

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 72

**Relationship between Minneapolis and
Hennepin County Libraries**

March 1957

REPORT OF HENNEPIN COUNTY
COMMITTEE CONSIDERING MINNEAPOLIS AND
HENNEPIN COUNTY LIBRARY RELATIONSHIPS

February 1957

I Make up of the committee

At the request of the Minneapolis and Hennepin County library boards the Citizens League of Minneapolis and Hennepin County invited over 100 people from all parts of the county to a meeting on November 14, 1956 to discuss city and county library relationships. At this meeting, which more than 60 attended, the information set forth in section III was presented and discussed. There was general agreement that more integration of the two library systems is desirable and the appointment of a sub committee to bring in recommendations at a subsequent meeting was authorized.

The subcommittee consisting of Dr. H. O. Kallestad, Wayzata, Chairman; R. C. Fernstrom, St. Louis Park; Kenneth Rahn, Golden Valley; Fred Kittell and Mrs. Forest Carpenter, Richfield; Baldwin Hartkopf, Brooklyn Park; Arthur C. Bredesen, Edina; Mrs. George Seltzer, Rabbi Albert G. Minda, and Mrs. John Rood, Minneapolis; and ex officio Earl Ainsworth, Alf Bergerud and Leonard Lindquist met three times to discuss possible legislation providing for closer integration or further consolidation of the two library systems. While the subcommittee made no specific recommendation, it did bring in a report and proposed bill which seemed to represent the consensus of the subcommittee's thinking.

At the second meeting of the full committee on February 6, the subcommittee's report and proposed bill were thoroughly discussed and adopted after certain modifications had been made. The committee elected Dr. H. O. Kallestad, Mayor of Wayzata, chairman and authorized him to present the committee's report and recommendations to the City and County library boards, the Hennepin County board, the Hennepin delegation and other interested groups.

II Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Non-Minneapolis residents of Hennepin County use the Minneapolis libraries extensively for reference purposes by telephone and in person. The cost to Minneapolis of furnishing this service is not adequately met either by fees for non-resident cards or by payments from the county to the city.
2. Freer inter-use of the two library systems should be encouraged by providing for more adequate reimbursement of the city by the county for county use and by providing that city and county library cards will be honored throughout the two systems.
3. To permit this Minnesota Statutes Sec. 375.33 should be amended to raise the ceiling on county library levies from two mills to $2\frac{1}{2}$ mills for 1958 and three mills for 1959 and the years thereafter with the understanding that the income from one mill ($\frac{1}{2}$ mill in 1958) will be paid

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to the Minneapolis system to reimburse it for the services rendered to county residents. A copy of the proposed bill is attached as Exhibit A.

4. Since eventual consolidation of the two systems is recognized as desirable, continuing study to see how this can best be accomplished is recommended.

III Background

The Minneapolis Public Library System, established in 1885, operates the main library and 17 branch libraries in Minneapolis. Its 1957 budget for operating purposes totals \$1,788,354, most of which is met by a property tax levy on Minneapolis property of 4 mills (4.49 in 1956 after Homestead Adjustment).

The Hennepin County Library System, established in 1922, operates a system of 23 branch libraries, 9 stations and 2 bookmobiles, throughout Hennepin County exclusive of Minneapolis, Fort Snelling and Hopkins. Its 1957 budget for operating purposes totals \$276,195, most of which is met by a property tax levy on the area served of 2 mills or slightly less.

Holders of Hennepin County library cards cannot draw books from the Minneapolis library system without paying \$2.00 per year for a non-resident card. In 1955, 3304 non-resident cards were issued. Minneapolis library books can be drawn out through the county system without charge by an inter-library loan, but this is cumbersome, slow and done infrequently (1633 books in 1955 against a total county circulation of over 750,000).

Many non-Minneapolis residents of Hennepin County use the Minneapolis Main Library and branches for reference purposes by telephone and in person without taking out non-resident cards. In recognition of this and other intangible services rendered the County Library System by the Minneapolis System, the county system started paying Minneapolis \$30,000 per year in 1949 and this sum was increased to \$35,000 per year for 1957. These figures appear to have been set without any attempt being made to measure the extent of the services provided non-Minneapolis county residents.

In connection with the discussion of the construction of a new main library building in Minneapolis, questions as to the county use of the building and the other relationships of the two systems have been raised. To get more facts the Library Board in 1955 hired Frederick Wezeman, a library consultant, to study the relationships and inter-use problems. His detailed report, completed in the spring of 1956 indicates that:

1. The working relationships between the two systems are excellent.
2. 15% to 20% of the users of the Minneapolis Main Library are non-Minneapolis county residents.
- 3/ The \$30,000 to \$35,000 annual payments do not adequately reimburse Minneapolis for the service it renders county residents.
4. The county library system does not meet minimum standards of service but does provide better service than the communities could provide for themselves at present expenditure levels.
5. Action should be initiated to bring about eventual consolidation of the two systems into one county or metropolitan system with free use of all facilities by all residents including Hopkins and Fort Snelling.

To consider what action should be taken on the Wezeman recommendations and to consider possible legislation the Minneapolis and Hennepin County Library Boards asked the Citizens League to call a county wide meeting on the problem. Such a meeting was held on November 14, 1956, and after a lengthy discussion the appointment of a sub-committee to bring in recommendations at a subsequent meeting was authorized.

Sub-Committee Work

The sub-committee selected Mayor H. O. Kallestad of Wayzata as chairman and explored various possibilities ranging from a bill providing for complete integration of the two systems by 1960 to a bill increasing the authorized county library levy so that a more adequate payment for services rendered could be made. It was generally agreed that the time is too short to consider a bill for complete consolidation for adoption in the current session of the legislature. This left the question of what could be done.

After further discussion the sub-committee asked the staff to prepare figures as to the actual cost of providing the services which are available to the public at the main library building. These figures and the method of computation used are attached as exhibit B. They show that based on the 1957 budget the cost of providing these services at the main library is \$812,564 or about 45% of the total operating budget. If this represents the cost of the services furnished to Minneapolis and Hennepin County residents, the next question the sub-committee faced is what portion should the city and county pay? Various possibilities are suggested:

	<u>County Proportion</u>
Wezeman report	15% to 20%
1950 population	22% *
1956 population estimates	28% *
1956 assessed value	23.2% *

These would result in the county paying from \$120,000 to \$225,000 of the total cost of \$812,000 depending which basis of allocation is used.

There seems to be agreement that even though the Wezeman figures are based on quite a limited sample, they represent the fairest basis of allocation presently available. Also, it is true that many of the suburban library users do own businesses within the city and contribute substantially tax wise to the support of the Minneapolis library system.

Based on present valuations one mill of county library tax levied throughout the county, except in Minneapolis and Hopkins, produces about \$126,000 per year. This will increase as assessed valuation increases but library expenses will undoubtedly increase, too. The suggestion was made, after various possibilities had been discussed, that the legislature be asked to raise the county library tax levy ceiling from the present two mills to 2½ mills for 1958, and then to three mills for 1959 and the years thereafter with the general understanding that if this is done, the tax revenue from the one mill (½ mill in 1958) would be paid to the Minneapolis system to reimburse it for the services rendered to county residents.

* Excludes Hopkins.

That if such an increase is arranged, the \$2.00 annual charge for Hennepin County residents to draw books from the Minneapolis libraries would be discontinued with city or county library cards to be honored at all libraries on an equal basis. Hopkins residents would continue to pay the non-resident fee unless Hopkins chooses to join the county system.

The sub-committee recognizes the advisability of eventual consolidation and urges continuing study to see how this can best be accomplished.

The attached bill, Exhibit A, if adopted by the legislature, would permit the adoption of the foregoing arrangement between the Minneapolis and Hennepin County library systems.

A BILL

FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FREE COUNTY
LIBRARIES; AMENDING MINNESOTA STATUTES
1953, SECTION 375.33, SUBDIVISION 1

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 1953, Section 375.33, Sub-
division 1 is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. The county board of any county may establish and maintain, at a location determined by the board, a public library for the free use of residents of the county, and may levy an annual tax of not more than ~~two~~ (two and one half ($2\frac{1}{2}$)) mills on the dollar of all taxable property for the year 1958 and not more than three (3) mills on the dollar of all taxable property for the year 1959 and the years thereafter, such tax to be levied on all taxable property which is not already taxed for the support of any free public library and all taxable property which is situated outside of any city or village in which is situated a free public library. The proceeds of this tax shall be placed in the county library fund.

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY
Cost of Main Library Services to the Public
Based on 1957 Budget

Contractual Service (Accounting, auditing, postage, heat, telephone, light, gas, etc.)	\$15,558
Repairs and Alterations (Office equipment, buildings and structures)	1,189
Current Charges (Insurance, rentals, registration fees)	1,807
Materials, Supplies and Parts	25,710
Capital Outlay (Office equipment and furniture, books and periodicals. Museum equipment)	80,214
Personal Service	688,086
TOTAL (45.4% of total budget)	\$812,564

To arrive at these costs the following method was used:

ALL costs directly involved in main library services to the public were put down first. To these were added the proportion of general costs which should be allocated to the main library based on the number of professional librarians definitely allocable to the main library compared to the number of professional librarians definitely allocable to the branches. Since the business and social service branches are to be included in the new main library, they were included as a part of the main library.

EXHIBIT B