

July 8, 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Skokie Public Library held virtually via Zoom, Wednesday, July 8, 2020.

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Prosperi, President, called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Members present: Mark Prosperi, President; Eugene Griffin, Vice President; Mira Barbir; Jonathan H. Maks, MD; Magnolia Rivera-Pulex; and Richard Kong, Director

Member absent: Karen Parrilli, Secretary

Staff present: Laurel Johnson, Young Adult Services Supervisor; Laura McGrath, Deputy Director; Blythe Trilling, Finance Manager

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 10, 2020

Dr. Maks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Griffin to approve the minutes of the regular a meeting of June 10, 2020, subject to additions and/or corrections. There being no additions or corrections, a roll call vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously and placed on file. The vote was 5 ayes and 0 nays.

COMMENTS FROM OBSERVERS

There were no comments submitted prior to the meeting as requested on the agenda.

EDI COMMITTEE UPDATE

Committee Chair Laurel Johnson was in attendance and provided an update on the EDI Committee's work. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about the involvement of youth in EDI work. She also asked about any collaboration with the Village about youth involvement and strategies for giving young people access to sports teams and clubs when their families do not have the means. Mr. Prosperi asked about Ms. Johnson's thoughts regarding involving the police and using the library as a space for conversations between police and people of color.

Ms. Johnson left the meeting at 7:07 pm.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Written report provided by Mr. Kong to the Board prior to the meeting)

COVID-19 Reopening Update

On June 8, our temporary emergency building and bookmobile closure due to COVID-19 ended. Though the interior of the library building remains unavailable to the public, we launched a completely new curbside pickup service to provide access to our collections. Patrons have quickly adapted to this new service, which involves driving through the west parking lot to pick up holds

from staff stationed at the bookmobile. During the first three weeks of offering this new service, we helped over 2,400 patrons and checked out more than 8,000 items. More than 10,000 items have been pulled by staff and placed on the bookmobile. Though our region is now in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan, with more businesses and some local libraries planning to open in the first two weeks of July, our plans are to keep the interior of the building closed to the public until the second floor renovation is complete. Currently, we are on schedule to move into the finished second floor in the last two weeks of July, so the window of reopening the building (except the west side of the first floor which is under construction) appears to be July 27-August 7. It is difficult to set an exact date because we need to wait and see how the final work on the second floor progresses. Information about our path to reopening is available on our website and has been shared via social media and emails to patrons.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide curbside pickup service, summer meals, and a wide array of online services and collections. Staff are also preparing to open up the east vestibule for computer/internet access by appointment only. The number of computers is limited due to the space limitations in the vestibule, and patrons will not have access to the rest of the building, but we hope that this service will help those who do not have other means to use computers and access the internet.

Renovation Update

I examined the first floor workroom with Shales McNutt Construction (SMC) to identify any items that need to be added to a punch list before the space is turned over to us. We expect completion of the punch list the first week of July, which will be followed by cleaning and the installation of technology equipment. In addition, the automated materials handler will be calibrated on July 14. We hope to be able to move staff into the new workroom sometime around July 15.

The second floor is nearing completion. Over the next few weeks, we expect many areas to be wrapped up, including the installation of the shelving, furniture, staircase, help desk, and technology equipment throughout. We will also see the return of our nonfiction collections from storage. Andrew Berman is planning to visit the library near the end of the month to examine everything, but this is contingent on the evolving COVID-19 situation in both the New York and Chicago area.

Phase 2 on the west side of the first floor will kick into high gear in July. The new walkway between the loading dock and the bookmobile garage should be completed in the first two weeks of July.

Financial Outlook for FY 2020-2021

Note: An update will be provided each month through FY 2021

There are no major updates to report with our financial outlook for the fiscal year. In August, the Board meeting agenda will include a discussion about the 2020 tax levy, with a vote scheduled in September. We hope to have some early indications on the tax collections/revenues over the next few months. We continue to watch our spending, using the reduced budget targets discussed by the Board

earlier. It should be noted that we had three pay periods in May, and have had the typical influx in technology purchases early in the fiscal year. Expenditures in other areas that we have discussed reducing are down, including in programming, physical content, and continuing education.

We received an update from LIRA, our insurance pool, notifying us that we should expect a property rate increase due to the trend of more severe and frequent catastrophic events across the country that are impacting the property marketplace. They are also seeing rate increases from a casualty standpoint due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent civil unrest. Many insurance carriers are re-evaluating their public entity books of business and making adjustments in pricing and coverages. LIRA administrators at Gallagher hope to negotiate renewal terms for LIRA that are less than forecasted in the marketplace, and we will know more toward the end of the calendar year. Due to our planned reduction in spending this year and our general conservative approach, this potential increase in our insurance will not cause any major issues with our budget.

Update on EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Efforts

In response to the recent social unrest and widespread dialogue about racial inequity and injustice, I have had many conversations about what the library can do to reflect on what it means to be an anti-racist organization and take action toward bringing further change to our organization and our community.

On July 1, I participated in a virtual conversation organized by a group of Skokie community members called Skokie United. Local organizations and institutions were invited to share information about their history, present state, and future commitment to make policy change and become an anti-racist, inclusive, and equitable organization. I spoke for the library, and highlighted the ways we can examine our policies and practices in the near future.

Specific steps include the following:

- Continuing our recent efforts to improve our hiring practices to become a more anti-racist organization and increase the diversity of our staff, especially in full-time and formal leadership levels
- Examining our policies and practices regarding the enforcement of library use guidelines
- Developing an equity lens tool to help staff in their work
- Creating a stronger process by which staff and patrons can express concerns related to inequity and injustice
- Working closer with our community partners and individual community members as we take on all of the above.

In addition to conversations with local community members and leaders, I led a discussion for the management team on Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's Ted Talk, "The Difference Between Being 'Not Racist' and Antiracist." (<https://bit.ly/3glrQT1>). The management team will hold monthly discussions on antiracism and EDI topics.

In addition to overseeing the ongoing renovation and guiding the library through the pandemic, I will be committing much of my time to EDI work moving forward. Our EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) Committee charge intentionally includes language that I, as the director, will be a standing member on the committee. This is to guarantee that the work of the EDI Committee is supported at the administrative level, and that I will personally be involved in our efforts. Current EDI Committee Chair, Laurel Johnson (also our Young Adult Supervisor), will share a brief update about some of the work planned by the committee members this year.

I have also reached out to the YWCA Equity Institute and other consultants to discuss how the library may benefit from outside expertise as we continue our EDI work. Moreover, I will continue to work closely with the Skokie Cares members, including the Village Manager and local school superintendents, to see how we can work together. Finally, I started a new monthly discussion group for local library directors with the intent on learning together and supporting one another in taking concrete action to elevate our local public libraries in the areas of EDI, specifically focusing on racial equity and justice.

ILA Board

I completed my brief term on the Illinois Library Association Board in June. Earlier in the year, I was asked to fill the remainder of the term for an outgoing Board member. Since I had recently served on the Board and was familiar with the current issues and initiatives of the association, I agreed.

Discussion of Director's Report

Ms. Barbir stated that she welcomed hearing more about the EDI work and would be interested in opportunities for the Board to participate in any of that work. Mr. Prosperi mentioned that he and Mr. Griffin took a tour of the renovation and were complimentary.

APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #7

The Board reviewed Construction Pay Application #7 and change orders #77, 82, 84, 85, and 87. None of them were in amounts that required Board approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Dr. Maks:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #7, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 5 ayes and 0 nays.

BILLS

Mr. Griffin asked about a payment to the Illinois State Police. Mr. Kong explained that that was a payment for background checks from before the closing of the library.

A motion was made by Ms. Barbir, seconded by Dr. Maks:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE BILLS, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

The roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 5 ayes and 0 nays.

CONSENT AGENDA (Financial Statements; Reports; Gifts; Personnel)

Dr. Maks made a motion, seconded by Ms. Barbir:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, SUBJECT TO AUDIT, AND THAT THE FOLLOWING CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS BE PLACED ON FILE:

1. REPORTS;
2. GIFTS: \$50 FROM EILEEN COULOMBE IN MEMORY OF LONG-TIME VOLUNTEER CELENE EPSTEIN;
3. PERSONNEL: DEPARTURE: REEHAN MALHANCE, PART-TIME PATRON SERVICES ASSISTANT, PATRON ENGAGEMENT, EFFECTIVE JUNE 10, 2020; RETIREMENT: JUDY FRIEDMAN, PART-TIME MATERIALS PAGE, ACCESS SERVICES, EFFECTIVE JUNE 30 2020

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 5 ayes and 0 nays.

TAX LEVY DISTRIBUTIONS AND COLLECTIONS TAX YEARS 2014-2018, FISCAL YEARS 2016-2020

Ms. Barbir asked about the shortage in FY 2017-18 compared to other years. Mr. Kong and Ms. Trilling explained that that year there happened to be a significant amount of refunds. The Board noted the tax levy distributions and collections.

QUARTERLY INVESTMENT UPDATE

The investment policy states that the director shall prepare a quarterly report on investments and their returns.

The library's Reserve Fund for Sites and Buildings includes the following accounts, with their respective balances at the end of the 2nd Quarter 2020.

- Fifth Third Bank Reserve Fund (\$1,093,685)
- IL Funds Reserve Account (\$5,720,114)
- IMET Reserve Fund (\$570)
- North Shore Community Bank Max Safe 4 CDs (\$1,075,295)
- North Shore Community Bank 4 CDs (\$1,062,345)
- First Bank Chicago CD (\$1,068,506)

The total balance of the Reserve Fund as of June 30, 2020 is \$10,020,515. This is a 2.20% decrease from the balance at the start of the calendar year. On June 1, 2020, the library made the first 2019 Bond Debt Service payment in the amount of \$291,317.50 from the IL Funds Reserve Account. Interest rates are continually low, however as deposits mature the highest interest rate is sought to reinvest funds.

Considering the balance is so small in the IMET Reserve Fund, unless the Board thinks that IMET is a desirable option for future investments, the account could be closed. Closing the account will not have an impact on the library receiving any future liquidating trust distributions.

Mr. Prosperi asked for and received clarification of the status of the matter involving IMET.

The Board noted the quarterly investment update.

APPROVAL OF FMLA LEAVE EXPANSION AND EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE POLICY DUE TO COVID-19

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) requires the library to provide library employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions apply through December 31, 2020.

Attorney Thomas Garretson of Robbins Schwartz helped prepare the policy provided to the Board that covers leaves taken pursuant to the FFCRA, and changes were made based on Board feedback during the June meeting. The library will also provide forms for employees to use to request leaves related to the FFCRA.

Mr. Kong recommended Board approval of the FMLA Leave Expansion and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Policy Due to COVID-19.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked whether the library is following federal guidelines regarding the leave. Mr. Kong confirmed that it is. Dr. Maks asked about the possibility of having another discussion in the October or November with the library's attorneys regarding a potential extension of the policy if the pandemic continues. Mr. Kong stated that it would be possible.

A motion was made by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Dr. Maks:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE FMLA EXPANSION AND EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE POLICY DUE TO COVID-19 AS PRESENTED.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 5 ayes and 0 nays.

DISCUSSION OF BOARD VACANCY

Due to the recent resignation of Susan Greer from the library Board of Trustees, there is a vacancy on the Board. Ms. Greer's term ends in April 2021, so it would be appropriate for the Board to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term. At that time, the consolidated general election on April 6, 2021 will determine who will fill the new term for this particular seat on the Board.

Recently, the Board's practice has been to advertise vacancies on the library website with a short description. Mr. Kong provided the Board with a recommended description for the announcement that can be posted on the library's website, and shared widely via social media and communication to community partners. He recommended posting the announcement of the opening soon after the July Board meeting with an application deadline of sometime in late July, perhaps Friday, July 24.

The Open Meetings Act defines a meeting as “any gathering of a majority of a quorum” of the members of a public body held for the purpose of meeting to discuss public business. If the Board decides to create a subcommittee of three or more members to review applications for the opening and create a shortlist of finalists for the review by the full Board, the library is required to handle the meetings of the subcommittee in the same manner that we do so for the monthly regular meetings. This includes giving notice to the public of each meeting and keeping written minutes.

Upon receiving a shortlist, the Board may choose to interview the finalists, perhaps at the August Board meeting or at a special Board meeting scheduled for a different day and time. If this timeline is followed, it would be feasible for Mr. Kong to provide an orientation to the new Board member in August, and have them join the Board starting with the regular September meeting. Board direction was requested.

The Board discussed the process for recruiting trustee candidates. The deadline to receive applications will be set for July 31. Ms. Chavez will share the applications and resumes with the Board weekly as they are received.

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM (RAILS)

RAILS Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, June 19, 2020

The following are highlights from the June 19, 2020, RAILS Board of Directors meeting’s supporting documents and recorded video conference via Zoom.

Financial Report: Mr. Jim Kregor reported that the unassigned General Fund total cash and investment balance ending May 31, 2020, was \$14,500,000, covering 15.4 months of operation. Since January, no Area and Per Capita (APC) grant payments were received.

A representative from the Nominating Committee reported on the recent election for the vacant seats on the Board of Directors for a three-year term, beginning July 1. Elected are: At-Large: Kristine Kenney, Poplar Creek Public Library; Academic Library: Gwen Gregory, University of Illinois at Chicago; School Library: Jenna Nemecek, North Shore Country Day School; Public Library: Becky Spratford, LaGrange Public Library; Beth Tepen, Silvis Public Library; and Alex Vancina, New Lenox Public Library.

Executive Director’s Report: Deirdre Brennan mentioned that delivery services resumed June 18, with full operation beginning June 25, and administrative staff may return to their respective offices on a limited basis as of June 15. Work continues on the Census 2020 project.

She initiated a discussion with the Board on addressing RAILS’ role in supporting social responsibility within individual libraries and their communities. A draft of an action plan was presented. RAILS will begin its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Project as part of the Executive Director’s initiatives for FY20/21, including discussions with staff on their responsibility to social justice.

Illinois State Library: A representative reported that the Illinois State Library has processed all FY2020 the Area & Per Capita grant applications and have sent out award letters to public libraries.

Next meeting: Friday, July 24, 2020, via Zoom.

The Board noted the RAILS report from Mrs. Parrilli.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Rivera-Pulex thanked Mr. Kong and Ms. Chavez for the plant that the library sent for her mother-in-law's funeral.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:51 pm, a motion was made by Dr. Maks, seconded by Mr. Griffin to adjourn the regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Karen Parrilli, Secretary