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**Board of Trustees Special Session  
Tuesday, August 18, 2020, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Cloud Public Library Mississippi Room  
Agenda**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and need to practice social separation, meeting room occupancy will be limited in accordance with MDH and CDC guidelines. Total attendance is limited to available seating, and all persons are expected to maintain a social separation of six (6) feet while attending.  
This meeting will be recorded and posted on the GRRL Board public webpage, <https://griver.org/board-of-trustees>.

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| 1. Call to Order                                      | 6:00 |
| 2. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement Discussion | 6:01 |
| 3. Next Meeting – September 15, 2020                  | 7:59 |
| 4. Adjournment  | 8:00 |



## Public Libraries Addressing Racism

Submitted by GRRL Board member Karlyn Forner to GRRL Board President Lisa Fobbe on August 11, 2020.

### GRRL

Selections from GRRL's core values and priorities that already support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#### Core Values

##### Exceptional Service

- We operate with respect for all, and appreciate our opportunity to serve.
- We provide free and equal access to information.

##### Forward Thinking

- We challenge ourselves to always do better.
- We are responsive to a changing world, and will build on past success.

##### Community Focus

- We create partnerships throughout the communities that we serve, to promote our libraries and services.
- We are inclusive and embrace diversity.

#### Service Priorities: Literacy, Access & Lifelong Learning

- Access: All users will have access to reliable sources of information in welcoming virtual or physical spaces that support community connection and engagement.

#### Organizational Priorities: Exceptional Service, Operational Excellence, and Community Focus

- Community Focus: We will enhance our service to current and future patrons by embracing the diversity of our communities.

#### Statement suggested by AFSCME Local 1345

We, AFSCME Local 1345 employees of Great River Regional Library, oppose police brutality and the systemic racism that is present in our community. The communities we serve are diverse, and we have a duty to represent their interests. We are making this statement to affirm the library's core values and send a message that hate, discrimination, and racism will not be tolerated by our organization. We are committed to training staff in awareness of microaggressions, inclusion, and privilege. Our goal is to ensure that the Great River Regional Library welcomes all people of color. We believe that it is necessary to publicly commit to this mission in order for meaningful change to become reality.

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ADDITIONAL INFO FROM EMAIL: We, AFSCME Local 1345 employees of Great River Regional Library, oppose police brutality and the systemic racism that is present in our community. The communities we serve are diverse, and we have a duty to represent their interests. For this reason, we urge the Board of Trustees of GRRL to take a stance against these social ills by making a public statement or joining us in making a statement that affirms the library's core values and sends a message that hate, discrimination, and racism will not be tolerated by our organization. We also urge the Board to take actions that further support equity, diversity, and inclusion at GRRL. These actions should include prioritizing increased representation of racial and ethnic diversity in its collections, programming, and staff. Furthermore, we ask that the library institute required staff training, to be provided at least annually, on topics such as microaggressions, inclusion and privilege, in an effort to create more equitable spaces for both staff and patrons. Our goal is to ensure that GRRL welcomes and supports Black and Indigenous people, and all people of color. We believe that it is necessary to publicly commit to this mission in order for meaningful change to become reality.

## Example Library Statements

<https://www.infodocket.com/2020/06/01/statements-from-library-organizations-re-racism-and-increased-violence/>

### **Urban Libraries Council's Statement on Race and Social Equity**

(Signed by 179 public libraries across North America including Hennepin & St. Paul)

As leaders of North America's public libraries, we are committed to achieving racial and social equity by contributing to a more just society in which all community members can realize their full potential. Our libraries can help achieve true and sustained equity through an intentional, systemic and transformative library-community partnership. Our library systems are working to achieve equity in the communities we serve by:

- Eliminating racial and social equity barriers in library programs, services, policies and practices
- Creating and maintaining an environment of diversity, inclusion and respect both in our library systems and in all aspects of our community role
- Ensuring that we are reaching and engaging disenfranchised people in the community and helping them express their voice
- Serving as a convener and facilitator of conversations and partnerships to address community challenges
- Being forthright on tough issues that are important to our communities

Libraries are trusted, venerable and enduring institutions, central to their communities and an essential participant in the movement for racial and social equity.

### **Shaker Heights Public Library, Cleveland, OH**

We at Shaker Heights Public Library are deeply saddened by recent acts of hatred and violence. We stand with those who are working to address systemic racism and human rights violations and to create significant positive change.

We are proud to be part of a community that has been at the forefront of leading candid dialogue on race and supporting equity, inclusion, and diversity.

**We welcome everyone at the library. Our mission and vision are to help strengthen our diverse and inclusive community, help our community solve problems, and envision a future where everyone is valued and supported.**

**We are committed to being a place where our community comes together to help in better understanding and combating injustice and racism.** While we cannot meet in person because of the pandemic, we continue to engage with and support our community by sharing resources for all ages to help make sense of recent events and to build empathy and understanding in our community.

We look forward to being together again in-person to help create a future that is just, equitable, and inclusive.

### **River Forest (IL) Public Library**

We are filled with grief over the actions of the police officers within the Minneapolis Police Department that resulted in the senseless death of George Floyd. We hope that justice will provide some peace to his family and that nationwide attention and peaceful protests can lead to systemic change. **River Forest Public Library is committed to building an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment that recognizes and respects the human dignity of people of all backgrounds and experiences.**

In our most recent strategic plan, we specifically addressed the priority of achieving equity and diversity within our organization through collections, programs, and policies. It is our intention that all library staff members embrace an environment of inclusion that moves beyond simple tolerance and actively embraces change. Most recently, all staff participated in Project READY, an online racial equity curriculum. This is just one example of the many steps we are taking to achieve this goal. Our work continues.

One of the ways a library can support change is by sharing and providing access to materials and resources that educate us on the documented history and continued impact of institutionalized racism in this country. With that in mind, we have compiled the following reading list:

#### **Orland Park Public Library (Illinois)**

Statement by President of Board of Library Trustees

As a public library, our purpose is to provide a place where all are welcome and treated with dignity and respect. We reject discrimination in all its forms and are deeply heartbroken over the death of George Floyd and all others who have suffered and died as the result of violence and racism. We support the [BCALA – The Black Caucus of the American Library Association’s](#) Statement Condemning Increased Violence and Racism Towards Black Americans and People of Color and uphold the civil rights and First Amendment freedoms of all people.

Racism and hate have no place in our community. We seek to work with others to build a resilient community that expresses a deep concern for the well-being of every person. We remain committed to action that is rooted in equity and respect for human dignity.

#### **Niles-Maine District Library (Illinois)**

Message from the Executive Director, **We Stand Against Racism**

Sorrow. Anger. Worry. These are feelings all of us have experienced over the past few weeks following the horrifying and tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the ensuing response. The complicated situation makes it hard to know what the “right” thing to say is.

But as a library staff that deeply cares for the diverse community we serve, we want to state clearly that the Niles-Maine District Library stands against racism. We pledge to continue to help people see and understand different perspectives. We pledge to work on ourselves and our own shortcomings in being antiracist.

As children’s librarian Cate puts it, “We are committed to serving our diverse community with compassion and a deep concern for human dignity.”

We remain with another feeling—hope.

#### **Heights Libraries**

A Statement to the Community about Recent National Events

Heights Libraries grieves with you over the brutal, senseless deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many other Black Americans. We recognize that as a public institution, it is not enough to passively mourn these losses. We must be actively anti-racist and stand up to the anti-Black racism so pervasive in our society.

We want to take this moment to recommit ourselves to service for all. In 2019, our board rewrote our Vision Statement, and it includes the following:

“Ensure that our libraries remain free and accessible. Champion digital and print literacy, intellectual freedom, and privacy. Respond to the needs and wants of our customers by leading with a culture of acceptance, equity, inclusion, and respect for all.”

Do you need information about current events? Do you need resources to help you explain to your children what is happening right now? We can help with those things and more.