

**LAKE FOREST LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 6:30 pm**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Jim Clifton welcomed all and called the meeting to order on February 13, 2024, at 6:38 pm in the Kasian Room, Lake Forest Library. He announced that the delay is due to video recording difficulties related to the loss of internet connectivity.

**ROLL CALL**

Trustees present: Jim Clifton, JoAnn Desmond, Josh Jackson, John F. Johnson, Bob Shaw, Vince Sparrow, Heather Strong and Emily Van Bel. Trustee Sue Shattock absent. Eight trustees in attendance; a quorum was present.

Library staff present: Ishwar Laxminarayan, Executive Director; Heidi Krueger, Director of Patron Services; Sameer Notta, Finance Officer; Jim Lee, Facilities Manager; Lorie Roher, Head of Youth Services; Joy Schmoll, Head of Communications.

Visitors: Mark Saran, Lake Forest Library Foundation; Peter Schoenmann, Parma Conservation (mural restoration).

**NEW TRUSTEE WELCOME- VINCENT SPARROW**

President Clifton welcomed new Trustee Vince Sparrow to the Library's Board of Trustees. Vince recently served as Chair of the City's Audit Committee (2019-2022) and has a very impressive record of community service in Lake Forest including stints on the Lake Forest Symphony Board (1996 – 2000), Gorton Community Center Board (2002 – 2008) and the Lake Forest Caucus (2009 – 2015). He also has a passion for 3D printing and has already met with Chad Clark to further explore his interests.

Trustee Sparrow responded that he is a long-time resident of Lake Forest and happy to be here.

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

President Clifton also welcomed everyone to the first library board meeting of calendar year 2024. He shared that we have a full agenda of items to discuss today, particularly a review of the new strategic plan draft and an overview of several capital projects under consideration. He shared that he was very happy to see that work on the restoration of the Remisoff Murals has started in the rotunda. And President Clifton acknowledged that it was especially heartwarming to see the creativity of our children displayed so expressively in the gallery of ducklings!

**OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

None.

**CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None

**CORRESPONDENCE REPORT AND PATRON COMMENTS**

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President Clifton invited Executive Director Laxminarayan to share any highlights of the patron comments and the articles attached in the packet. He included the few critical as well as the positive public comments in the packet. He also shared some of the good comments about exam week and library programs. Director Laxminarayan also highlighted a couple of articles in the packet on what public libraries are focusing on across the country, including staff development and compensation, and building maintenance issues. The article, *Hungry For Connection*, focuses on how library programs are part of a national strategy to combat loneliness, a major public health epidemic.

Trustee Shaw asked if Director Laxminarayan was surprised by any of the information in the article. He responded that the importance of staff development was increasingly reported in the library literature.

#### APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

President Clifton asked if there are any questions or comments on the Consent Agenda. Director Laxminarayan requested to delete the last two sentences in the Minutes under Staff Presentation: Behind the Scenes: Interlibrary Loan Operations by Jeannie Kennedy. Trustee Johnson asked about clarification of revenue on the finance report that was answered by Finance Officer Nota.

Trustee Johnson moved and Trustee Van Bel seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as edited.

- a. Approve February 13, 2024, Agenda
- b. Approve December 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes with the deletion of the last two sentences (pg. 2 of 4) in the section on Staff Presentation: Behind the Scenes: Interlibrary Loan Operations
- c. Approve December 2023 Financial Report
- d. Approve January 2024 Financial Report
- e. Approve January 9, 2024, Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Omnibus Roll Call vote on items a through e. All Ayes. Motion passed.

#### LIBRARY STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT PRESENTATION – HEIDI KRUEGER, DIRECTOR OF PATRON SERVICES

President Clifton invited Heidi Krueger, Director of Patron Services to present a Statistical Snapshot of the Library over the past 5 years. He indicated that it was very instructive as we begin our strategic planning process to understand recent trends in library usage since the pandemic, and brainstorm ways we may respond. Highlights of the presentation include the following:

- a. Collection sizes and expenditures were reviewed. Print material purchases declined while electronic purchases have increased. Trustee Clifton asked if there was a way to measure the turnover rate of the collection. Trustee Sparrow asked about what impact inflation has had on our collections and Director Krueger indicated that increased costs are mostly related to electronic purchases. Trustees Strong and Shaw asked about interlibrary loan and going outside our interlibrary consortium. There are 30 libraries that are a part of the interlibrary loan system, and this number is growing giving our patrons increased access to significant resources outside our local facility.

- b. Patron users have increased about 15% since May.
- c. Library visits are trending up since last year but not as high as pre-pandemic. The system used to count patrons prior to the last two years likely resulted in skewed numbers on the chart and double counts. It is expected that in person visits are down in general due to the increase in electronic availability of resources and automatic renewal of library materials resulting in a reduced need to visit the library.
- d. Desk Top computer usage is showing a small increase from last year but not as high as in 2019. People usually do not have to wait to use the computers and Facilities Manager Lee reported that an analysis of usage and need will be studied prior to determining the number of new computers to purchase with capital funds.
- e. WIFI sessions are down because people tend to continue to use their cell plans.
- f. Website visits have increased substantially.
- g. Program in person attendance has been affected by the pandemic and many pivoted to online programming. It has been increasing lately when people are seeking more in person programming. Trustee Johnson noted that we have had fewer programs this year with higher attendance.
- h. Reference Questions are now more consistently tracked since it was difficult to know how the numbers were collected prior to 2023.
- i. Tutorials in the media lab, one on one appointments, and bibliographic Instruction is moving upwards this year.

Trustee Johnson requested that in the future it would be informative to separate out the children's, young adult, and adult collections and trends. Director Krueger indicated that she has that information available.

#### ILLINOIS PUBLIC LIBRARY PER CAPITA GRANT APPLICATION FY 2024

Director Laxminarayan provided background information on the Application and any changes from previous years. The Lake Forest Library receives an annual grant of about \$28,000 from the state of Illinois after this application is approved to be spent on the areas designated by the library.

Consistent with the annual certification process for the Per Capita and Equalization Aid Grant Application process, Trustee Jackson moved, and Trustee Shaw seconded the motion to agree to the terms of the Grant Application and to authorize Director Laxminarayan to submit the application on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees.

Roll call vote. All ayes. Motion passes.

#### LONG RANGE PLANNING: DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN – 1<sup>ST</sup> REVIEW

Director Laxminarayan stated that the library staff was involved in the preparation of this draft of a new strategic plan. He indicated that some areas of it still need to be fleshed out, so he wanted to provide this opportunity for the trustees to provide input into the initial draft that will be further developed in coming weeks after discussions with staff and the Long-Range Planning Committee. Considerable Board discussion followed.

Planning Committee Chair, Trustee Shaw, referenced the City's survey, which provided macro data that helped to inform the first draft at a high level. The Planning Committee's Intention is to follow up with more data specific to our own needs. Director Laxminarayan drew upon staff input to develop the first

draft. Trustee Shaw stated that the library is becoming more data driven and the Planning Committee's hope is to be collecting it at the micro level. He indicated that over time the library should be able to track the metrics of performance as it hasn't been done in the past. Trustee Shaw expressed that he is very excited with the work product and looking forward to the next version at the March meeting and final approval at the April Board meeting.

The goal is to have a living document and one that is an integral part of the Board meeting for review and discussion. Director Laxminarayan envisions a summary one-page tri-fold document to hand out with regular tracking reports for the Board at our monthly meetings. The library is considering investing in a new tool to assist with acting on the data that we collect and allows us to connect with users to match messaging to the targeted audience.

Trustee Johnson would encourage the staff and trustees to look at page 7 and identify three levels of prioritization and determine how do we know how well we are doing. He stated that are all important and some are interdependent but how would we prioritize and give a timeline for each. Trustee Strong said to look at the first page and first paragraph of the Community Profile. This comparative data demonstrates that we are not like others community libraries and, she suggested, that a lot of people love our library as it is, and our programming should reflect our demographics. Trustee Strong explained that programs such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program may not be the right match for our community. Trustee Desmond agreed our programming should reflect our demographics and community needs and suggested that programs such as passport and notary services may be a draw for people who haven't previously found a reason to visit the library.

Trustee Strong asked about the second bullet on pg. 12 under Organizational Excellence that referenced a goal of hiring a diverse workforce that reflects the demographics of our community when we currently have a highly diverse staff. Trustee Johnson shared that our programs should encourage kids to read and stimulate their interest in reading.

President Clifton stated that the Strategic Plan is a long-range vision and if it accomplishes our mission and serves our community that should be our objective. He opined that it should not be a matter of dictating day in and day out programs but achieving those long-term objectives and measuring success and progress against those objectives. President Clifton further stated that the community is changing. It is not the same community as it was three years ago, and the library needs to change with the times so our Strategic Plan needs to be constantly updated to reflect those changes and be a dynamic process.

Trustee Shaw concluded that he would continue to have conversations with Trustee Shattock and Director Laxminarayan about the Strategic Plan. He indicated that we want to be out there exploring ideas knowing that some are going to fail. Trustee Strong offered the importance of satisfying our best users and identifying what they would like.

#### FINANCE COMMITTEE: COMPLETED AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROJECTS PRESENTATION

Finance Committee Chair, Trustee Johnson, reviewed the Capital Projects budget from 2020 to the present and then looking ahead to 2027. Facilities Manager Lee presented a PowerPoint presentation on the completed capital projects from FY2021 to FY2024 and he introduced Peter Schoenmann, Parma Conservation, who provided an update on the mural restoration work. Mr. Schoenmann indicated that the work was going well, and they noted several interesting details in the paintings as the

original color and detail were revealed by peeling away the molecular layer that has built up over the years. He indicated that they called in a specialist from Chicago Ornamental Plastering to evaluate the wall damage from previous water penetration that was uncovered behind the murals.

Manager Lee further discussed capital projects moving forward as proposed by the Building Committee and projects proposed by the staff. Trustee Johnson recommended accelerating the replacement of the 1931 boiler, along with the new controls.

#### BUILDING COMMITTEE

Building Committee Chair, Trustee Strong, provided an overview of recent discussions with the Historic Preservation Foundation and the proposed building projects for 2024. Trustee Strong also explained three options just received for the elevator replacement project that the Building Committee will thoroughly review. They are as follows: 1) Leave the elevator as it is and replace it with everything new in the same shell, and this will cause very little disruption to library operations; 2) Expand the size of the elevator to allow for more space inside; and 3) Move the elevator to another location.

Facilities Manager Jim Lee discussed the need for changes to a previously approved RFP in March 2023 for the Boiler Pump Assembly and Condensate Pump Replacement due to site relocation away from the electrical switchgears to the former location of the chiller, at an additional cost.

Trustee Johnson moved that the Pump Assembly and the Condensate Pump Replacement be combined into a single RFP and, after the bids are received, it would come to the Board for approval. Trustee Sparrow seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All ayes. Motion passed.

Trustee Jackson moved to issue an RFP for HVAC Controls and Building Automation System. Trustee Strong seconded. Roll call vote. All ayes. Motion passed.

#### LIBRARY HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES LIST FOR 2024

Director Laxminarayan reviewed the list of library closures and special operating hours for the calendar year 2024. In response to community requests, the Director indicated that the library would be implementing a pilot project to provide additional open hours on Sunday, December 15, 2024, to help high school students prepare for their winter final examinations. Board discussion followed regarding school finals and AP exam dates for hours of student access. Trustee Shaw confirmed with the Director that the dates could be modified in the future if a need existed.

Trustee Jackson moved and Trustee Van Bel seconded to approve the list of holidays and closures as presented. All ayes. Motion passed.

#### LIBRARY OPERATIONS REPORT

Director Laxminarayan provided highlights of the library's operations for December 2023 and January 2024. He thanked Facilities Manager Lee and staff for their efforts to deal with the flooding from the broken water pipe and the subsequent insurance walk through. Trustee Johnson thanked him for minimizing the damage and down time at the library.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ABSENCE – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Director Laxminarayan will be out of the country on vacation from February 14 through March 1, 2024, and requests the Board approve the delegation of authority in his absence to the Director of Patron Services, Heidi Krueger.

Trustee Johnson moved and Trustee Jackson seconded to delegate authority to Heidi Krueger in the absence of the Executive Director from February 14 through March 1, 2024. All ayes. Motion passed.

BOARD MEETING DATES FOR MARCH 2024 AND APRIL 2024

Director Laxminarayan requested the Board move the regularly scheduled Board meetings for March and April one week later to allow additional time to work on the Strategic Plan and the FY2025 Budget. The proposed dates for the rescheduled meetings would be Tuesday, March 19, and Tuesday April 16, both starting at the normal time of 6:30 pm.

Trustee Desmond moved and Trustee Jackson seconded a motion to reschedule the March and April Board meetings for Tuesday, March 19, and Tuesday April 16, both starting at the normal time of 6:30 pm. All ayes. Motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Desmond shared that she was assisting President Clifton with facilitating the Executive Director annual evaluation process. She passed out a recommended timeline and indicated she would be sending out an email by tomorrow with draft criteria that has been reviewed by Director Laxminarayan, past President Johnson, and President Clifton for the updated instrument. Trustee Desmond requested that Board members with suggested edits respond directly to her as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

President Clifton called for a motion to adjourn.

Trustee Shaw moved and Trustee Jackson seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 pm.

All ayes. Motion passed.



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JoAnn Desmond, Secretary pro tem

Minutes submitted for approval by the Board on March 19, 2024

Next Meeting March 19, 2024