as those are anticipated only through July 31 at this time. Savings here are limited and will be applied towards the anticipated reductions in fine/fee revenues until some phased operations are restored.

The fund balance with FY19 year-end close was $1,009,000 as shared with the Board this past fall. The Board previously approved the use of $500,000 in fund balance for the design and construction of a new intake air unit for Central Bausch & Lomb building, and in February approved the use of $210,000 in fund balance to close the gap for FY21. The City has opted to increase its overall debt ceiling to support capital projects in its Capital Improvement Program, including ROC the Riverway, for FY21. As a result, the City will bond on behalf of the Library for the air intake unit project, leaving a larger fund balance to plan for fiscal year-end and potential budget gaps beyond the fiscal year 2020-21. We are proposing an additional $90,000 use of fund balance for FY21 (total $300,000), with potential for additional fund balance approvals going forward in the event of mid-year reductions requested by City or if a substantial change in County support is provided for Central.

The City’s Capital Improvement Program budget as submitted to City Council was revised; a summary of the Library’s allocations is attached.

The Community operating budget as amended will be $4,533,600, a reduction of $230,800 from February. We are distributing revised expense and revenue summaries, which reflect the changes described.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of the amended 2020-21 Community Library Budget.

### Central Library Development Aid FY21 (Harrison)

Enclosed is the proposed budget application for the expenditure of state Central Library Development Aid for the 2020-21 fiscal year, a reduction of 2.6% from 2019-20. FY21 reflects the ongoing shift of Central collection development to support electronic materials, especially in light of COVID-19, with a decrease in print reference...
materials of $6,500. A minor increase in Interlibrary Loan (ILL) software from the year prior reflects a new web-based subscription cost.

**Board Action Requested:** Approval of NYSED Central Library Development Aid for the 2020-21 budget cycle.

**Report Items**

*RPL Director Patricia Uttaro reporting*

**COVID-19 Update** - The last month has been spent primarily working with the City’s Department of Human Resources Management (DHRM) on identifying staff to be furloughed or have their hours reduced. Ana Suro and I spent considerable time reviewing lists of staff and consulting with senior managers and supervisors regarding work being completed at home, staff who were struggling to complete work from home, trying to predict which services we would be able to restore, when that would happen, and the staff we’d need to make it happen.

Tom Miller from DHRM was a champion for our staff once they were notified of furlough and hours reduction. He has patiently answered dozens of questions and treated staff with kindness and understanding. Several staff members have sent me notes expressing their gratitude for Tom’s service. Furloughs and reduced hours began May 11 and will continue for most staff through the end of July as we work on re-opening plans. Lists of the furloughed staff are presented in Ana Suro’s Personnel Report this month.

Early word from staff is that most have been successful in securing unemployment and pandemic benefits and are adjusting to changed schedules.

We continue to work on a re-opening plan, which is being based on guidance from the Regional Control Room, Monroe County Health Department, and the City of Rochester. Branch Supervisors are being engaged to work with Dr. Reeves on determining changes to floor arrangements, including desks, computers, and shelving. They will also be working on potential changes to traffic flow and building access for patrons, how to deliver summer programs, and implementing curbside service.

Central opened curbside service May 18, after weeks of planning. The response has been very enthusiastic, with most people looking for books and DVDs. Staff continues to tweak the process to make it more efficient and ensure safety. We expect to be able to identify branches that can open curbside service in the next two weeks.

Brie Harrison and Dave LaCrosse (Facilities Manager) are working on identifying issues with air intake in all of our buildings, and Dave has had one of his staff create prototypes of sneeze guards that could be added to circulation and reference desks. We are exploring various types of floor decals and signage that will be used to direct traffic flow once patrons are allowed back into the libraries.

I am also reviewing policies that may need revision to support changes in service and access requirements, such as adding language to the Code of Conduct that addresses the use of PPEs and compliance with health emergencies.

I continue to be impressed by and very grateful to our staff who continue to develop creative and engaging programs for our community.
RPL Director’s Report – May 2020 (Continued)

RPL Strategic Plan Update – Dr. Reeves and I met with Board VP Donna Benjamin shortly after the April board meeting to discuss the impending update to the RPL Strategic Plan. We would like to add a stronger focus on equity, especially in the areas of staff development and digital inclusion. I expect to engage the board in a review and vision exercise later in the summer to help move the update along.

Central Library Updates
Central Library public services remain closed, although a vibrant and busy schedule of virtual programs has been developed. This report will share highlights from selected departments rather than include a separate report for each.

Central Casting, a library podcast produced by Arts/Literature librarian Andy Coyle (https://rundelania.com/central-casting-rpl/) began on April 17, and had 310 views in 10 days. The site features nature recordings, recordings from local musicians and authors, poetry readings, and audio essays from library patrons and the community at large. Issue 7 of Rundelania, the division’s digital literary journal, was published online on May 1 and has submissions from over 20 library patrons and community members.

Librarian Melissa Manczuk of the Arts/Literature Division began creating a new series of craft videos for patrons to watch while in quarantine. She has focused on making videos of crafts that can be made with easily obtainable materials but still bring beautiful results. A new video is uploaded to the library’s YouTube channel weekly and so far, the reception has been very positive.

Five Rochester Writes online classes were offered in April and included This Is Your Year to Write, Writing During COVID-19, Make Me Care: The First Pages of Your Story, Reflective Writing, and Writing As Resource: Inner Guidance Through Challenging Times. The classes continue to be intimate and interactive, thanks to the Zoom platform, our enthusiastic students, and the skills of our fabulous writing instructors. Some students have enjoyed the online experience so much that they have expressed interest in our continuing to offer classes in this way after the library reopens.

The Business Insight Center provided extensive intellectual property support to RIT students at the Simone Center for Student Innovation & Entrepreneurship, resulting in this message from Jeff Arywitz, a coach for the RIT Venture Creations Incubator:

“Thank you for sharing data on your experience this past semester. I think you’ve clearly shown that not only is there an unmet need, but that this is the right way to address it. My gratitude to Kate and Jennifer for stellar support for our students.”

Central staff worked to set up telephone reference, specifically in response to a need expressed on social media for people needing assistance navigating the IRS website with stimulus check questions. Cynthia Dana, Dennis Williams, and Martha Ruggeri created a process that provides email notification to staff when voicemail messages are left on specified phone lines, allowing reference staff to respond quickly. Adam Traub also launched an online chat reference service that has been very busy.

The Reynolds Media Center worked hard to get as many MiFi units in the hands of our patrons as possible before the library’s doors closed in March. Here are two patrons talking about the difference these units have made in their lives.

"I am a regular library patron. I use the computer and WiFi for my phone there, because it’s too expensive to get at home. I so appreciate getting this [device] from the library – since COVID-19 happened I have been in touch with my family and friends more than ever to let them know how much I love and care for them. Thank you from the bottom of my heart..." ~ J.Z.
"We used to have internet at home, but as the bill went up, our family could no longer afford it. We were using the internet at the Central and Irondequoit libraries before they had to close. I am homeschooling my two children, and we would be stuck without this mobile internet service – we would have zero access to resources. Now we can use Overdrive, my daughter can continue her art classes on Zoom, and both children can continue their schoolwork and entertainment.” ~ Rachel

Darlene Richards coordinated virtual programs with Susan Shiroma from Candid on proposal writing and for the Grant Writers on Candid resources. Richards also held a virtual program on Introduction to Grants with Susan Shiroma. Her presentation included topics such as what funders want to know about the organizations they are funding, and how to identify funders and make the first initial approach. Below is a comment from a patron registering for the next Proposal Writing Program:

“Thanks so much. I just signed up. I also wanted to say, that last week's webinar on finding grants was the best webinar I have attended since New York has been shut down. I really learned a lot from it. Can't wait until the library opens again so I can come down and visit the Grants Resource Center. Thank you for organizing both workshops.”

Central staff has put together a handful of Facebook clubs to keep patrons engaged around various topics. These have proved to be very popular. They include clubs on cooking, gardening, a scavenger hunt, a LEGO challenge, and reading.

The ever-popular Mourning in the Morning series, presented by the Local History Division in partnership with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, proved especially popular as it moved to a virtual platform this month. Chris Grooms presented “Tales from the Crypts: The Mausoleums of Mount Hope Cemetery.” This was the division’s first time hosting a program on Zoom, and it attracted 244 registrants. Unfortunately, only 100 of these were able to participate, as that is the maximum number allowed through the library’s Zoom account. A recording of the program received an additional 414 views through the library’s YouTube account. The incorporation of sign-language interpreters helped make the program accessible. This worked well, and we plan to provide sign interpretation for our online lecture programs for as long as we continue to work in a virtual-only environment moving forward.

Local History’s Daniel Cody’s SUNY Brockport Master’s thesis on the 1918 flu epidemic continues to attract widespread attention. It was accessed 344 times in April by people from all over the world, including the governments of the City of Rochester, the State of New York, and two downloads from the U.S. Department of Defense.

Branch Library Updates

Assistant Director Tolley Reeves, EdD reporting

All Branches remain closed at this time, and most Branch staff have been furloughed or are working reduced hours. Despite this workforce reduction, the remaining staff members have continued to produce creative programs and found ways to keep community members engaged. Branch staff have also continued to order digital content for Overdrive, and have also prepared orders of physical materials to be submitted when the library re-opens.

With the start-up of curbside service at Central on May 18, we expect to be able to expand that service to selected Branches as early as June.
Here are some service highlights from April:

Arnett held several online contests via Facebook usually featuring an Arnett staff member. One contest featured a picture and information about Clerk Linda Smith. The contestants had to guess how many years Smith worked at Arnett. The winners received prizes funded by Branch Manager Bruce Tehan and FFRPL. The most popular contest received a lot of interaction on a Facebook page followed by a lot of old-time 19th Ward residents and past residents. That contest featured the late Stella Foote Campbell. Foote-Campbell was past manager of the Arnett Branch Library.

Charlotte librarian Kim Whittemore is a geocacher and has maintained a geocache in the library garden. She reports “I thought it might be fun to share that the Charlotte Library geocache continues to draw attention. Originally placed on April 28, 2016, it was found two more times this weekend, bringing total Finds to 143! One cacher left the following message in posting their find: ‘Greetings from Georgia! Very well-hidden! Giving this one a favorite point!! Thanks for placing this cache to add to the fun of our grand adventure!’

Douglass librarian Sarah Ngo has provided extensive virtual patron assistance including providing storytimes over Zoom to the Honeybee classroom at Rochester Childfirst Network, posting storytimes on Facebook every Monday through Friday at 10:00 a.m., a bedtime story every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., and a fairy tale every Friday at 1:00 p.m.

Lincoln library assistant Jasmine Santiago has been creating multiple virtual contents for the Facebook page including five Spanish storytimes and six English language storytimes.

Lyell Branch Manager Shamika Fusco and her staff have been busy creating fun activities. “Whatcha Fixin’ Friday” is a program to engage patrons with cooking ideas during the quarantine. The Pink Supermoon Watch Party program was created around the phenomenon of when the moon is closest to Earth. Patrons were encouraged to stay up and take pictures and share them on Facebook. The “Tell Me a Story Tuesday” program was lighthearted and sweet. It started with an introduction and participating patrons could comment on the story building a progressive story.

Maplewood staff has created a series of videos that teach youth dice games like Buck Dice, Ship, Captain, Crew, and Knockout dice. The other series of videos posted are from the Genshiken Club which is an Anime and Manga Club. The videos discuss cosplay and how to create props.

Monroe librarian Margaret Paige has creatively engaged children with various crafts. The Monster Craft Facebook post was shared 16 times and reached 2,427 people! She also put out the craft in front of her house. One family from the library saw the post and came by to pick up the craft. They stayed on the sidewalk and chatted with Margaret as she stood in her doorway. Another family from the library told her that they didn't pick up the craft bag but they did do the project at home.
Sully librarians Maria Heeks-Heinlein and Jen Nesbitt represented Sully in a neighborhood car parade. Representatives from the Neighborhood Service Center, School #33, Thomas Ryan Community Center, and Connected Communities were escorted by the Rochester Police Department for a car parade through part of the Beechwood Neighborhood. Participants were able to put signs on their cars that gave uplifting and/or information messages. They then drove through the neighborhood while honking horns and waving to people.

Wheatley librarian Alex Haehn continues to produce virtual storytimes and has done 18 so far.

Winton librarian Pat Finnerty has transitioned her bookclub to a virtual environment and held the first meeting in April. It was well-received. Winton staff are fully engaged in some “clean-up” work of their collection in the online catalog, all of which can be done from home.

### Social Media

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<td>Profile/Page Visits</td>
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### Selected Meetings & Outputs

**MCLS Director, Patricia Uttaro reporting**  
**April 18 – May 15**

**Standing Meetings**  
City Senior Management Team (weekly)  
RPL-MCLS Management Team (weekly)  
A. Traub, T. Reeves, B. Harrison, A. Suro, T. Burton, C. Ridarsky – one-on-one meetings (monthly)  
FFRPL Executive Director Ned Davis (monthly)  
MCLS System Services and Operations Committee (monthly)  
New York State Library – Division of Library Development conference call (monthly)  
Public Library System Directors’ Organization (PULISDO) conference call (monthly)  
Deputy Mayor James Smith (monthly)
RPL Director’s Report – May 2020 (Continued)

County Chief of Staff Amy Grower (monthly)

Other Meetings
RPL Site Supervisors
Urban Libraries Council Directors
Lomax Campbell, City of Rochester
Roc the Future Convener’s Meeting
City Budget Director – Budget Review
DRYS Commissioner Danielle Lyman-Torres and City Director of Special Projects Sandra Simon
RPL Assistant Director Reeves and RPL Board VP Donna Benjamin
City CIP Hearing
Seymour Library Director Michael Boedicker
Budget meeting with Mayor Warren
Central & Branch All-Staff Zoom Calls
NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council Executive Team
Roc the Future’s Jackie Campbell & Stephanie Townsend
GRASA Program Locator meeting

Email Activity
April 2020

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