

**DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY
1050 CURTISS STREET
DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING
FEBRUARY 28, 2024, 7:00 P.M.**

BOARD TRUSTEES:

Swapna Gigani	President
Carissa Dougherty	Trustee
Dave Humphreys	Trustee
Barnali Khuntia	Trustee
Marti Sladek	Trustee

GUESTS:

Julie Milavec	Library Director
Jen Ryjewski	Assistant Library Director
Scott Anderson	Business Office Assistant
Ed Bromiel	Media Lab Coordinator
Allyson Renell	Children's Services Manager

ABSENT:

Bill Nienburg	Trustee
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Minutes prepared by Jodie Percy of Minutes Solutions from a video recording and edited by Business Office Manager Katelyn Vabalaitis.

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and the Trustees having been given adequate and proper notice of the meeting, the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

President Swapna Gigani led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance and read aloud the Downers Grove Public Library Land Acknowledgement.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion made by Marti Sladek, seconded by Dave Humphreys, it was resolved to adjust the agenda to move public comments, trustee comments, and the resolution of censure before the approval of the minutes. Motion carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

President Swapna Gigani outlined the rules for public comment before opening the floor for comments.

Brookes Ruyle, a Downers Grove resident, Director on the Downers Grove Public Library Foundation and Chair of the Friends of the Library Committee, noted that February is “Love Your Library” month coinciding with the announcement that DGPL Foundation will be overseeing the Friends Group. It was noted that there are buttons available to the public at the door for the “Fill the Room with Friends” initiative. The Foundation is hoping to receive 100 recurring donors this year.

Kylie Spahn, a Downers Grove resident, stated her full support for the Library Director Julie Milavec and the staff, programming, and Board members present. She asked for a vote of no confidence against Trustee Nienburg for violating Section 2C and 2E of the Bylaws of Library Trustee of the Village of Downers Grove. It was stated that the first violation was a serious security breach of sending a confidential email to an external recipient. The second breach was noted to have occurred on social media when personal beliefs were not differentiated from the library in a statement of politics. Kylie Spahn stated support for terminating Trustee Nienburg from his position on the Board.

Jim Wool addressed Trustee Dougherty regarding an incident at the last Board of Trustees meeting. Jim Wool stated evidence of staff participating in unethical behavior had been provided to the Board on numerous occasions and was sent to the Board again upon request. He stated that the Board would not censor the staff members for unethical behavior. He called into question the credibility of Trustee Dougherty in her actions at the previous meeting compared with the refusal of the Board to address the perceived unethical behavior. Jim Wool continued by addressing Trustee Humphreys, alleging concern of disappointing the staff. He next addressed President Gigani alleging the Land Acknowledgement is filled with error and prepared by the offending staff member. He compared the Board of Trustees to a story included in “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” (After being asked repeatedly to keep his comments directed to the Trustees, Jim Wool was asked to leave the meeting for not following the rules set out.)

The next attendee thanked the attendees who respected the rules set out at the beginning of the public comment period.

(The meeting closed for a recess and resumed at 7:32 p.m.)

The next participant noted a statement at the previous meeting regarding not consulting previous minutes from before the Trustee sat on the Board. The participant continued by referencing a previous speech given to the Board regarding a lack of institutional control, noting that the meeting in session is showing those concerns to still be valid. The participant continued to address the meeting regarding the deterioration of the meeting in progress. The participant noted that the Board has not addressed the issue of the lack of response regarding a window painting issue that had been ongoing for some time. The participant asked for the Board to admit to their behavior and address the issue regarding window painting.

Laura Kamdowski, a Downers Grove resident, thanked the Board for continuing to serve during a difficult situation.

Ilene Briner, a Downers Grove resident, presented the land acknowledgement statement of Glen Ellyn as a contrast to the Downers Grove Public Library land acknowledgement. Ilene Briner suggested that the Downers Grove Public Library land acknowledgement statement be adjusted to the opening statement with information provided on where to obtain further information.

Ed Briner, a Downers Grove resident, expressed concern about the safety and security of the library for children. He noted that the response from the Board member did not address the issues that were brought forward at the previous meeting. He outlined a list of police reports for the library in detail.

On a motion made by Dave Humphreys, seconded by Marti Sladek, it was resolved to extend the public comment period to accommodate the attendees in line to speak. Motion carried.

Mike Ryan, a Downers Grove resident, noted the concerns regarding police incidents having increased and assertions that had been made that the library staff had been hiding police incidents. He continued to note that the library is a public space and, therefore, cannot prevent the public from accessing it. He noted that his family are members of the library, enjoy it greatly, and thanked the staff and Board members. Mike Ryan noted that he supports the motion to censure Trustee Nienburg from the Board.

Robyn Tryloff, a Downers Grove resident, noted that the library has faced attacks and accusations for the past 18 months that are damaging to the reputation of the library and are unacceptable. She continued by expressing her reasons for loving the library, including it being a community hub, offering activities for everyone, and a sense of community.

Noel Manley, from Darien, Illinois, noted that the optics of the resolution of censure were not good. He noted that the standards and measures are not properly outlined in the resolution. Noel Manley asked for the Board to table the resolution until Trustee Nienburg can be present at the meeting.

Werner Kiuntke, a Downers Grove resident, presented a brief history of the US. He lauded the library for the land acknowledgement statement as the first phase to address the wrongs of the country. He noted that the library had been criticized for allowing community members to enter the library and noted that the library is not a social services office to be criticized for how they handle the actions of those with mental health issues.

5. **TRUSTEE COMMENTS**

Barnali Khuntia noted the privilege she holds to serve as a Trustee and the responsibility that it entails. A coffee hosted by the Trustees was related to the attendees and the story time that happened at the same time as the coffee. When the parents and children who were attending story time were asked if they felt welcome and safe, the answer was yes. It was noted that all District 58 students will soon have access to the DGPL through an agreement that has been put in place. She noted that the library is a critical part of the community and is valuable.

Dave Humphreys noted that his chief job as a Trustee is to stay out of the way of the staff. The Trustees govern the library by setting policy and raising money to support the library. The Trustees hire a Library Director who hires staff to run the library. As a long-time library Trustee, he noted that he has done his best to follow all the laws and policies of the library and commended the current staff of the library. He noted that public comment has recently degenerated to name calling and personal attacks toward staff. He noted that all the public comments must be civil, and all participants need to avoid attacking the Board and staff.

Marti Sladek noted that people who come to the meetings with a lack of good manners are contributing to what they are expressing concern about. She noted that those who are concerned

about their safety within the library should consider the feelings of the staff and Trustees who are facing verbal abuse and threats on the street and through social media. She noted that Trustees have had enough of hate speech against minorities and the LGBTQ+ community.

Marti Sladek clarified that draft documents are not public documents. She further clarified that a director of the library is not a member of the Board but is the sole employee of the Board. Performance issues of the staff are not the responsibility of the Board. All issues that are dealt with are employee privacy issues and will not be included in a public forum.

Carissa Dougherty noted programming offered on information literacy and the upcoming management retreat. She expressed disappointment that her comments at the previous meeting had been misunderstood, noting she had not intended to downplay the police reports and emphasized the need to acknowledge the difficulties faced by the library.

Carrisa Dougherty discussed the values of the library and the need for these to be promoted by the library Trustees. She noted that the optics of the resolution being presented are not good. She presented other unique aspects of Trustee Nienburg that do not promote the values of the library. She noted that a person's politics should not influence how they act as a Library Trustee. She closed by noting that, given the current Board composition, it is unclear whether the Trustees can follow the bylaws and values of the library in a complete and productive manner.

Swapna Gigani apologized for how the public comment period was conducted. She replied to the comments of the participant who expressed concern regarding institutional control noting some inaccuracies in his comments. She thanked those who had attended the Trustee coffee. She outlined the work of staff to increase the security of the library. She expressed concerns regarding the attacks on staff and the Trustees.

6. RESOLUTION OF CENSURE

On a motion made by Marti Sladek, seconded by Carissa Dougherty, it was resolved to move the resolution of censure to the table for voting. Motion carried.

The Trustees made clear that the library staff did not participate in the development of the resolution in any way.

Dave Humphreys provided a statement on his stand regarding the resolution noting that the Trustees are required to follow the bylaws and act as a team. He further noted an erosion of trust and confidence from the staff.

On a motion made by Dave Humphreys, seconded by Marti Sladek, it was resolved to amend the resolution of censure to conclude with the sentence: In light of all of these circumstances, we call upon the Downers Grove Village Council to remove Bill Nienburg from the Board of Library Trustees of the Downers Grove Public Library as soon as possible. Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Barnali Khuntia thanked Dave Humphreys for his statement regarding teamwork. She noted that the roll of Trustee should include listening and working together for resolutions. She noted her stand regarding the resolution of censure noting that Trustee Nienburg's unwillingness to acknowledge her by name makes it very difficult for her to work with him.

Swapna Gigani provided a statement on her stand regarding the resolution of censure. She noted that the timing of the resolution is based on the final incident noted in the resolution causing action to need to be taken promptly.

A roll call vote was conducted to pass the resolution of censure. Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The resolution to censure was passed.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Barnali Khuntia, seconded by Dave Humphreys, it was resolved that the minutes of the Board of Library Trustees meeting held on January 24, 2024, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

8. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

On a motion made by Barnali Khuntia, seconded by Dave Humphreys, it was resolved to accept the January 2024 financial statements and February 2024 invoices as presented. Motion carried.

It was noted that more than 103% of revenues were collected in 2023. Expenditures were reviewed and it was noted that the variance in insurance was due to the annual premium being paid in January 2024 and accrued throughout the year. It was noted that in May 2024, the Trustees will begin receiving a month-to-date report.

9. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Julie Milavec addressed comments regarding incident reports and emails and directed attendees to the transparency webpage of the library. It was further noted that incident reports are included in the meeting packet. Julie Milavec provided a summary of a police incident involving a mental health issue. Attendees were reminded that the library is used as a geographical location in many police reports.

Julie Milavec noted that there will be a temporary Teen Desk being staffed beginning March 1, 2024. It was noted that this is the beginning of a transition to a new teen area in the library.

Julie Milavec noted that the library's annual report is featured in the upcoming issue of Discoveries.

Julie Milavec reminded the Board and meeting attendees that the March 2024 meeting will be held on March 20, 2024, to accommodate spring break.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a. Intergovernmental Agreement for Library Cards with Downers Grove Grade School District 58:

On a motion made by Carrisa Dougherty, seconded by Barnali Khuntia, it was resolved to approve the intergovernmental agreement for library cards with Downers Grove Grade School District 58. Motion carried.

Allyson Renell presented a summary of the intergovernmental agreement. It was noted that by providing library cards to District 58, the teachers will be granted access to databases provided by the library.

b. General Policy Update:

On a motion made by Barnali Khuntia, seconded by Dave Humphreys, it was resolved to approve the general policy update as presented. Motion carried.

Julie Milavec presented a summary of the general policy updates. It was noted that the policy applies to participation with the Downtown Management Corporation, and any entities that have events, the library can opt into.

Carrisa Dougherty asked if Section 2.9 applies to all use of the library including the Board meetings. Julie Milavec stated that the section does apply to all library use.

c. Board of Library Trustees Goals for 2024: Carissa Dougherty provided a summary of the process behind creating the Trustees goals. The Board was encouraged to discuss goals that could be set for individuals and the Board together.

The Board discussed the usefulness of pursuing goals to grow as Trustees. It was noted that visiting other libraries could help in developing spaces in the Downers Grove Public Library. Consideration was given to having a Board retreat to exchange knowledge between the Trustees. The Board agreed to bring goal ideas to the next Board meeting.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion made by Barnali Khuntia, seconded by Marti Sladek, it was resolved that the Board recess to an executive session. Motion carried.

The Board recessed to an executive session at 9:23 p.m.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Library Trustees meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.