WEST CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025
7:00 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: President Weninger called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:
TRUSTEES PRESENT: Patricia Weninger, President; Frank Fokta, Vice President; Diane Kelsey, Secretary; Corrine Jakacki, Treasurer; Richard Bloom, Scott Grotto, and Maureen Navadomskis, Members.

STAFF PRESENT: Benjamin R. Weseloh, Library Director; Gabriel Cardenas, Circulation Manager; Amanda Ghobrial, Adult Services Manager; Michael Novy, Technical Services.

C. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:
1. Board Meeting - March 24, 2025: Ms. Jakacki moved to approve the Minutes of the March 24, 2025 Board Meeting as read; seconded by Mr. Grotto.
Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

D. RECOGNITION OF THE PUBLIC: None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

F. AGENDA - ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: None.

G. TREASURER'S REPORT:
1. Approval of the Bills for April 2025: Ms. Jakacki moved to approve payment of the bills for April 2025 in the amount of $222,226; seconded by Mr. Fokta.
Roll Call Vote - Yes: Bloom, Fokta, Grotto, Jakacki, Kelsey, Navadomskis, Weninger. Motion carried.

2. Financial statements: Ms. Jakacki stated the Library is 75% of the way through the year, has collected almost 98% of its budgeted revenue, and has expenditures approximately 69% of budget. The Library is expecting a PPRT check in June.

H. COMMUNICATIONS: None.

I. REPORTS:
1. President's Report: President Weninger appointed Mr. Fokta and Ms. Kelsey to perform the semiannual review of closed session minutes and recordings.

Information on The Little Free Library memorial for Nancy Conradt was enclosed within the trustee packets. Ms. Weninger hopes the trustees will be able to attend the unveiling. President Weninger thanked Mr. Bloom for leading the effort to build the "Golden Read-Triever" library and to the Library Foundation for donating funds for the cost.
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At the May meeting the Board will give a fond farewell to the long-serving board members who are stepping down, will welcome and swear in the newly elected trustees, and elect new officers.
Ms. Weninger thanked the current board and the Director for serving the Library and having a shared vision of putting the Library and the library community first.

2. Library Director: Mr. Weseloh stated the Library is 75% of the way through its fiscal year elapsed and running at 69% for expenditures with three months remaining in FY25. The FY25 capital projects are 50% expended at $178,527 of the budgeted $350,000. The entire project should come in less than $320,000. A change order was created to add the ADA accessible ramp on the outside curbing.

The working budget was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. The Committee will meet next on May 27, 2025 prior to the board meeting. On April 1, 2025, the Library transferred $600,000 from FNBC Bank & Trust to Republic Bank, and bills will now be paid from the Republic Bank corporate checking account.

The capital projects are moving forward slightly ahead of schedule. The rough-in inspection was scheduled for April 29, 2025; and assuming the work passes inspection, the bases for the light posts will be poured. It is anticipated that the main entrance will be reopened on Thursday, May 8, 2025.

President Trump has signed an Executive Order to eliminate funding of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Funding had been approved for the fiscal 2025 budget, which ends in September 2025; so the money for this year should be received, but the IMLS funding would need to be approved again in September 2025 in order for the funds to be received next year. Illinois receives roughly $5.7 million in IMLS grants which filter down to Illinois community libraries via the Per Capita Grants.

Twenty one attorneys general filed a lawsuit against the Trump Administration to stop the dismantling of three federal agencies that provide services and funding to support libraries and museums through IMLS. The Library director will follow the suit as it goes forward, as well as congressional approval of the budget to see if the funding remains intact.

The April agenda included an action item to vote on the second phase of capital projects discussed at a 2024 board meeting. Phase 2 focuses on the exterior of the building including caulking, tuckpointing, installation of gutters all the way around, and replacement of deteriorating sandstone face plates at the base of the building, as well as replace another five VAV boxes inside the building. Funding for Phase 2 will come out of the corporate carryover funds, which is the same source for Phase 1.

A Council of Governments meeting was held on April 17, 2025. A long conversation was had about the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County seeking to acquire additional land within West Chicago. There are three developable parcels of land that are of particular interest to West Chicago which governmental bodies do not want to be taken out of contention for development by the City as it is believed not to be in the best interest of West Chicago and particularly not in the best interest of the Library District.

At its April 1, 2025 meeting the Forest Preserve District authorized a motion for the acquisition of certain property known as West Branch West for Forest District purposes. The parcel is +/- 110 acres; 15 acres of the land are woods, the remainder is farmland. There are no flood plain or wetlands that exist on the property. The three developable parcels of land would allow some retail and commercial to enter, as well as mixed use for both residential or other uses. Residential development brings additional funding to taxing bodies. Additional people -- assuming Per Capita Grant doesn't go away -- would provide additional per capita funds.

Mr. Weseloh read through the Threatened Developments Highlight Sheet. Some of the issues include: The Forest Preserve District's attempt to seize the remaining developable land threatens to stall the community poised for renewal and growth; the city currently faces a housing and economic development challenge; West Chicago struggles with a low housing vacancy rate, overcrowding, and an insufficient population to attract commercial development. There are tax inequities with an overabundance of tax exempt land as low to moderate-income households will have to bear a disproportionate tax burden for essential services, education, public safety, and infrastructure.

West Chicago is an economically disadvantaged community: 21.1% of residents live in poverty, more than triple DuPage County's rate; expecting West Chicago to shoulder the green space burden for the rest of the largely affluent county is both irresponsible and unjust.
No protected species are endangered by the planned development.

Acquisition serves no public need given the abundant existing green space. The West Chicago Park District alone exceeds national park land standards with 18 acres per 1,000 residents, which is well above the 10 acres per 1,000 residents guideline.

The Forest Preserve District is reportedly targeting two remaining developable areas, farmland near St. Andrew's Golf Course, and the Kuhn Road/Cascade property. Had the three parcels been developed, the government bodies would have received $284,000 more this year; ten years would result in almost $3.7 million additional tax revenue.

The Library is awaiting the completion of permanent signage for the drive-up bookdrop. There has been an uptick to the drive-up bookdrop since the front entrance has been closed for construction.

Personnel milestones were highlighted. A new Teen Services Librarian was hired with a start date of April 7, 2025. Maureen Bajor has decided to permanently retire at the end of May 2025. As a result, Mr. Weseloh would like to replace her position with a full-time Assistant Library Director who will handle the HR functions and assist Mr. Weseloh with administrative tasks. The salary schedule was on the agenda as an action item to reinstate the Assistant Librarian Position.

3. Department Managers (Circulation): Mr. Cardenas provided a presentation to the board including the following information: Some of the demographics of the West Chicago community include: 48% Hispanic or Latino persons; 7,436 households, 3.37 people per household; language other than English is spoken in 51.5% of the homes. 90 percent of the households have a computer, and 92% have Internet. The high school graduation rate is 80%, versus 90% in Illinois, and 89% in the U.S. A Bachelor's Degree or higher is held by 32% of adults, versus 37% in Illinois, and 35% in the U.S.

Mr. Cardenas sees these numbers as an opportunity for the Library to support students through the high school level, and to provide guidance to pursue higher education.

The presentation provided data on patrons' access rate of e-materials before COVID compared to after COVID, with a 3% drop as of March 10, 2020. Other circulation statistics also dropped post COVID compared to before, and the numbers have never recovered. Online material access is trending up but very slowly. The increase in e-material circulation is not filling the gap of the drop in circulation of physical material.

Winfield Library serves a very small community, they have been promoting more e-services, and more of their patrons are now using the e- services. Promotion of the material is very important, because

people cannot check out materials that they do not know are available.

West Chicago Library experiences a regular ebb and flow cycle of materials being checked out: Circulation of materials is slow in January, lower in February, goes up in March, drops in April and May because of spring break and school finals. Programming is heavy at the end of the fiscal year. The summer reading, which is June and July, is strong; circulation goes down again when school starts in the fall; October is the month of the very popular Trunk Or Treat event at the library; October and November have several programs scheduled; and finally, December slows down as the calendar year ends.

Checkouts by item: Books are the primary materials checked out. Videos checked out have been going down due to availability of streaming services. Audio books checkout is very low, trending lower every year because fewer people have the ability to listen to CDs because new cars are not outfitted with CD players anymore. A book on average costs between $15 and $18; an audio book can be approximately $50.

Checkouts by audience: Most material checked out during the year is juvenile material, followed by adults at 43%, and teens at 7%. The difference between juvenile and adult checkout numbers annually, between 2020 and 2025, is approximately 15,000 and 25,000.
Checkouts by age: Around 60% of the checkouts are patrons between the ages of 26 and 60 years old. Checkouts by patrons between the ages of 13 and 25 is very low.

Transaction per hour: Most checkouts happen between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Around 11-13% of checkouts occur before lunch, after a morning program. Programming clearly brings people to the library and increases checkouts.

Visitors versus transactions: Most checkouts happen on Mondays and Tuesdays; Saturdays and Sundays the Library has a higher number of visitors, but they are not checking out materials.

Around 60% of current patrons have checked out 0 or 1 item in the last five years; 2% have checked out 2 items in the last five years. According to a study from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Illinois has 2.48 library visits per person during the year 2022. That same year West Chicago had 58,572 patrons come into the library, which is the equivalent of two visits per person in West Chicago.

It is worth noting that after the COVID pandemic people's lifestyles have changed as far as more often utilizing virtual services, and foot traffic has reduced to many destinations.

4. Finance Committee: Ms. Jakacki stated that the Finance Committee met April 21, at 6:00 p.m. Present were Ms. Jakacki, Chair; Ms. Kelsey and Ms. Navadomskis, Members; Ms. Weninger, ex officio; and Mr. Weseloh, Ms. Bajor, and Ms. Ghobrial, staff.

The Committee discussed the salary schedule; and they will be making a recommendation on the revised salary schedule. They took an initial look at the draft of the proposed income for the budget, and they spent a considerable amount of time going through the proposed working budget for FY26. The Director and Ms. Ghobrial explained in detail why each category was funded to the level it was.

The Committee will next meet Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. before the next board meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

5. Policy committee: Mr. Fokta reported that the Policy Committee met April 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Present were Mr. Fokta, Chair; Mr. Bloom, member; Ms. Weninger, ex officio; and Mr. Weseloh, staff.

The Committee discussed the Library Card and Circulation Policy and the Meeting Room Policy, which were on the April Agenda to recommend to the Board to approve. The Committee also discussed the Closed Session Policy and Closed Meeting Minutes procedures. This policy will be changed to implement logs that are entered upon by the Secretary on the same day of the meeting, noting the date of the meeting.

The procedure for the approval of the Minutes of the Closed Session review will be amended to provide for the board going into closed session during a regular board meeting for the sole purpose of approving the Minutes. This removes the need to have another executive session to approve the minutes.

The next Policy Committee meeting will be May 8, 2025. The April meeting ended at 7:45 p.m.

J. Unfinished Business: None.

K. New Business:
1. Meeting room policy: The Policy Committee recommended to the Board that the Meeting Room Policy be approved. Discussion was had regarding Line 66 states the application "must be submitted at least two weeks in advance"; and Line 171 states "Applications must be submitted no later than two calendar weeks prior."

Mr. Fokta stated the Committee recommends approval of the Policy as

amended. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

2. Library Card and Circulation Policy: Mr. Fokta stated the Policy Committee recommends to the Board that the Library Card and Circulation Policy, as provided in the trustee packets, be approved as is.
Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

3. Golden Read-Triever Little Free Library Intergovernmental Agreement: Ms. Jakacki moved that the Board approve the Golden Read-Triever Little Free Library Intergovernmental Agreement; seconded by Mr. Grotto.

Roll Call Vote - Yes: Bloom, Fokta, Grotto, Jakacki, Kelsey, Navadomskis, Weninger. Motion carried.

4. Salary Schedule: Ms. Jakacki stated the Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed Salary Schedule from May 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Two categories have been added: Assistant Library Director, and Janitor.

Currently the Library is paying Buck Services about $39,000 annually; and the Director stated the Library could hire two part-time employees and realize a savings approximately $15,000 a year.

These two positions were previously on the Salary Schedule a number of years ago as Assistant Administrative Librarian and Janitor, but since the positions were not being filled they were removed to "clean up" the schedule.
Roll Call Vote - Yes: Bloom, Fokta, Grotto, Jakacki, Kelsey, Navadomskis, Weninger. Motion carried.

5. Capital Projects Proposal for FY 2026: Midwest Mechanical provided an estimate of costs for the proposed capital projects for the fiscal year. The exterior work that needs to be done includes some caulking, tuckpointing, and gutters around the building, for a total of $293,000.

Ms. Jakacki moved that the board approve the capital projects proposal for FY 2026 in the amount of $293,000; seconded by Mr. Grotto.

The costs are derived from services provided through the Purchasing Alliance.

Discussion was had regarding tax on the work (the library is tax-exempt) landscaping repairs, scaffolding or a lift, as needed, and permit fees.

Ms. Jakacki amended her motion that the board approve the capital projects proposal for FY 2026 in an amount not to exceed $325,000;

seconded by Mr. Fokta.
Roll Call Vote - Yes: Bloom, Fokta, Grotto, Jakacki, Kelsey, Navadomskis, Weninger. Motion carried.

6. Library Director Evaluation: Mr. Grotto moved to go into closed session at 8:04 p.m. to evaluate Library Director's performance; seconded by Mr. Bloom.

L. CLOSED SESSION: Began at 8:04 p.m.

M. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION: The trustees returned to open session:
Roll Call: Pat Weninger, President; Frank Fokta, Vice President; Diane Kelsey, Secretary; Corrine Jakacki-Dattomo, Treasurer; Richard Bloom, Scott Grotto, and Maureen Navadomskis, Members.

Ms. Jakacki moved to increase the Director's salary to $116,050.60 for the next fiscal year; seconded by Mr. Grotto.
Roll Call Vote - Yes: Bloom, Fokta, Grotto, Jakacki-Dattomo, Kelsey, Navadomskis, Weninger. Motion carried.

N. ADJOURNMENT: President Weninger adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.