

Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees

City Hall Chambers, 220 East Deerpath Road

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Regular Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Desmond welcomed all and called the meeting to order on December 17, 2024 at 6:30 in the City Hall Chambers.

ROLL CALL

Trustees present: Vice President JoAnn Desmond, Trustee Josh Jackson, Trustee John J. Johnson, Trustee Garth Pearson, Trustee Robert Shaw, Trustee Vince Sparrow, Trustee Heather Strong, Trustee Emily Van Bel. A quorum was present.

Trustee absent: Jim Clifton

Library Staff present: Ishwar Laxminarayan, Executive Director
Facilities Manager Jim Lee, Kate Buckardt, Head of Adult Services, Heidi Kruger, Director of Patron Services, Joy Schmoll, Head of Communications, Leo Hamza, Business Manager, Susan Athenson, Circulation Assistant.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Vice President Desmond welcomed everyone and thanked City Hall for allowing the meeting to take place in their space. She reflected on the continued collaboration with City Hall and expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Director Laxminarayan shared his appreciation for the ability to meet at City Hall. He highlighted the positive feedback on Youth Services' reorganization of collections which has improved accessibility. Director Laxminarayan also gave special recognition to Media Lab employee John Lacson for his exceptional and ongoing efforts to assist patrons. He also discussed an article in *Forest and Bluff Magazine* where the interviewee named the library as Lake Forest's "best-kept secret." There was discussion and agreement amongst the Trustees.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda include:

Consent Agenda (omnibus vote on matters 7(a) - 7(d):

- a. Approve December 17, 2024 Agenda
- b. Approve November 19, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

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- c. Approve November 2024 Financial Report
- d. Approve December 11, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

No comments or proposed changes. Trustee Jackson moved to approve items 7a-d (as amended) to reflect that Trustee Pearson attended the November 19, 2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Johnson. The omnibus vote passed unanimously.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION- *Financial Overview by Elizabeth Holleb (City Finance Director)*

Ms. Holleb highlighted the positive, long-standing partnership between the library and the city, which provides accounting and financial services. Ms. Holleb discussed a projected 9.77% increase in the city's assessed valuation, though this figure may decrease after Board of Review appeals (final numbers expected by April). Based on the previous year's change in the Consumer Price Index, the library will see a 3.4% increase in its tax revenues in FY 2026 with an additional 0.64% anticipated from new construction. Ms. Holleb explained that the Library levy accounts for 3% of the total tax bill for a Lake Forest property. There was some general discussion amongst Trustees. The Trustees expressed their appreciation to Ms. Holleb and wished her well in her future endeavors. Trustee Sparrow presented Director Holleb with a token of appreciation from the Library Board and staff.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION- *Legislative Update by Trustee Johnson*

Trustee Johnson recapped the Illinois Library Association (ILA) meeting that took place on December 4 with area legislators and library directors. He recapped some of the highlights of the meeting including efforts to raise the bidding threshold for library construction projects (currently at \$25,000) with adjustments for inflation as well as a proposal to address competitive book pricing for eBooks. Given the excessive cost of eBooks relative to print books, the ILA hopes to present a proposal in the Spring to mitigate these costs. Trustee Johnson also highlighted what a wonderful job Director Laxminarayan is doing and how fortunate we are to have him.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION- *Exterior Courtyards Restoration Presentation by Ken Itle (of WJE Associates)*

For historical context, on the state of the courtyards, Mr. Itle discussed them in their original state. When the library was built in 1931, it originally featured two enclosed courtyards with 8-foot-high walls. These walls were shortened in 1957 for aesthetic and practical reasons. Notable changes to the courtyards in the 1970s included the removal of the central sidewalk.

Current issues include:

- Non-ADA-compliant access (thresholds, steps, and double doors).
- Deteriorating masonry walls and poor drainage.
- Limited lighting and safety hazards.

Mr. Itle discussed the proposed restoration plan to address said issues as well as other indications of wear and tear. This proposal included rebuilding the courtyard walls using salvaged bricks and limestone where possible, with reinforced masonry for added strength. It is recommended to also grade the courtyards to match the interior lobby level for ADA

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compliance, eliminating ramps and tripping hazards. Other key improvements include (but are not limited to): replacing the double doors with a single, wide door, addressing any water leakage issues and improving the waterproofing, enhancing drainage and replace deteriorating paving systems, upgrading the courtyard lighting and adding electrical outlets for better functionality. There is also consideration given to restoring the original 8-foot wall height and central sidewalk.

A proposed time is as follows:

- Design Development (Jan-Feb 2025) to finalize plans, gather community input, and create cost estimates.
- Construction Documents (Mar-Apr 2025) and bidding.
- Construction (summer 2025) with a target completion by early September 2025.

Members of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation were present including President Brian Norton. His recommendation was to consider raising the courtyard walls back to their original height of 8-feet but, also noted that could be a discussion for a later date. Library staff member Susan Athenson, who has also served as past president of the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, noted that she had some questions about the project that she will communicate to Director Laxminarayan. Overall, Mr. Norton on behalf of the Preservation Foundation, offered his strong support and enthusiasm for the project.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Trustee Sparrow began his overview by making two motions that required a vote as discussed earlier in Ms. Holleb's report. First, was a motion to accept the audit as presented. This motion was seconded by Trustee Shaw which passed unanimously by all Trustees in attendance. Second, was a motion to approve the property tax levy. This motion was seconded by Trustees Shaw which passed unanimously by all Trustee in attendance.

Trustee Sparrow then discussed the state of current investments, offering an overview of things: there is \$2.2M invested through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City and over \$800,000 in Illinois Funds, in addition to \$7.7 million in cash balances. Trustee Sparrow then discussed the proposal to modify the current MOU with the City to increase the investment cap from \$4 million to \$6 million, and to extend the maximum investment term from 3 years to 5 years. Trustees debated flexibility for early withdrawals, ensuring funds remain accessible for capital projects. A motion to approve MOU modifications was made by Trustee Jackson, seconded by Trustee Van Bel. The motion passed with one abstention (Trustee Strong).

OPERATIONS REPORT

Director Laxminarayan touched on some new materials introduced to the library, including a new knitting machine for the Media Lab. He again highlighted the success of recent programming, including an extremely well attended kids' program- a Reptile Show. He also unveiled a new promotional effort for the West Side vending machine through the creative use of book-themed candies with QR codes. Director Laxminarayan concluded his update noting that checking out mobile hotspots continue to be extremely popular among Lake Forest residents.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

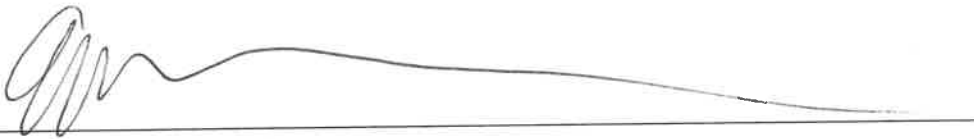
None

NEW BUSINESS

Due to Director Laxminarayan's absence in February, a request was made to cancel the February board meeting. A motion to cancel the February board meeting was made by Trustee Johnson, seconded by Trustee Jackson and approved unanimously by all Trustees in attendance.

Director Laxminarayan kindly distributed gifts to the trustees on behalf of Library staff, thanking the trustees for their service and dedication.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Sparrow, seconded by Trustee Shaw. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Emily Van Bel', is written over a horizontal line.

Emily Van Bel, Secretary
Submitted for approval by the Board on January 21, 2025

Next meeting: January 21, 2025