

Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees
360 E. Deerpath Road, Lake Forest, IL, 60045

Tuesday, January 20, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

President Jackson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order on January 20, 2026 at 6:32 pm in the Kasian Room, at Lake Forest Library.

ROLL CALL

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

Library Staff present: Ishwar Laxminarayan - Executive Director, Heidi Krueger, Assistant Director, Kate Buckardt, Adult Services Manager, Lorie Rohrer, Youth Services Manager, Kari Kan, Youth Services Assistant, John Lacson, Media Lab Specialist, Leo Hamza, Business Manager.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Jackson welcomed everyone noting how he closed 2025 with gratitude for a strong year and expressed excitement for the year ahead.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Trustee Desmond offered an update from the Friends Board meeting. Jan Gibson of the Friends' Grant Committee requested where the library might need financial support for programming and other needs.

Trustee Strong suggested the library be included as a stop on the tour following the symposium hosted by the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation on Sunday, October 18, 2026, positioning it as a regional showcase for Midwest visitors.

Trustee Shaw noted the luncheon he and Trustee Johnson attended together highlighting the positive collaboration between city managers of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff and honoring the Citadel Theatre.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

STAFFING UPDATE

Children's Services is fully staffed. The newest employee of children's services, Youth Services Assistant Kari Kan, was introduced and she spoke briefly on her background and training.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Director Laxminarayan reviewed several patron comments, highlighting the many praises received for the library's extended hours and food offerings during Exam Escape. He also shared appreciation for staff efforts during Exam Escape, particularly highlighting the supportive environment created for students. Mr. Laxminarayan noted that there will be a final city recommendation expected late January with regards to parking regulations for the Central Business District.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Omnibus Consent Agenda was presented. Trustee Johnson made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Trustee Sparrow seconded the motion.

The following voted "Aye": Trustees Clifton, Desmond, Jackson, Johnson, Pearson, Shaw, Sparrow, Strong and Van Bel. The following voted "Nay": none. 9-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Exterior Courtyard Rehabilitation- Phase I

Trustee Strong provided a construction update citing that construction remains delayed due to weather. During the brick cleaning process, due to the size and shape variances of the original brick, additional brick was identified for purchase. This custom brick will be used both on the inside and outside walls. The salvaged brick will be repurposed elsewhere (location not yet determined). Custom samples were approved and will be ordered. Furniture for the courtyards is expected to be ordered by the end of the month.

Boiler Replacement

The replacement is still pending due to weather conditions.

1931 Room Restorations

Trustee Strong noted that the schematic design is nearly complete; the Building Committee is still awaiting a cost estimate. Evergreene Architectural Arts submitted their proposal to assess the various paint colors and determine what the original colors were with primary focus on the rotunda and foyer. A motion was sought to move forward with the proposal for an amount of \$13,680. Trustee Sparrow made a motion to proceed with the proposal as outlined, authorizing Mr. Laxminarayan to sign the proposal. Trustee Shaw seconded the motion.

The following voted "Aye": Trustees Clifton, Desmond, Jackson, Johnson, Pearson, Shaw, Sparrow, Strong and Van Bel. The following voted "Nay": none. 9-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

FUNDRAISING DISCUSSION

President Jackson expressed enthusiasm about fundraising efforts for upcoming projects. Based on last month's discussion as a board alongside feedback form board members, President Jackson has identified trustees Sparrow and Van Bel to serve on a fundraising committee that will be announced in the near future.

STATE OF ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
GRANT

Thanks to the efforts of State Senator Julie Morrison, the Lake Forest Library has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for costs associated with infrastructure improvements. Director Laxminarayan provided an overview of the grant guidelines, noting that it would support infrastructure projects completed within the last two years or expected to be completed within the next two years. Trustees Desmond and Sparrow strongly recommended that the library use grant funding to complete projects that would enhance ADA accessibility. Senator Morrison is planning to issue a joint press release in the near future. Trustee Desmond moved to accept the State grant, while trustee Shaw seconded. Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.

FY2026 ILLINOIS PUBLIC LIBRARY PER CAPITA GRANT

Director Laxminarayan noted that the Illinois State Library had recently updated its standards for public libraries. Library leadership has created action plans for each of these 12 standards that have been used to complete the library's annual per capita grant application to the state. While the library meets or exceeds several of the standards, we need to update several of our public service and personnel policies and also create a succession plan for our senior leadership team. Trustee Desmond moved to approve the library's per capita grant application and authorize the Executive Director to submit it by the deadline of January 30, 2026. Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.

NEW LIBRARY WEBSITE

Communications staff members Joy Schmoll and Mandy Cowan have researched options for updating the library's website and have identified BiblioWeb as the best platform to integrate services. Key features include built-in training, personalization, customized dashboard, future tools (Biblio App), and ability to set content preferences. Discussion followed about staff support for transition planning. Mandy confirmed there is a clear implementation process. Trustee Shaw inquired about ongoing training. Trustee Johnson questioned how this new software presents itself across various devices. Trustee Johnson made a motion to approve the subscription to BiblioWeb, events, and calendar services for \$30,706.39, including a one-time implementation fee (March 2026-March 2027) and to authorize Director Laxminarayan to negotiate and sign the contract. Trustee Desmond seconded the motion.

The following voted "Aye": Trustees Clifton, Desmond, Jackson, Johnson, Pearson, Shaw, Sparrow, Strong and Van Bel. The following voted "Nay": none. 9-Ayes, 0-Nays, motion carried.

LIBRARY OPERATIONS REPORT

Director Laxminarayan highlighted the outstanding work of the Technical Services staff, who successfully navigated recent changes while ensuring collections continued to flow efficiently. He mentioned several staff members participating in the Holiday Market, which was a valuable opportunity to showcase the library's vending machine.

Youth Services programming remained strong, with the Gingerbread House Challenge and Exam Escape as some of the highlights. December programming was lighter due to the holidays,

Lake Forest Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 20, 2026

and circulation reflected a typical seasonal dip. Administration is evaluating increased investment in electronic collections to supplement physical materials.

Trustee Strong noted the strength of recent programming including *The River We Remember* and *Three Girls from Bronzeville* and its positive impact on circulation. Mr. Laxminarayan also cited positive visibility in the community with staff members Chad Clark and Kate Buckardt being featured in Forest & Bluff and local podcast *Hiya Gorgeous*.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

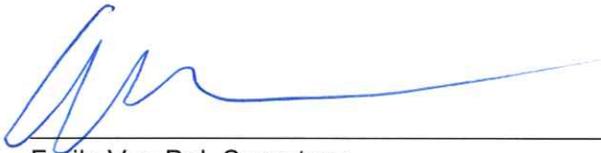
None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

Next Schedule Meeting: Regular Board Meeting, Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6:30 pm.



Emily Van Bel, Secretary

Submitted for approval by the Board on February 17, 2026