

MINUTES

PARK RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

20 S. Prospect Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Held in Park Ridge City Hall Council Chambers – 505 Butler Place, Park Ridge, IL

March 15, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

President Rapisand called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Trustees Present: Lauren Rapisand, President; Karen Burkum, Alexandra Hanba, Vice President, Josh Kiem, Danielle Powers, David Somheil, Treasurer; Joseph Steinfelds,

Trustees Absent: Gregg Rusk, Deepika Thiagarajan, Secretary

Others Present: Joanna Bertucci, Library Director; Angela Berger, Lauren Bochat, Alyson Doubek, Staci Greenwald, Jennifer Healy, John Priala, Laura Scott, Library staff
Claire Shaffer, Sal Galati, Francesca Pieraccini, Paul Kunke, Jeff Feucht, Lorinda Sues, Vicki Kouros, George Kouros, Mary Czerwionka, Rebekah Czerwionka, Karen Murphy, Caitlin Ryan, Lindsay Recsetar, Kim Schaefer, Samantha Hecker, Carter Esterling, Daisy Bowe, Molly Bowe, Ginger Pennington, Andrea Cline, William Hallihan, Rob Nash, Lauren Maloney, Marty Maloney, Community Members

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Rapisand welcomed community members in attendance and thanked them for their participation in tonight's meeting. She explained that public comments will be first on the agenda and she read the Board's policy, "Public Participation and Comment at Board Meetings". She stated that members of the public will be called upon to address the Board in the order in which they appear on the sign in sheet for tonight's meeting and asked if there was anyone wishing to speak who had not signed in. There were no additional community members wishing to speak. The Board then heard comments from the following individuals:

Claire Shaffer spoke about the value of providing access to books addressing LGBTQ+ issues in support of the community and as important educational tools. She stated that having access to these materials is vital to the mental health of Maine South students.

Sal Galati stated that he wants to address two issues. The first is how to work through disagreements in our community; the second issue is about not sexualizing our children and is not about anyone's sexual orientation. He stated that parents should be able to decide when and how to have these conversations with their children. He stated that he would like to have an intelligent conversation about establishing clear guidelines for what are adult topics and what topics are appropriate for children. He expressed his openness to engaging in conversation about this topic with anyone who wishes to do so.

Jeff Feucht stated he is supportive of the Library curating a diverse and inclusive collection of literature for young adults and secondly, thanked the Board for their unpaid service during this time of public discourse.

Lorinda Sues stated that she supports an unrestricted (Library) collection that represents and reflects all kinds of people in all kinds of situations.

Vicki Kouros related her experience of being a library user and expressed her appreciation to the Library Director and staff for keeping the shelves of the Library filled with diverse, inclusive and relevant books for her children and all the children of Park Ridge.

George Kouros stated that he has seen the email from the Freedom Park Ridge group and his understanding is that there is an organized effort underway to remove books from the Library under the pretense that these materials infringe on parents' rights. He requests that the Board not feel pressured by this and that they continue to do what he believes libraries should do; protect the freedom of ideas and people's freedom to choose for themselves what they will read.

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Karen Murphy stated that she is a high school counselor and mental health professional and that she wants to echo the sentiments expressed earlier supporting the library and keeping a diverse collection of books available. She further stated that she wants to push back on the idea that books about sexuality are inappropriate in the young adult area. She stated her belief that these books are developmentally appropriate for this age group.

Lindsay Recsetar stated that she is mental health professional and her belief that censorship limits the rights to full information and sends a passive yet clear message about what is acceptable. She stated that research has shown that having access to diverse materials can reduce the risk of isolation, depression and anxiety. She supports keeping diverse and representative materials in the Library.

Kim Schaefer spoke about the mission of public libraries and that access to materials is critical. She noted that the Park Ridge Library was started with funding from the Carnegie Foundation and that it was part of Andrew Carnegie's vision to provide free and open access to the public. She stated her belief that removing books from the Library flies in the face of public access. She believes that everyone benefits by having access to stories that take them outside of their own experiences and asks that the Library continue to offer stories that show the diversity of life.

Samantha Hecker stated that she believes there is a difference between the children's and teen spaces in the Library. Her idea is that the Loft is a place where teens can individualize and develop independence while the children's area is where younger children are to be supervised. She feels that much of the misunderstanding of LGBTQ+ issues stems from a lack of understanding and education and that teenagers do need to be educated so that they become more empathetic to differences among people.

Carter Esterling stated that it is important for him that people understand that libraries are for everyone. He feels that all young people deserve to see themselves represented in the offerings at their public library, and to learn from and about people who are different from them. He urged the Library to resist this "poorly cloaked" censorship attempt.

Daisy Bowe stated that her experience with the Library is that staff has always been helpful in helping her and her children select books that were of interest and were age appropriate with no attempt being made to unduly influence their selections. Her belief is that public libraries are for the public and that if a parent has issues with what their children are reading, have those discussions with their children but do not make decisions for others living in Park Ridge.

Molly Bowe stated that as a teen she was able to access LGTBQ materials in the Library and was thus able to learn new perspectives and learn about herself. She stated that teens are going to learn about these issues and she would rather that happen in a positive way than in slurs and hushed whispers. She feels reading these materials helps all teens develop a better understanding and acceptance of each other.

Ginger Pennington stated she strongly supports the educational mission of libraries and thanked the Board and Library staff for providing a collection that truly represents the beautiful diversity in this community and in the world. She asks that children not be prevented from basic knowledge and learning about these topics; she feels it teaches them respect for themselves and for their peers.

Andrea Cline came to support the Library and its staff and expressed her trust in their work. She opined that if we remove books from the library based on any criteria, then what is to say that we won't go forward with other removals. She posed the question, where is the line to be drawn?

William Hallihan addressed the ideas of parental rights and control and stated his opinion that what his children read should not be limited by the opinions or actions of others in the community.

Rob Nash thanked the Board for serving the public and hoped that a take-away from this evening is that there is a great deal of support in the community for what the Library is currently doing. He came to tonight's meeting because he was frustrated with the messaging from Freedom Park Ridge and stated that he is ready to engage in these types of conversations.

President Rapisand stated that this concludes the list of individuals who requested to speak at tonight's meeting. She again asked if there was anyone else who wished to speak.

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Sal Galati asked if he could again address the Board and as required by Board policy, a

MOTION: To extend additional time to speak to Sal Galati

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels

Motion passed

Mr. Galati addressed the Board again stating that he wants to clarify what his group, Freedom Park Ridge, is saying. He reiterated his position that he is attempting to open up a dialog and that he wants to add books to the collection, not about sexuality but about freedom, history and similar topics. He stated that he is not looking to remove anything in particular from the library but instead is concerned about where in the Library they are housed.

George Kouros then requested to again address the Board. A

MOTION: To extend additional time to George Kouros

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels

Motion passed

Mr. Kouros addressed the Board again stating his opinion that there was obfuscation going on in the last rebuttal speech. He stated that in his opinion, the email from Freedom Park Ridge was clear and was not only about adding books (to the Library's collection) but was also about removing books. He encouraged the Board not to give in to these calls for censorship.

Public comment was then concluded. President Rapisand again thanked those attending for their interest and participation in this evening's meeting.

President Rapisand requested that the President's Report be moved forward on the Agenda as she had a statement she would like to read.

Trustee Kiem made a

MOTION: To move the President's Report forward on the Agenda to be considered the next order of business

Trustee Powers seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels

Motion passed

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Rapisand then read the following statement:

"Having the honor of serving on the Park Ridge Public Library Board is one that none of our trustees take for granted. We know the tremendous responsibility that we have, to ensure that all members of the Park Ridge community are seen, heard, and valued. We want to thank all the individuals that came to our meeting this evening, wrote emails, or visited the library in person over the past few days, as it shows that we have a community that cares.

I also, personally, want to take this moment to thank the staff of the Park Ridge Public Library who do their jobs with the utmost professionalism and care in what they present, making sure materials are peer reviewed and age appropriate.

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Since October, the Board has been working extensively to review all aspects of our policy manual to ensure that the library is operating in a manner that is reflective of the times. While some of the policies have stayed consistent, we also have updated some that hadn't been reviewed in many years. In light of the recent feedback we've received, we have decided to accelerate the review of our Collection Management Guidelines to happen in April. While all the feedback is appreciated, please know that we do have a process that reviews materials based on several factors.

The Park Ridge Public Library is for everyone. Our collection contains materials that expand our perspective with experiences beyond our own and we aim to have a broad collection of viewpoints. Our job, as board members is to ensure that all Park Ridge voices are heard, and we will look at our Collection Management Guidelines to ensure that continues to happen. Board members, please know we will have the Collection Management Guidelines discussion at the April COW meeting.”

The Board then took a brief recess at 7:57 p.m. and resumed the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

President Rapisand stated that the following items are included on the Consent Agenda and added that if a Board member so requests, that item will be removed from consent for further discussion after the Consent Agenda is approved.

- Approval of Minutes of the February 15, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Library Board
- Ratify Bills Payable Warrant Register for Period 2, FY22 February 16, 2022 and February 28, 2022
- Cash Statement for all accounts for February, 2022
- Ratify disbursements from the Petty Cash Fund, \$37.95
- Approve the award of the 2022 Library Award, posthumously, to Rose Boghosian and Maurine Barinek
- Approve extension of the “Illness at the Workplace (COVID-19) for Library Staff” policy through June 30, 2022
- Approve a 3-year contract with Orange Boy in the amount of \$13,350, to be paid from the Computer Materials budget
- Approve revisions to the Display Case/Exhibits, Community Bulletin Board, and Library Trustee Orientation policies and rescission of the Horticultural Displays policy

Trustee Steinfels made a

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda

Vice President Hanba seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels,

Motion passed

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Somheil reviewed the FY22 Year to Date Revenue and Expenditures report on page 50 of the packet noting that with 17% of the fiscal year complete, 14% of the Operating budget has been expended. He also noted that a CVI quarterly payment results in 34% of that budget line showing as expended which is just a timing issue.

Treasurer Somheil made a

MOTION: To approve the FY22 Consolidated Year to Date Revenue and Expenditures Report for February, 2022

Trustee Burkum seconded the motion

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Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels,

Motion passed

SECRETARY'S REPORT

In Secretary Thiagarajan's absence, Director Bertucci reviewed the written report included in the packet on page 51 noting the articles related to the return of the Library's Classic Film Series hosted by Matthew Hoffman and the Library's mask optional policy. .

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Bertucci highlighted the following items included in her written report beginning on page 52 of the packet:

- Programming will return to the originally planned formats given the decline in COVID cases
- The Library will be receiving a FEMA grant in the amount of \$11,045.19 to cover costs from the early days of the pandemic, to protect the public health and safety of the general population
- The Library today began circulating five hot spots, purchased from the not for profit, Tech Soup, at deeply discounted rates. Staff will monitor their usage to determine if more are needed.
- On a personal note, Director Bertucci thanked President Rapisand for her commitment to addressing matters brought to the Board and stated that she is grateful for the Board's support and for being on the Library team.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Award of HVAC System Duct Cleaning project

President Rapisand noted that Director Bertucci's recommendation is discussed in a memo included in the packet. She asked if the trustees had any additional questions. There being no further questions,

Trustee Burkum made a

MOTION: To award the HVAC System Duct Cleaning project to Kleen Air Service Corp., in the amount of \$36,200

Trustee Powers seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels,

Motion passed

Approve revisions to the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees Park Ridge Public Library

President Rapisand explained that these Bylaws were reviewed as part of the ongoing review of the entire Policy Manual. Because revisions to the Bylaws require the approval of 2/3 of the Board, they are considered here, separately from the other policy revisions approved earlier this evening.

Vice President Hanba made a

MOTION: To approve revisions to the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees Park Ridge Public Library

President Rapisand seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels,

Motion passed

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Update Essential Government Functions Resolution

Director Bertucci explained that as the State of Illinois is still under an Emergency Declaration from Governor Pritzker, it is necessary to update this resolution as it gives the director the ability to manage library operations related to COVID-19. Previously the resolution was being updated on a monthly basis but is now being extended and updated on a quarterly basis.

Trustee Steinfels made a

MOTION: To approve revisions to the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees Park Ridge Public Library

Trustee Kiem seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels,

Motion passed

Staff Appreciation Resolution

President Rapisand directed the Board's attention to a draft resolution included in the packet on page 87. The resolution is intended to express the Board's appreciation to Library Staff for their exceptional service to the Park Ridge community during the COVID-19 pandemic. President Rapisand read the proposed resolution and noted that it will be presented to staff on April 5 which is National Library Workers Day and that it be included in these meeting minutes.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PARK RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

WHEREAS, The Board of Trustees recognizes The Staff of the Park Ridge Public Library for their commitment and dedication to the Park Ridge community between 2020 and 2022, during the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic; and

WHEREAS, during those years of service, Staff went above and beyond to find creative and thoughtful approaches to services while keeping public health and safety at the forefront of planning and decision making; including but not limited to, moving to virtual programming for adults, teens and children, connecting patrons to library materials through contact-free pickups and home deliveries, monitoring metrics and welcoming the public back into the building when it was safe to do so, and currently providing a range of services options for the convenience and needs of all patrons; and

WHEREAS, being flexible in all iterations of library service with the ever changing environment and finding a way to pivot, sometimes overnight, based on new circumstances and guidance; and

WHEREAS, holding themselves to the highest standards of excellence amid constantly changing conditions, demonstrating a deep commitment to the mission and vision of the Park Ridge Public Library even in the face of adversity; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT ON April 5, 2022, on National Library Worker Day, the Board of Trustees of the Park Ridge Public Library expresses their sincere thanks to All Staff for their efforts on behalf of the entire community of Park Ridge, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to each individual and included in the contents of the Minutes.

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Trustee Kiem added that he too wants to express his appreciation for what Library staff has done over the past two years and also over the past five years. He asked that each of the trustees sign the resolution. Director Bertucci will circulate the document to the trustees for signature.

Trustee Kiem made a

MOTION: To approve the Resolution for Staff Appreciation, as amended

Trustee Steinfels seconded the motion

Roll Call Vote: Yes: Burkum, Hanba, Kiem, Powers, Rapisand, Somheil, Steinfels,

Motion passed

There being no objection, President Rapisand adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.