

Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees
365 Deerpath Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045
Regular Meeting Minutes
7:30 p.m., March 8, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

President John F. Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Kasian Room, Lake Forest Library.

ROLL CALL

Trustees Present: Germaine Arnson, Bryan Bertola, Jim Clifton, JoAnn Desmond, Elizabeth Grob, John F. Johnson, Andrea Lemke, Sue Shattock, and Heather Strong
9 trustees in attendance, a quorum was present.

Staff Present: Catherine Lemmer, Executive Director; Ed Finn, Director of Operations; and Sameer Notta, Finance Officer.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Johnson welcomed us to the Library Board Meeting with the following remarks.

Despite all the difficulties we see in our world today, I appreciate all the Trustees, the Library Staff and members of the public sharing your time this evening for matters about our Library.

As you may recall, I've been reading Library Board Minutes since the founding date in 1898 and have finished up until 1982. Tonight, these are some highlights for the late 1970s and early 1980s for your perspective as background for our deliberations this evening.

On January 15, 1975, the Board of Trustees adopted a resolution that went to the City Manager to purchase two properties adjacent to the Library site: 404 East Deerpath and 350 East Deerpath. At the February meeting the Trustees recognized Jerry Verbeke for 22 years of taking care of our Library building and grounds. During these years of his service, the "heating system changed from coal to oil to gas, the driveway enlarged, the court walls were lowered, court gardens replanted, new lighting installed inside and outside, air-conditioning reactivated, and the lower level was transformed into the children's department." The Building Project bid specification to enlarge the elevator to accommodate a stretcher was approved.

On February 17, 1975, the City sent a letter to Rosemary Cowler, President of the Board, with the following summary of a joint meeting held on February 7 with the following:

1) Library Board would be retaining an architect soon for an approximate 12,000 sq ft addition.

2) While the Library Board would like the City to purchase two properties, the church property is in use and not for sale and the City would not be willing to purchase the Baker property. The City might consider the Baker property for public purposes since it has historical value. However, private funding should be pursued, and a plan submitted for its refurbishment, maintenance and use.

3) With regard to parking, the city was planning to expand the parking lot on the southeast corner of Deerpath and McKinley which could serve the Library as "overflow" parking for evenings and Saturday.

At the March Meeting, a Library budget for FY 1976 was proposed with an increase of 13%. The overrun for the previous year was attributed to the 75th Anniversary Celebration. The charge for rental and reserve books for mysteries had been 10 cents for 27 years and was raised to 20 cents. The charge for novels and biographies was raised from 25 cents to 50 cents.

During May and June 1975, the Building Committee reported that they had interviewed 14 architectural firms which was reduced to four for final interviews. Brenner, Danforth Rockwell was chosen. The tax rate was adopted not to exceed .15% of value of taxable property. A volunteer program that was organized over the past year has resulted in a reduction of thefts. A patron refused to pay for a lost book and the Board affirmed its official policy without easing.

A Special Meeting of the Library Board was called on August 4, 1975. There was uncertainty about the zoning of the Baker property to eight single family detached residences or multiple family condominiums. The Board opposed any zoning variations and notified the Plan Commission.

In September 1975, Trustee Russ Kohr reported on plans to form an organizing committee to prepare a statement of purpose and a proposed governing structure for a Friends organization. He also reported that it would take a year to receive a charter. In November, Priscilla Bina, retiring Children's Librarian was recognized for her seven years of dedicated service to bring up the standards of the collection and "encouraging young minds with story hours" and making the Children's Library a "vital, happy place." In December a separate phone line was approved for the Children's Library.

In January 1976 the architect, Mr. Brenner, presented the drawings incorporated from previous meetings. The first cost estimate was reported at \$640,000. Mr. Hixon Glore and Hermon D. Smith, future co-chairman of the Friends, were present by special invitation by the Board. They shared the objectives of the Friends and "possible activities mentioned were book sales, extended volunteer help in departments, and meetings with outside speakers. The Friends of Lake Forest Library would be organized as a not-for-profit organization. The makeup of the Board of Directors of Friends would represent as many different constituencies as may prove to be feasible."

At the April Board Meeting it was reported that the Reed Family had made a gift of stock valued at \$573,000. Also reported was that "The first meeting of the Friends was attended by about forty people. The Constitution and by-laws were approved." At the May and June meetings there were many comments about the new additions and the concern about the energy requirements of the two front wings. There was a Board Meeting of the Friends on June 20 about planning a book sale on September 18 and a lecture later in the fall. "Weather permitting, the sale would be

held in the courtyard.” At the August Board meeting a member of the public commented on the building plans. The elevator should be installed to provide direct access for handicapped persons and there must be washroom facilities for handicapped persons.

At the December 8 meeting it was reported that the opening of bids will take place at the Library on December 21 at 2:00 pm. The Building Committee reported that there would need for changes in the plans and specs due to the City Fire Inspector. Other comments were related to the color of the matching brick, either weathered or unweathered. It was noted that “approximately 50 people attended an event hosted by the Friends” featuring the President of the Newberry Library. “The book sale will be held again next year. Books will be stored and sorted in either an empty store or Gorton Community Center during the Library construction program.”

On January 10, 1977, the Library Board voted to accept the low bid of the construction firm of Meyer-Ross subject to negotiating a firm price for the City code adjustments to the specifications. The total bid was for \$862,235. This included the following alternates: additional lower-level excavation for future Library expansion, rebuilding the brick walls in the garden courtyard, new 4-ply gravel roofing over existing stacks, and local gravel for walks to reduce the cost. While the problem of the 46-year-old heating system was raised, there was no decision. The claim of enlarging the elevator for a stretcher would be investigated further. It was also noted that tax levy changes over a three-year period from .15% to .18% to .21% to .24% would be subject to a referendum. The contract was signed with Meyer-Ross at the Library Board Meeting on February 16, 1977. The Ground Breaking ceremony was held on February 22 and work began on February 28.

During the construction there was vandalism of plumbing firm truck tires and suspected thefts of bricks from the courtyard. The Children’s Department was flooded in late March. The Board Meeting in May included discussions with the architects of tile choices for washrooms and floors, color of metal book stacks, and carpet samples. In May it was noted that \$150,000 was still required to complete the Building Project. In June it was noted that so many weathered bricks had been stolen it would be necessary to face one side of the wall with new brick. In June it was also reported that late night parties were taking place on the front benches of the Library property with a “group of tough not-so-young motorcyclists who were also littering and breaking lights.” Addition of recessed wall heaters were recommended for the men’s, women’s and staff washrooms to prevent freezing of plumbing. The Friends reported an autograph party for the author of Ordinary People, Judith Guest, and that the Annual Book Sale would be held on September 17 at the Gorton Community Center.

In September, the Board faced challenges with the construction funding since extensive corrosive damage to the heating system was discovered and the landscaping was larger than was generally anticipated even when scaled down. The interior needs in floor coverings and furniture exceeded the remaining balance as well. An arrangement was made with the City to borrow the difference only after the Library Board made every reasonable effort to raise the additional amounts.

At the October Board meeting there was mention of continued vandalism inside the Library, particularly carving on tables. The Board adopted a policy that family library privileges would be suspended if any individual was found vandalizing library property. The Lake Forest Women's Club and Friends donated to the Library Building fund. The Friends also agreed to assume responsibility for the dedication ceremony expenses of the building addition.

In December, it was reported that Kent Chandler had accepted the chairmanship of a Mayor's Committee to lead the fundraising campaign. There were many continued discussions and public comments about floor coverings, materials, maintenance and colors.

In January 1978 the Library moved to accept Louis Wells Kasian's resignation after thirty years from 1947 through 1977 and approved her request for disability status. She began as a Lake Forest Teenager shelving books and her name remains on this room where we meet tonight. There was continued discussions on flooring and paint colors on walls. There was further discussion about the need for a security system due the continuing problems of theft, noise, and vandalism. The Lake Forest Garden Club expressed concerns about the quality of the landscaping plan. In April it was reported that the culprits have paid in full for damaging a table in the Children's Library. In May the American Legion donated a flagpole for the Library grounds. In June it was reported that new flooring was being laid. Speed bumps were installed during the summer since drivers were speeding through the parking lot!

The American Library Trustee Association award was presented to the family the late Mrs. Helen Shedd Keith on Monday, October 23, 1978, for her generous support to our Library since the very beginning. She was able to attend the 75th Celebration in a rare appearance in her later years. In January 1979, the Building Fund reached \$130,000.

The Library went on-line on May 16, 1979. In July 1979 the Library Board received a Resolution of Appreciation from the Mayor about the fine work and the completion of the building project without additional funds required from the City. A security system was installed on July 15, 1980. Potential thieves had been apprehended. Summer Programs had 612 participants. Video tapes were popular in 1981 and 57 patrons requested 337 tapes from December 26 to January 13, 1981. The 1983 Fiscal Budget was presented with a 9.86% increase over 1982. A Library Christmas Party was scheduled for Sunday, December 12, 1982 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm.

Thanks for listening.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

No members of the public addressed the Board.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

There were no comments on the Correspondence Report.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the March 8, 2022 Agenda
- b. Approval of the February 8, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- c. Approval of the February 15, 2022 Building Committee Report
- d. Approval of the February 2022 Financial Report
- e. Approval of 2022 Mariani Commercial Landscape Management Agreement

Questions and comments on the individual items are as follows:

During the discussion of the February 8, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes, President Johnson asked to amend the minutes to remove the following text on page 5, "when no action was taken by the Friends by March 2021 and on the understanding that the Friends would fund a gift to the Library for capital improvements. A capital improvement pledge was approved in April 2021 (as publicly announced) but the Friends have not yet executed a pledge agreement nor delivered any funds under the Friends' Board approved \$800,000 pledge" because the Friends of the Library report to the Library Board will reflect that the Friends have not sent any contributions to the Library for FY2022.

President Johnson thought the Building Committee Meeting on February 15, 2022, was excellent and had no changes to the minutes. Trustee Shattock questioned the timing of a 2023 construction project. Trustee Bertola responded that this timeline is a conservative estimate based on where we currently are in the process. The date will be more defined after a proposed solution is presented to the City of Lake Forest and the Historical Preservation Committee. President Johnson questioned when the Board would hear back from Wiss, Jinney, Elstner Associates ("WJE") on the next steps. Trustee Bertola said that next week a meeting is scheduled with WJE and the Building Committee for the firm to present proposed solutions and ideas for consideration. The Building Committee will decide if they need to come before the Board with information.

President Johnson commented that the 2022 Mariani Commercial Landscape Management Agreement is for routine maintenance and any special projects are not included. Trustee Shattock questioned how long Mariani has been providing landscape management to the Library. Director Lemmer responded that Mariani has been contracted for 3 years. The use of the robotic lawnmower that Mariani provides has significantly reduced cost and that noise pollution is kept at a minimum in respect to our neighbors living near the Library.

Trustee Arnson made a motion, seconded by Trustee Desmond, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. 9 yeas votes. Motion passed with a roll call vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports

UPDATE OF FY2023 LIBRARY BUDGET

Ed Finn, Director of Operations, received two questions from Board members for discussion on the FY2023 Library Budget.

1. Does the Special Projects line accommodate administering surveys?

Mr. Finn answered that the Special Projects line has factored the surveys into the calculations. It can accommodate two surveys—one for current cardholders and another full community survey regarding Library services. Also, operating cash is available if the Library needs to move the money, and the Library can talk with the City on how to move reserves, if necessary. Director Lemmer added that the \$70,000 Special Projects line should be more than sufficient to retain a firm to help the Library with envisioning and conducting the necessary surveys.

2. Does the budget sufficiently cover the impact of inflation of goods and services on the Library's programming needs and collections, and provide additions in the next fiscal year?

Mr. Finn answered that Sameer Notta, Finance Officer, has had multiple discussions with the department heads and is very comfortable with the numbers as stated in the budget.

Trustee Desmond asked if there is money budgeted for expenses to move forward with Phase #2 of the dome project. Mr. Finn answered that the Library is talking with the City of Lake Forest and WJE about potential costs. There is a lot of flexibility within the budget to move funds when they are needed. Director Lemmer added that there is \$50,000 in the Capital Improvement line which can become available for this type of expense as well.

President Johnson has had two discussions with Jan Gibson, Chair of the Friends of Lake Forest Library Awards and Grants Committee. The Friends will be meeting on April 2, 2022, ahead of our April Board Meeting, and any changes can be made to the FY2023 budget which will be approved at the April meeting.

LIBRARY OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Finn announced that all the equipment for the RFID equipment, including gates and self-checkout machines are on the Library premises. The technicians from Biblioteka will be onsite on Thursday and Friday for the installation of equipment. The implementation date for RFID will be March 15. The Library will be closed on March 15 for final installation, training, and to prepare for the launch on March 16. The Library will use the closure on March 15 as a staff training day for RFID and other operations matters (e.g., Code Adam and other emergencies) and HR meetings and focus groups.

Director Lemmer mentioned three technological innovations that the Library is tracking:

1. Hold Locker Systems place lockers outside of Library buildings to extend hours for retrieving or returning materials. This is an extension of serving the public during non-business hours. These lockers offer flexibility in design and are simple to use.
2. Library Dispensary Systems are also known as “Libraries in a Box.” These non-staffed spaces are open 24/7 and are available with components to allow the user a full library experience. Locations are variable especially when space is a premium. Collections can be as specific or general as needed. Santa Barbara, California successfully utilizes this system with robotic arms to retrieve materials. Envisionware offers full functions of a library including checkout, returns, book downloads, and visual identification of materials in other locations besides the Library building.
3. Open Plus Location are full-service libraries in locations other than the library building. They offer access to materials and services by swiping the library membership card for access. Palatine Library uses this system in two of their park district locations. The advantage of locating these type of branches in other public buildings is that other services including bathrooms and security are provided by the public building.

Director Lemmer sees these ideas as potential options for serving areas in our community that do not have the services that they want. Full staffing of a branch on the west side of town is not feasible so these solutions may be considered. Trustee Shattock inquired about the holdings of these systems and how they could adapt over time. Director Lemmer responded that this information would need to be discussed and analyzed. The idea of using the west side train station, as well as other locations for these systems can be researched. Trustee Strong mentioned the need for security in the locations not staffed.

Trustee Arnson suggested that the need for a survey question would help in determining the direction of these systems. She mentioned that the staff is an important part of the Lake Forest Library experience and perhaps the community does not want unstaffed systems. Director Lemmer mentioned the historical bookmobiles are adapting to the in-person needs of the community by including children’s storytime outside the van and running book discussions in their traveled-to locations and that any of these options could be enhanced with different staffing models for these new trends. Director Lemmer will continue to update the Board as these trends develop.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Trustee Desmond wants the Board to consider a needs assessment and community input regarding the Library’s Capital Improvement project. Trustee Shattock agreed that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the needs of the community may have changed since the last survey conducted in 2016. She sees the end goal of a needs assessment to be improving all users experience in the Library. Director Lemmer agreed that a successful process in determining the community’s library needs and wants is the starting point of any conversation regarding

modifications or renovations. Options might include a community survey or a series of discussions with broad or limited focus groups. She wants Board members input based on our communication with our neighbors on what the community would determine as sufficient input gathering and what would make the community comfortable going forward. Board members will also need to determine how to measure the success of these information gathering tools. President Johnson recommended that the Board Meeting in May include a broader discussion on this topic.

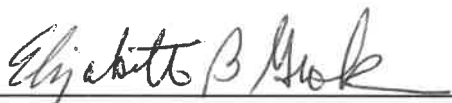
NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Desmond made a motion, seconded by Trustee Shattock, to adjourn the meeting. President Johnson adjourned the meeting by a voice vote at 8:29 p.m.

Upcoming Meeting: Regular Board Meeting, April 12, 2022



Elizabeth Grob, Secretary

Minutes approved by the Board on April 12, 2022.