

HIGHLAND PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 13, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

President Wolfe, presiding, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Alicia De La Cruz, Irene Hoffman, Ashley Lapin Olian, Rob Olian, Bill Ott, Nancy Sawle-Knobloch, Carol Wolfe

Members Absent:

Others Present: Noah Apley, Pamela Siegel, Heidi Smith, Kim Stone

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Hoffman moved and Trustee Sawle-Knobloch seconded a motion to approve the August 9, 2022 minutes, August Bill List, and the August 2022 Financial Reports on the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Ayes: De La Cruz, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Olian, Ott, Sawle-Knobloch, Wolfe

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Wolfe's report included the following:

- President Wolfe welcomed Alicia De La Cruz as the newest trustee to the Library board.
- The Library board's page on the City's website will be updated with additional information on trustee responsibilities.

Councilwoman Stone questioned whether the number of trustees will remain at the reduced number of seven or return to nine. Director Smith reported that she understands the City is still reviewing the situation and will make a decision shortly.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Director Smith thanked President Wolfe for talking through the Social Worker in the Library program. She also thanked Cindy Castro, from Ascension, for joining the board meeting. Ms. Castro is currently the Manager of the Social Worker in the Library program at Evanston Public Library and was previously at Chicago Public Library. After the July 4th tragedy, Director Smith queried colleagues in the area about what the library response and service could be to the community. One of the things that came up immediately was Evanston's Social Worker in the Library program. After speaking with the interim Director at Evanston Public Library about the program, she was introduced to Cindy Castro to learn more about the program. At the same time, members of the team were conducting research on a national basis about social workers in the library programs. In addition, members of the team were in communication with the Highwood Library and were monitoring what was happening in day-to-day operations at the Highland Park Public Library. Director Smith is recommending moving forward with the Social Worker in the Library program.

Highwood Public Library reported over 500 service requests during the month of August. The residents were not limited to Highwood residents but included residents from the greater community. Director Smith strongly feels that because of what has been happening in Highland Park and surrounding areas, and the work being done nationally as well as locally, a social worker would be a great benefit both to the community as well as staff in times of need. In the past two months, there are more patrons struggling with keeping tempers under control and having appropriate behavior in public spaces. Not only would a social worker aid members of the community in connecting them with resources but would support the staff on how to have a trauma informed service response.

Director Smith turned the meeting over to Ms. Castro. After a brief introduction, Ms. Castro received questions from board members.

Trustee Olian asked the following questions: Does the Highland Park Public Library want to have a Social Worker in the Library program? Where do we find that person and how will it be paid for? Is this something that needs to bid out? Director Smith will look at other companies that might outsource social workers as well. She will talk to the attorney to find out if an RFQ is needed or request for proposal.

Director Smith thanked Ms. Castro and she left the meeting.

Ms. Sawle-Knobloch stated when it comes to case management, community connections are more important than library experience. She suggested contacting Rob Rubin for deescalating training for staff.

Director Smith summarized that there is Board consensus to have social worker support in the Library but more information is needed to know how to introduce it in the most cost effective way using all of the expertise already in place. She will submit a proposal to the Highland Park Community Foundation tomorrow.

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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Director Smith's report included the following:

- Director Smith reported that Cary Rositas-Sheftel will begin her role as Assistant Director on Wednesday, September 28.
- The Library has an annual membership with HR Source which includes access to salary surveys, use of an employee hotline, and legal advice. Director Smith contracted to host an HR partner hourly to support staff with employee relations. Jessica Frank started today and will have office hours for staff beginning next week.
- Director Smith met with Randy Braverman of Facility Engineering Associates and requested a proposal of a security assessment of the facility and procedures. He is currently working with District 112 as well as the Park District.
- Last month Director Smith reported to the board that library staff was hosting a book discussion program on a graphic novel Gender Queer. It is currently one of the most challenged books in America. It was a nice, intimate discussion and no questions or concerns came to the Director.
- The Downer's Grove Public Library has been in the press recently for a Drag Queen Bingo night Program for teens. They were communicating to the community that they see all members of the community and welcome everyone. The program was canceled because of active threats received. It is on the list for the Operations and Policy Committee to look into a Program Policy, similar to the Collection Policy.

- The Literary Fest was held at The Lot last Saturday. The Library had a booth with a book challenge game. Over 100 people participated in the game. The Youth Department presented a storytime. The Friends of the Library sponsored a storyteller for the event.
- On October 8, the Library will host an event in partnership with Working Together, Sister Cities, the Highwood Library, and the Art Center, to name a few. The event will be held throughout the Library to celebrate Spanish Heritage month. It's a month-long initiative in the community and there's a calendar poster with all the events.
- Two patrons were suspended. One suspension was for 30 days for disruption, loudness, and inappropriate language. The second suspension was for six months. The patron was belligerent, intoxicated, and threw paper at a staff member.

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Trustee Lapin-Olian reported the Committee reviewed nine proposals for architectural services and met to review them. They narrowed it down to three: Product Architecture + Design; Sheehan, Nagel, Hartray Architects; and Studio GC Architecture + Interiors. All three had library experience. An RFP has been requested from all three. An addendum was made to the RFQ today and the deadline for submission was extended to September 21. Special board meetings are scheduled for September 29 and October 3 to select the architect.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Director Smith has been working with Laurie Skinner and Nancy Webster on a budget and grant proposal to the Illinois State Library to support the Library with curating, maintaining and providing access to the July 4th collection as part of the archives. It includes physical artifacts, documents, digital files, internet news footage, and social media. Nancy Webster, staff archivist, has been working on a budget including materials needed for proper storage of artifacts and documents. The overall cost of the grant is \$25,000. Through this grant, the staff archivist will be able to support this work. The long-term plans for the physical materials will warrant further communication between the City, Historical Society, and the Library as part of the current partnership. Director Smith is seeking the consensus of the Board to move forward with the grant proposal and archiving materials from July 4. The Board agreed to move forward with the project. There may be a need for additional staff hours in the future. Director Smith will operate within the budget but there may be some flexing as the work moves forward.

Director Smith spoke to Julie Logan about the grant and whether there should be a change in the 2023 budget. Ms. Logan recommended this would be the time to reflect any changes to the budget presentation. Three changes are proposed to reflect grant income. The expenditures and revenues balance each other.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Lapin-Olian moved and Ms. Hoffman seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. President Wolfe, presiding, adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Ayes: De La Cruz, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Olian, Ott, Sawle-Knobloch, Wolfe

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED

Submitted by: Pamela Siegel

Reviewed by: Heidi Smith