HIGHLAND PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Meeting
May 19, 2026

CALL TO ORDER
President Hoffman, presiding, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE
Members Present: Rich Basofin, Rob Biederman, Irene Hoffman, Rebecca Nathanson, Ashley Lapin Olian, Rob Olian, Steve Schutt, Carol Wolfe
Members Absent: Peter Zotos
Others Present: Claudia Fincher, Graham Harwood, T. J. Moaton, Pamela Siegel**,** Heidi Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Trustee Lapin Olian moved and Trustee Biederman seconded a motion to approve the April 21, 2026 regular meeting minutes, April 2026 Bill List, and the April 2026 Financial Reports. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Basofin, Biederman, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Nathanson, Olian, Schutt, Wolfe
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT
President Hoffman's report included the following:

- President Hoffman noted the current strategic plan extends through 2027. She and Director Smith discussed the need for a bridge plan to extend the timeline until the Library has more experience operating the addition and the new building is fully in use. The revised timeline would extend planning through 2028, with implementation beginning in 2029. President Hoffman, Trustee Schutt, and Director Smith will begin brainstorming in June regarding the components that will contribute to the next strategic plan.
- President Hoffman reported that the campaign will officially conclude on June 30. Plans include celebrating exceeding the campaign goal, recognizing and thanking donors, evaluating the campaign process and identifying improvements for future campaigns, the ribbon cutting event, and a preview event for donors. Trustees were encouraged to share thoughts with President Hoffman and Director Smith.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Director Smith's report included the following:

- Director Smith shared an update on the Library's partnership with Take No Bullying to sponsor a mural in the Teen Room. She is hoping that there is time to engage with teens who will use the space, in partnership with the high school. Additional details will be shared as the project progresses. Director Smith will forward the artist's website to trustees.
- Director Smith provided an update on the triennial review of impact fees involving the Park District, School Districts, and the Library. The participating entities identified a consultant to

assist with the review under the leadership of the Park District. During the process, the group became aware of proposed Illinois House Bill 5626, which could establish a standardized formula for impact fees statewide. Illinois Senate Bill 4200 was subsequently introduced as an alternative intended to provide an equitable method for managing and calculating impact fees. In light of the pending legislation, the group has decided to pause moving forward with the consultant until there is clarity regarding the legislative outcome. Director Smith noted that the participating government units agreed to allocate consultant costs proportionately based on the existing impact fee structure. She will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available.

- Trustee Biederman referenced a Chicago Tribune article regarding efforts to reduce the costs of electronic resources through Illinois legislation and asked who initiated the effort. Director Smith stated that she believes it remains a grassroots effort taken up by the Illinois Library Association.

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair Biederman reported that the committee met to discuss the proposed 2027 budget. The preliminary draft budget, originally reflecting a 7.8% increase, was reduced to 7.2%. On the revenue side, the committee discussed the possibility of using gift funds to reduce the levy request. On the expense side salaries represent the largest area of increase. The draft budget currently includes a proposed 2.5% salary increase, with an overall 4% personnel increase that includes two new full-time employees. Some City Council Members asked that the Library favor industry benchmarks over applying the City's non-union salary increase as its standard.

Chair Biederman further reported that health insurance is the largest component of personnel-related costs, with projected premium increases of approximately 20% next year, compared to 5% last year. The next largest overall expense category is collections, for which an 8% increase is proposed in alignment with Illinois public library standards. Increases in maintenance of building expenses are attributed to the expansion, as the additional square footage will result in proportionately higher operating costs. Proposed capital expenses total $269,000. Chair Biederman noted that the next committee meeting is scheduled for June 2. By that time, the committee expects to have additional information from the City, and Director Smith will continue refining the budget to bring the increase closer to 7%.

Trustee Olian stated that he does not support using gift funds to reduce the levy request. He expressed the view that gift funds should be reserved for projects or purchases the Board would not feel comfortable funding through taxpayer dollars, and that the true cost of operating the Library should be reflected in the budget. Trustee Olian also noted that the Library's portion of the overall property tax bill and the size of the increase, is significantly smaller than that of other taxing bodies. He commented that the Board should not hesitate to request an 8.5% increase if necessary to maintain the collections and materials budget at appropriate levels.

Trustee Olian stated that there is value in maintaining consistency with the City's general approach to salary increases rather than relying solely on comparisons with other libraries. He expressed concern that using HR Source averages as the primary benchmark can create an ongoing cycle in which libraries below the average continually increase salaries to meet the average, only to face the same issue again the following year. He noted that this creates an escalator effect that may or may not be reasonable. Trustee Olian suggested that HR Source data may be more appropriately used to reflect gradations among different staff positions rather than to determine overall salary increases.

Director Smith noted that the comments and questions shared during the meeting differed significantly from the committee's prior discussion and stated that it would be helpful for the Board to provide additional guidance regarding its expectations for recommendations coming from the administration, particularly with respect to compensation, the use of gift funds, and the overall levy request.

Discussion continued regarding total employee compensation, including the Library's generous healthcare plan and comparatively low employee premium contributions.

DEVELOPMENT LIAISONS

Trustee Lapin Olian reported that the fundraising campaign is nearing completion and has exceeded its goal, reaching $1,027,918 through 376 gifts, with 17 outstanding pledge balances. Trustee Lapin Olian noted that several gift agreements will be presented for Board review and approval next month. One agreement requiring approval at the current Board meeting includes a minor modification, with the donor requesting the addition of the word "Family" to the naming language.

At their most recent meeting, Trustee Lapin Olian, President Hoffman, and Director Smith discussed the approval process for plaque wording. They agreed that Director Smith may approve minor, non-material wording changes without bringing the revisions back to the Board for approval.

Trustee Lapin Olian also reported that a draft Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared for the Friends of the Library. The draft includes support for the Makerspace as well as several areas within Youth Services. Discussions regarding other donor gifts are ongoing.

The campaign letter mailed in April generated approximately $36,000 in donations.

Trustee Wolfe moved and Trustee Olian seconded a motion to approve the Herz naming agreement as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Basofin, Biederman, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Nathanson, Olian, Schutt, Wolfe
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

EXPANSION LIAISONS

Graham Harwood of CCS provided a construction update. Roof panels have been completed. Backfill beneath the floor has been installed, along with conduit and underground plumbing, and concrete pouring is expected to begin this week. Exterior insulation and the vapor barrier have also been completed, with exterior masonry work scheduled to begin shortly. In addition, the elevator foundation beneath the first floor of the Library has been poured.

Mr. Harwood reported that work has shifted to the main floor renovation in Youth Services. Demolition has been completed, and crews are currently working on mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Ceiling tiles are being tested this week for hazardous materials. The main floor renovation is projected to be completed around the same time as the addition.

Construction of the stairs is expected to begin in approximately one month, in June. Mr. Harwood also reported that the project team continues to address water leakage issues in the lower level. An investigation determined that the damage is related to existing pipework and roof drains. The remainder of the lower-level work is complete, with the exception of the floor finish and corridor. Additional solutions to stop the leakage are being evaluated.

Watermain work has been pushed back due to masonry blocking the access path. Mr. Harwood noted that this is not currently affecting the project schedule's critical path.

Looking ahead, exterior wall construction will continue, concrete will be poured, and framing work will begin.

Mr. Harwood reported that Allowance No. 3 has been processed. Pay Application No, 9 has been paid, and Pay Application No.10 has been approved pending receipt of waivers. Total project costs to date are approximately $3.4 million.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Lapin Olian moved and Trustee Wolfe seconded a motion to approve a financial services contract with ATA Group, LLP. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Basofin, Biederman, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Nathanson, Olian, Schutt, Wolfe
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

OTHER COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Schutt moved and Trustee Biederman seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. President Hoffman, presiding, adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: Basofin, Biederman, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Nathanson, Olian, Schutt, Wolfe
Nays: None
MOTION CARRIED

Submitted by: Pamela Siegel
Reviewed by: Heidi Smith, Ashley Lapin Olian
Approved: June 16, 2026