

LAKE FOREST LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 6:30 pm

Regular Meeting Annotated Agenda

CALL TO ORDER

President Clifton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Kasian Room of the Lake Forest Library.

ROLL CALL

Trustees present: Jim Clifton, JoAnn Desmond, Josh Jackson, John Johnson, Garth Pearson, Bob Shaw, Vince Sparrow and Heather Strong. Absent: Emily Van Bel. A quorum is present.

Staff present: Executive Director Ishwar Laxminarayan, Director of Patron Services Heidi Krueger, Head of Adult Services Kate Buckardt, Head of Youth Services Lorie Rohrer, Head of Digital and Innovation Services Chad Clark, Head of Communications Joy Schmoll, Business Manager Leotrim Hamza, Adult Services Librarian, Lydia Frank, Assistant Facilities Manager Bledian Ajroja.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Trustee Desmond will serve as secretary pro tem this evening. We have several interesting items to discuss today, particularly our first review of the FY2026 budget. I am looking forward to a productive discussion on all these topics.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT AND PATRON COMMENTS

Executive Director Laxminarayan provided some snapshots of Patron Comments presented in the Board packet. He reported that there were lots of positive comments about the 3D printed assistive tools. He also shared that because of the lack of attendance, the library won't be showing movies anymore, except for special events. The puzzle exchange was very successful, and the library plans to do this again. Trustee Shaw inquired about what percentage of the comments that the library receives are included in the board packet. Executive Director Laxminarayan indicated that it is about 60-70% of comments heard or shared that are listed in the board packet. Trustee Johnson appreciated the balance of some positive and some negative comments. Executive Director Laxminarayan indicated that all comments are followed up by staff.

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

Lydia Frank, Adult Services Librarian, provided an overview of the Read Between the Ravines community reading program in partnership with the Lake Bluff Library. The book featured this year is **Three Girls from Bronzeville: A Uniquely American Memoir of Race, Fate, and Sisterhood** by former *Chicago Tribune* reporter and author Dawn Turner. Ms. Frank mentioned the author would be

presenting in Lake Forest and the library was promoting several events that are related to this nonfiction work.

Chad Clark, head of Digital and Innovation Services, showcased the interactive Vibe all-in-one Smart Whiteboard that was paid for through the generosity of the Friends of Lake Forest Library. This Smart Whiteboard meets the current expectations of many presenters that come to the library and supports their work. Mr. Clark also described what is available from the library that has been created by 3D printing as assistive devices.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Clifton asked if there were any questions and comments on the Consent Agenda items a through f and if any Trustee wants to consider any one of the items separately. The President then called for a motion and Trustee Johnson moved, seconded by Trustee Sparrow to approve the Consent Agenda with the following items:

- a. Approve March 18, 2025 Agenda
- b. Approve January 21, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- c. Approve January 2025 Financial Report
- d. Approve February 2025 Financial Report
- e. Approve Personnel and Policies Committee Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2025
- f. Approve Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2025

Motion passed on roll call vote with 8 yea votes.

COMMITTEES REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building Committee

Bledian provided an update on the elevator construction and a very successful and thorough inspection. The new lighting, walls and the flooring are not yet installed but it is operational.

Trustee Strong and Executive Director Laxminarayan provided the following updates from the Building Committee related to the three phases of the Capital Improvement Projects:

- Phase 1 was the restoration of the Dome and murals completed in 2024.
- Phase 2A is the courtyard restoration and Wiss Janney Elsner (WJE) is currently in the construction documentation phase. The goal is to be on the April Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission docket. As per contact, WJE engaged an outside pricing estimate and there were no surprises with pricing. The plumbing team scoped some lines at the site last week, and it is possible that the Committee will recommend the replacement of a section of drain tile under the courtyards when the paving has been removed. Trustee Strong indicated this additional scope would be within our pricing estimates.
- Phase 2B is the 1931 Historic Room Revitalization in Phase 2B. Executive Director Laxminarayan updated the Board on progress made. These spaces include the Entry Foyer, the Rotunda, the Friends' Reading Room, the Reference Room and the furnishings for the two courtyards. Executive Director Laxminarayan shared that the Committee was impressed with the quality of candidates that demonstrated interest in the project, and they have narrowed it down to five finalists for further interviews, from which they will select the final consultant to recommend to the Board.

Finance Committee

Trustee Sparrow and Johnson updated the Board on the last Finance Committee meeting and provided a draft FY2026 budget in the Board packet for review. The FY2025 budget revenue is projected to be \$5.6 million and total expenses are projected at \$5.0 million for the end of the fiscal year. Interest on investments is projected to be higher than anticipated at \$430,000. The completed capital expenses were also reviewed along with highlights for FY2025.

The first draft of the FY2026 budget was presented and further discussion will take place at the April Board meeting.

Other Reports

Bledian provide background on the proposed new chairs for the Kasian Room and information about the chair design selected. He also mentioned that they would be stored on carts. This purchase is within the current budget.

Friends of Lake Forest Library

Executive Director Laxminarayan provided background on the proposed grant request to the Friends of the Lake Forest Library for FY2026. It included a request for \$45,000 for reading programs, \$10,000 for digitization of community history and, \$10,000 for staff development, for a total of \$65,000. In his FY2026 request for grant funding, Executive Director Laxminarayan indicated that he plans to submit a second request asking that The Friends consider additional support when cost estimates for the courtyards and 1931 Historic Rooms Revitalization are received in the spring/summer of 2025.

Trustee Jackson updated the board on his meeting with the Lake Forest Library Foundation about assisting the library with public private partnerships related to some capital projects the library is undertaking. He shared that the meeting went well, and it is incumbent upon the Board to show the Foundation what our needs are for these future projects. They expressed a willingness to assist.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Executive Director Laxminarayan reviewed highlights presented in the Board packet on Library operations. He also mentioned the sobering news coming out of Washington about cuts to library services that had been funded through federal grants. Fortunately, it represents a very small part of our budget, but the real impact will be felt by local library systems in the state of Illinois. Libraries are looking closely at what this might mean for the future.

Trustee Johnson suggested that the library may wish to consider creating a heat map where places can be identified that may need hot spot Wi-Fi.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS

Trustee Desmond reviewed the timeline for the Evaluation Process that is to commence no later than April 4th when Executive Director Laxminarayan will disseminate his self-evaluation to trustees. At that time, trustees will receive an electronic Evaluation Form and are requested to return it completed by Wednesday, April 9th. Summary evaluation data results would be compiled and emailed to trustees prior to the April 15th Board meeting, where a closed session

meeting will be held for the purpose of meeting with the Executive Director to discuss the evaluation of his performance.

Trustee Desmond also reminded Board members to file their Statement of Economic Interests with the County Clerk by May 1st. Executive Director Laxminarayan will follow up for those that have not yet received an email from the County Clerk.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As President Clifton's second term as President expires this year, he will serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee that recommends a slate of officers for 2025-2026.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Please mark your calendars for the Annual Board & Commission Recognition Dinner on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Lake Forest Club.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Sparrow made a motion, seconded by Trustee Shaw, to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 6.30 pm.



JoAnn Desmond, *Secretary pro tem*

Submitted for approval by the Board on April 15, 2025