

**Highwood Public Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
October 23, 2023**

Present—Trustees: Lucy Hospodarsky, Nora Loreda, Paul Martinez, Jason Muelver, Catherine Regalado, Lorena Victorica; Laura Ramirez, Director
Absent: Bertha Chavez, Janell Cleland

Ms. Hospodarsky called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Public Comments – Ms. Hospodarsky welcomed Nancy Pastroff to the meeting. Ms. Pastroff has submitted a trustee application to the City, which could be on 11/7/23 Council agenda. She lives in the Fort Sheridan area of Highwood and would bring needed accounting skills to the board.

President's Report -

- This is Ms. Victorica's last board meeting as she is resigning for personal reasons.
- Ms. Loreda and Mr. Muelver were reappointed to the board at the last City Council meeting.
- With the resignation, there is one board opening. Board could use legal expertise.
- New logo is being rolled out. Note that ampersand is used, not "and" for Highwood Library & Community Center. Current legal business name is Highwood Public Library but there will be further discussion on this.
- Ms. Ramirez led a building tour for City Council, Mayor, and city staff; several board members attended too. One alderman was away and has been offered a tour on his return.
- President asked Mr. Martinez to consider being chair of B&G committee.
- President has been working extensively with Friends group on building opening plans. There will be a ribbon cutting event Nov 20: tour and refreshments from 3-4, program with speakers from 4-4:30, ribbon cutting at 4:30, followed by sneak peek to 5:30, offered to additional donors. She will send signup request to board to help with preparation.
- Friends is creating a donor wall for recognition of many contributions.
- Library will open to public on November 21, but Grand Opening will be December 2nd.
- President has been discussing FY25 tax levy with Director and City – will be on November agenda. Because fire department and pension costs have increased, City Manager is asking library to have a flat tax levy. Director believes we can manage with a flat levy and there was discussion that both tax and grant income need to be spent. Mr. Coren plans to have Council create a roadmap for funding Library in future years.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Hospodarsky moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting of September 25, 2023 with one change, Ms. Loreda seconded, and the motion carried with Mr. Martinez abstaining. Ms. Hospodarsky moved and Mr. Muelver seconded to approve executive sessions minutes of July 24, 2023 and September 25, 2023 with one correction, and the motion carried unanimously.

Communication

- FOIA item is closed and director will place documentation in shared drive. She is working on access to FOIA training.

- Ms. Hospodarsky has communicated with some original library founders. One lives in Italy now, and one local founder may attend ribbon cutting.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Loreda presented the September financials and October invoices.

The following items were discussed:

- \$2500 professional development for managers is part of a larger expense, using grant funds to pay a consultant to train 2-3 managers. Director will reconsider types of items listed under professional development in her report.
- A book replacement fee to another library was from a TAB program where a youth lost an ILL book but there was no way to determine which participant, so library is covering cost.
- \$35 bank service charge was listed on statement as maintenance fee. It doesn't seem to be a wire charge. Treasurer has investigated similar fees before and feels it cannot be changed.
- The ~\$12,000 bills for Kohl's children's exhibit are part of larger installation cost. Phase 1 is installation of a permanent framework, and Phase 2 is the actual exhibit which can be changed out. Director predicts an annual exhibit change at ~\$10,000 cost, and hopes to cover this with a grant from a donor who supports a similar setup at a different library. Friends may also be able to fund this exhibit refresh in the future as it falls into childhood literacy.
- There is a new contractor for marketing, administrative support, and donor tracking.
- Kentwood office furniture is an installment payment.
- It was noted that telecommunications line was high last month and if annualized, next FY budget may need increase.

Ms. Hospodarsky moved to approve the October 2023 invoices as listed in the Check Detail, Mr. Muelver seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Director's Report

Ms. Ramirez commented on several items from the report.

- New seniors' group for digital literacy which meets Friday mornings has been very well received. It will meet in the community room once library reopens.
- Some adult literacy programs are winding down for the holidays, and some are being reconfigured.
- Children's department is planning for re-opening and looking forward to onsite programs.
- Health equity is working really well offsite but will be moving back; a counseling success story was shared.
- HR updates: one employee has left, there may be some contract counseling, and a new adult services manager started last week. One staff member is being converted to contractor at their request.
- When library reopens, hours will be back to 48 hours a week. Director plans to have 3 staff present to cover all spaces, but is requesting 4 on evenings and weekends. This would mean hiring 2 part time staff at 18 hours a week who would have part time benefits but not be in IMRF. Special city/library working committee has already agreed to this increase in library core services, which would be paid for by a combination of tax levy and grant funding. Director will discuss with City Manager.
- Mr. Martinez recommends a follow-up library tour in 1 year with Mayor/Council, and increasing Board attendance at Council meetings and vice versa.

- Donor relations have been busy. Library will be represented at NorthShore Health board meeting on November 10 in Chicago.
- 450 gift bags created by Mesirow, now stored with President until Dec 9 Winter Fest and Vaccination Clinic.
- Grant payments are being processed. Documents were submitted to Illinois State Library, but need 90% to get reimbursement for this quarter. DCEO reimbursement should be arriving. Lake County CBG reimbursement for accessible vestibule is in process.

Ms. Hospodarsky moved to go out of order to hear from technology consultant Mr. Knutson on alarm system options. The motion was seconded and carried.

Board viewed the improved low light images from the new camera systems. There was discussion on 4 researched alarm system options, the reason for adding, and recommendations from police chief and director.

Ms. Hospodarsky moved to select Vivint as security system company with maximum costs of \$3500 upfront equipment and \$40 monthly. Ms. Loredó seconded and the motion carried.

Meeting went back into agenda order.

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds: Mr. Martinez reported that committee met. They discussed landscaping issues and ongoing maintenance needs and proposals. Committee also decided that a general policy on art is needed. Walls will be left without art until this is established, and library will purchase interim posters/decor with obvious library content.

Finance: Mr. Muelver has obtained 3 additional quotes for staff fidelity bond because of slow response from original vendor. There was discussion on documentation: Friends has articles of incorporation and Library has a proclamation. As Board must approve specific carrier, Mr Muelver will have proposal for next meeting. He has also researched building insurance. Board feels \$4.5 million value of building and contents is suitable post-construction, and President will provide this value to City Manager for revised policy.

Policy: Ms. Regalado reported committee met and discussed policies for approval tonight, as well as Unattended Children, which will be brought to November meeting. She reported on a webinar she and Ms. Cleland attended, sponsored by multiple libraries, entitled Book Challenges on the Rise: Support Your Freedom to Read. Speakers included Alexi Giannoulis and the head of RAILS, as well as two authors whose books had been placed on banned lists. Committee had recommendations on how to prepare for possible material challenges.

Old Business

Library construction project update: Ms. Ramirez reported that there have been delays in furniture shipment, affecting timeline. Current plans are: flooring, light fixtures, millwork, walkthrough/punchlist in next 2 weeks; shelving installed week of 10/30; week of 11/6 Kohls Museum exhibit installed; week of 11/13 Kenwood furniture installed; Nov 6-13 TBD work in garage. Director prefers to maintain vestibule access for public with limited service instead of closing library during furniture installation, but situation is uncertain.

Ms. Hospodarsky moved to allow a maximum of 5 days closure for purpose of preparing for re-opening, at Director's discretion, Ms. Loredó seconded, and the motion carried.

New Business

Ms. Hospodarsky moved and Ms. Regalado seconded to approve the following policies: ALA Freedom to View, ALA Freedom to Read, ALA Filtering, ALA Electronic Access, ALA Core Values, ALA Code of Ethics, ALA Bill of Rights, and the new Emergency Response Policy. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Regalado moved and Mr. Muelver seconded to retain status of currently closed executive session minutes, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hospodarsky moved to allow hiring of two part time circulation desk members at 18 hours a week, Mr. Muelver seconded, and the motion carried.

There was discussion on vending machine options and locations, as renovation plans had included a vending machine, which board members hadn't realized. Board was in favor of having a coffee pod dispensing vending machine, similar to Highland Park, that would be located at coffee bar by fireplace. This could have hot chocolate pods for youth, and would have cups with lids. However, board was not in favor of additional vending machine at this time, because there was not a good space, didn't want to promote junk food to at-risk populations, didn't want to have to directly manage healthy option vending, and wanted to keep new furnishings in good condition by adhering to current Food/Beverage policy.

There was discussion on filing DBA to use new name of Highwood Library & Community Center, or if there is a need for incorporation. Currently Library was created by proclamation so Ms. Hospodarsky will request City to pass a proclamation with new name, which will be much simpler. Need to have proper name for federal and state grant applications.

Ms. Hospodarsky moved and Mr. Muelver seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:59 pm.