

November 11, 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Skokie Public Library held virtually via Zoom, Wednesday, November 11, 2020.

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Prosperi, President, called the meeting to order at 6:31 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, CEO of RGW Consulting, LLC.

Observers present: Bill Goldberg; Nancy Kim Phillips; Scott Harrod; Stacy Jaffe

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 14, 2020

Ms. Barbir proposed one small change to the minutes. The Board was in consensus about the change. Dr. Maks made a motion, seconded by Ms. Milo-Nicolasin to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 14, 2020, subject to additions and/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.

COMMENTS FROM OBSERVERS

Ms. Chavez read the comments received from Mr. Bill Goldberg.

DEBRIEFING OF EDI DISCOVERY REPORT

Reesheda Graham Washington attended and led the Board in a discussion of her discovery report.

Ms. Graham Washington left the meeting at 7:14 pm.

Ms. Kim Phillips left the meeting at 7:15 pm.

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

EDI Consultation

EDI consultant Reesheda Graham Washington of RGW Consulting, LLC. will be attending the November Board meeting from 6:30-7:30 pm to provide more context for the findings and

recommendations in her discovery report (attached). She will also join the management team and EDI committee, respectively, for debriefing sessions.

COVID-19 Reopening Update

With the transition between phases 2 and 3 of the renovation scheduled for the end of the month and beginning of December, staff are preparing to open the renovated west side of the first floor (and already renovated second floor) to the public on December 1. At that time, curbside pickup services will no longer be offered in the west parking lot through the bookmobile, but instead patrons will be able to pick up their holds just inside the west entrance. Patrons will also be able to browse and check out materials, though some of the youth collection will be in storage as the youth services area is being renovated. Computers will be available by appointment on the second floor. The plan is to open our normal hours of Monday-Friday 9 am-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm, and Sunday noon-6 pm. Masks and social distancing will be required of all patrons, and we will continue to limit the number of patrons allowed in the building at any given time and the duration of each visit. Due to all of the steps required to move into the west side of the first floor and prepare the east side of the first floor for construction, and the social distancing required for safety, the library will be closed for in-building services from November 16-November 30. Curbside pickup services will still be available for holds in the west parking lot through the bookmobile and some community bookmobile stops during this time, except for November 26 (closed for Thanksgiving) and November 30. Of course, as has been the case since mid-March, further COVID-19 mitigations required or suggested by state and local officials may force us to change some of these plans without much notice. I will continue to provide updates to the Board, library staff, and community as needed.

Renovation Update

Phase 2 (west side of the first floor and courtyards) of the renovation is scheduled for completion by the end of the month. Over the next few weeks, we will work with Shales McNutt Construction (SMC), Andrew Berman Architect (ABA), and various vendors to take care of the punchlist, shelving installation, collections, signage installation, and furniture delivery. ABA is expected to visit the library again the week of November 16 to inspect everything before we open the space to the public at the start of December. At that time, the focus will turn to phase 3 (east side of the first floor), including the youth areas and adjacent program rooms and offices, the east lobby area, and the Petty lobby area. During phase 3 (December-March), patrons will have access to the west side of the first floor and the second floor.

Financial Outlook for FY 2020-2021

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

We are on track to meet the reduced spending limits (i.e., 10% reduction of approved operating budget). The one line that will be over by the end of the fiscal year is the capital line. Rather than stick to the reduced budgeted amount, I recommend that we spend down the original budgeted amount for capital in our operating budget before spending out of our reserve fund.

Finance Manager Blythe Trilling and I will begin working on the first draft of the FY 2022 operating budget and present that to the Board in January.

FY 2020 Audit Update

Finance Manager Blythe Trilling is working with Lauterbach & Amen to wrap up our FY 2020 audit, and the Board will be asked to accept the audit during the December Board meeting. Since this is Lauterbach & Amen's first year working with us, there were some delays with the IMRF calculation and a restatement of our capital assets, neither of which should cause a delay next year. The auditors have filed an extension to submit our Annual Financial Report with the Illinois Comptroller.

Insurance

The full membership meeting of LIRA (Libraries of Illinois Risk Agency) will be held on Thursday, November 12. At that time, we will receive our insurance quotes for 2021 coverages (i.e., Property & Liability, Workers Compensation, Auto, Cyber Liability, Directors and Officers, etc.). In July, the LIRA service manager at Gallagher suggested that member libraries plan to budget renewal pricing for 2021 coverages to reflect a 30% to 40% potential increase due to the anticipated insurance marketplace. It now looks like they were able to negotiate renewal terms for LIRA that are less than what was forecasted, and the expected increase in our renewal pricing should be closer to 17%. The Board will be asked to approve the coverages during the December Board meeting.

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 the December Board meeting to discuss the standards.

Skokie Community Foundation Grant

The library is part of a grant project that was approved for \$5,000 in funding from the Skokie Community Foundation. Our Young Adult Services team will be working on a program series with JCFS Response for Teens. As Learning Experiences Manager Amy Koester explained, "The programs are titled "Connect, Transform, Act: Teens Take Action and Take Care," and teens in the program will discuss issues that impact them personally, investigate the roots of these problems, and work towards potential local solutions. Response will provide monthly mental health programming to support the teens' holistic well-being."

Healthcare Symposium: Coping with COVID-19

The library and other community partner organizations are supporting the Skokie Community Foundation's healthcare symposium for the public on Thursday, November 12 at 6 pm. In addition to hearing the latest updates about COVID-19 from former director of the Village of Skokie Health Department, Dr. Catherine Counard, participants will learn practical strategies for coping with the stress caused by the changes and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how they can also support

others through the challenges. The event will be held online via Zoom and participants will have the opportunity to break out into smaller groups based on several focus topics. Registration is being handled on the library's website.

Meeting with Senator Ram Villivalam

State Senator Ram Villivalam arranged a check-in meeting with local area library directors on November 16. I will attend and share updates about how we have served our community during the pandemic, the status of our renovation project, and plans for our ongoing EDI (equity, diversity, inclusion) efforts.

Little Free Libraries

Michelle Tuft, Director of the Skokie Park District, reached out to me to ask if the library would be interested in partnering with the Park District on setting up some "little free libraries" (i.e., neighborhood book exchanges) in some local parks. Matt MacKellar, Community Engagement Supervisor for Neighborhood Engagement, and I took part in a discussion to brainstorm some ideas and there is some positive momentum.

Discussion of Director's Report

Mr. Prosperi asked about the potential for limited seating in the library for senior citizens or others that may need a place to sit down. Mr. Kong responded that there are two benches available in the library for that exact reason.

Mr. Prosperi said he read that the amount of money from property taxes coming in this fall is about 7% lower than the usual amount. He asked if Mr. Kong anticipates the receipt of any additional taxes. Mr. Kong said there might be a little bit of money trickling in but he does not anticipate any additional large payment. Mr. Prosperi asked if Mr. Kong foresees a 7% reduction in next year's property tax collection as well. Mr. Kong stated that at this point he does. He also reminded the Board that the first look of the FY 2022 operating budget will go to the Board in January and will likely be reduced from what it has been in recent years. Mr. Kong stated he will be attending the upcoming tax levy presentation next week.

Mr. Goldberg and Ms. Jaffe left the meeting at 7:26 pm.

Andrew Berman entered the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Ms. Barbir asked about the high increase in business insurance costs. Mr. Kong responded there will be more information in the Board packet next month after his meeting with the insurance pool. She also asked for an explanation of what is included in cyber liability coverage, and Mr. Kong provided more information.

Mr. Griffin gave a summary of the upcoming COVID-19 health symposium, which the library helped organize and support.

Mr. Berman said that the renovation is moving along really well and that it will feel complete once the books are in place.

The Board decided to move up the approval of the millwork for the youth services area up on the agenda so that Mr. Berman could participate in the discussion.

APPROVAL OF MILLWORK FOR YOUTH SERVICES AREA

Custom millwork is required for the youth services area that will be renovated in phase 3 of the renovation. This millwork is needed to implement the designs for the east side of the area near the windows to the Village Green. There will be curved pieces that help define the “play” area for babies, toddlers, and other kids. Benches for kids and their parents and caregivers, built-in shelves for books and toys, and other elements (e.g., play kitchen) to provide opportunities for creative play will be included. In addition, the millwork order includes custom panels that can be used by kids, parents and caregivers, and library staff to create make-believe structures.

The bidding process for construction in 2019 included an alternate (#12) for this millwork and the low bid was \$145,780. This alternate was not included in the bids that were approved at the time, as the decision was made to handle payment for this millwork outside of the renovation budget with funds set aside from the capital line of the operating budget or the Reserve Fund, if necessary. There was also an expectation that the designs would be further developed by Andrew Berman Architect (ABA), in collaboration with library staff.

Mr. Kong recommended that the Board approve the cost for custom millwork for the renovated youth services area for a total of \$145,780. If approved, he recommended that this cost be paid with funds that were appropriated from the Reserve Fund during the approval of the FY 2021 budget.

Mr. Berman spoke about the scope of the custom millwork and its anticipated impact on the youth services area. Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked how all of the millwork will fit into the area because it has felt very crowded in the past. Mr. Berman spoke about how the millwork is not so much filling the space but defining it.

Mr. Griffin asked about the source of funding for this purchase. Mr. Kong explained that it would be coming from some money that has been already appropriated in the reserves by the Board.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE THE MILLWORK FOR THE YOUTH SERVICES AREA AT A TOTAL COST OF \$145,780 FROM THE RESERVE FUND.

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

APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #11

The Board reviewed Construction Pay Application #11 and change orders #153-157; 159-162; 164-165. None were in amounts requiring Board approval.

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

MOTION: THAT THE SKOKIE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPROVE CONSTRUCTION PAY APPLICATION #11 AND CHANGE ORDERS #153-157; 159-162; and 164-165, SUBJECT TO AUDIT.

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

Mr. Berman left the meeting at 7:50 pm.

BILLS

Ms. Barbir asked a question about an item in the 6270 Learning line of the bills. Mr. Kong explained that it was the bill for Lynda.com. He also explained the services provided by Lynda.com for Ms. Rivera-Pulex. Ms. Barbir also asked about a bill paid from the continuing education line, and Mr. Kong explained that it was for a staff-training event that occurred pre-COVID.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about some payments to Recorded Books, LLC. Mr. Kong explained that they are batch orders that are being placed for materials for the collection.

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 7 ayes and 0 nays.

YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGETARY STATUS

Mr. Griffin noted the year-to-date status of the salary line and asked whether there would be a savings in the salary line this year. Mr. Kong explained that there happened to be three pay periods in October, and that most staff were working their full hours. He also stated that he expects to see some savings in the salary line by the end of the year.

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

Ms. Milo-Nicolasin left the meeting at 7:59 pm.

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDING 10/31/20

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked a clarifying question about what was included in the "Other Operating Expenses" line and the reserves for capital projects line.

The Board noted the balance sheet for the six months ending 10/31/20.

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

Mr. Griffin made a motion, seconded by Dr. Maks:

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. GIFTS: \$18 FROM JON AND AGI HARTSTEIN IN MEMORY OF LOIS LEVEY;
3. PERSONNEL: HIRE: CHRIS CARTER, FULL-TIME CUSTODIAN, BUILDING SERVICES AND SAFETY, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 30, 2020; RETIREMENT: JAIME TREJO, PART-TIME CUSTODIAN, BUILDING SERVICES AND SAFETY, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 31, 2020; JUDY ZARTMAN, PART-TIME PATRON SERVICES ASSISTANT, PATRON ENGAGEMENT, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 12, 2020.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. There were 6 ayes and 0 nays.

APPROVAL OF REVISED FINANCE POLICY

Finance Manager Blythe Trilling and Mr. Kong reviewed the current Finance Policy, approved by the Board in November 2018, and have one recommendation to eliminate the Fine Arts Acquisition Fund. According to the existing policy, "Assets in the Fine Arts Acquisition Fund are classified as committed funds. This accounts for the proceeds of specified revenue sources that are committed to fine art acquisition purposes."

The account was opened in 2010 with a balance of \$13,467.26, and as of the end of October, the balance was \$13,887.89, so there has not been a lot of activity. The last donation received for the fund was in April 2016 for \$100.00. If the library is in a position to acquire fine art in the future, it can be budgeted for and taken out of the general operating fund or reserve fund.

Mr. Kong recommended Board approval of the revised Finance Policy.

There was discussion among the Board about the Fine Arts Fund. The Board came to the consensus that the Finance Policy should remain unchanged for the time being.

REVIEW OF INVESTMENT POLICY

The Board last approved a revision of the Investment Policy in November 2018. The policy states that the Board should review the policy every two years. Finance Manager Blythe Trilling and Mr. Kong have reviewed the current policy and do not have any changes to recommend.

However, one item that the Board may want to consider is how to handle the language in the policy about any possible investment in the Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund (IMET). The policy currently states that investment in IMET cannot exceed \$1,000. This was put into place to allow the library to keep a small balance in our IMET accounts, but the Executive Director of IMET recently made clear to us that we do not need to maintain our accounts to receive disclosures and distributions. If the Board is open to additional investment in IMET, it would make sense to remove the \$1,000 cap. If the Board is not interested in additional investment in IMET in the future, it may make sense to close out our accounts and remove IMET from the list of authorized investments in the policy.

There was discussion among the Board about IMET and the library's investments. The Board came to the consensus to leave the Investment Policy as is for the time being.

UPDATE ON MOVING SERVICES

In November 2019, the Board approved Hallett Movers' bid of \$179,875 for renovation moving services. The first part of the phase 1 move (moving the bulk of our second floor collections to remote storage) was completed as originally planned in late December 2019. However, before we could get to the second part of phase 1 (moving the second floor collection back into the library) the pandemic hit and our plans for the end of phase 1, as well as for phases 2 and 3, had to be substantially altered.

Due to pandemic-related construction delays, we were unable to bring back the second floor collections until late July and incurred two additional months of warehouse storage fees. Our original plans for internally relocating some of the first floor collections during phase 2 had to be altered in order to make the Radmacher Room available to quarantine and process returned materials. Plans to have library staff shift several large sections of the collection proved unfeasible due to the need to complete the necessary moves for phase 2 quickly and the need to keep everyone physically distanced. The move occurred during a time when nonessential businesses were closed, and we were under a stay at home order, so bringing in enough staff to move hundreds of shelves of materials was impossible.

To recapture some of the time lost to construction delays, phases 3a and 3b have been combined which means that our original plan to house much of the youth collection in the Radmacher Room, Petty Lobby, and East Lobby is no longer possible. We will need to send some youth materials to offsite storage during phase 3.

The total cost of moving services is now \$219,607, an increase of \$39,732.

- Phase 1 increased \$8,280 for two extra months of storage and some unanticipated shelving moves.
- Phase 2 increased \$27,752 for the shifting of more materials than originally planned as well as the moving of more materials to offsite storage, extra shelving moves needed to

compensate for the loss of the Radmacher Room, and an extra month of warehouse fees due to a one-month delay in the move-in date.

- Phase 3 increased \$3,700 to cover sending some youth materials to the warehouse.

Hallett Movers has been extremely accommodating throughout all of the needed changes and each move has gone as smoothly as can be expected under the unique circumstances caused by the pandemic.

Ms. Rivera-Pulex asked about the original budget for the moving expenses. Mr. Kong stated it was \$180,000.

Mr. Prospero stated he would sign off on the change order.

COMMENTS FROM TRUSTEES

Ms. Barbir stated she is pleased with the fact that the bookmobile is providing free Wi-Fi at stops. She would like to know if it is being used and how that is being communicated to community members. Mr. Kong said he had not yet heard from staff, but will look into it. Mr. Prospero asked about the ability to access the library's WiFi from the parking lot. Mr. Kong said that IT is working on extending WiFi to the village green. Ms. Barbir praised it as a response to issues of inequity. Ms. Barbir asked if the digital divide is a topic of conversation at the Village in Mr. Kong's experience. Mr. Kong said that he would have a conversation with Mr. Lockerby with regards to the digital divide and how the library and Village might be able to work together to find solutions.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:33 pm a motion was made by Ms. Barbir, seconded by Ms. Rivera-Pulex to adjourn the regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Shabnam Mahmood, Board Secretary