

**Agenda**  
**North Riverside Public Library District**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**Regular Meeting, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**6:00 PM**

**1) Opening of Meeting**

- a) Call to order – 6:05pm by Annette Corgiat
    - i) **Present:** Annette, Corgiat, Greg Gordon, Ken Rouleau, Kathy Bonnar, Jeanne Ottenweller, Kyle Johnson
    - ii) **Also Present:** Director Natalie Starosta and Public Services Associate
  - b) Quorum was established
  - c) No guests present
  - d) Approval of agenda
- A motion was made by Greg Gordon to approve the agenda as written. John Mathias seconded. All ayes, **motion carried.**

**2) Open Forum**

- a) N/A

**3) Consent Agenda**

- A motion was made by John Mathias to approve the consent agenda as presented. Kyle Johnson seconded. All ayes, **motion carried.**
  - Secretary:  
Minutes of the March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Regular Board Meeting Correspondence
  - Treasurer:  
March 2022 Financial Statements  
Authorization to transfer \$60,000 to checking

**4) President's Report**

- a) N/A

**5) Director's Report**

- a) Director Starosta stated that NRPL is preparing for the summer reading program. As reflected in Starosta's weekly reports, the amount of daily traffic so far has met typical expectations for this time of year despite the pandemic. However, Starosta added, concerns about new COVID-19 surges have been noted as probable obstacles. Yet cautious optimism about patron use of library has led leadership to expect current patron interaction numbers to at least remain stable.
- b) Director Starosta added that she had sent out packets related to filling out the Statements of Economic Interest, and that if board members have any specific questions regarding these forms, they are advised to reach out to the Director who would then pass these along to the NRPL's lawyer.
- c) Vice President Gordon encouraged fellow board members to review these packets in detail, as it "makes a big difference about how [one] feels about this." Following Gordon's anecdote about going "from against it, ready to depart, to

okay” over the course of the document review, Director agreed that the language in the Statement of Economic Interest is “still not great” and that it “asks for information that they shouldn’t be asking for.” For example, Gordon says, board members need to list institutions to which board members owe money, as well as sources of income. However, Gordon underscores that the board members need not enumerate the exact amounts, solely the sources.

- d) Secretary Mathias concurs that they “found the brochure to be very helpful” in filling out the Statement of Economic Interest.

## **6) Committee Reports**

### **a) Advocacy (Johnson) (informational)**

- i) Kyle Johnson said they did not have a whole lot to report. Johnson has been working with Manager Britney Musial on the Summer Reading Program. They have a list of sponsors whom NRPL has reached out to in the past and whom NRPL staff has reached out to thus far this year. Johnson underscored those existing connections may be easier to secure for sponsorship than cold-called businesses. Manager Musial had informed Board Member Johnson certain businesses have requested to meet outside of regular library hours and that this is a hurdle to be overcome.

### **b) Building & Grounds (Rouleau) (informational)**

- i) Ken Rouleau stated that Muellermist was on site to get the outside sprinklers up and going, as well as to fix the hardware that had been torn up during the concrete work. USA Fire Protection inspected the interior sprinkler system. The backflow system was inspected as well, and both water-related inspections were passed. There were no specific dates set yet for parking lot repaving, but NRPL is on the list of the company contracted.
- ii) Jeanne Ottenweller chimed in to remind other Board Members about the need for electric signage to make the building easier to spot from Des Plaines. Anecdotally, a senior patron who came to NRPL’s Sewing Help Desk program had a tough time finding the library. Director Starosta clarified that the current financial limits placed on the library by winter 2021 moisture damage as well as regular maintenance projects limit such nonessential projects at this time.
- iii) Gordon pointed out that the original design itself makes the sign blend in with the surroundings. Mathias added that creating contrast between the stone and the lettering of a future NRPL sign would be ideal to visually separate NRPL from the Village of NR’s current sign would benefit patron engagement.
- iv) Rouleau asked whether the lights illuminating the sign worked, and Starosta answers that they had been, but they are currently flickering due to previous wire damage.

**c) Finance (Bonnar) (informational)**

- i) Bonnar asks whether there are any questions about the current budget. There were no questions.

**d) Personnel (Gordon) (informational)**

- i) Gordon asked what the status of new hires is (AS, YS assistants + YS manager). Starosta says that the first two roles are going through background checks now, having been open for a while as employees have been departing and moving between departments, while the future YS manager position is expected to be filled before Susan Locander's last week in the department so that they have time to acclimate to the role.

**e) Policy (Bonnar, Ottenweller) (informational)**

- i) Nothing on policy.

**f) Strategic Planning (Mathias) (informational)**

- i) John Mathias asked what effects long-term inflation might have on NRPL's bottom line in anticipation of the new fiscal year. After stating that the established month-to-month budget requires about a \$60,000 sign-off from the board, an adequate amount thus far, Mathias opined on future savings (i.e. how the upgraded HVAC system's upgrade has resulted in a decrease of operational costs). However, Mathias asked - what if 6 months from today NRPL requires an additional \$2000 to \$3000 simply due to inflation? Per unspecified board members' previous discussions amongst themselves, stretching the budget up to \$80,000 or \$85,000 may be feasible; however, a \$20,000 to \$25,000 hurdle would be cause for operational budget concerns. Greg Gordon agreed that an eye should be kept on the matter, but countered that the process of inflation is slow. Starosta mentioned the possibility of annexing peripheral properties as the only feasible option to increase the annual budget if an increase were required.

**7) New Business**

**a) 3 Additional IMRF Positions (action)**

- i) Director Starosta explained that these three part-time positions (under 1,000 hours per year) qualify for the fully funded, sought-after, and financially risk-averse retirement plan. She added that the plan is incredibly careful about whom to accept into the plan. Starosta went on to say that NRPL joined it about four years ago, and nearly all IL libraries are in it now (save for a handful of unique cases). Starosta highlighted that this should help retain people, as these positions include a sought-after pension plan, and (given the pandemic's effect on employment statistics) ensure high quality applicants for each future position which may open up. One additional IMRF position had been requested for each of the following departments, Circulation, Youth Services, and Adult Services.

- ii) Gordon mentioned that this is “because of the way salaries happen to be right now” and trailed off, which Starosta picked up by pointing out that because people who were being paid more are leaving and/or moving across departments, and new hires are paid a lower starting rate than established staff, NRPL can afford these new positions.
  - iii) Bonnar said that this is important, but that further down the line a net rise in budget expenses would be inevitable with this change. Starosta added that retention is the goal, and that retention would cut turnover fees as well as training expenses and set an overall standard of consistency. Starosta added that this change would be huge for employees’ job satisfaction, and that the number one expense of NRPL will always be its employees because NRPL is, at the end of the day, a service industry. And since employees have been NRPL’s greatest asset, it only makes sense to invest more of the budget into staff retention.
  - iv) Ottenweller reiterated the specifics for retirees – if an employee works for any organization in this program, they cannot work more than 1000 per year. This includes cases such as Marilyn’s, the previous interim director. Per Ottenweller, a problem may arise if/when an employee’s pension amount, based on said employee’s number of service years, changes after retirement. So that if said employee starts to earn at a part-time rate but was previously earning at a full-time rate (that is, pre-retirement), upon retiring again, said pension would be based on the most recent employment history rather than the years of full-time service. Thus, Ottenweller said, retirees’ pensions may be cut in the eventuality that their pay overreaches.
- **Jeanne Ottenweller** made a motion to approve the 3 additional non-full time IMRF positions. **Kathy Bonnar** seconded. All ayes, **motion carried**.

**b) Draft 2022/2023 Working Budget (review)**

- i) Gordon asked whom to address. Starosta answered in stating that budget amounts were based on last year’s budget, plus expected inflation, expected projects planned for this fiscal year, and finally the IMRF positions. Furthermore, Starosta elaborated that the *Facilities* category had been split out and moved into *Salaries*. Previously, the *Facilities* category had been under *Building Expenses* as *Casual Labor*. While *Casual Labor* was still under *Building Expenses*, this was only for payments to the Board Secretary and should be moved out of *Building Expenses* soon. Starosta added that *Budget Justification* worksheet went through each one of these categories in detail and enumerated any changes to each with annotations. If there was no change to a given category, there was nothing listed on the *Budget Justification* worksheet. The biggest changes were listed in bright colors: specifically, *Materials* and *Programs* budgets were condensed (i.e., no more book, DVD, CD budget line items – departments decide how much to spend on these material categories; also, the *Youth Services Programs* budget had been split between *Programs* and *Summer Programs* – these two line items have been combined into one *Program* budget). In

short, Starosta said, this budget is much more streamlined and understandable. The audiovisual (AV) holdings breakdown accompanying the new budget was based on last year's AV expenses and was simply a recommendation. Final decisions will be made by departments based on what materials get checked out most until materials budgets are exhausted.

- ii) Gordon pointed out that, unusually for a budget review, the budget went down. Starosta explained that the budget decreased due to the refunds that Cook County calculated for local property taxes, decreasing income NRPL received from each household. Also, last year's \$172,000 loan revenues/funds have been cut from the budget because NRPL will not take out a loan this year. However, donations and grants funding expectations were increased under the *Other Expenses / Donations & Grants* subcategory.
- iii) Gordon pointed out that the budget went down \$70-80,000 and asked where that might have been used if it had been retained. Director Starosta answered that this would most likely have gone into capital reserves, so that NRPL could budget for roof repair. Per Starosta, NRPL staff is researching moisture mitigation measures and budgeting for this.
- iv) Bonnar pointed out that each section did not decrease dramatically. Rouleau asks what the next steps are. Starosta states that next budget review would be at the next Committee of the Whole meeting, where board members can ask questions, bring concerns, or add comments, and the budget will need to be approved at the May meeting.
- v) Finally, Starosta mentioned the Building and Maintenance Ordinance, which was planned to be ready for review sometime in May. Starosta added that she will be trying to move up NRPL's ordinance dates as much as legally possible so that NRPL can finish the Levy Ordinance in October if possible (rather than November or December as in past years). These are due October 30<sup>th</sup>. Ideally, as much of these budget matters should be wrapped up by November so that no staff members are tasked with additional responsibilities.

**c) Service Awards: Barbara Silvestri, Mary Cooper (action)**

- i) Ottenweller asked what the Service Award entails, and Starosta explained that both employees get an award and \$10 for each year of service, totaling \$150 each for their 15 years of service.
- **Greg Gordon** made a motion to approve the service awards for 15 years of service to both Barbara Silvestri and Mary Cooper. **Jeanne Ottenweller** seconded. All ayes, **motion passed.**

**8) PTAB Resolution renewal (action)**

- a) Gordon asked Starosta to talk about the Property Tax Appeal Board. Starosta explained that NRPL contracts with a legal firm that takes care of property tax appeals, collecting additional information to execute appraisals of land parcels (i.e., golf course) and businesses. Starosta continued, stating that NRPL splits this bill with District 94, District 96, and another entity that Starosta could not

remember at the time of the meeting (but not The Village of North Riverside). Starosta added that, because the school districts as entities collect much more of the local tax revenue, the schools pay a much larger share of the PTAB project's billable hours.

- **Ken Rouleau** made a motion to approve the updated PTAB Resolution. **John Mathias** seconded. All ayes, **motion carried**.

**9) Old Business**

- a) None.

**10) Closed Session**

- a) None

**11) Adjournment**

- a) **Ken Rouleau** made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 06:39 p.m. **Jeanne Ottenweller** seconded. All ayes, **motion carried**.

*Note: Agenda items may be added that pertain to discussion or information.*

*No items may be added to the final agenda that require Board action.*

**Next regular Board Meeting is scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.**