

October 14, 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Skokie Public Library held virtually via Zoom, Wednesday, October 14, 2020.

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Prosperi, President, called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

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

Staff present: Laura McGrath, Deputy Director; Blythe Trilling, Finance Manager

Guest present: Reesheda Graham Washington, EDI Consultant

Observers present: Kassy Trejo; Gin Gaiser; unknown number

DISCUSSION WITH EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION CONSULTANT  
REESHEDA GRAHAM WASHINGTON

Ms. Graham Washington led a discussion with the trustees regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion at the library.

Mr. Griffin entered the meeting at 6:55 pm.

Mr. Shah entered the meeting at 6:57 pm.

Mr. Campanelli entered the meeting at 6:59 pm.

Andrew Berman and Alexander McLean entered the meeting at 7:01 pm.

Ms. Graham Washington left the meeting at 7:01 pm.

APPOINTMENT OF SHABNAM MAHMOOD TO FILL REMAINDER OF SUSAN  
GREER'S TERM AS LIBRARY TRUSTEE

Dr. Maks made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex to fill the remainder of Susan Greer's term as library trustee. A roll call vote and the motion was approved unanimously. The vote was 5 ayes and 0 nays.

APPOINTMENT OF NATALIE MILO-NICOLASIN TO FILL REMAINDER OF KAREN  
PARRILLI'S TERM AS LIBRARY TRUSTEE

Mr. Griffin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex to appoint Natalie Milo-Nicolasin to fill the remainder of Mrs. Karen Parrilli's term as library trustee. A roll call vote and the motion was approved unanimously. The vote was 5 ayes and 0 nays.

Mr. Pramod Shah, Village Clerk, swore in the two new library trustees.

Mr. Shah left the meeting at 7:07 pm.

#### COMMENTS FROM OBSERVERS

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

#### APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR AND CLOSED MEETINGS OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

Ms. Barbir made a motion, seconded by Dr. Maks to approve the minutes of the regular and closed meetings of September 9, 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 7 ayes and 0 nays.

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

#### COVID-19 Reopening Update

Stage D of our reopening plan continues, with expanded services offering browsing and checkout of materials in the building, as well as limited computer use by appointment. Overall, our safety guidelines for staff and patrons are working well, and we have made some adjustments along the way after more observation and staff feedback. Maps of the temporary arrangement of the collections on the east side of the first floor and the new second floor arrangement are now available for patrons, which will help create a better self-service environment. Safety staff are still greeting each visitor at the east entrance and pointing out our key safety guidelines. Other staff are stationed at service desks on the first and second floors (with clear shields and stanchions set up to keep them at a distance from patrons). Curbside services continue outside in the west parking lot using the bookmobile as a base of operations.

Starting in December when the renovation of the west side of the first floor is scheduled for completion, our plan is to allow patrons to enter the building through the west entrance to pick up their holds. This will allow us to pause outdoor curbside pickup services during the winter months, when cold temperatures, darker conditions, and snow/ice would make it difficult for staff to be stationed outdoors for long periods. Patrons will still have the option to pick up their holds at various bookmobile stops throughout the community.

We are currently quarantining all returned physical materials for three days, but have recently discussed the possibility of reducing this length of time to 24 hours, or eliminating the process of quarantining materials altogether due to scientific and medical consensus that the risk of transmission from touching objects or surfaces is very low. Health officials have clearly emphasized that the virus spreads mainly from person to person through air particles and aerosols, and that wearing masks and social distancing are the most important health guidelines to protect oneself from the coronavirus.

Access Services Manager Annabelle Mortensen provides a fuller explanation of our position in the attached memo.

### Renovation Update

The second floor is open for the public for browsing collections and limited computer use by appointment. Public reaction to the new renovated floor has been overwhelmingly positive, even with parts of the second floor not open yet and much of the furniture not available for use. One issue we are continuing to work through involves the dimensional letters on our signage failing due to the adhesive not being strong enough. After many conversations with ASI Signage, Andrew Berman Architect, and Neil Donnelly (graphic designer on the project), ASI Signage agreed to reproduce and reinstall all of the dimensional letters using a more aggressive adhesive to ensure we do not have any further issues. Some of the film panels on certain glass pieces throughout the second floor also needed to be replaced due to bubbles that were not flattening.

The west side of the first floor (Phase 2) is on schedule to be completed in late November. Progress has been made with drywall, priming and painting, tile work in the restrooms and café, lighting, some doors, and ceiling preparation. Installation of flooring should begin sometime next week. Work on all three public courtyards (i.e., south courtyard, center swan courtyard, and north courtyard) is almost complete, with progress being made on the lighting, hardscaping, and columns. The transition from Phase 2 to 3 of the project will likely require us to close in-building services temporarily in mid-late November. Curbside pickup will continue to be offered.

### Financial Outlook for FY 2020-2021

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

Through September, we received approximately \$5.75 million in property tax revenue. During our FY 2021 budget planning process, we projected \$6.2 million in property tax revenue for the fall, so we are still expecting approximately \$449,000 in additional property tax revenue. The extended deadline to pay property taxes in Cook County was October 1, 2020, so it may be possible that we will receive additional disbursements from Cook County later this month. Though we hope to receive the rest of our anticipated fall property tax revenue, it is good that we received most of our funding, as well as this year's per capita grant for \$80,980. In total, we have received 96.7% of the total 2019 tax levy, which amounts to \$13,029,875. We are staying in line with our reduced spending limits (i.e., 10% reduction of approved operating budget) and will continue to do so through the remainder of the fiscal year.

We received information from Cook County that each public library is eligible to receive up to \$5,000 of coronavirus relief funds from Cook County through the CARES Act. Part of the requirement to apply for this funding is Board approval of an intergovernmental agreement between the library and Cook County (see later agenda item). We have also requested that the Village of Skokie include a reimbursement of additional COVID-19 related expenditures from the library in

their application for CARES funding from Cook County, and the Village Finance Director has indicated that they will do so.

#### New Trustee Orientation

I met with both of our new trustees, Shabnam Mahmood and Natalie Milo-Nicolasin, over a series of meetings to provide a comprehensive orientation of the library and review the role of a library trustee. Both new trustees will be sworn in by Village Clerk Pramod Shah before the October Board meeting. The orientation included the following:

- The library's vision, mission, and strategic plan
- Our EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) efforts over the past five years
- An overview of the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act
- The library's Board-approved policies
- A detailed explanation of the library's finances and the reports the Board receives on a regular basis
- Background information about the renovation project
- A review of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- A tour of the library

#### EDI Consultation

A series of individual and group listening sessions are scheduled with EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) consultant Reesheda Graham Washington (RGW). Library staff are invited to participate in one or more sessions based on various affinities related to their identity or work at the library. We will also have two group sessions open to the public for Skokie residents and one group session specifically for community partners. At the start of the October Board meeting, RGW will join the Board for a discussion. After these listening sessions, RGW will create a report of her findings and recommendations.

#### Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

All staff are required by the State of Illinois to complete sexual harassment prevention training on an annual basis. We are using a training module called "Once & For All: Stopping Sexual Harassment at Work," with a specific version for managers and supervisors.

#### State of the Village

The Chamber of Commerce is holding its annual State of the Village event virtually on Wednesday, October 21 at 11:30 am. Mayor Van Dusen will discuss key economic development projects and budget issues. If you would like to attend, please let us know.

#### Tax Levy Ordinance

On Monday, November 16, 2020, I will attend the Village of Skokie's Board meeting as the Village Manager and Finance Director present the first reading of the 2020 tax levy ordinance. The library's total 2020 tax levy, approved by the Board in September, represents a 0% increase from 2019. The Property Tax Levy ordinance serves as formal notification to the Cook County Tax Extension Office

of the aggregate amount of property taxes to be levied from Skokie properties. The ordinance will be filed with Cook County upon adoption by the Village Board.

#### Per Capita Grant Requirements

The application for the FY 2021 Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Aid Grant requires the Board to review *Serving Our Public 4.0 Standards for Illinois Public Libraries* in its entirety. We will be required to indicate if the library meets, is making progress towards meeting, or does not meet the standards outlined in the publication. A PDF copy of *Serving Our Public 4.0* will be shared with the Board, and time will be set aside during an upcoming Board meeting to discuss the standards.

#### Review of Finance and Investment Policies

It is time to review the finance and investment policies to determine if any changes are needed. Finance Manager Blythe Trilling and I will review both policies before the November meeting and present revisions for Board consideration as needed. It would be helpful for the trustees to review the policies before the November meeting as well.

#### Discussion of Director's Report

Mr. Prosperi asked a question about the half-life of the virus. Dr. Maks explained that it is the amount of time it takes an organism to disintegrate and become inactive. Mr. Prosperi also asked Dr. Maks how long he would suggest materials be quarantined. Dr. Maks deferred to the study and what was recommended in Ms. Mortensen's report. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about the current process for returning books. Mr. Kong reviewed that process. He emphasized the focus on the safety of patrons and staff in terms of social distancing, masks, and limiting visits as being more important than quarantining materials at this point. The Village Health Department concurred with Mr. Kong's impressions regarding COVID-19 transmission at this point. Dr. Maks spoke of relying on the science. Mr. Kong asked Dr. Maks if he would be willing to participate in further discussions around these sorts of decisions. Dr. Maks said he would.

Ms. Barbir asked about how long the potential closing of the physical library building in November would be in order to transition from Phase 2 to Phase 3. Mr. Kong mentioned it might be two weeks but that things are a bit up in the air at this point. Curbside services would continue.

Mr. Prosperi asked if the library is anticipating more funding to come in from property taxes in the fall. Mr. Kong said he thought there might be. Mr. Prosperi said that would mean a shortfall of about \$450,000 of what was projected which is 93% or 94% of the total tax levy. Mr. Kong stated this is correct and will be taken into consideration when proposing the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Several trustees expressed interest in attending the State of the Village meeting.

#### UPDATE ON RENOVATION PROGRESS AND BUDGET

Andrew Berman and Josh Campanelli provided an update on the renovation progress and budget for the Board.

Mr. Griffin asked about how the accident involving the water sprinkler pipes has affected any of the project. Mr. Berman stated that the pipes have been replaced, the system has been tested and recharged, and is done as a matter of work. There was no change to the plans or modification to the design needed, but obviously a lot of time was spent dealing with the issue as it was unforeseen. He praised SMC's handling of it and their ability to keep the work going.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex thanked Mr. Kong for providing the budget spreadsheet to the Board. She found it very easy to understand where we are at this point. She asked a question about one of the figures on the spreadsheet which Ms. Trilling clarified for her.

Ms. Barbir asked about how much longer the project is expected to last. Mr. Kong is projecting that by the end of March the project should be completed. She thanked the team for their excellent work.

#### APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #10

The Board reviewed Construction Pay Application #10 and change orders #130-152. None were in amounts requiring 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 #10 AND CHANGE ORDERS #130-152, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

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

Messrs. Berman, McLean, and Campanelli left the meeting at 7:50 pm.

#### BILLS

Ms. Barbir asked about the bill for SYNCB/Amazon. Ms. Trilling explained that it is the Amazon bill. The Board requested a breakout for the Amazon bills from now on. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about a payment to EBSCO. Mr. Kong explained that the Research line includes subscription databases. EBSCO is an annual subscription for several of the library's database resources. She also asked about expenses for Library Furniture International in two different accounts. Mr. Kong explained the difference between the Capital and Furniture lines.

A motion was made by Ms. Rivera-Pulex, seconded by Ms. Milo-Nicolasin:

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.

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

Ms. Barbir made a motion, seconded by Ms. Mahmood:

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. PERSONNEL: PROMOTIONS: ANDREW HAZARD, PART-TIME MATERIALS HANDLER, ACCESS SERVICES, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 12, 2020; GREG SPIRATOS, PART-TIME MATERIALS HANDLER, ACCESS SERVICES, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 12, 2020; IQRA YOUSAF, PART-TIME MATERIALS HANDLER, ACCESS SERVICES, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 13, 2020; DEPARTURE: LYDIA MORRIS-DRUMMOND, PART-TIME PATRON SERVICES ASSISTANT, PATRON ENGAGEMENT, EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 24, 2020.

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

#### 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 3rd Quarter 2020.

- Fifth Third Bank Reserve Fund (\$1,094,190)
- IL Funds Reserve Account (\$5,722,691)
- IMET Reserve Fund (\$571)
- North Shore Community Bank Max Safe 4 CDs (\$1,064,354)
- First Bank Chicago CD (\$1,072,142)
- First Bank Chicago CD (\$1,077,332)

The total balance of the Reserve Fund as of September 30, 2020 is \$10,031,280. This is a 2.09% decrease from the balance at the start of the calendar year due to the 2019 Bond Debt Service payment made on June 1, 2020.

The spreadsheet provided to the Board included more detail about the accounts that make up the Reserve Fund and their returns.

The Board noted the Quarterly Investment Update.

#### APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN LIBRARY AND COOK COUNTY FOR CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUNDS

Under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the "CARES Act"), Cook County received a portion of the Coronavirus Relief Funds and chose to allocate some of the funds for

libraries. Cook County's Bureau of Finance announced that municipal libraries are eligible to receive \$5,000 in CARES funding from Cook County.

This reimbursement is meant to help cover costs related to keeping employees and patrons safe during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The library is requesting the full \$5,000 allowed to reimburse specific costs for plexiglass shields, hand sanitizer, and masks.

The application requires a resolution, passed by the library Board, authorizing the intergovernmental agreement provided to the Board. Mr. Kong recommended Board approval of the resolution to authorize the intergovernmental agreement between the library and Cook County for coronavirus relief funds.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LIBRARY AND COOK COUNTY FOR CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUNDS.

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

#### APPROVAL OF REVISED EMERGENCY CLOSING POLICY

Last month, the Board reviewed a draft of a revised emergency closing policy, which was last revised in March 2019 after the library closed due to the 2019 polar vortex. At that time, the Board decided to amend the policy to make it clear that the library would pay employees who are scheduled, but excused from work due to an emergency closing.

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the library continued to pay staff during the unexpected emergency closing since it was out of anyone's control. Most libraries handled staff compensation in a similar manner, and our staff have been very appreciative of the library's policy. When we started curbside pickup services, Mr. Kong made the decision to end our emergency closing status and the library began paying staff based on actual hours worked.

After some discussion during the August and September Board meetings, the Board requested that Mr. Kong work with the library's attorney to bring forth a revision to the policy for approval. The revision, prepared in consultation with our HR attorney from Robbins Schwartz, makes a clear distinction between how short-term emergency closings (30 days or less) are handled from long-term closings (more than 30 days). The revised language states that the Board would determine staff compensation in the case of a long-term emergency closing, and that staff would not be guaranteed payment of their previously scheduled time. The revision also clarifies that the policy is referring to a possible physical emergency closure since the library's virtual services would, presumably, still be available.

A motion was made by Dr. Maks, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex:

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE REVISED EMERGENCY



### CLOSING POLICY AS PRESENTED.

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

### APPROVAL OF DATES OF UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

The Board was provided with a calendar of Board meeting dates for 2021 and 2022.

Mr. Prosperi asked about how long Mr. Kong anticipates virtual meetings will continue. Mr. Kong said it will all depend on what the state and Governor recommend but he anticipates continuing virtual meetings for the foreseeable future.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE CALENDAR OF BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2021 AND 2022 AS PRESENTED.

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

### APPOINTMENT OF BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Mahmood volunteered herself for the position of Board Secretary.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPOINT SHABNAM MAHMOOD AS BOARD SECRETARY.

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

### COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Barbir asked a question about an email Board members received from Outlook 365 and Ms. Chavez clarified it was an update to the Board mailing list. Mr. Griffin apologized for being late to the meeting. Mr. Kong invited him to share his thoughts regarding EDI with Ms. Graham Washington if he has additional comments.

### ADJOURNMENT

At 8:16 pm, a motion was made by Dr. Maks, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex to adjourn the regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

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Shabnam Mahmood, Board Secretary