



Annual President's Report for FY 2022
May 2021 to April 2022

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.

One new Trustee, Lorena Victorica was appointed by Mayor Pecaro in April 2022. Two trustee terms expired, and the trustees did not wish to seek re-appointment.

Trustee Name	Email	Term Expiration
Nora Loredó	treasurer@Highwoodlibrary.org	May-23
Jason Muelver	trustee6@highwoodlibrary.org	May-23
Diana Guerrero	trustee3@highwoodlibrary.org	May-23
Lucy Hospodarsky	president@highwoodlibrary.org	May-22
Bertha Chavez	trustee1@highwoodlibrary.org	May-22
Open	trustee5@highwoodlibrary.org	May-22
Catherine Regalado	secretary@highwoodlibrary.org	May-24
Janell Cleland	vicepresident@highwoodlibrary.org	May-24
Lorena Victorica	trustee4@highwoodlibrary.org	May-24

Financial Summary and Fundraising for Programming

Highlights are presented below. For more details, refer to the Finance Annual Report.

On the revenue side, property tax collections fell a bit short of the tax levy, but only by .3% (~\$900), and we received the expected Per Capita Grant from the Illinois State Library. Because of the pandemic, we budgeted a very modest amount of our share of the Personal Property Replacement Tax (\$300). Our actual receipt for PPRT was ~\$5,600.

Carmen Patlan, Executive Director, through the Friends of the Highwood Library, initiated the Campaign for Impact & Sustainability. This campaign is focused on securing grants for programming, which includes the staffing associated with running the programs. This funding enabled us to add an Associate Director position, whose main responsibilities are managing the implementation of the organization's strategic priorities, growing, and diversifying financial resources, and effectively communicating the organization's impact. Additional staff hired and the additional hours for current staff were also paid for by the various grants secured. Also secured were some donations to be applied to our operating expenses to enhance our limited tax revenues. Toward the end of our fiscal year, we were able to eliminate our Fines through a generous donation of \$800 annually for the next 10 years.

The FY22 operating budget approved at the beginning of the fiscal year (May 2021) was at a forecasted deficit of approximately \$20,000. We approved a deficit budget because we had secured funding from several sources that could be applied to our operating budget. We have prepared a 3-year plan to be presented to the City of Highwood Mayor and Alderman which will request additional tax levy funds in the future to meet the current budgetary needs.



The Reserve Account and Capital Improvement fund balances at IMET remained untouched with balances of approximately \$20,000 and \$3,600 respectively.

Tax Levy for FY23

In October, we prepared the tax levy budget for FY23, and received city council approval for our requested amount of \$292,500 (same amount as FY22).

Strategic Plan Update

The Board approved an updated 3-year Strategic Plan, prepared by Carmen and our new Associate Director, Laura Ramirez.

As part of our updated strategic plan, the library is expanding our mission to become a community center, offering programming to meet the needs of the community on a wider scope than traditional library service offerings.

New Grant and Renovation Project Update

Senator Julie Morrison nominated the library to receive \$2 million in funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (IL DCEO), contingent upon successful grant application and approval from various state-level entities. This money would be used to expand our current renovation project to bring further structural improvements to the building. The grant application process was extensive and required updating the original building renovation budget. As of the end of the fiscal year, IL DCEO approved the grant application and sent the application to Governor Pritzker's administration to officially approve the release of the funds.

The renovation project will begin with a construction bidding process once the official release of this additional \$2 million has been secured. The total building project budget will be \$4 - \$4.3 million.

Programming & Services

As part of our community center focus, we have secured a \$578,000 grant from the NorthShore University Health System Community Investment Fund to pilot a Health Equity Program. This program seeks to bring mental health care education and services to our underserved community members. Future funding to continue the program in future years may be possible provided we show successful outcomes. Staff has reported positive impacts to individuals with personal stories just in the few months of the program. Additional insurance has been secured to cover this new type of service (paid for by the grant).

The Highwood Library & Community Center has experienced significant growth in library usage in the past year, with the total number of visits having more than tripled from FY21 to FY22. The library is serving more children and teens and has seen an increase in the number of children and teens attending programming. The library intentionally worked on creating a collection that is more relevant to the community served, with 235 Spanish language books added to the collection. As a result of this and additional efforts to improve our collection, the library's physical material checkouts have nearly doubled during FY22.

Computer access is an important resource provided to community members. The library's computer access, both in terms of users and the number of minutes of computer use, more than doubled from FY21 to FY22. With grant funding from the Illinois State Library, the Highwood Library & Community Center was able to upgrade and improve the WIFI access provided to patrons. The wireless coverage was extended to cover the parking lot to the west and parts of Everts Park. The resulting usage by community members has far exceeded our projections, in that the exterior wireless access delivers over 50 percent of the total wireless service the library provides to our community. This helps the library remain relevant and serve the needs of the community even when the library is closed.

For information on our other programming, please refer to the Director's Annual report.



Personnel Items and Outside Contractors

We have increased staff to 12 full time and 3 part time employees, including creating the Associate Director position. Grants and private donations fund the additional staff/augmented hours that cannot be covered by our operating budget (from tax revenues). We have added a part time bookkeeper to our staff due to the increase in grant bookkeeping required by our successful fundraising efforts.

Carmen completed the annual evaluations for staff, who are all doing exceptional work. Staff are enthusiastic, hard-working, passionate, innovative, and always friendly and customer focused. Carmen leads by example and has developed an amazing staff.

We continue our relationship with our IT consultant.

Operations

Carmen and her staff continue to enlist the support of volunteers to better execute literacy focused programs such as Learning Partners, homework help and more.

We are planning to continue our operations during the building renovation project by using the East Building programming room as our “mini library” and re-instituting curbside pick-up and converting some programs to virtual as we did for the pandemic. The City of Highwood has been working cooperatively to help store some of our collection. The Church of the Redeemer and North Shore School District 112 (Oak Terrace School) are also making their space available for some of our programming.

Building and Grounds

Refer to the Committee’s annual report. A community member has donated labor and materials to upkeep the two flower planters at the library entrance.

Community and City Outreach

Carmen and Laura continued to strengthen the partnerships already secured with community organizations, the two school districts, and potential private donors, and continues to make new connections.

Carmen is well-known throughout Lake County, serving on several committees outside of the library world, which has resulted in a county wide appreciation for and recognition of the Highwood Library amongst a variety of organizations and public figures. Our success with our outreach and fundraising initiatives are well known and people/organizations seek advice from her and use our strategies as a model to improve their own activities.

Staff stay active on social media (Facebook, Instagram) and circulate an electronic newsletter every month.

On several occasions, Carmen and the President have attended City Council meetings and shared updates to the City Manager via email, for inclusion in his weekly Manager’s report.

Twenty two Highwood businesses are supporting the library by participating in the Friends Discount Card, which is given to people who become members of the Friends of the Highwood Library organization. Card holders can receive discounts from the 22 local businesses.

Friends of the Highwood Public Library

The Friends’ board is very active, with the Friends’ President, Andy Hamilton actively assisting with the Campaign for Sustainability. The Membership Committee, with the assistance of the Marketing Committee, is launching the first ever Friends Membership drive, mainly to engage with the community and bring awareness of the library’s



offerings and upcoming renovation, and to help raise a little money from the membership dues. Dues are very affordable to ensure inclusivity (\$10 student, \$20 individual, \$30 family, and a few other categories).