



Annual President's Report for FY 2019  
May 2018 to April 2019

The Standing Committees that met most actively this year were Technology and Finance. Committee Chairs prepare annual reports which outline their specific activities for the year.

Adoption of the Strategic Plan

The Board recognized the need to develop a strategic plan for the Library that could help shape the future of the library with a focus on becoming more relevant to the community. With the financial support of the city council, the Library engaged a well-known library consultant to assist with the development of a 3-year strategic plan. The consultant interviewed key stakeholders, staff, board members, the city administrator and alderman to gain an understanding of the community, both its history and visions for the future. After two working sessions, a strategic plan was presented to the board for adoption. The strategic plan is available on the Library's website. The Board is excited about having this roadmap that will be our guide to creating a Library that will be better utilized by more members of the community.

Trustee Appointments/Resignations

Dr. Maribeth Kuebler resigned citing an increase in professional and personal responsibilities that prevented her from being involved at a level she felt was needed. A potential new Trustee, Janell Cleland, attended the April Board Meeting to introduce herself and express her interest in becoming a Board Member. It is anticipated that she will be appointed in May. With her appointment, we will continue to be a full board of 9 Trustees.

Community Outreach and City Relations

Relations are good and of a cooperative nature with city staff, city manager, and the city's Finance Director.

Our new Executive Director's focus is on forming and nurturing partnerships with community organizations, the two school districts, and potential private donors. In only a short three months since her start in February, she has met with many individuals and organizations to begin building these partnerships. The network of individuals that she has worked with in the capacity of her two latest positions have really benefited the Library. Carmen has been able to secure some work pro bono and this ability to engage with people and express the Library's needs is a great asset for the Library.

Carmen has also started a Friends of the Highwood Public Library 501 c 3 organization, with a Board of five, and the Friends Board will be launching a membership drive in the summer. Starting the Friends' group was her top priority and will enable the Library to expand its revenue source to support new



programming and other library needs, as well as promote the Library in the community and be a new source for volunteers.

The Director's Annual report has additional information about this topic.

Carmen updated the website to include a newsletter page that will be updated periodically. Print materials were also created/updated and some translated in Spanish. We continue to contribute material to the City's quarterly e-newsletter.

### Programming

We continue to offer and support all of the Children's and adult programming from last year (e.g. children's movie nights, K9-Reading Buddies, crafts, story time, adult book club, Current Events, Sherlock Holmes club, seasonal children's events, English conversation club and many more).

Please see the Director's Annual report for detailed information about new programming that focuses on personal growth and literacy.

### Personnel Items and Outside Contractors

Director John Mitchell announced his retirement and the recruiting committee was established to hire his replacement. His announcement came at the time the strategic planning process was beginning, which allowed the consultant to provide guidance on the skill-set requirement for the new leader that would ensure a successful implementation of the strategic plan. The committee focused on hiring someone with proven community engagement and fundraising skills. Our new Executive Director has 14 years of non-profit experience, most recently as the Chief Development Officer at a Safe Place where she doubled the organizations revenue for their operating budget. Prior to that, she was the Community Engagement and Development Manager at the Waukegan Public Library.

While at the Waukegan Library, Carmen created a community engagement program that won the IMLS (Institute of Museums and Library Services) National Gold Medal that year and found Carmen at the White House with First Lady Michelle Obama. In 2013 Carmen was also awarded the American Library Association's Library Mover and Shaker award for her nationally recognized community engagement strategy.

Part of the strategic plan includes seeking strategic partnerships. For this reason, the Library decided to move its accounting operations to the firm that provides services to the City of Highwood. The Finance Committee met with the City's Finance Director and determined that the relationship would benefit the Library, especially if the Library moves its payroll processing and accounting platform to the same system the city uses. The move would be considered after we are on solid footing with the new provider within our current Quickbooks environment.



Our long-standing IT person's move out of state last summer did not cause a disruption of service so we continue to be supported by him remotely.

### Operations

The Director's Annual Report, presented to the Board at its June meeting, should be read as a means of getting a detailed picture of what accomplishments were made in the general operations of the library. A few items have already been covered within the President's Annual report.

During the 5 months of a Director vacancy, board members stepped up to manage certain Director duties and, on occasion, stepped in to fill staff vacancies due to sick time. The President held monthly staff meetings to ensure continuity of services and daily email communications with staff occurred when needed.

Winter storms notwithstanding (the library was closed for one day), the library was in full-service mode and programming continued as normal.

### Building and Grounds

Two capital improvements were made to the Library building – much needed tuckpointing and the replacement of the roof over the East Building. We also strengthened the horizontal beam over the East Building entrance. The final piece of the renovation effort was to build concrete steps on the outside of the north part of the building from the storage room to meet code requirements. The total cost of the roof replacement, tuckpointing and overhang repair was close to \$50,000. The Library's reserves would have been depleted and the remainder would have been covered by borrowing. For this reason, the city council agreed it was in the best interest overall to cover these capital improvement expenses.

### Financial Summary

#### Tax Levy

To satisfy the mayor and city council's desire to keep the city's overall tax levy flat, the library was kept its tax levy at the same dollar amount as the prior fiscal year.

The Library will have a one-time surplus of funds attributed to the salary and benefits savings due to the five months of we operated without a Director, during the hiring process. Part of this money will be spent in the FY20 and the other part will be deposited into our Reserve Account, as the account was greatly reduced to meet the expenses related to the East Building.