



Annual President's Report for FY 2025  
May 2024 to April 2025

### **Library Board of Trustees**

Committee Chairs of the standing committees prepare annual reports which outline their specific activities for the year, Building & Grounds, Finance, Personnel, Policy, and Technology.

Three trustee terms will expire in May 2025, and they are seeking re-appointment. There is one open position and the ideal candidate would have a legal, human resources, or information technology background.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, all interested candidates should apply.

Trustee Name	Email	Term Expiration
Nora Loredó	treasurer@Highwoodlibrary.org	May-26
Jason Muelver	trustee6@highwoodlibrary.org	May-26
Nancy Pastroff	trustee3@highwoodlibrary.org	May-26
Lucy Hospodarsky	president@highwoodlibrary.org	May-25
Bertha Chavez	trustee1@highwoodlibrary.org	May-25
Paul Martinez	trustee5@highwoodlibrary.org	May-25
Catherine Regalado	secretary@highwoodlibrary.org	May-27
Janell Cleland	vicepresident@highwoodlibrary.org	May-27
Open	trustee4@highwoodlibrary.org	May-27

### **Financial Summary and Fundraising for Programming**

Highlights are presented below. For additional information, refer to the Finance Annual Report.

We received 99.4% of our tax levy request of \$321,750, leaving us with a revenue shortfall from property taxes of approximately \$1,800. Although we have not generally had shortfalls in the past, it is anticipated that property owners are in default of their property tax bills either in whole or in part. Another shortfall was for the Personal Property Replacement Tax (PPRT) from the State of Illinois, which was about \$1,800 less than budgeted due to an adjustment by the state for past overpayments, according to City Manager Scott Coren. On the positive side, we received the budgeted amount for the Per Capita Grant from the Illinois State Library. We also invested some of our sustainability grants from private donors in the IMET Convenience Fund, and as a result, received 10,000 additional interest income above our budgeted amount. This interest income, along with tax revenues (the levy and PPRT), the Per Capita Grant, and photocopy revenues support core library operations and some core library staff. We continue to receive miscellaneous donations directly from patrons (outside of the Friends of the Highwood Library) which helps supplement the revenue sources.

The sustainability fund is designated for (1) future funding of programs our patrons have come to rely upon, when particular programming grants may not be received and (2) for future operating expenses primarily for building repairs and replacements (i.e. roof, HVAC, carpeting, etc.).



Most of our expenses for programming and the staff needed to run the programs are supported via specific program grants obtained from private foundations and County or State government. Additionally, we successfully raised additional non-program specific private donations through our Campaign for Impact & Sustainability.

The Reserve Account and Capital Improvement fund balances at IMET remained untouched with balances of approximately \$407,500 and \$4,000 respectively.

#### Tax Levy for FY2026

In the fall of 2024, we requested a tax levy increase of 5% for our FY2026, which calculates to \$337,838. The city council approved this levy increase which we will begin receiving in June 2025 with the first property tax payments due.

#### Strategic Plan Update

Our current 3-year plan was scheduled for an update in FY2025. The Board and Executive Director decided to postpone the preparation of the next 3-year plan to allow for additional time for observation and buildup of programming in our new library space. We did approve an interim plan update for FY2025.

At the time of this writing, the President and the Executive Director have met with a strategic plan consultant and will present this option and the timing of the summer to complete a 3-year plan to the Board at the May 2025 meeting.

#### Operations

The Executive Director has done an exceptional job maintaining the operations of the library. She and her staff continue to enlist the support of volunteers to better execute literacy focused programs such as Learning Partners, Homework Help, adult literacy programming, and more.

#### Programming & Services

The Executive Director's annual report showcases the programming and services offered at the library. Through strong partnerships, successful grant writing and fundraising from private foundations, the library is able to offer transformative programming for patrons of all ages.

#### Personnel Items and Outside Contractors

We ended FY25 with eight full time staff and eight 18-hour per week staff.

We continue our relationship with our IT consultant.

#### Building and Grounds

Refer to the Committee's annual report.

#### Community Outreach

The Executive Director continued to strengthen the partnerships already secured with community organizations, the two school districts, and potential private donors, and continues to make new connections. Laura is familiar with the community and attends as many local events as she is able as a means of networking (i.e., Highwood Chamber of Commerce annual dinner, Highland Park Community Foundation events).



Staff regularly promote programming on social media (Facebook, Instagram) and circulate an electronic newsletter every month.

### **Friends of the Highwood Public Library**

The Friends is a 501c3 organization critical to assisting the HLCC achieve our mission. The Friends' Executive Board grew to eight board members in this fiscal year. Their focus this fiscal year was to re-connect with donors. They ran a successful end-of-year pledge drive which generated over \$ 80,000. They also were very helpful during the two early voting and day of voting events held in November and April.