

**DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES  
APRIL 28, 2021, 7:30 P.M.  
ONLINE VIA GOTO MEETING**

**MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order.** President Graber called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.
2. **Roll Call.** Members present: Trustee Carissa Dougherty, Trustee Swapna Gigani, Trustee David Humphreys, Trustee Barnali Khuntia, Trustee Kim Stapleton, President Jonathan Graber. Absent: None.

Also present: Library Director Julie Milavec, Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski, Executive Assistant Katelyn Vabalaitis, Media Lab Coordinator Ed Bromiel, Resident Ed Pawlak, Resident Richard Barker Jr.

3. **Welcome to Visitors.** President Graber welcomed visitors and thanked them for their interest in the library.

4. **Approval of Minutes.**

- a. March 24, 2021 Regular Meeting. It was moved by Stapleton and seconded by Humphreys THAT the Minutes of the March 24, 2021 Regular Monthly Meeting be approved as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Gigani, Humphreys, Khuntia, Stapleton, Graber. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

5. **Financial Matters.**

- a. March 2021 Financial Report. Library Director Milavec presented the report. The library is one quarter of the way through the year. Revenues do not reflect any property taxes yet, which is typical for this time of year. Generally, the first property tax payment is posted sometime in May. The Village of Downers Grove covers any operating expenditures that the library needs during the time period between the beginning of the fiscal year and when property taxes start coming in. Milavec noted that the April revenue report, which will be distributed in May, will include the FEMA grant that the library just received in the amount of \$20,499.46. This grant is a reimbursement for PPE and other expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Milavec thanked Assistant Director Jen Ryjewski for her hard work and commitment to helping the library secure this grant.

On the expenditure side, the library is at 21.2% expended in the first 25% of the year. As discussed in previous meetings, the Maintenance Supplies, Data Processing Services, Insurance, and Capital Equipment lines are all over budget due to annual invoices received at the beginning of the year as well as expenses due to COVID-19. Milavec noted the RGW Consulting invoice in the

May Invoice Edit List, which included the newly signed additional scope of work that is for three additional staff trainings, including recording and playback of those trainings for staff who are unable to attend live. This additional scope of work also includes six support meetings for the library's BIPOC staff support group that will include a consultant meeting with them on topics of their choice.

- b. April 2021 Invoices. It was moved by Humphreys and seconded by Dougherty THAT the payment of April 2021 Capital Replacement Fund invoices totaling \$3,496.50, the payment of April 2021 Operating Fund invoices totaling \$137,192.89, and the ratification of March 2021 payrolls totaling \$242,596.33 be approved. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Gigani, Humphreys, Khuntia, Stapleton, Graber. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

6. **Public Comment on Agenda Items.** President Graber invited comment. Resident Richard E. Barker Jr is a resident of Downers Grove and thanked the Board for giving him time to speak as well as for their service to the library. He was looking for guidance in terms of the Board's anti-racism statements of late. First, he wanted to make it very clear that he is in support of all anti-racism of all people of all stripes. He marched against racism in Chicago in the 60s and 70s and participated in the recent march in Downers Grove. He would like guidance on where the library derives authority to put out public statements on social, political, or legislative matters.

Library Director Milavec noted that she has spoken with Mr. Barker on several occasions in regards to this question. The Board is acting under its bylaws and under the statutes in Chapter 75 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes that govern library law. They are acting as they see fit as an independent governing body.

Mr. Barker felt the section of the bylaws covering the Board's ability to make statements is more linked to the idea of the Board speaking to the business of the library, or library matters. Mr. Barker commented that the Board has a powerful, influential voice, especially for a non-elected body. He stated that in particular, the Board's anti-Asian racism statement has many mischaracterizations and misstatements of fact. Mr. Barker believes the language of the bylaws seems to imply that statements should be made only on library business. He is concerned with the governmental issue of a non-elected body having authority to issue public statements. In particular, he feels this statement was not researched and sources were not cited. There is no liability. Mr. Barker asked for assistance in researching the actual language of the compiled statutes. President Graber commented that the actual language can be found in section 75 ILCS 5/4-7 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes. He noted that the Board has the power to adopt bylaws and in Section 1, Article 2 of the Board's bylaws, it says that they have the ability to communicate actively with local government and the general public.

Mr. Barker asked who regulates the Board of Library Trustees and Library Director Milavec responded that the Board is appointed by the Village Council and the Mayor and can be removed by the Village Council and the Mayor, and that is the totality of the Village's oversight.

7. **Public Comment on Other Library Business.** President Graber invited comment. Assistant Director Jen Ryjewski read aloud and verbatim a comment that was submitted electronically to the Board of Library Trustees from Brian Sewell. The comment is as follows:

When did the DGPL become an advocate for BLM (a Marxist organization) and other woke racial equity plays? The latest April 16th message from Ms. Milavec makes reference to "systemic racism" and asserts "The Black community's pain, fear, and anger is real." On what basis does she speak for these communities? She is also apparently an expert on evaluating policing techniques and feels her position is an appropriate venue to comment. These are opinions NOT facts, and she feels she is sending a message that is divisive to our community. The library receives its funding from our taxes and this new social agenda is unwelcome and divisive. What will be next Ms. Milavec, defunding the DGPD? We await your input.

8. **New Business.**

- a. Strategic Plan 2017-2020 Review. Library Director Milavec led a discussion on the progress made on the Strategic Plan 2017-2020. Milavec commented that doing this review of the plan brought home how far DGPL has come as an organization in the past three and a half years. This plan was approved in September 2017 and at that point, focus was on the long-term health of the facility, team-building, and cross-departmental cooperation and collaboration. Partnerships have grown in ways staff never could have imagined. Staff have been given a lot of latitude to innovate and to try things and do things that have never been tried before. The single action item of adding STEM kits to the Kids Room collection grew into an entire library of things that is now known as the Anything Emporium. One of the most important pieces is that equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives for the library started in this strategic plan and have grown into diversity audits and working on an Equity Strategic Plan.

Trustee Dougherty was not on the Board when the strategic plan was created, though she has seen how it has evolved during her time on the Board and appreciated all of the periodic reports over the years as well as all of the effort that went into creating the plan review. She would like to understand where the connection is between the actions and the eventual impact for some of the goals/focuses. How can we understand the impact of some of the bigger initiatives so that the next strategic plan takes advantage of all of that hard work? Milavec noted that this plan focused on deliverables at the action level rather than how the deliverables fed into the goals. The

new strategic plan will be more focused on impact and outcome rather than on specific actions and deliverables.

Trustee Humphreys viewed the strategic plan as a transition document. It had been a while since the library had a real strategic plan and there was a strong feeling that the library needed one. The first thing Library Director Milavec did after being hired was create a strategic plan. The library is looking outward into the community and is inviting the community to be partners with the library. He is thrilled to see the EDI movement come to fruition as well.

Library Director Milavec commented that the former Board that passed this strategic plan was adamant that it be created in-house and not through a consultant. The task turned into a team-building exercise and consisted of a cross-departmental staff committee that did key stakeholder interviews throughout the community, which was the basis for this plan. The Equity Advisory Team has started working on an Equity Strategic Plan for the library and the intention is that the plan will become the springboard for the larger strategic planning process.

#### **9. Unfinished Business.**

- a. COVID-19 Response and Phased Reopening Plan. The Meeting Room was converted into seven staff workstations and study rooms will reopen on Monday for public use. Non-reserved seating has been slowly reintroduced and some soft seating has been put back on the floor. There have been more visitors on a regular basis and most are adhering to the two-hour visit limit. Staff are looking forward to slowly reintroducing even more seating. Once study rooms reopen, tables will no longer need to be reserved. Summer reading will include some outdoor in-person programming, including the use of Fishel Park. Operating hours are slowly increasing and the plan is to return to regular operating hours on July 5.

It was moved by Gigani and seconded by Khuntia THAT the Library Director be reauthorized to make temporary policy changes in consultation with the Board President and within the parameters of the COVID-19 Response and Reopening Phasing Plan as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Gigani, Humphreys, Khuntia, Stapleton, Graber. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

#### **10. Library Director's Report.** Library Director Milavec presented her report.

Library staff are working towards a partnership with CASA DuPage, which would allow the library to offer restricted use cards to children in foster care in Downers Grove. Building Operations Director Ian Knorr is on a medical leave and staff are hoping to have him back in a couple of weeks. Building Operations Assistant John Martin has been doing a great job in his absence, especially with the ceiling leak incident. Several other staff were on hand to assist, including Adult & Teen Services Manager Lizzie Matkowski, Children's Services Manager Allyson

Renell, and Circulation Assistant Manager Sandy Feuillan. Staff are continuing work on the land acknowledgement. The Aspen Discovery Platform, the library's beta catalog, was approved for a three-year contact to become the primary catalog.

**11. Trustee Comments and Requests for Information.**

President Graber asked how online public comment submissions are passed along and if they need to meet certain criteria before being passed to the Board. Library Director Milavec responded that to be read aloud at the Board meeting, members of the public must indicate in the body of the comment that it is a Board Meeting Comment.

Trustee Stapleton talked with Assistant Director Jen Ryjewski about Republic Bank doing a third display in the library. This third display is on the 20th anniversary of September 11.

Trustee Humphreys applauded the Board and library staff for exercising their responsibility to serve the entire community of Downers Grove and to occasionally audit themselves to be sure the entire community is being served.

**12. Adjournment.** President Graber adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.