

**Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees**  
360 E Deerpath Road, Lake Forest IL 60045  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
7:30 p.m., February 8, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

President John F. Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m., on Tuesday, February 8, 2022.

The Trustees of the Library Board attended this meeting by electronic means, in compliance with the recent amendments to the Open Meetings Act. The Mayor of the City of Lake Forest has determined that it is not prudent or practical to conduct an in-person meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that it is not feasible to have the Trustees or members of the public physically present at the meeting due to the pandemic disaster. Members of the public were invited to attend this meeting, as well as provide public comment at the meeting. Members of the public participated remotely in the meeting via the link in the agenda.

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.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

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

As all of you know, I've been reading the Library Board Minutes since the founding date in 1898 and have finished up until 1975. Here are some highlights of interest that may offer some perspective for our budget and meeting discussions this evening.

In the February 1964 it was noted that Circulation had doubled in the ten-year period 1954-64. Book prices had doubled for fiction and tripled for non-fiction.

An engineering report was received about a new air-conditioning system which would also need a power system upgrade. In June 1964 the Library Board approved raising the tax rate to afford the new air-conditioning system. It was also noted the following summer in 1965 that borrowing funds would be necessary to complete the installation.

In June of 1965, the Lake Forest population was more than 10,000 and total library volumes were 58,000 books. There were 8,000 Library patrons and circulation was over 90,000 books. Renovation of the Children's lower level was completed.

During the mid-1960's there were several Trustees who retired from the Library Board after long term significant service and contributions. Richard Bentley retired after serving 40 years, a skilled lawyer with a deep interest in literature. Pauline Christie left the board after 12 years and had

chaired the Book Committee. Paul Le Roi left the Board after 15 years and had chaired the Building & Grounds Committee. John Shedd Reed retired after serving nine years and was chair of the Budget Committee. John Reed was the son of Kersey Coates Reed in whose memory the Library Building was given. Edward Arpee, well known Lake Forest historian, retired after six years, after completion of the by-law revisions. William Dunn retired after serving 11 years including three as President.

On July 18, 1966, there was a special meeting of the Board called to reaffirm joining the new North Suburban Library System, subject to being able to give 90-day notice to leave if the Library ever wanted to exit. This was the result of Illinois State Law HB563 passed in February and approved by the governor on August 17 of that year to begin creating regional library systems. Lake Forest Library was one of the founding members.

In September 1969 a completed building needs assessment included a proposed drawing of a new addition. In Fiscal Year 1971-72 the Tax Levy was \$150,320. A new Building Fund was created in anticipation of a future building addition.

In the Fall 1970 there were unfortunate vandalism matters of interest. "Culprits had been shooting bee-bees at men painting the exterior building of the building and had been caught and turned over to the police. Students had removed screens and were throwing books out of the building. Plants grown from seeds were confirmed by the police as marijuana."

In July 1971 there were reports of extensive book loss, exhibit cases were broken and a silver display stolen. In September there were some payments received "from the boys who had been responsible for the vandalism in March." In November 1971 there were more reported losses of books and magazines exiting through the back door. In January 1972 the building was broken into and money was taken from the main desk.

In May of 1972 discussion about paying Library Board Members was discussed and decided that it "was not a good idea."

On July 18, 1972 the Board approved borrowing \$20,000 since tax money was not coming in until August.

In December of that year John T. McCutcheon retired after nine years. He was a Board President but also served on the first North Suburban Library System Board.

At the January 1973 meeting Librarian Kasian reported that some of the Library's historical holdings had been turned over to the newly formed Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.

There were more thefts reported including a large fern taken from the foyer which was on loan from the Church of the Holy Spirit. In October of 1973 vandalism continued with rocks thrown

through the front door. Mixing up on shelves was a new pastime reported from some individuals. In December of the following year vandals did serious damage to the sofa in the foyer.

In November 1974 providing materials for the blind and handicapped was discussed. It was also reported that a large fire screen in the Art Room was stolen and graffiti again appeared on the murals in the Garden Room.

In January of 1974 the Board discussed the 75th Anniversary celebration and decided to hire a consultant for direction and review. The event was held at the Library on June 2. Mr. Russell Kohr mentioned that a Friends group could have helped but it did not exist at the time. He volunteered to do some investigating. Minimum wage for student helpers at the Library was established at \$1.90/hr.

In July 1974 it was approved to add Fine Arts Insurance to the policy but that did not include any of the fine books locked in cases. Annual theft rate was estimated at 6-7%.

In September of 1974 the authorized book audit was completed. It was found that 1,544 books were taken. That was three times the theft rate when the last inventory was completed in 1971. Reference books were also reported as "heavily stolen."

A new volunteer program was successfully started in 1974. Gorton Community Center requested that the Library participate in a series of talks beginning in January 1975.

#### 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

Trustee Strong requested a discussion about the Personnel Report for the month of March. President Johnson stated that a staffing discussion will occur later in the meeting or may be continued next month if questions are not answered. Trustee Strong requested information regarding the employees who left the Library in 2021 by the end of the meeting. Director Lemmer provided that information and will any provide additional information of staff retention when requested.

#### APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

There were no comments or questions on the consent agenda. Trustee Desmond made a motion, seconded by Trustee Arnson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

- a. Approval of the February 8, 2022 Agenda
- b. Approval of the December 14, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

- c. Approval of the December 2021 Financial Report
- d. Approval of the January 2022 Financial Report
- e. Approval of 2022 Annual Calendar

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

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS: BUILDING COMMITTEE

Trustee Bertola updated the Board on the progress of the dome repair. The architectural contract to employ Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates (“WJE”) was signed on December 16, 2021 by Board President Johnson.

Between December 25, 2021 and January 1, 2022, the HGA dome report was reviewed along with additional documents, photos, and drawing supplied to WJE by the Library. After January 1, WJE visited the Library to take measurements of the interior rotunda and to meet with the roofing specialists to evaluate the dome under the tarp.

A special Building Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. to introduce WJE to the community, provide detailed updates, share what WJE has discovered in their process to date, and to answer any questions from the Board and the community. This meeting will be held virtually. HGA provided Trustee Strong with digital scans of some blueprints which have been transferred to the Library’s SharePoint network. The Historic Preservation Foundation invited the Building Committee to their board meeting to discuss the dome repair updates and answer any questions. Trustee Bertola appreciates the working partnership that has developed with the Historic Preservation Foundation. Trustee Bertola thanked the Library staff for accommodating WJE’s onsite visits and information needs.

#### UPDATE OF FY2023 LIBRARY BUDGET

Trustee Lemke, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided an update on the FY2023 budget process. There was no vote taken on the budget as this was only an update and additional work is being completed to finalize the numbers. The final budget will be voted on at the April Library Board meeting. Ed Finn, Director of Operations, walked through the budget draft, and encouraged everyone to ask questions at any time.

Mr. Finn introduced the Preliminary Budget 2023 Revenue lines. Director Lemmer discussed the Tax-Based, Impact Fees, and Per Capita Grant lines. The next line discussed was Library Revenues. The other two Revenue lines were Friends of Lake Forest Library Grant and Other Gifts & Grant Income. Trustee Grob asked about the increase to Photocopying line and was informed that it is a cyclical expense. The increase looks larger than FY21 and FY22 because the Library did not provide photocopying services during COVID restrictions. However, the small amount earned was also small due to making copies from the “Print From Afar” service that the Library provided free of charge to patrons during the COVID closures.

Trustee Arnson asked about the assumption that the Library would receive money from the Friends of Lake Forest Library each year. Director Lemmer noted that the Friends are a separate 501(c)(3) organization and that the Library Board does not control their distributions. Trustee Strong reported that she was asked to serve on the Friends of the Lake Forest Library Board in January and has been looking into this matter. Trustee Strong reflected that the FY2022 grant request attached to the FY2023 budget discussion (see page 30 of the board packet) reflected that the Friends had declined to fund the FY2022 grant. Trustee Strong objected to the use of "Declined to Fund."

Trustee Strong read into the record an email exchange (see attached) regarding the FY2022 Library Grant Request (May 2021-April 2022 period) to the Friends and follow up on the FY2021 grant award (May 2020-April 2021). Director Lemmer agreed that the FY2022 Grant Request which was submitted November 19, 2020 was withdrawn.

Director Lemmer further noted that the Friends FY2021 Final Grant Report detailing the use of funds was delivered to the Friends on June 19, 2021 and that a copy is in the Trustee SharePoint site along with the other Friends' documents (see attached). President Johnson stated that the Friends' Grant Committee is meeting on the FY2023 Grant Request and a decision to fund or not to fund will be made prior to the Library Board's vote on the final FY2023 budget in April.

Mr. Finn discussed the Operating and Capital Expenditures for FY2023. The increase in Salaries/Wages, is primarily due to benchmark salary increases, and merit and cost of living expense increases. Trustee Desmond raised questions about the difference in the budgeted and forecasted yearend numbers. Mr. Finn said this is attributed to retirements, departures and some positions not being filled over the fiscal year. The numbers will change over the coming year. President Johnson summarized that this FY2023 budget will allow the Library to pay the Library staff fairly at competitive rates in the marketplace. Mr. Finn then discussed Print, Audiovisual, and Electronic Media line increases. The Contractual Services line includes regular recurring charges and includes Bibliotheca RFID contract service. Special Projects line may be enhanced depending on what projects the Board determines to fund. Mr. Finn answered President Johnson inquiry about if the line item included a new, community survey being conducted in 2023. Since the last survey was taken about 5 years ago, money has been budgeted to conduct the survey should the Library Board decide to take such actions in FY2023. Trustee Strong inquired about breakout information on these line items and Mr. Finn referred to the FY2022 Forecast with FY2023 Budget Building Maintenances chart. He explained this breakout of information on Janitorial Supplies, Custodial Services, Contractual Services, Liability Insurance, Building/Equipment/Ground Maintenance and Water line items. Director Lemmer said that the levy is designed and structured to levy two separate amounts, one for the building and grounds and a separate amount for operations. Staff salaries and benefits are levied separately for building and operations, but for budget purposes all salary and benefits appear as one line.

In response to a question, Director Lemmer noted the monthly financial information is made available in the Board member packets and on the Trustee website. Trustee Strong suggested

breakouts in more of the expense line items moving forward. Director Lemmer will confirm that the detailed spreadsheet on the Capital Improvement Project is available on the Trustee SharePoint site. President Johnson again inquired about the availability of money is sufficient to administer another community survey in the coming year. Director Lemmer assured him that other libraries on the Northshore are engaging in this process and there are routine requests among senior staff for which companies the Libraries are using and what the dollar ranges are for completing a community survey. If the Board decides to move forward with this project, then the budget can be adjusted. Trustee Desmond inquired about the line-item location for the dome repair. Mr. Finn and Director Lemmer are working with the City on how to best move those funds out of the Reserves. The Total Capital and Technology Expenditures lines may be supplemented from the Reserves to undertake the dome and larger technology projects. The \$1.2M surplus from last year was moved into the Capital Reserve line for this purpose. The City personnel who manage the Library's investments know that funds will need to be moved to pay for the dome project. Mr. Finn said the Programming line is increasing due to some anticipated projects the Library would like to undertake. The FY2023 Capital Expenditures budget line is a primarily a placeholder as of now. Trustee Clifton wanted more detail on Programming and Other Expenses line. Director Lemmer stated the increase is due to a plan of developing two of the Library's signature programs in a much more significant way, 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary expenses, costs associated with the Library's newsletter, and other general cost increases. Mr. Finn added that the city uses Other Expenses to include small discrete items. Director Lemmer addressed Trustee Desmond's inquiry about a monthly check ledger included in the Board packets. She said this will be included starting in March. Mr. Finn addressed questions about purchasing computers for the library and that the Library is evaluating the purchase or lease based on the metrics for usage and space.

There were no questions from the public for the Finance Committee.

#### LIBRARY OPERATIONS REPORT

Director Lemmer, in response to Trustee Strong's request, noted the full-time, part-time, retired, and resigned staff numbers in 2021 and noted there is a total of 47 employees at the Library currently. Mr. Finn gave an update on RFID progress. The first RFID self-checkout kiosk has been assembled and is being programmed in the lower-level expansion area. Once the programming is completed and tested, the remaining self-check kiosks will be assembled and programmed. A set of RFID gates will be delivered within the week, and these gates will be assembled as soon as all the parts are available. President Johnson shared that he enjoyed the surprise selection of a graphic novel that was offered through the Library's February offering called "Blind Date With a Book."

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

#### NEW BUSINESS

Director Lemmer discussed the Read Between the Ravines event that is occurring around the book title, "Unraveled: The Life and Death of a Garment" by Maxine Bédat. The Library is working

with the Lake Bluff Public Library, Rotary, the Gordon Center, the Lake Forest Book Store, and other organizations to bring this high-caliber author to our community.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:10 p.m., President Johnson requested a motion for the Board to enter an Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1): The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

Trustee Arnsen made a motion, seconded by Trustee Grob, to enter Executive Session. 9 yeas votes. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

President Johnson reopened the regular session of the meeting at 10:10 p.m. President Johnson took a visual roll call.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Arnsen made a motion, seconded by Trustee Shattock, to adjourn the meeting. President Johnson adjourned the meeting by a visual vote at 10:11 p.m.

#### **Upcoming Meeting: Regular Board Meeting, March 8, 2022**

/s/ Elizabeth Grob (signed electronically due to COVID-19 pandemic)

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Elizabeth Grob, Secretary

Minutes approved by the Board on March 8, 2022.

**answer to your question**

Friends of LF Library <friendslflibrary@gmail.com>

Sun 2/6/2022 10:54 PM

To: Heather Strong <hstrong@lakeforestlibrary.org>

Cc: Patricia Borkowski <tish\_borkowski@msn.com>

**CAUTION: Think Security!** This email is not from someone at Lake Forest Library. **Do not click any links or open any attachments you are not expecting.**

Hi Heather,

Thanks for your question. I reviewed the Friends' minutes and found the following in the March 6, 2021 board minutes referencing the Library's grant request letter dated November 19, 2020. The short answer is that the library director withdrew the library's grant request for FY2022. Here is the exact wording from the 3/6/2021 Friends' minutes:

"It is important to note that in the interim, due to the pending "kick-off" to the Capital Campaign, the Library has withdrawn any requests for funding for programs in the current fiscal year (and likely for the next couple of years); with the intent that any available funding during the next few years should be applied to the Capital Campaign. Given this situation the FY2022 grant requests for operating items are now moot."

Just prior to the library's withdrawal of the FY2022 grant request, the Friends' Grant Committee sent the following email to the library requesting backup for FY2021 grant dollars given COVID had eliminated many of the approved grant items. Therefore, the Friends' wanted to understand what the grant dollars had been spent on since the approved uses never happened. Following is the email from the Friends to the library:

"and we would like to correlate the monies spent to what we approved. We realize this has been an unusual year with limited program activity and that it's very possible that much of the grant money from our last donation has not yet been spent.

Could you take the approved grant list from FY2021 and identify the following for each grant:

--- Program names, program dates, amount spent per program during FY2021 (to date and for the remainder of the fiscal year).

Thank you for your cooperation with our requests."

The Friends never received the backup information requested in the above email.

Please let me know any other questions.

Thanks,

Tish

Friends' Co-President

*Figure 2. Email From Friends of LFL (Yellow highlights by Trustee Strong)*



## FY2021 Yearend Grant Report to Friends of Lake Forest Library

### Introduction

The Lake Forest Library (the “Library”) submitted its FY2021 grant request in a manner that aligned its fiscal year with that of the Friends of Lake Forest Library (“Friends”). Payment of the awarded FY2021 grant funds occurred in May 2020 to be used for programs, resources, and services during the period of May 2020 through April 2021.

The Library received a FY2021 grant of \$74,000 from the Friends for:

- \$61,500 for adult, teen, and children’s programming
- \$5,000 for partial funding of *Lake Forest Reads: Ragdale*, fall community one-book (fiction) read program
- \$5,000 for partial funding of *Read Between the Ravines*, spring community one-book (non-fiction read)
- \$2,500 for the continued digitization and indexing of the *Lake Forester*

### Programming

In FY2021, the Library hosted 906 programs and events, attended by 43,262 individuals as compared to 897 programs attended by 34,941 individuals in FY2020. In FY2021, 19,738 adults attended or participated in 361 adult programs, 1,374 teens attended or participated in 145 programs, and 22,133 children attended or participated in 400 children’s programs and storytimes.

To enhance a participant’s virtual program experience, the Library created Grab&Go teen and children’s kits. For example, storytime kits were developed to replicate the sensory experiences children would have if attending the storytime in-person at the Library. The kits provided the full experience even though the program was delivered virtually. In addition, the Library hosted nearly two dozen virtual storytimes and other programs at offsite daycare and school facilities after these organizations resumed operations in late FY2021.

The ability to record and host many of the online programs enabled Lake Foresters to participate at their convenience or in the case of the Library’s younger patrons, view a loved storytime more than once. The Library plans to carry this practice forward whenever possible to extend the reach of its programs. Similarly, the Library plans to continue to host virtual programs in those months of the year that are challenging for members of our community with mobility and other conditions that make it difficult to come to the Library.

689 children, 125 teens (YA), and 215 adults participated in the Summer Reading program. Children and teens (YA) completed another 875 additional Summer Reading challenges after completing the Summer Reading program requirements. The success of the Summer Reading program prompted the Library to develop and deliver a Winter Reading program for all ages from December 2020 through February 2021. 148 children, 34 teens (YA), and 176 adults participated in the Winter Reading program. Books and gift cards to local businesses were used as prizes in both the Summer and Winter Reading programs.

The Library increased and expanded its technology courses to go beyond its standard offerings. New offerings included courses on using virtual platforms and ways of staying connected and creative during the COVID-19

pandemic. Additional offerings for the business community were developed and delivered on topics such as marketing, business development, and use of the Library's research databases.

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual *Lake Forest Reads: Ragdale* discussed and explored Jean Kwok's novel *Searching for Sylvie Lee*. 192 individuals attended one of four virtual events with Ms. Kwok. These events, as well as the lead-up events, received compliments from attendees. A.J. Bullough won the writing contest with her entry, *Five Demands, Not One Less*, which is posted on the Library's blog.

The FY2021 selection for the Library's third annual non-fiction community read, *Read Between the Ravines (RBR)*, was *Reading with Patrick* by Michelle Kuo. The programming around this work began after the first of the year, culminating with an interview with Ms. Kuo in April 2021. The interview was viewed by 540 participants. This relevant and important read continued the success of the earlier RBR programs. *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes* by Dan Egan (2019) and *American Overdose: The Opioid Tragedy in Three Acts* by Chris McGreal (2020) were highly praised by the community. Chris McGreal's presentation was delayed from April 2020 to July 2020 and had over 2,100 viewers.

The Library launched its long-planned *1000 Books Before Kindergarten* in Spring 2021. This early literacy program already has over 80 children enrolled. The Library also launched StoryTime Walks in April 2021. The three selected children's works have already engaged Lake Foresters at Deerpath Community Park, Sheridan School, Northcroft Park, South Park, and School of St. Mary, as well as on the Library lawn.

The Library costs for programming in FY2021 remained constant. There were author and presenter fees as well as the usual promotion, supplies, and technology costs. In addition, the move to virtual programming required the purchase of various software platforms (e.g., Zoom, SquareSpace, ReadSquared, etc.) to host and deliver programs. These purchases were funded in part by the Library and other grant funds.

At the conclusion of FY2021, the remaining grant fees were used to fund a portion of the FY2022 summer reading program – *Reading Colors Your World*.

### **Digitization and Indexing of the *Lake Forester***

The Library coordinates the annual digitization and indexing as the issues become free of copyright limitations. There is no other free online option for this historical resource. The requested grant funds are used to microfilm, digitize, and index issues from 1934 forward. The resource is accessible from the Library's website at: [www.lakeforestlibrary.org/research-learn](http://www.lakeforestlibrary.org/research-learn). This is a highly used and valuable resource. In FY2021, there were 15,139 uses of the digitized *Lake Forester*.

### **Conclusion**

The Library's work in FY2021 reflects the efforts, creativity, and tenacity of the Library Team. Over the course of the year, the Library expertly and seamlessly executed a half-dozen different service shifts in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Library's services, resources, and programs were a life-line for many Lake Forest residents and families this last year. We hope that many Friends took the opportunity to take in some of the outstanding programs and events and utilize the Library's services and resources over the course of this uniquely challenging year.

The Library continues to evaluate opportunities to improve the services, resources, and programs delivered to the Lake Forest community. The Library also continues to assess and discuss the future of the current library facility with the goal of providing equal access to its programs, resources, and services to all members of the Lake Forest community.

In evaluating and assessing the Library's work for this report, the generosity of the Friends of Lake Forest Library, whose ongoing support and dedication is greatly appreciated, enhanced the Library's ability to deliver outstanding programming in a challenging pandemic year. This year-end report expresses the appreciation of the Library Board and the Lake Forest community for the Friends' continued commitment to the Library.

Catherine A. Lemmer, Executive Director

Submitted June 19, 2021 to the Board of the Friends of Lake Forest Library