

February 10, 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Skokie Public Library held virtually via Zoom, Wednesday, February 10, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Prosperi, President, called the meeting to order at 6:39 pm.

Members present: Mark Prosperi, President; Eugene Griffin, Vice President; Shabnam Mahmood, Secretary; Mira Barbir; Michelle Mallari; Magnolia Rivera-Pulex; Dr. Noreen Winningham; and Richard Kong, Director

Staff present: Laura McGrath, Deputy Director; Blythe Trilling, Finance Manager; Monica Chavez, Administrative Assistant to the Director; Beth Dostert, Human Resources Manager

Observers present: Allyson Coan; Amy Koester; Jimmy Gonzalez-Vicker; Laurel Dooley; Ly Nguyen; Megan Rosol; Rachael Bild; Veena Villivalam; Martha Nelson; Erica Nelson; Katie Fox; Tiffany Breyne; Jarrett Dapier; Sue Teller; Angela Jones

Guests present: Tom Garretson and Catherine Locallo of Robbins-Schwartz; Pramod Shah, Skokie Village Clerk; Andrew Berman, Andrew Berman Architect; Josh Campanelli, Shales McNutt Construction

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 13, 2021 AND SPECIAL AND CLOSED MEETINGS OF JANUARY 21, 2021

Mr. Griffin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mahmood to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 13, 2021, and Ms. Barbir made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex to approve the minutes of the closed meetings of January 21, 2021. A roll call vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously and placed on file. The vote was 7 ayes and 0 nays.

COMMENTS FROM OBSERVERS

There were no comments from observers.

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

COVID-19 Reopening Update

Our region (10) moved into Tier 1 mitigations recently. With the COVID-19 metrics trending in a more positive direction, and with mitigations reduced, I made the decision to open up the library again for in-person browsing. Holds pickup, limited computer services, and online services and collections will continue as well. In the building, there will be limitations on the total number of patrons allowed at any given time as well as time restrictions for visits. Seating and study rooms will be unavailable, similar to when in-person browsing was allowed last fall. On the first floor, the café, youth lab, and meeting room

will be closed to the public, but the teen room will be open because some youth collections are temporarily housed there. Fiction, audiovisual materials (DVDs, Blu-rays, CDs), and “Most Wanted” collections will all be available on the first floor. Nonfiction collections will be available on the second floor. The bookmobile will continue to make stops throughout the community to provide a location for holds pickup. Patrons will still not be permitted to come into the bookmobile at this time.

We are also working with the Village of Skokie and AARP volunteers to provide space in the new Business & Community Center for tax assistance volunteers to help people in the community file their taxes. Social distancing and other safety measures will be in place to provide a safe environment for volunteers and the public. Library staff will also be assisting with calls made to the Village’s COVID hotline. We are doing whatever we can to be flexible and help our community during these difficult times.

Renovation Update

Phase 3 of the renovation on the east side of the first floor continues to go well. Millwork, ceiling tiles, tilework in the restrooms, and painting are all in the works. In mid-March, shelving will be installed and that will be followed by the return of collections from storage and furniture delivery. Shales McNutt Construction (SMC) projects owner move-in the week of March 29-April 2. We are still projected to complete the renovation on budget as well, with the allowances and contingency budget in a good position with two months left in the project.

Settings for the lighting in Phases 1 and 2 were adjusted recently, and will be finalized when lighting is examined for Phase 3 areas. There are a few shelving and signage issues being worked out as well, but we anticipate everything to be completed by the end of Phase 3.

Financial Outlook for FY 2020-2021

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

As a reminder, our total fall property tax collection was \$6,123,718, which is only \$74,755 below our projected revenue used for the FY 2020-2021 operating budget. This means we received 98.8% of the anticipated fall revenue from property tax collections, and 99.46% of the entire 2019 tax levy in 2020. We are still on track to meet our significantly reduced overall spending target this fiscal year.

Finance Manager Blythe Trilling and I reviewed a revised 5-year indication of what our general operating fund would look like based on very specific assumptions of reduced property tax collections. The purpose of this exercise was to be as prepared and thoughtful as possible. Given our fall collections, we do not believe there is any reason to think that we will see a dramatic reduction in revenue this year. At the start of the new fiscal year in May 2021, we project having \$5 million in our operating fund balance plus the revenue we receive from property tax collections through the end of April. We should be in a strong position with both our operating fund and reserve fund to begin FY 2022. More information is provided in the memo regarding the projected FY 2022 operating budget.

Sexual Harassment Training

For all elected or appointed Board members and all employees, sexual harassment training is required every year. <https://www2.illinois.gov/dhr/Training/Pages/State-of-Illinois-Sexual-Harassment-Prevention-TrainingModel.aspx> Training used by staff will be sent to each board member.

COVID-19 Vaccination for Staff

As requested by the Board last month, I looked into the question of whether or not the library is able to and should require employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19 when it becomes available to them. Attorney Thomas Garretson at Robbins Schwartz explained that while they do believe that employers can legally mandate vaccination of its employees, the issue is complicated due to the status of the COVID-19 vaccine. The current COVID-19 vaccines are available pursuant to Emergency Use Authorization (“EUA”) from the FDA, which allows vaccines to be used before full FDA approval due to an emergency. However, when receiving the vaccine, recipients are required to be informed of and allowed the option to refuse vaccination. Thus, any kind of mandatory vaccination program may be limited in scope and effectiveness if a large number of employees exercise their right to opt of the EUA vaccination. The status of the vaccine, combined with an employee’s ability to claim a disability/religious exception to receiving the vaccine, makes the effectiveness of a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination program questionable at this time. If an employee’s ability to opt out of the vaccination is eventually removed after full FDA approval, mandating the vaccine would become a bit easier and straightforward for employers. With respect to creating a policy, if not mandating the vaccine at this time, a policy is not necessary.

Discussion of Director’s Report

Andrew Berman of Andrew Berman Architect and Josh Campanelli of Shales McNutt Construction provided a brief update on the status of the renovation project. Mr. Prosperi asked if there will be a process for trying out all of the new features of the library before fully opening. Mr. Berman answered that yes, it is a rolling process, and there will be fine tuning that will happen after completion. Mr. Prosperi asked about the tentative turnover date. Mr. Kong said that it is technically March 29, but it is more likely that there will be a little bit of time before officially opening to the public to prepare safety measures, move collections, etc.

Mr. Shah swore in Dr. Noreen Winningham as trustee. Mr. Shah left the meeting at 6:53 pm.

APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #14

The Board reviewed Construction Pay Application #14 and change orders #172R2; 190; 193-199; and 201-206. None were in amounts requiring Board approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #14 AND CHANGE ORDERS #172R2; 190; 193-199; AND 201-206, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 7 ayes and 0 nays.

Messrs. Berman and Campanelli left the meeting at 6:56 pm.

BILLS

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked a clarifying question regarding patron reimbursements for lost items listed in the bills. Mr. Kong explained they were reimbursements to patrons who paid for lost items and later found and returned the items to the library. Mr. Prosperi asked how the elimination of fines has affected the rate of return of items to the library. Mr. Kong stated that there have been no issues with that. Patrons' cards are put on hold when they have items overdue for an extended amount of time, which is an incentive to return items.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked a clarifying question about a quarterly payment to St. Paul Lutheran Church for parking. Mr. Kong explained that the library contracts with the church to lease their parking lot for extended staff parking.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked a question about the gas bill. She asked if the library has ever tried to enter into a monthly budget plan with Nicor to pay the same amount every month. Mr. Kong stated that it is not something we have looked into but it is something Ms. Trilling could contact Nicor about. Ms. Rivera-Pulex felt it might make it easier for the accounting department to have a set amount to pay every month versus a variable amount. Ms. Trilling explained that it has not been a problem and that she tracks it from year to year to compare usage and payments made.

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

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 7 ayes and 0 nays.

Tom Garretson and Catherine Locallo entered the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Mr. Prosperi proposed entering into closed session.

A motion was made by Ms. Rivera-Pulex, seconded by Ms. Mahmood to enter into closed session.

An amended motion was made by Mr. Griffin and seconded by Ms. Mahmood to enter into closed session pursuant to section 2(c)11 of the Open Meetings Act. The roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 7 ayes and 0 nays.

The Board entered into closed session at 7:07 pm.

The Board resumed open session at 7:50 pm.

YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGETARY STATUS

The Board noted the year-to-date budgetary status.

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDING FROM 5/1/20 THRU 1/31/21

The Board noted the balance sheet.

CONSENT AGENDA (Financial Statement; Reports; Personnel)

Ms. Rivera-Pulex made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mahmood:

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

1. REPORTS;
2. PERSONNEL: DEPARTURE: MIMOSA SHAH, FULL-TIME ADULT PROGRAM COORDINATOR, LEARNING EXPERIENCES DEPARTMENT, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 19, 2021; RETIREMENT: MARY TONG, FULL-TIME MATERIALS PROCESSOR; ACCESS SERVICES DEPARTMENT, EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 5, 2021.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 7 ayes and 0 nays.

The Board was in consensus that the highlights cover page for the quarterly report was helpful and welcome.

APPROVAL OF RENEWAL OF INN-REACH

The library's subscription to INN-Reach is up for renewal and we would like to renew for one year effective February 1, 2021.

INN-Reach is a resource sharing software provided by Innovative Interfaces and allows us to participate in LINKin (a group of standalone public libraries in Illinois which includes Arlington Heights, Elmhurst, Naperville, and six others). Because of this shared software, requests for items are filled at least three times as quickly as traditional interlibrary loan.

As of October 2020, the full LINKin catalog included 2,013,080 titles with 622,557 of those items unique to individual libraries. The library typically averages nearly 2000 LINKin transactions per month. This has not been the case since the emergency closure in March 2020 but we expect to resume a typical volume of resource sharing in early 2021. LINKin is a valuable service that is well-used and well-liked by patrons, and its ease of use improves the way patrons are able to access materials.

Mr. Kong recommended that the Board approve a one-year renewal of INN-Reach for \$26,145.31. In past years, the library has used funds from our per capita grant to pay for the renewal cost of INN-Reach and plan to do so again this year.

Ms. Mallari asked about the usage rates for LINKin. Mr. Kong and Ms. McGrath said that it is historically heavily used and they believe that the usage will return to usual rates post-pandemic. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked if the program is for physical materials or electronic materials. Mr. Kong explained it is for physical materials. Dr. Winningham asked a clarifying question about how the program works. Mr. Kong explained the basics of the program. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked Ms. McGrath if she believes the program will be useful in the coming year in the context of the pandemic. Ms. McGrath said she believes the library is hoping to get it going again this spring. It is generally a very seamless process and very popular among patrons. Mr. Kong also explained that leaving LINKin and attempting to join later would be more difficult.

A motion was made by Dr. Winningham, seconded by Ms. Mahmood:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE A ONE-YEAR RENEWAL OF INN-REACH FOR A TOTAL COST OF \$26,145.31.

The roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 7 ayes and 0 nays.

UPDATE OF ANTICIPATED CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Board has asked for an updated list of potential, upcoming capital projects every six months. The capital asset study, completed in May 2017, includes a fuller picture of what capital improvements are needed over the long term. However, the current renovation project is addressing many issues related to the interior, glazing, courtyards, and other aspects of the building and grounds, so the capital asset study will need to be updated after the renovation is completed.

The spreadsheet provided to the Board only highlights recently completed projects since 2015, work that is in-progress, and key anticipated expenditures over the next few years. The overall outlook for the next few years remains the same as what was shared in August 2020.

FY 2021

Outside of the renovation work already completed for Phases 1 and 2, the replacement of some computers (public and staff) and the refurbishment of the cooling towers are the main projects to be completed in the remainder of this fiscal year. Other projects that will be completed in 2021 to coincide with the renovation include the following:

- Replacement of our Bibliotheca equipment (Board approved)
- Upgrade and expansion of our security-related systems (Board approved)
- Upgrade and expansion of AV/Technology (Board approved)
- Installation of the new fish tank

FY 2022

There are some technology-related projects planned for the next fiscal year, but assuming the renovation wraps up on schedule by the end of FY 2021 and barring any unforeseen emergency expenditures, FY 2022 should be a light year as far as capital expenditures.

FY 2023 and beyond

Looking ahead to the summer of 2022, Mr. Kong anticipates that both the lower roof and upper roof will need to be replaced. In addition, the library may consider a major repaving project for the parking lot and driveways, and a replacement of the south retaining wall and fence, once the roofing replacement is completed in the summer of 2023. Several technology upgrades will also be needed over the next several years, and those are indicated on the spreadsheet.

Another updated list of anticipated capital projects will be provided in August 2021 as the Board considers the 2021 tax levy. No board action is needed at this time. This update is for informational and planning purposes only.

Mr. Prosperi asked about an expense for millwork for book displays and the youth toddler area and whether the payment for those came out of the bond for the renovation project. Ms. Trilling confirmed that the two millwork projects came out of reserves and the loading dock and courtyard came from the general operating fund capital line. Mr. Prosperi asked why those items were not covered by the bond. Mr. Kong explained that when the renovation project was discussed a few years ago, there was discussion that some items might be covered by the library because at that time the full scope of work was not known. It was agreed that the library would go ahead and do the bidding for the known items, and then the rest would be items that would need to be approved by the Board after the fact. This last year, a number of these items were brought to the Board for approval for payment from the library's reserve funds.

Mr. Prosperi asked where the funds for the roof and parking lot repaving projects are expected to come out of. Mr. Kong answered they will come from reserves.

APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL FOR COOLING TOWER REFURBISHMENT

According to Building Services Manager, Tim Murphy, the library's two cooling towers located on the roof of the library need refurbishment due to basin corrosion and scale buildup in the fill media. These cooling towers are a major part of the library's HVAC system that helps the building stay cool during warmer seasons.

The library put out an RFP (request for proposals) for the required work and received three bids. The low bid (see attached) came from J&L Cooling Towers, Inc. at a total cost of \$59,092. Three references were checked and they all had positive comments about their experience working with J&L Cooling Towers, Inc. The other two bids we received were from Murphy & Miller Mechanical at \$84,000 and Atomatic Mechanical at \$93,317.

Mr. Kong recommended that the Board approve the proposal from J&L Cooling Towers, Inc. at \$59,092 for the refurbishment of the cooling towers. As this is a major capital improvement project, using funds from the Reserve Fund for Sites and Buildings is appropriate.

Mr. Prosperi asked why the one bid was so much lower than the others. Mr. Kong answered that Mr. Murphy had explained that this company is one of few companies that can do the work itself, whereas the other two bidding companies would have had to subcontract the work, which

would be more expensive. Ms. Barbir asked how old the existing cooling towers are. Mr. Kong said he would have to look it up but that information is in the capital asset study in Dropbox.

Dr. Winningham asked why the cooling tower refurbishment was not part of the renovation. Mr. Kong explained that the renovation was focused more on the interior of the building versus systems like the HVAC.

Ms. Mallari asked how long the refurbishment is expected to extend the life of the cooling towers. Mr. Kong referred her to the capital asset study in the files provided to the Board. Pursuant to what was determined in that study, the refurbishment would potentially extend the life another 15 years. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked if there would be a warranty attached to the job. Mr. Kong said there is a seven-year warranty according to the proposal documents.

A motion was made by Mr. Griffin, seconded by Ms. Mallari:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FROM J&L COOLING TOWERS, INC. AT A TOTAL COST OF \$59,092 FOR THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE LIBRARY'S COOLING TOWERS.

The roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 7 ayes and 0 nays.

APPROVAL OF COMPUTERS PURCHASE

Board approval was requested for the purchase of 33 Dell computers: 13 for the new Youth Lab, and 20 to replace staff computers. The Information Technology (IT) department asked for the approval of \$31,224.14 to be taken from the current Technology budget.

The previous Youth Lab computers were purchased in 2013. It is time they were replaced. Additionally, brand new computers will complement the newly renovated Lab space. The staff computers to be replaced are even older. They were purchased in 2011. Replacing the oldest model of staff computers will be the first step in a multi-year process of modernizing staff desktop computers.

Quotes obtained broke down as follows:

Manufacturer	13 Youth PCs	20 Staff PCs	Total
Dell	\$12,513.54	\$18,710.60	\$31,224.14
HP	\$19,372.73	\$27,808.00	\$47,180.73
Lenovo	\$11,425.57	\$20,761.20	\$32,186.77

Mr. Kong recommended Board approval of the purchase of 33 Dell computers at a cost of \$31,224.14.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about some payments in the bills provided this month to Dell and CDW and if those were for computers. Mr. Kong explained that those were for some laptops provided to staff for remote work and some new workstations within the library.

Dr. Winningham asked what would happen to the computers taken out of service. Mr. Kong explained they would be used in the library wherever possible or the library would work with other organizations to either donate them or recycle them if they were not otherwise usable.

A motion was made Ms. Barbir, seconded by Ms. Mahmood:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF 33 DELL COMPUTERS AT A TOTAL COST OF \$31,224.14.

The roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 7 ayes and 0 nays.

PROJECTED FY 2021-2022 BUDGET

Last month, Mr. Kong presented the Board with a first look at the projected operating budget for FY 2021-2022 (see attached). No changes were made from the budget presented last month, including estimates for anticipated revenues and expenditures. Mr. Kong will provide another revision of the projected budget in March, and will ask the Board to approve the final budget in April.

Mr. Kong also provided a the Board with a revision of the spreadsheet shared with the Board last year to provide an indication of what the library's general operating fund may look like with a specific set of assumptions. It should be noted that this is not a forecast or suggestion of what we should plan for our expenditures. If we see property tax collection rates going down, we could take steps like increasing the tax levy or making adjustments on the expense side. The two sets of numbers shown on this spreadsheet are based on assumptions of a 2% and 5%, respectively, decrease in property tax revenue. Given the historical data about collections in the recession years a little over a decade ago and more recently this fall during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no reason to believe that we will experience an extreme decrease in property tax collections over the next five years. Property taxes are generally stable sources of revenue. The spreadsheet also is based on assumptions of a flat tax levy over the next five years and only a \$100,000 annual increase in expenditures. Again, this is not a recommended plan for the Board to consider; rather it is one indication of what the financial picture would look like based on a specific set of assumptions. Mr. Kong does not think it is feasible to think that the library can maintain a flat tax levy over the next five years, following four years of no increases in our levy. When the library revises its capital asset study, we should have a better idea of what our long-term (20 years) projection looks like as far as capital expenditures are concerned. Finance Manager Blythe Trilling and Mr. Kong reviewed this spreadsheet with municipal advisor Jamie Rachlin, who worked with the library last year, and he agreed that we are in a good position with our projected general operating fund balance and reserve fund balance.

Lastly, at this point in the budgeting process, Mr. Kong usually shares information about the Bureau of Labor Statistics employment cost index summary, which was recently issued for 2020.

Compensation costs for state and local government workers increased 2.3% for the 12-month period ending in December 2020. Wages and salaries increased 1.8% and benefit costs increased 3.1%. The March Board agenda will include a recommendation for the Board to consider a cost of labor and merit increase for staff. This will allow Mr. Kong to present the final proposed budget to the Board in April.

Approval of the budget is not required until April.

Mr. Prosperi asked what assumptions were made with regards to the amount proposed for raises for employees. Mr. Kong stated that a potential 3.5% increase was factored into the proposed budget, which includes both a merit increase and a cost of labor adjustment. He reminded the Board that the increases have not been voted on by the Board yet. Mr. Prosperi asked if that takes into consideration increased cost of benefits. Mr. Kong explained that those expenses are from a separate line of the budget. Mr. Prosperi asked for comparison numbers for other federal, state, and local government employees' increases for next month in preparation for the discussion of potential staff raises. He believes that a 3.5% increase is very high. Mr. Kong said he would compile as much information about that as possible for next month. Ms. Barbir also asked for historical data for the library and specific data from the library sector where possible.

Ms. Mallari asked about the continuing education and memberships line and why it was down over 40%. Mr. Kong explained that we spent significantly less this year because the library was not sending staff to out of state conferences as it normally does. This year looks to be about the same as past years in that many large conferences are choosing to go virtual so it is likely that spending will be down again this year. Ms. Mallari expressed a desire not to limit staff's ability to attend professional development events and Mr. Kong concurred. He expects that the following fiscal year spending should return to normal levels.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about the increase to the professional services line. Mr. Kong explained that that line includes the budget for attorneys and consultants such as for EDI work. She also asked about the increase in the insurance line. Mr. Kong explained that the market for insurance has gotten very difficult this year and the library has to plan for the possibility of continually increasing insurance costs.

Dr. Winningham asked about the maintenance of equipment line. Mr. Kong explained that the library was able to budget less for this because of a new contract with Bibliotheca for the AMH equipment and some savings that were extended by that vendor.

Mr. Prosperi asked for the deadline for proposals for changes to the budget. Mr. Kong confirmed that any proposals can be brought to the March or April meetings but asked that the Board approve a budget in April so that it is in place for the May 1 start of the new fiscal year.

Mr. Prosperi asked if it would be possible for any proposed changes to be given to Mr. Kong ahead of the meeting so that a revised budget can be brought to that meeting for discussion.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked that any changes from the previous budgets be explained. Mr. Kong said that he would include that information in his memo.

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM (RAILS)

RAILS Board of Directors Meeting Summary

January 15, 2021

The following are highlights from the January 15, 2021, RAILS Board of Directors meeting, supporting documents, and recorded video conference via Zoom.

RAILS Financial Report - Jim Kregor

- Mr. Kregor reported RAILS was in a good position financially.
- \$17.4 million cash balance in general fund, which would fund nearly 18.8 months of operations.
- \$5,000,000 grant payment received in October 2020.
- \$1,965,000 revenues above budget due to these payments. Remaining payments would total nearly 8.1 million of the fiscal 21 grant.
- Investment Income continues \$71K below budget.
- Expenditures of \$5,658,000 through December. \$652,000 below budget.
- Special Revenue Funds have been active recently having been awarded ebook grants which are federal funds in the amount of \$125,000; will be used to purchase special content for e-read programs.
- Fraudulent checks update: \$18,000 was reimbursed for one check; ninety days to receive funds for other two checks; apprehended person for crime and will be prosecuted.
- Illinois Department of Employment Security fraud claims - Mr. Kregor and ten other library employees were victims of fraudulent claims. The Illinois attorney general and FBI have created a task force to investigate. 213K fraudulent claims filed in November 2020. 350K fraudulent claims filed in January 2021.

Advocacy Committee – Jenna Nemeč-Loise

- Committee met on January 14, 2021 to discuss the status of outreach to specialized libraries.
- Hallie Cox developed an email for list-serv; talking points for school and academic libraries on what RAILS has to offer.
- Potential partnerships opportunities between schools and academic libraries; collaboration has been difficult due to pandemic.
- Committee is trying to find common ground with partners- e-resources among library types.
- ILA Trustees Forum- looking to increase advocacy with trustees in RAILS capacity.
- ILA Legislation Meetups- have representation.

Consortia Committee -- Paul Mills

- Committee discussed Mr. Pronevitz's delivery study; Mr. Halter's statewide database survey; social membership return on investment; SWAN communication about concern over funds allotted to consortia members.

EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Committee -- Diane Hollister

- Committee inaugural meeting held December 2, 2020. Members discussed hopes and thoughts on how the committee should proceed and succeed.
- EDI consultant, Biz Lindsey and Deirdre Brennan provided much support and guidance.

RAILS Monthly Report

- Deirdre Brennan announced the Advocacy Committee meeting was Zoom-bombed.
- Trying to stay in compliance with the Open Meetings Act but safeguarding and ensuring meetings are conducted efficiently the administration reported the incident to the Internet Division of the FBI and will meet with attorneys to assess meetings going forward.
- Ms. Brennan also discussed board engagement and how to do a better job of it.

Communication Committee -- Mary Witt

- Status of the "My Library Is..." (MLI) campaign. Campaign was started in 2019 to allow libraries to demonstrate their value to different stakeholders.
- Brian Smith discussed the MLI website (www.mylibraryis.org) showcasing resources, videos, and what various libraries are doing, especially their most popular feature the blog.
- Dan Bolstrom discussed grants for school libraries.
- MLI Advisory Team discussed blog posts; quarterly meetings, infographic template for advocacy purposes.
- Ms. Witt discussed reintroducing the *Elders of the Internet* campaign which was initially launched February of 2020 but due to the pandemic lost traction. Working with a marketing company and featuring actor Nick Offerman they created a video for this campaign which will be launched February 14, 2021, Library's Lovers Day.
- Plans are in place for a social media campaign.
- Talking points for all types and sizes of libraries and customizable for those who talk about their libraries to different stakeholders.
- Partnership with Illinois Heartland Library System which will augment membership participation on RAILS website and advocacy; create a survey for libraries to see if MLI is on track with campaign; expand blog.
- Nicole Zimmerman writes and edits the weekly e-news for RAILS and discussed what board members can do to help the MLI campaign; share on their social media accounts; share talking points with library staff, from their perspective, to ensure library's relevancy; share the *Elders of the Internet* video; consider contributing to blog.

State Library -- Greg McCormick

- FY21 budget-intent of the secretary's office to move forward with grant programs as they were appropriated in the summer of 2020.
- Any reduction in state budget would not affect grant programs.
- Intent to move forward with FY22 at same level as FY21.

New Business -- Dan Bolstrom

- Henry Geoge School of Social Studies is a non-profit school in Chicago and was accepted as a new RAILS member.

Board Engagement

- Ms. Brennan discussed the results of the EDI consultant's, Biz Lindsey, findings and how the board can be more engaged; expectation compared to the experience of being a board member.
- How can board members do better; what barriers exist; how can board members understand each other to make RAILS better.
- Ms. Cox suggested having a description of board member duties on the website for potential candidates to educate themselves before running.
- Having board diversity and better communication; lack of communication between library staff and board and other managers is a huge problem in most libraries.
- Working remotely creates issues in equity and inclusion.
- Library employees should be encouraged to run for the board.

Board Development

- Look at the RAILS website and talk about RAILS to various libraries.

RAILS BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

- New Lennox Library representative, Alex, reported his library voted to go fine-free in November 2020 and will go into effect March 2021.

Next meeting: Friday, February 26, 2021, at 1:00 pm via Zoom.

The Board briefly discussed the RAILS report. Dr. Winningham asked why the Chicago Public Libraries are not included in RAILS. Mr. Kong briefly explained that the Chicago Public Library has its own library system and the rest of the libraries in the state are divided into RAILS and the Heartland library systems.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Dr. Winningham expressed her appreciation for the library Board and its work and for being included as a trustee.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 pm a motion was made by Ms. Rivera-Pulex seconded by Ms. Mahmood to adjourn the regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Shabnam Mahmood, Board Secretary