

HIGHLAND PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
October 11, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

President Wolfe, presiding, called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.

**Trustee De La Cruz made a motion and Trustee Sawle-Knobloch seconded a motion to approve remote attendance for Trustee Olian due to business and family matters. The motion passed unanimously.**

ATTENDANCE

**Members Present:** Alicia De La Cruz, Irene Hoffman, Ashley Lapin Olian, Rob Olian (remote), Nancy Sawle-Knobloch, Carol Wolfe

**Members Absent:** Bill Ott

**Others Present:** Noah Apley, Cary Rositas-Sheftel, Pamela Siegel, Heidi Smith

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Trustee Hoffman moved and Trustee Lapin Olian seconded a motion to approve the September 13, 2022 minutes, September 29 minutes, October 3 minutes, September Bill List, September 2022 Financial Reports, FY23 Annual Calendar, FY23 Board Dates, and renewed Memorandum of Understanding with Highwood Public Library on the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ayes: De La Cruz, Hoffman, Lapin Olian, Olian, 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 attended the Friends quarterly meeting. The Friends mailing campaign will be a postcard with a QR code rather than a letter this year. They approved funds for all the fall programs requested by staff. The Book Nook sale is cancelled on October 29 due to early voting and the Halloween Railroad.
- President Wolfe formed a Nominating Committee which includes President Wolfe, Trustee Hoffman, and Trustee Sawle-Knobloch. They will meet prior to the November board meeting to prepare a slate of officers.
- New library emails have been established for all trustees and should be used exclusively.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Director Smith's report included the following:

- Director Smith reported she distributed the Library Strategic Plan Activities Report for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters. Highlights include reports of support of the community with current events, connecting with best-selling authors, supporting students with learning opportunities, connecting people to creative and fun experiences, enhancing services for Spanish speakers and Spanish language learners, supporting people with technology skills, and ensuring services are compassionate and

helpful to the community. Director Smith applauded the Facilities Manager, Chad Stechly, on the work he has coordinated to ensure the building, mechanicals, and facade are in the best working order so the need for repairs is minimal. He has brought some work inhouse, resulting in significant cost savings on an annual basis.

- Director Smith emailed a monthly draft format for a future monthly report on activities and statistics. Directors are required to share this report monthly to meet a standard requirement of ILA's Book of Standards for grants. The report will include announcements, highlights, new resources, programs, services, and an update on library safety. Staff training, new and departing staff, patron comments, HPPL in the News, and library data are already included in the monthly report but may be reorganized. Director Smith hopes to include more statistics next month. In future, an annual report will be shared with the community.

### OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Director Smith's report last month on the Social Worker in the Library program focused on the "Why," what the community needs. The consensus of the Board was to move forward with the program, but they requested more information on the "how" and "what." Director Smith asked Assistant Director Rositas-Sheftel to report on the research compiled in the last couple of weeks. Director Rositas-Sheftel spoke with national and local trusted partners to learn more about the implementation of the Social Worker in the Library program.

Assistant Director addressed the "What." The Social worker should be able to identify and address immediate needs and refer patrons to community resources provided by local organizations. This person should help with recommendations for programs and services to better meet the unique and unmet needs of the community, should be able to form support groups in a culturally relevant manner, and seek out and leverage relationships with community partners. In addition, this person should ensure and support appropriate training for library staff on topics such as trauma informed approach, de-escalation techniques, and emotional first aid.

Assistant Director Rositas-Sheftel discussed the pros and cons for hiring a social worker as part of the library staff (FTE) or contracted with an outside organization. She also explored a Social Worker Colocation modality where the Library offers space during specific hours to community organizations. The recommendation is to hire a social worker as part of the Highland Park Public Library staff. This will ensure the Library is serving the unmet needs of the community.

As Director Smith reported last month, there are three leads for grant funding but nothing is confirmed yet. Two leads are good prospects for partial or full funding. The back-up plan would be to use unrestricted gift funds to fund all or part of the initiative. Another option would be for the board to review the budget after 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter to restate the budget or use gift funds. Director Smith asked the Board if it would be acceptable for the Library to move forward with the program now. Trustee Olian stated that he's more comfortable with the social worker being on staff versus a contractor. He reported there is money available in the salary line so it is not necessary to wait from a cash flow perspective. President Wolfe agreed with Trustee Olian. She stated that if the Social Worker in the Library program is determined a priority, the money will be made available in the budget. Director Smith will move forward with the consensus of the Board and will come back to the Board with funding options.

Director Smith reported the number of book challenges in America has been increasing and has become concerning to ALA, public libraries, and school libraries. The Library's Collection Policy includes Freedom to Read as a top priority. In response to all the challenges and in honor of Banned Books Week, Chicago Public Library has created a Book Sanctuary program. Director Smith suggested that, at the very least, the Board could discuss the Library's current policies in support of Freedom to Read and Freedom to

View. Another option would be to pass a resolution to become a book sanctuary. Additionally, the Library Board could get support of the City Council, possibly with their own resolution. Finally, as part of Banned Books Week every September, the Library could reaffirm the policies. It's an opportunity for the community to understand the approach.

Trustee Hoffman reported this is the highest rate of banned books ALA has seen in 20 years. She suggests the Library be proactive in getting the conversation out and has three suggestions. The first is to consider a Book Sanctuary resolution and get City Council to endorse it. The second would be to review the Reconsideration of Library Materials policy. The third would be to offer training to staff on how to talk to patrons who request a book be removed from the shelf.

Trustee Olian prefers a Freedom to Read statement versus Book Sanctuary. Book Sanctuary can be confusing - stories don't need a safe place; people need a safe space to read. He suggested using the Austin example for a resolution. President Wolfe recommended that the O & P Committee review the policy and work on a proclamation.

President Wolfe reported the last item on the agenda is the approval of the architectural firm for the 2025 expansion project.

**Trustee Lapin Olian moved and Trustee Sawle-Knobloch seconded a motion to approve hiring StudioGC as the architectural firm for the 2025 expansion project. The motion passed unanimously.**

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

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED stated

Director Smith will inform all firms who submitted proposals and speak to StudioGC about preparing a contract for the first phase of the project.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Sawle-Knobloch moved and Trustee Lapin Olian seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. President Wolfe, presiding, adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

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

Nays: None

MOTION CARRIED

Submitted by: Pamela Siegel

Reviewed by: Heidi Smith