

**DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
SEPTEMBER 28, 2022, 7:30 P.M.
VILLAGE COUNCIL CHAMBERS
VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
801 BURLINGTON AVE
DOWNERS GROVE, IL 60515**

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Land Acknowledgment.** President Gigani called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance. President Gigani read aloud the Downers Grove Public Library Land Acknowledgement.
2. **Roll Call.** Members present: Trustee Carissa Dougherty, Trustee Dave Humphreys, Trustee Barnali Khuntia, Trustee Bill Nienburg, President Swapna Gigani. Absent: None.

Also present: Library Director Julie Milavec, Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski, Business Office Manager Katelyn Vabalaitis, Media Lab Coordinator Ed Bromiel, Building Operations Monitor Daniel Bartkowiak, Building Operations Monitor Andrew Thing, Jason Perkunas of Shales McNutt.

3. **Welcome to Visitors.** President Gigani welcomed visitors and thanked them for their interest in the library.
4. **Approval of Minutes.**
 - a. August 24, 2022 Regular Meeting. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Nienburg THAT the Minutes of the August 24, 2022 Regular Monthly Meeting be approved as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.
5. **Financial Matters.**
 - a. August 2022 Financial Report. Library Director Julie Milavec presented the report. The library is 66% through the year. There was a major fund balance change, which was due to the annual transfer from the Library Fund to the Library Capital Replacement Fund that was approved earlier in the year. The library has received 63.8% of its expected revenue and Library Fund expenditures are at 64.3% spent for the year. Milavec noted that there was no invoice for the Drag Queen Bingo event as the contract had been cancelled.
 - b. September 2022 Invoices. It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Khuntia THAT the payment of September 2022 Capital Replacement Fund

invoices totaling \$107,970.31, the payment of September 2022 Operating Fund invoices totaling \$128,629.05, the acceptance of September 2022 credit memos totaling \$409.37, and the ratification of August 2022 payrolls totaling \$256,484.59 be approved. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

6. **Public Comment on Agenda Items.** President Gigani invited comment. There was none.

7. **Public Comment on Other Library Business.**

- a. Move Public Comment on Other Library Business to After Librarian's Report, Waive 30-Minute Maximum Time Limit on Public Comment, and Amend the Maximum Time for Public Comment to 2 hours.

It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Nienburg THAT Public Comment on Other Library Business be moved to after the Librarian's Report, the 30-minute maximum time limit on public comment be waived, and the maximum time for public comment be amended to two hours. Motion passed by voice vote.

8. **New Business.** There was none.

9. **Unfinished Business.**

- a. Workroom Renovation Project Bid Awards. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Humphreys THAT the construction bids as presented in Shales McNutt's Recommendation to Award be and furniture, fixtures, and equipment proposals be accepted.

It was moved by Nienburg THAT the vote on the project bid awards be tabled and moved to the next meeting.

Trustee Nienburg commented that the information for this vote was available in mid-September. This project was originally budgeted at less than \$250,000 and the estimates came in at \$660,000, which is a 270% increase. The bids that have come in are at \$659,000 and this level of spending deserves a little more scrutiny than being added to the agenda packet one week before the meeting and being revised 48 hours before the meeting.

There was no second to the amended motion.

The original motion was voted on. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Gigani. Nays: Nienburg. Abstentions: None.

10. Library Director's Report. Library Director Julie Milavec presented her report. The library has received an overwhelming amount of feedback about the Drag Queen Bingo event beginning on August 27. The event was posted on the library's events calendar at the beginning of August but no comments were received until August 27. From August 27 through September 12, when the program was cancelled, the feedback received was 852 individual responses. 51.53% of those comments were positive, 44.25% were negative, and 4.23% were classified as other, such as questions. After the cancellation of the program on September 12 through September 23, the library received an additional 363 pieces of feedback that were 81.82% positive, 14.33% negative, and 3.86% other. Milavec thanked the Center for Creative Arts Therapy and Azizi Marshall, who are providing some staff wellness events for library staff. It is much needed and their thoughtfulness and kindness is very much appreciated.

Public Comments on Other Library Business

President Gigani began the Public Comment section of the meeting by sharing the guidelines that will be in place, which are similar to Village Council meetings. Public comment is a time for the community to address the Board of Trustees and it is not a question and answer session with the Board. President Gigani outlined additional ways to provide feedback to the Board. Commenters should state their name for the record, keep their comments to five minutes or less, avoid repeating what others have already said, keep visits to the podium to one visit per subject, and remember that it is an opportunity to be heard but not a debate or open discussion. To ensure everyone has a chance to speak, President Gigani asked the audience not to clap or boo when they hear something they like or don't like.

Ted Waltmire, former Downers Grove Public Library employee from 1995-2009, worked in libraries for 29 years before a stroke changed his employment status and forced early retirement. He was supported by staff and the Library Board, and now it's his turn to support the library. The focus and mission of the library is to present materials and programs which benefit members of the community. Policies and procedures for this are in place. He has worked through his share of controversy at DPGL, including the issue of unfiltered internet access in the early days of the online world. Now, a library program is being threatened by another community group imposing their standards on the library and threatening violence if we do not conform to their standards. Downers Grove is a diverse community – he learned this by working at the library and attending a Downers Grove church. There is too much hate and misunderstanding in the world today. Everyone in the room may not agree with materials and programming at DGPL but everyone should endorse a safe environment for staff and for the public to learn about diversity. He quoted a song lyric from *South Pacific*, "You have to be

taught to hate in fear” and a quote from *Into the Woods*, “Careful with the things you say, children will listen.” He applauds Downers Grove Public Library for being diverse and recognizing that issue and he fully stands behind the Board and staff of the Downers Grove Public Library.

Noel Manley is the co-chair of Awake Downers Grove, a peaceful organization dedicated to the protection and education of all children. The United States is a country filled with systemic love, kindness, and fairness. Downers Grove is a village filled with systemic love, kindness, and fairness. However, what he does not understand is why the Downers Grove Library would want to host an event that promotes a highly sexualized form of adult entertainment for children as young as 12 years old. This is the sexual exploitation of children and it needs to end. Why would a library be motivated to hold such an event? This nonsense stems from the implementation of the Downers Grove Library’s Discovery Report. It’s listed on the library’s website. Downers Grove taxpayers payed an equity consultant, RGW Consulting, \$86,834.00 to date. What do the people of Downers Grove get for their \$86,000? If you go to page 8, question 1, RGW’s previous client is listed where the Downers Grove Library should be. He wonders if they know how to use their word search. He also obtained a copy of the Glen Ellyn Discovery Report, also executed by RGW Consulting. There were significant sections where it was almost word for word the same report. His experience with Downers Grove is that it is a village of decent, hardworking people who support and sacrifice for their families and participate in the community. However, if he knew nothing about Downers Grove and only had this Discovery Report, one would think Downers Grove is the old Jim Crow South. The \$86,000 report paints Downers Grove Library as a racist institution, as well as the Downers Grove community by extension. His experience with libraries is that the people working there were all decent, kind people, and this includes the Downers Grove Library. The report is only 22 pages and he encourages everyone to read it. It essentially uses race as a bludgeon to label the Downers Grove Library as systemically racist. There is nothing scientific about it. There’s a lot to unpack with this report. In the shared language section, the report asserts that the term taxpayer is coded language that signals power and privilege and “likewise, a patron naming that they are from the north side of Downers Grove implies an expected level of privilege and respect that residing on the south side of Downers Grove does not imply.” In a section called Whiteness, the report asserts that whiteness is an actual thing and describes specific attributes of whiteness, such as punctuality and behavioral expectations. He quotes from the report, “Designed and informed most specifically by white males, whiteness is also patriarchal. Whiteness informs how we manage time, hold space, and share power.” He wonders how many hardworking African American, Hispanic American, and Asian Americans know that their cultural work ethic is in fact a surreptitious form of whiteness. Again, the Downers Grove taxpayers paid

\$86,000 for this divisive nonsense. What this report and its implementation attempts to do, under the guise of diversity and inclusion, is in fact the opposite. Instead, it promotes divisiveness and exclusion. Those responsible for wasting taxpayer dollars should be held accountable for this politically and incendiary report. This needs to end and this needs to end now.

Shannon Adcock is the founder and president of Awake Illinois, a nonprofit, social welfare, advocacy organization that operates state-wide. She received an interesting welcome when arriving to the meeting earlier. Another attendee said, "What are you doing here from Naperville? Get a life." The heart on the shirts, peace signs, the love – so much for tolerance and inclusion. When they were first informed of the Drag Queen Bingo event scheduled for October 10 at the Downers Grove Public Library, they did due diligence. They investigated community concerns and answered the appeal to advocate against a cross-dressing performance for minors aged 14-18. The following details were confirmed via discovery: 1. the registration form did not require a library card, nor parental permission or adult supervision. It did require the minor's first name, last name, phone, email, and selection of grade 7-12. It is unknown who had access to this registration information and how it may have been shared. 2. Internet searches of the scheduled performer resulted in graphic and mature content being displayed. 3. They received numerous appeals from the Downers Grove community and the blog post from the Awake Downers Grove chapter was viewed over 2,000 times, which outlined the public service announcement and listed concerns relayed by the community. 4. FOIA requests show that the Library Director, Julie, is also the FOIA Officer. A public employee overseeing legally mandated disclosures of their own activities presents a clear conflict of interest. For the record, Awake Illinois never suggested, posted, or engaged in any threats. Any reports of this are false. They advocate for the law, not against it, and as such, they have grown to over 30 state-wide chapters. Awake Illinois leadership and members represent all walks of life, every race, creed, sexuality, and various countries of origin. On this issue of the Drag Queen Bingo event for minors, they listened to all of the community, including the gay community. It is important to share some of the voices that have been overshadowed due to the conversation being hijacked. A gay man who married his partner two years ago said that this is not for kids and it brings shame on the gay community. Two lesbian moms said they found this to be outrageous and this kind of programming is inappropriate. A drag queen by the name of Kitty Demure is broadcast as saying, "I have no idea why you would want drag queens to influence your child. Would you want a stripper or porn star to influence your child? It makes no sense at all. A drag queen performs in a nightclub for adults. There is a lot of filth that goes on. It is extremely irresponsible on the library's part. I understand you may want to look like you are with it, cool, woke, or not a Nazi or homophobe or whatever it may be, but you can raise your children to be

a regular child without including them in gay, sexual things.” Those are the words straight from the mouth of a male, gay drag queen. One of the more emotional testimonials came from the parent of a child who is gay. She said her child is now more insecure, with all of the hyper-fixation on the community drama over her child’s sexuality. Why would a caricature of the gay community be considered a best practice? Leave the kids alone. These voices matter and they heard you. Awake Illinois implores any public entity to not weaponize the word inclusivity to push inappropriate programming. They applaud the respectful advocacy of any concerned citizens who spoke of their concerns while there are a few public employees who hijacked tax-funded resources to promote sexual behaviors to children. There is a vast community of commonsense citizens who stand against the exploitation of children. Awake Illinois is proud to be part of it.

Michael Nielsen is an Afghan War veteran and thanked the Board for their time to listen to his statement. He wanted to open with a couple of questions. \$86,834.00 of taxpayer money – that’s just insane. Does he have white privilege or Asian privilege or both? He’s white and Asian. What about the Board? Does the Board feel oppressed? Oppressed that they hold the position of power and influence on the Downers Grove Library Board? If the answer is no, then he asks why they are using hard-earned taxpayer dollars for a consultant that stands with racist, Marxist ideology? What will the Board achieve by indoctrinating children with this repulsive ideology? Does the Board believe, as individuals, that segregation should be allowed back into our society? Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. stated in his Lincoln Memorial address in 1963, “I have a dream that all four of my children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character.” Those are some powerful words. Michael wants the Board to cease and desist from hiring these decisive, Marxist consultants who are teaching children how to hate each other as well as hate our great nation in order to push their political narrative. Children don’t see skin color, they see a person and they become friends no matter what background they come from. Very innocent. Racism is taught, not inherited. He is a combat veteran who was deployed to Afghanistan, where he met extraordinary men and women who have served this great nation. They have signed their names on the line, as well as him. It didn’t matter about race, creed, color, religion, etc. They just wanted to come back home and see their loved ones and be together and have a cohesive bond together. Hate and racism do not have a home here. It might in the Board members’ homes, but not in schools or the community. If the Board wants to be social justice warriors, then he suggests they should step off their chair and allow someone else to take charge. Somebody that is willing to go ahead and put in political standards in the library that is not indoctrinating kids or others as well. He had one final question that he wanted the Board to ask each other and ask themselves every day that they wake up. What is America? Is it a person? Is it a place? Is it a dream? It is a great nation, a diverse nation. People

from countries all over the world come to this nation just to seek and pursue the freedom and happiness that we have today. These people want to strive and better themselves, better each other, and their lives and their family. CRT has no home here.

President Gigani reminded the audience to avoid applause and background comments to save time. She also asked commenters to consider leaving points out of their statements if those points have already been made by other commenters.

Eileen Briner lives in Downers Grove. She does not hate anyone and she is not superior to anyone. She is in attendance to reiterate her concern for the youth of Downers Grove that the Drag Queen Bingo was directed at. These are 12-17 year olds. Do you remember that age? It's awkward. Bodies are changing, kids just want to remain kids but life marches on and everyone has to become adults. As their bodies are changing, they are asking lots of questions. This is normal but along comes the library presenting the idea of gender change or gender-bending ideas to a highly susceptible age group. The library has always been a wholesome place for the youth of this community and has been a trusted establishment for kids. But the presentation of a drag queen to this age group goes against all of that. This is grooming of some teenagers. It can put a child on a course of irreversible damage. We must not allow this. Let's look at what a drag queen is. A drag queen is a person, usually male, who wears drag clothing and makeup to imitate and often exaggerate female gender signifiers and gender roles for entertainment purposes. As a woman, Eileen is insulted by a drag queen. Big hair, big makeup, and sexualized performance does not represent women. Do you remember when women wanted to be respected for their intellect? This is opposite of that. This is imposing the idea that gender is about external appearance. We need to teach kids to develop who they are, to become the authentic individual person that they are. This individuality cannot be imposed on them externally. Every person must develop from the inside out, not the outside in. This presentation is a disservice to every child's development. The library must promote healthy children. This program promotes disturbing, unhealthy ideologies. This type of sexualized presentation does not belong in a public library to impressionable youth who are just developing their own identity as a young adult. This is grooming. It does not serve to educate them in any way but rather its sexualized content can be mind-bending. Is this what we want in our library? She says no. The library should not be the impetus to start some youth on a journey to a mutilated body and years of destructive hormones. Let's let our youth grow up without the library introducing sexualized performance for them. If inclusivity is the real goal, then let's truly get inclusive and include programming for pro-life and chastity programs. If the library doesn't do that, then they are just being a hypocrite. She brought the Discovery Report with on a QR

code and offered copies to the attendees. She encouraged everyone to read the report – it is egregious. The library spent over \$86,000 on it and will spend more if it is not stopped. This document is about equity. We believe in equality, where the persons are judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. If Julie truly believes in equity, she should give up her job and give it to a marginalized person. Otherwise, she is just a hypocrite. Lead with love.

President Gigani circled back to the request to not repeat points. So far, commenters have established the price of the Discovery Report, discussed indoctrination, stated that the event was for 12-17 year olds, used the term grooming, and stated that it's a drag queen bingo event. She asked that commenters refrain from repeating those topics.

Trustee Nienburg responded to President Gigani by remarking that it is not the Board's job to try to editorialize the comments.

Rich Brennan is a Downers Grove taxpayer. He thinks we haven't properly recognized the great leadership of our Governor on this subject. JB Pritzker is a leading funder of gender activism for K-12 children. He starts in kindergarten. JB simply wants to end the concept of male and female – that is his political agenda. His political agenda doesn't belong in school and doesn't belong in the library. Rich says his own political agenda does not belong there either. The Board has a responsibility to be fair.

Ed Briner is a Downers Grove resident. Though they applaud the Board for cancelling the children's drag show, they cannot forgive the Board for their failure to exercise good judgement, failure to distinguish between good and evil, and failure to distinguish between right and wrong by planning a children's drag queen show. The Downers Grove Library and Board should be defending and protecting the community's children from potential sexual predators rather than hosting and exposing them to drag queen adult entertainment and strange men. This is grooming. Then there is the waste of taxpayer dollars for the \$86,000 report and hiring RGW Consulting. All residents should read this report – it's on the Library Board website. Here are a few of the lowlights: The Downers Grove Library staff and Board are racist and too white. According to the report, "Racism has historically pervaded the library system. This is most evident in the reality that the library's most senior leaders are all white." The entire report implies that the Downers Grove community is racist and refers often to its whiteness. He is appalled that \$86,000 was paid for this racist report. It's not worth the paper it's written on. He has been a Downers Grove resident since 1953. Downers Grove is not racist. We don't hate. We are not bigots. This rhetoric should stop. We're parents for the rights and protecting of our own children. Authorizing and paying for this racist Discovery Report further shows that the Board is not capable of

wisely carrying out the fiscal responsibilities needed to manage the Downers Grove Library. With these two particular inexcusable decisions, the Board has lost public trust and the support of the community to carry out their duties of running the library. Therefore, he calls for the immediate firing of Ms. Milavec, Library Director, Ms. Lizzie Matkowski, who came up with the drag queen idea, and any others who were responsible for imagining and scheduling the drag queen show and supporting the insidious Discovery Report.

Jim Wool is a resident of Downers Grove. In 2004, the Downers Grove Library had pamphlets listing 20 books showing the homosexual lifestyle. These pamphlets were paid with taxpayer dollars. When he asked the director of the library why the library did not also have pamphlets available listing book titles offering a different point of view (after all, the mission of the library is to educate and different points of view need to be presented), the director explained that the library determined that the community had interest in books advocating homosexual lifestyle and that there was not a demand for books advocating the traditional family. He then asked the director for a printout of how many times the books listed on the pamphlets were checked out over the last three years. When the director completed the research, it told a very different story. More than half of the books on the pamphlet were never checked out over the course of three years. Furthermore, not a single book on the list was checked out more than three times over the course of three years. In other words, the reason given for creating the pamphlet, that there was a demand of interest from the residents of Downers Grove, was completely fabricated. Plain and simple, the director and the Library Board lied. This was a brazen lie to advance their political agenda. When he pointed out the discrepancy in what the Library Trustees stated and what the evidence revealed, the director removed the pamphlets from the library. Fast forwarding to this year, the director and many on the Library Board have engaged in another game of deception. In December 2021, the Downers Grove Library sent out an email to the community supporting the book *Queer Nation*. This was odd, because the book controversy originated in the high schools of Downers Grove, not the library. Yet the library decided to weigh in on the issue. Why? To advance its progressive political agenda. What the library conveniently omitted from the email that was sent out to the community was the fact of why the parents and students opposed the book. They opposed it because of a sexually lewd illustration in the book. The illustration showed a high school-aged boy performing oral sex on another high school-aged boy. This is why the parents and students were upset and demanded the book's removal from the high school libraries. Would the Board defend a book that showed a high school-aged female performing oral sex on a high school male? He's sure the library would condemn the book. Yet, the library defended the book *Queer Nation*. The email also stated that the challenge was raised not by students, but by parents. This indicated that Julie and the trustees believe that parents should remain

silent in matters concerning their children. That parents should simply defer to their so-called progressive elites. Yes, of course this challenge was raised by parents. Jim stated that he and the others are parents and will defend their children. Yes, Julie, they will act as responsible adults. Responsible parents. What is so shocking is that the library abhors the rights of parents to make decisions that affect the lives of their children. To defend their children against the perverse ideology of progressive agenda. In that same email that was sent out on December of 2021, the Board of Library Trustees and Julie stated that the library stands with the LGBTQ community. In the statement to the Downers Grove residents, the Board said the following: "The library fully condemns all discrimination, harassment, and violence against members of the LGBTQ community." In the wake of the Dobbs Decision by the United States Supreme Court, churches and pro-life women's centers were vandalized and firebombed. Actual acts of violence were committed by left-wing groups against churches and pro-life women's centers. The pro-life community was harassed, discriminated against, and went and witnessed terrible acts of violence. Yet, the Downers Grove Library issued no statements of support for the pro-life community and the library did not issue emails condemning the violence committed by the left-wing groups. Where was the library's sense of outrage over the discrimination and violence that was perpetrated against the pro-life community? The library's silence exposed its progressive narrow-mindedness, bias, and bigotry. The library has also stated that the LGBTQ community does not feel welcomed. Well, there is no litmus test for residents to use the library. Anyone can enter the library. Anyone can sit and read in the library. Anyone can use the study rooms in the library. Anyone can receive a library card. Anyone can check out a book. And anyone can attend a library event. So the library's claim of discrimination is a canard. All are welcome. Many people want to use the library and not be verbally and visually assaulted with the library's progressive agenda. Residents are certainly not welcome, so upon further review, the library does discriminate. Pride is considered the worst of the seven deadly sins. The library's pride has been on full display. Julie and the trustees, the library is not your personal institution to indoctrinate the community with your political agenda. You believe that if the community did not conform to your condescending, elitist progressive agenda, then this community, in your warped opinion, deserves to be punished and deserves to be mocked. But this is what self-appointed social justice bullies engage in. They do not build hope, they do not build community. They reveal division and chaos. The library is not a city upon a hill; instead they are vultures, perched upon their throne of intolerance. They prowl about, ready to devour anyone who dares dissent from their radical progressive agenda. An iron curtain of intolerance is descended upon this library.

When Mr. Wool was notified by President Gigani that he reached his five minutes, he continued to speak. President Gigani then notified him that the Board

was moving on to the next speaker. Mr. Wool continued to speak. President Gigani insisted he sit down once he reached the seven or eight minute mark of his comment. As Mr. Wool continued to speak, President Gigani called for a five-minute adjournment and then exited the meeting. Library Director Milavec clarified that it should be a recess, not an adjournment. Trustee Nienburg commented that the Board cannot adjourn without a vote. Trustee Khuntia exited the meeting. Trustee Humphreys exited the meeting.

Trustee Khuntia and Trustee Humphreys returned to the meeting and Trustee Dougherty announced that the Board was coming back in to vote to adjourn.

It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Khuntia THAT the Board of Library Trustees take a five-minute recess.

Trustee Nienburg addressed the audience, saying they need to try and stick to the guidelines. He has been to many Village Council meetings and there is a plus and minus with the time limit. But it has to be kept reasonable. It would be inappropriate for the Board to cut anyone off at five minutes with a hard cutoff, but he asked that when a speaker hits the five minute mark, they try to finish their thought and then move on to the next speaker. He thinks that will make sure everyone gets a chance to speak and it will keep order in the room.

Motion passed by voice vote. The Board took a five-minute recess at 8:25 p.m.

David Deal has been a resident of Downers Grove since 1997 and he cares about the welfare of the community. He cares about the children of the community because they are the future of the community. Much of the criticism of Drag Queen Bingo at the public library has characterized drag queens as groomers, pedophiles, and sexual abusers. He decided to do a little bit of research into grooming, sexual predators, and sexual abusers to find out what the facts say. According to RAINN, the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, 93% of people who sexually abuse children are well-known to that child. Of that 93%, who do you think comprises the largest group? It's family members. Who else might be in a position most likely to groom or sexually abuse a child? People in authority, like teachers, clergy members, and coaches. If people are concerned about the safety of their children and they are concerned about having their children groomed and they are looking drag queens, they are looking in the wrong place. They will not be found on that list. He challenges everyone to research drag queens and pedophilia and see what they uncover. Are they finding anecdotes and accusations or are they finding real facts, statistics, and trends? He guarantees they will not find out that this is a real trend or a real problem. If one looks up priests, coaches, Little League coaches, or Boy Scouts of America and sexual abuse of children, they will find some very

disturbing trends. They are not going to find drag queens anywhere near those stories. He urges everyone to do their homework. If they care about the future of their children, do not listen to hate groups, like Awake Illinois, that spread hatred and encourage violence. To the Downers Grove Public Library, he says I support you and I love you. The library is leading this community and he is proud of Drag Queen Bingo and everything they do as a library. They are a service to this community. Awake Illinois is a threat to this community.

Laura Hois has been a resident of Downers Grove since 1985. She is fighting for parents' rights to raise their children as they see fit and for children's right to be children. The last thing she wants in the community is children being exposed to sexually charged content at the library. Lewd adult content does not belong at the public library or at a library event for any age group. Despite the mainstream media reports about alleged threats of violence that caused the drag queen cancellation, she has confirmed through FOIA requests and information obtained that there was actually no violence at all. There were no credible threats. This is simply not true. Cancelling Drag Queen Bingo was the right thing to do. She does not want raucous, raunchy events for her children. Concerned parents and residents in the community are telling the library loud and clear to stop. Stop scheduling drag events and inviting minors to register with no parental notification. Stop discarding the classics and ushering in tawdry, sexual books like **Gender Queer**. Stop displaying LGBTQ flyers in an attempt to force people to validate sinful lifestyles as normal. Stop accosting the community with LGBTQ posts at the library entrance during Pride month. No thank you. How would it be if there was pro-god, pro-life posts at the entrance of the library with godly materials on display? Stop displaying combative art like the distasteful twist on Norman Rockwell's famous art, American Works, that is currently in the library. It is absolutely insulting to Americans. Stop inappropriate allocation of tax dollars to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Downers Grove is not systemically racist. This is not a racist community. She has lived here for a long time and can attest to that and so can many others. Stop promoting the Library Director's and Democrat Board members' personal political agendas. Actually, what the library is doing in prioritizing pride and LGBTQ and trans is not permitted under the law. The Illinois Local Library Act Section 1.3 requires the Board to use the library for the benefit of the greatest number of residents and taxpayers. The library is duty bound to serve the entire community, not just part of it. The library staff members would have the community believe that they are promoting civil discourse and inclusiveness. The community disagrees. The library is outwardly and actively canceling and excluding Christians and conservatives in favor of anti-racism and Marxist theory. The library's bylaws require trustees to avoid situations in which their personal interests might be served and to disqualify themselves immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interest exists. There is a conflict of interest. There is political activism every day in this library for the last several

years. She sees it. She used to love to go to the library. She steps inside now and does not feel welcome anymore, because of this political activism and the prioritization of the Board's agenda. Political activism simply does not belong in the library. Library trustees hold positions of public trust. They are expected, per the bylaws, to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards and to maintain absolute truth, integrity, and honor. This is not what the Board is doing. The Library Director and Democrat Board members have violated Illinois Library Law, the library's own bylaws, and their duty of public trust. A great number of the residents in Downers Grove object and have objected to the DGPL's corrupt vision. Where to go from here? What should the Board do? Start to comply with the library act. Start to comply with the library bylaws by serving all constituents. Do not steal any more tax dollars to serve their own political agendas. Hands off their kids. Do not sexually influence children without their consent. Let's get rid of RGW Consulting and come together to turn this around.

Donald Glass is a resident of Downers Grove. He did not come with any prepared remarks or research or anything else, but he wanted to ask the question, is there something inherently wrong with someone being in drag or dressing up in drag or performing in drag? It is a thing that people do and it is something that is common in public entertainment. His reference to that would be any number of high-grossing Hollywood films from *Some Like it Hot*, to *Mrs. Doubtfire*, to *Tootsie*, to anything *Madea*, to anything *Eddie Murphy*. They're all dressed up as women and performing as women and there is nothing inherently sexual about it. It is performance as a woman. Some may say, well what about drag queens? What's the difference between a drag queen and somebody dressing up in a movie? Is their costume a little more flamboyant? Maybe so. But does that make it sexual? No, it does not. It's just a costume. In the context of *Drag Queen Bingo*, where is the sexuality? Where is the indoctrination? Indoctrination is defined as the process of teaching a person or group to accept a beliefs uncritically. In the middle of playing bingo, where is the indoctrination? People complain that drag performs are sexualizing their children. Sexualizing is basically attributing sex to something. Who are the people that are attributing sex to anything here? It's certainly not the drag performer. The drag performer is just appearing in costume and performing. They're not doing anything inherently sexual. People who think that they need to defend children should define children – the event was for anyone from seventh grade up through high school. High school kids are young adults, they are not children. They can decide what they want to attend if they want to, within reason. He trusts his children to do what is right for them because he has raised them. He is not worried about what anyone else is doing with their children. He only worries about his children. Why people feel the need to impose a worry about sexuality or indoctrination on something that has nothing to do with that – he doesn't understand why that is. That's about all he can say at this time.

Tina Chan has a question. Is this the Downers Grove Library Board that wanted to put up a Drag Queen Bingo event? Is this the Downers Grove Library Board that wants to sexualize children with drag queens? Is this the Board that has a new value system as set out in the Downers Grove Equity Strategic Plan and the Discovery Report that have nice names but are completely opposite to what they mean? After reading the Discovery Report, which many have suggested, written by a woman named Reesheda Graham Washington and the subsequent Equity Strategic Plan, the goals are very clear. Critical Race Theory needs to be taught everywhere and everyone is racist. Doesn't matter what people have done or what people have said, it says in there everybody is racist, the system is racist, and especially white people. The write-up in this Discovery Report provides zero evidence, zero quotes, and zero actual interactions between people showing racism. The entire premise of this report is again, everybody is racist, whether they know it or not. Based on Tina's findings after reading the reports, the Board of Library Trustees and those who agree with the report and Reesheda Graham Washington are racist and promote racism, because the idea of inclusion and diversity mean that if you are white, you are racist, no matter what. If someone does not adhere to these new values of what it means to be inclusive, then the person needs to be re-educated to the library's dogma. We know what this is – this is called the liberal world order. The new world order. It's fascist, authoritarian, communist, it's the administrative state, and it's the real slave system. Critical Race Theory is the library's dogma and it's oppressive. They use word manipulation and jargon to achieve mind-controlled programming so children and adults will be subservient to the state. Just admit it. If the Board is anti-freedom, anti-family, and anti-god, just say it. The words equity, inclusion, and diversity have to be redefined by the library, by the woman writing the report. The RGW Consulting Group spent \$86,000 for thirty hours of interviews and assuming it's a 40-hour work week, this woman earned \$2,150 per hour. This is outrageous. What's minimum wage, \$15 per hour? To give context, when a highly experienced lawyer from a very big law firm is hired, it's like \$750 per hour and that person better be good. This is a pure example of cronies, or people within an inner circle who are contractors pocketing taxpayer money. Not to mention the wasted library staff time, whose salaries are taxpayer funded. So really, the cost is more than \$86,000. Every one of the Board members needs to be held accountable for this. The community will not forget and the Board needs to repent and come to Jesus Christ.

An attendee came to the podium to say that she really supported Drag Show Bingo. It meant a lot to her when she saw that it was being held at the library because when she was a kid, they didn't have things like that. It just didn't exist. It wasn't until she was much older that her parents took her to a show that was an all-male show where they went and changed into women's clothing. She really

enjoyed it and it was a great experience of seeing the performance and she just wanted to come up to the podium and say that.

An attendee came up to the podium to speak, but was not planning on speaking so she didn't have anything written down. She thanked the library for putting on an inclusive event like the Drag Queen Bingo. She thought it was great and was disappointed her kids are a little too old for it now. She has raised four kids in Downers Grove; all of them were heavily involved with things going on at the library. Two of them would have said pass, not interested, but the other two probably would have enjoyed it and one in particular would have really benefited. She thinks events like that are super important to having an open and diverse community, so she wanted to thank the library for that. She also wanted to talk a little about parental rights, because that's been discussed quite a bit and she as a parent also has parental rights and hers were kind of infringed upon. If she views an event like this to be valuable for her kid for any number of reasons that are completely personal and totally up to her and her family, that option was taken away. It was taken away in her community where she wants her child to feel welcomed and if her child were sitting in the audience today, they might not feel very welcome and that's really sad. This was a great event. She hopes the library is not scared off from doing more things like this. There are kids who need to be part of events like this that welcome diversity. The Flip Wilson show in the 60s is an example that drag is not that radical. She doesn't know why people turned it into something so radical. She also wanted to talk a little about transgenderism, because she thinks that's misunderstood and people are drawing an inference where it doesn't need to be drawn. Transgenderism, the community of teenagers who identify as transgender has pretty much the highest suicide rate in the country. There is only one known treatment for avoiding the depression, the suicide, and the mental health issues that come with being transgender in society. It is society that creates that issue, not the person. That issue is allowing someone to be comfortable living their life authentically, living their life out in the open and to be loved and accepted for who they truly are. If you don't believe those statistics, they're out there, go look for them. Things like this help that community and it's so important.

An attendee started by speaking to the gentleman who said there's no basis that drag queens are child molesters or that they're in libraries. The Houston Public Library apologized for featuring a convicted child molester last fall during its drag queen storytime series. A media spokesman for the library confirmed one of the program's drag queens, Tatiana Mala Nina, is Alberto Garza, a 32-year-old child sex offender who in 2008 was convicted of assaulting an eight-year-old boy. The Downers Grove Public Library attempted to produce Drag Queen Bingo and he thinks it was a blessing. It exposed the library and the system of public libraries to the broader public for what it has become. No longer a neutral provider of

information, now infested with social justice warriors, propagators of the most radical ideas leaching from academia. Child sexualization and grooming is available at your public library for grades 7-12, parental consent is not required. The only adults permitted are a 300-pound man dressed as a grotesque caricature of a woman. No idea is too depraved for the Downers Grove Public Library to push at taxpayers' expense. \$86,000. He will not have his free speech restricted because someone else has mentioned it. This boilerplate consultant's report is a document that proposes to address racism by treating people differently by skin color. Tired tropes, recycled CRT crib from Ibram Kendi – pretty weak tea. The long march through America's institutions has come to the library system. The library is corrupt, not in a legal sense, but in its decay. Look at the recommended titles. Woke pap abounds, all showcased in librarians' choice displays that checks diversity boxes but pales in quality to the great books of the past. Raise your fist and take a knee, Julie. You peddle a divisive view of a stained and broken America. A land acknowledgement? Pure, unadulterated virtue signaling. A woke ritual devoid of impact meant to divide people and sow guilt. BLM, LGBTQ, defund the police, racial animus, and let's not forget the DEI fetishes are the library's new true agenda. A legion of publicly-funded and benefit-pensioned library employees push the gender industrial complex on children. An institution whose core mission should be to serve children instead participates in the ritual debasing of childhood. What was once a beloved institution now sullied. Thank you. But social justice warriors always double down, so community objection is just more proof that there's still critical work to be done. Label of a bigot or hater is a fix to those who don't support the LGBTQ agenda at our library. It's an attempt to chill debate. Words are not hate, so go ahead and hurl the vitriol. The kids are worth it and we'll stand for them. Drag Queen Bingo, involuntarily canceled, is an example of what our library seeks to deliver. If we don't do it, the children will feel excluded and take their own lives – the justification for the drag queen performance for kids. Ironically, identical logic is used to rationalize mutilating surgeries including physical castration of children – that's now a gender as of September 15 – castration eunuch of a boy at age 17 is now a gender. That's recommended for someone who's going to kill themselves at 21. It feels like we are trapped in a bad art house horror movie. The tragic LGBTQ suicide stats will be offered, and the Trevor Project will be attached. Unfortunately, the Trevor Project is based on junk science. But who cares, it supports the library's narrative. Suicide has many causes. Roots and causes are complex and cannot be coded to a lack of inclusion any more than abuse of social media. For all the keyboard warriors out there click clacking away, social justice will not be attained by doubling down on their bad ideas. We all want the best for children, regardless of their sexual orientation. He's sure one of the numerous woke pastors will offer their basement to further the journey of inclusion. Just do not expect the entire community to support it in the library. Julie, he is going to ask you to take off your social justice warrior cape and

resign. You've done enough damage to the community and its reputation. She's succeeded in dividing the community and agitating both sides. Her staff feels unsafe. She has a contingent of armed police at the meeting for some reason. It's time to move on, time to get back to playing field and if this case for incompetence is not compelling, then the recommendation from the equity audit should be actioned and open up the top job to underrepresented communities. Julie, it's time to walk the woke.

Gloria Walsh-Rock has been a Downers Grove taxpayer for more than 20 years. She and her family fully support the library, its Board, its Director, and its staff in its mission to be intentionally inclusive and welcoming to all members of the community. She is particularly proud that the library has created ways to let community teens know that they are seen and welcomed, no matter who they are. She understands that the Drag Queen Bingo night had to be canceled and it is certainly of most importance to ensure the safety of staff and participants, but it's a sad statement about the community and our nation that this kind of programming, for our authentic selves, is being threatened in a public space where people can choose to participate or not. She hopes the library will continue to offer services and programs to meet the needs of everyone in the Downers Grove community and not just a small, vocal portion of the community. She believes that the Downers Grove community supports the library.

Christine Martin is a resident of Downers Grove. It's honestly been years since she's gone to the Downers Grove Library. The reason for that is that she no longer has faith that the library is a respectable, upstanding institution. Years ago, her daughter came home with a book from the library – full pages, no pictures. She said, "Mom, what are the fairies doing in the fairy pond, I don't understand." Christine took the book, read the page in question, and she clearly, as an adult, understood what the fairies were doing in the fairy pond. The fairies were having sex. To be real clear, the fairies were having an orgy. Her daughter fortunately didn't understand this, because she was an innocent child, which is how she should have remained at that time. If anybody would have explained it to her, however, it would have most likely confused her deeply and if anything, scared her a bit because she was not of age or mental ability to take that in, because she was a child. She took the book back to the library and brought it to the attention of the children's librarian. She was not concerned with the sexual content of the book and implied that Christine was the one in the wrong. Whether it be drag queen story hour or drag queen bingo hour, the library has been putting questionable stuff in front of kids for years. As for drag queen stuff, she's not fazed by it. Honestly, she had been anticipating it much sooner than the library brought it. She is surprised it took the library this long to shove it at the kids. She has stepped away from the library. Drag queen story hour is nothing more than just another avenue to get at kids. It's all part of an agenda that is all

over this country. Schools are one of the main culprits, but it's also saturated into our culture. It's grown into something completely different and completely unrecognizable to any rational, logical, thinking adult who cares about the health and well-being of children. For example, the State of Illinois is adopting through the National Sex Education Standard (NSES) radical sex education for kids K-12. Kids K through second grade are to learn how to define gender, gender binary, and gender role stereotypes. Grades three through five learn to distinguish between sexes assigned at birth and choose to be boy or girl. They learn how to define differences between cisgender, transgender, gender non-binary, gender expansive, and gender identity. Grade six and above learn a range of sexual positions and techniques. They learn different ways to masturbate. They learn oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex, and this is for sixth graders. Naturally, you wonder where reading, writing, and arithmetic went. Another example of irresponsible adults is furies. Furies are kids and some adults who believe that they are cats. She clarified that in no way is she making fun of this. She's a mature adult and cares about the mental well-being and health of kids. When she asked her 11-year-old niece if she knew what a furry was, she was very quick to say yes, there are kids in her class who only meow if the teacher asks them a question. They have different meows for the different feelings they have. There's also a school in northern Illinois that places litter boxes in bathrooms for children who believe they are a cat. A responsible adult would get that children need help when they grow to be healthy in mind and spirit. Many adults in the room think it's healthy for a child to believe that they're something they're not. That is a dangerous space for a child and the Board and its mindset is going along with this. Hospitals are also now in the game. Lurie's Children's Hospital has created partnerships with local school districts to promote radical gender theory and provide kink, BDSM, and trans-friendly sex toys for children. Look it up, it's all right there. They are openly saying it. They are performing mastectomies, hysterectomies, removing male genitalia on children, doing facial surgeries to create looks of the opposite sex. These are just a few examples. So many in attendance tonight will call her a hater. She's used to it and would expect nothing less. Those who preach kindness, tolerance, and inclusivity. She's confident she's not a hater but she's grown angry to perceive to be irresponsible adults confusing children and not letting them grow naturally into what they could be. She calls herself a protector of children, which is the opposite of a groomer. A villain doesn't recognize themselves as a villain. They think they're the good guys. They're actually causing great disturbance though. She begs the Board and Julie to reflect on their current mindsets and actions because they've grown dangerous. They are unaware of the ramifications that will come to fruition as they are affecting certain children. She cares about the children and she implores them to do the same thing.

Kelly Cerinecki is a resident of Downers Grove. She thanked the Board for being present that evening and commented that she recognizes it is a complete waste of their time. She has been teaching middle school children for 20 years and also has a transgender son. She has not indoctrinated a single child in her 20 years of teaching. She has not taught anyone to be gay or queer or trans or even a democrat. She simply teaches children to be kind and loving and forgiving of the world around them. She does not think that anyone is present at the meeting to find any sort of agreement on this issue. One side of the aisle is not going to step across and agree with the other side of the aisle, and vice versa. It's just simply not going to happen. Agreement is not going to happen this evening but she hopes some people can have respect. Respect should be the goal. She is quite positive she does not agree with many of the values that many of the attendees are instilling in their children. In fact, she finds many of their beliefs unfathomable. Even though she disagrees with how she believes some people are grooming their children to be fearful, intolerant, spiteful adults, she is not making threats against them, spewing hateful remarks to them, or scaring their children because of what they choose to teach their children. She has to step back from her own beliefs and understand that their beliefs are grounded in the way that they have been taught and their own life experiences. She has no right to take away others' beliefs simply because she disagrees with them. Maybe she believes that football grooms teenage boys to be aggressive, abusive men, and she would never ever let her son play such a sport because she's appalled by what it teaches. It's still others' right to send their children to play football if they don't find any problems with it. We don't have to agree philosophically to ultimately agree to respect each other's decisions regarding the choices made for each other's children. She is asking those who are opposed to these types of events being held at the library to please just let everyone choose what they think is best for their children and those opposed can choose what they think is best for their children. It does not affect their children in any way if parents choose not to send them. If Kelly's child is trans and searching for a community of other teenagers who can help him feel connected, welcome, and safe in this world, then allow her to give that to him. She will agree to respect those opposed and their perspectives even though she strongly disagrees with most of what's being said at the meeting, if they agree to respect her perspective and stop telling her what to expose her child to. In the spirit of this community moving forward with a goal to provide avenues for all children, she is hopeful that they will place members of this Board who will help all children in this town live a good life, a safe life, and she hopes that the library can continue to serve this community in the respectful way that they have so far.

Natalie Murphy is part of the age group for the Drag Queen Bingo event. In fact, she was proudly signed up. As she sits today and listens to the remarks made in a room of primarily adults, she cannot help but feel a deep anger and sadness on

behalf of her friends, both straight and identifying as LGBTQ+IA. She says this as a privileged white, straight girl who has been fortunate enough to have parents who have provided her with the opportunity to develop her own persona without the influence of theirs. Both communities – anyone for that matter – will not benefit from lack of easily obtainable and safe information about the LGBTQ+IA community, because it is real. It's important to have empathy and to have respect for others, regardless of stance, regardless of religion, race, or sexual orientation. It's important to learn and be educated. This is a fundamental right. She challenges those in attendance to continue to show up in their community and voice their opinions, but do so in consideration for those around them and those they are talking about. This is a basic consideration that has been taught since everyone started their education. This is a basic concept of respect. We cannot politicize kindness and respect. This will create a divide and history has shown us repeatedly that this is true. Unity and division – these words are not synonyms. At her school, Downers Grove South, they have a saying: Be respectful, be responsible, and engaged. She wanted to remind everyone of that, regardless of age or stance. We must always be respectful of those around us, engaged in the community, and responsible and take action. With this, she thanked the DGPL library for their consideration of safety and for their persistence in providing a space for everyone to be represented. She specifically acknowledged the hard work and patience of Ms. Milavec.

Kevin Deaney is a Downers Grove Friends of the Library Board Member, is not married, has no kids, is not an uncle, and is not a godparent, unfortunately. He has friends who have kids and is as close to them as if they were his blood. Some of them are gay and they live out of state. They said if they had a program like this in their library they'd be thrilled, because there's nothing like that for them. Kevin applauds the library for doing that. He's been to two drag shows. There's a place downtown called the Baton Club, near his office. A bunch of him and his coworkers went there twice over about a five-year period. All of them are straight and all of them had a fabulous time. They are fabulous entertainers and they had a blast. He bets the person who was supposed to perform at Drag Queen Bingo puts on a really good show and he's jealous he wouldn't be able to see it. They are fabulous entertainers. He turned 60 this year, so he grew up in the 70s. All his friends loved Kiss, they all loved David Bowie and his Ziggy Stardust persona. They all grew up to be straight, conservative, wonderful family people. He thinks a lot of kids at that age do respond to the outrageousness of those performers and a drag queen would be the same way. Two of the drag shows he's been to were about as sexually explicit as *The Sound of Music*. There was nothing explicit and he thinks this performer would be smart enough to realize that.

Ezri Blau is 13 and was signed up for the Drag Queen Bingo. They have completely forgot what they were going to say but is sure they will get back on track in a second. They are sad to have not had the opportunity to go to the Drag Queen Bingo. They thought it was going to be really fun and all of their friends who had enrolled were also really excited. Their friends who weren't enrolled were also really excited about the event. They were all really sad when they realized it was canceled. A drag queen is just someone in a costume and they don't see any problem with someone in a costume playing a game and singing a song for kids. Is there anything wrong with them wearing a crown tonight talking to everyone in attendance? They are pretty sure all would agree that there is nothing wrong with that, so why would there be anything wrong with a drag queen singing a song and playing a game? That's all they can think of to say right now.

Andi Voinovich, they/them, is a proud resident of Downers Grove and a clergy member in the community. They just wanted to take a moment and thank the Board for attempting to offer this programming. As someone who works very closely with the LGBTQ community as a member and with youth, this is right on track for people's experiences. People are coming out younger and younger. The average age is 13 years and three months – right around the age of those who were invited to attend this event. It is an incredible thing to have the opportunity to witness people who are like you, who are adults. In the LGBTQ+ drop-in center that they run, a youth recently shared that they had never known an out LGBTQ+ adult until they came into that space and what was being offered in Drag Queen Bingo was an opportunity for youth to see that they had a future, so thank you to the Board for that. Thank you to the Board as well for considering the safety of youth in the decision making process. They are devastated the library had to cancel but is grateful and not surprised that the library showed the wisdom to try and host that event and then when it was no longer safe to let it go. They also wanted to take a moment to thank Julie Milavec for her leadership at this time and they are so sorry for the strong vitriol and hate that she has experienced in this time. Many people are absolutely grateful for Julie's leadership as well as the Board's, who are volunteers offering their time. Andi thanked the Board for their love for the library and for the work that they do and for creating space for all people. They are so grateful for the Board and so sorry for the community that this is where we are at and they hope this is an eye-opening experience for everyone and that we recognize a bit of who we are as a community, what the community struggles with, and what's ahead. Andi thanked the Board and Julie again and they wished them peace and rest after the meeting.

Matt has been a Downers Grove resident for about six years. He is straight, married with no kids, and he had no plans to attend the event in question, but

that doesn't mean it doesn't break his heart that the 40 teens who were excited to sign up, including the one who just spoke, didn't get to attend. More than that, just having their identity so callously rejected by their community or elements of their community is truly heartbreaking. He thinks the community can do better. He wanted to affirm and support where the library was coming from. He thinks the misrepresentation of the intent of the event that's been said tonight is really unfortunate and he applauds the work the library has been attempting to do and hopefully continues to attempt to do.

Amber Leckey recently graduated from high school. As a member of the community and a younger person in the community, they support what the library was doing with this event. They think it was very helpful, especially for people who might be questioning and unsure if they should come out or if they should hide themselves from their families and their friends. Personally, they have a cousin who is transgender and didn't come out for years, because he was terrified that his family would reject him. They think that this could definitely help this community become a more inclusive place, so thank you to the library for trying to implement this event.

Vera Miller and her husband have lived in Downers Grove and been library patrons since 2013. She is attending the meeting to support everyone in the library. She stated how supportive she and her husband are of the Drag Queen Bingo program that was scheduled for this fall and they very much want to see more programs like this held in town to make sure that all residents, no matter their gender orientation, feel welcome and accepted. The library offers an amazing variety of programs, many of which she and her family have participated in and many they haven't. They are so glad their local library includes diverse offerings to ensure that everyone in the community feels welcome. A police presence should not be needed in order for attendees of a library game of bingo to be safe from harassment or threats. They are deeply concerned about the misinformed and bigoted statements that have been made to both the Library Board and the Village Council about this program. Dressing or performing in drag is not necessarily sexual in any way, no more than any typically female hairstyles, clothing, makeup, and jewelry are automatically sexual or inappropriate. Drag has no association whatsoever with pornography, pedophilia, or grooming. "Grooming minors" is an art and entertainment performance that often also celebrates LGBTQ identities. Like any senior dance performance, it can be customized to be appropriate for audiences of different ages, which the library staff had already stated it would be. Ironically, the hostile response to this event from members of the community fearing that teens will somehow be harmed by it risks causing actual harm to those same teens. It sends a message that people with a different gender expression or sexual orientation are not welcome in the town or are somehow wrong. This can cause LGBTQ young

people to feel excluded, ashamed of who they are, or that they need to pretend to be “normal,” which can lead to serious problems for them, including anxiety and depression, drug and alcohol use, and suicidal ideation. A 2022 survey from the Trevor Project, an organization that provides crisis support for LGBTQ youth, found that nearly half of LGBTQ young people had seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year and that these rates have trended upward over the past three years. Unfortunately, current trends in legislation and political rhetoric across the country are putting these youth more at risk. An event like Drag Queen Bingo, where young people of all identities can find community, have fun, and feel welcome, is extremely important and positive for youth, especially now. The equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts of the Downers Grove Public Library are crucial for the well-being of Downers Grove teens and it is crucial for all of the Downers Grove leadership to make clear through their words and actions that it is a welcoming community that shows love, not hate. Vera asked the Board to please not let the hateful comments of a few deter them from similar programming in the future. It is very much needed and appreciated as Downers Grove all learns to be a more inclusive community. The bottom line is Downers Grove is and must be a community where we celebrate each other’s differences, not one where everyone is forced to be the same.

Robin Tryloff has lived in Downers Grove for more than 30 years and has served on the Downers Grove Public Library Foundation Board of Directors since 2017. As a resident, taxpayer, and devoted library patron, she is at the meeting to voice her unqualified support for the library, its Board of Trustees, and its extraordinary professional staff. She has two points that she wants to make. The first is why she deplores the recent intolerance, hate speech, and violent threats against the library and staff. The second is why the library is important and should be supported by all. First, the recent intolerance, hate speech, and threats of violence. It is the library’s role to identify emerging trends relevant to the community. Article One of the Library Bill of Rights states that “Books and other library resources are for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation. A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide variety of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.” The Downers Grove Library does this by addressing equity, which extends beyond equality to deliberate and intentional efforts, to create service delivery models that will make sure that community members will have the resources they need. Sometimes these needs are different, not only because of race and ethnicity, but also owing to sexual orientation, gender identification, socioeconomic status, and physical ability. By law, public libraries cannot discriminate in the provision of access to books, media, or programming. As a trusted neutral safe space, the library is an ideal institution to lead dialogue and

deliberation efforts for difficult topics in the community and should be respected as such. The library has the First Amendment right to speak in its own voice as a government agency in important matters. The library can exercise its prerogative to convey strong messaging that counters messages of bias, hatred, and discrimination. Such messaging can be proactive, affirmative, and ongoing, as well as a reaction to an incident of hateful conduct or speech. The library can, and does, mount prominent signage throughout the library announcing its support for equality, diversity, and inclusion and its belief in the human dignity of all persons, specifically those in marginalized communities. Library-sponsored programming and services can and should echo this message. Robin applauds the library, Board of Trustees, and the library's outstanding professional staff, for standing strong for professional ideals, for the breadth of needs required by the community, and for intellectual freedom. Her second point is why the library is important. Intellectual freedom is guaranteed by the First Amendment and it is one of the core values of the library profession. It promotes access to information, provides the defense against censorship, and is a type of public forum. The Freedom to Read Statement states, "The freedom to read is essential to our democracy." In a democratic society, individuals must be sufficiently knowledgeable to make informed decisions. Libraries provide their users with necessary information through a wide variety of tools from varying viewpoints and it is essential that library resources remain free to use for all. The Downers Grove Library provides an impartial environment in which individuals and their interests are brought together with the universe of ideas and information spanning the spectrum of knowledge and opinions. The library should be a welcoming and inclusive space for all library users, all workers, and all community members. It should be free of discrimination and threat to individual safety. The library services are always adapting to community changes, as are the library's roles and responsibilities. For instance, studies show that libraries become busier in times of economic downturn, as they serve many at-risk individuals and families – people who take advantage of free services such as computer and internet access, free activities, employment advising, tax preparation, free books, and other media. Robin closed by repeating her unqualified support for the library, its Board of Trustees, and its extraordinary professional staff.

Jill Bartelmey has been a resident of Downers Grove since 2009. She is a mother of two beautiful daughters and she is at the meeting to show her support for the library, Julie Milavec, and the trustees. She supports the library's continued efforts to provide inclusive programs for all members of the community. She personally knows and loves far too many members of the LGBT+ community who have lived their entire lives as cisgender, heterosexual individuals simply because that was all they knew. They felt there was something wrong with them. This is why inclusion, representation, acceptance, and

programs like this is so very important. One of her dear friends has a child who Jill used to babysit for – she grew up in a very supportive household but knew nothing other than what she was taught day to day. She was brilliant, went to school, joined the Navy, became a doctor, and married a man and was unhappy because she was really a lesbian. Thank God now she gets to live her life as her true self. This shouldn't have to happen. No one should feel ashamed of who they are. This is why we need more programs like this and this is why she is so thankful for the library. Optional programs and books that the library provides are a crucial part of this inclusivity. Not all programs, events, book are for everyone. We all have the right to disagree or dislike them. However, our own personal opinions should not be allowed to dictate what is right or wrong for the whole community. Like the other speaker so eloquently said, she doesn't agree with a lot of people and the way they raise their children. She's not telling them how to raise their children. She doesn't want to tell them how to raise their children. It is none of her business. Stop telling her how to raise her children. Don't tell her that she is a groomer or a pedophile because she is smart enough and intelligent enough to actually know what a drag queen does. Jill thanked the Board again and strongly encouraged everyone to educate themselves and she thinks that the misinformation and the political agendas that are being pushed around events like drag events and books and other things, which led to the bingo being canceled due to threats, are just simply unacceptable. People need to worry about their own kids and parent their own kids. That's what parenting is.

Norm Sidler is a 40-year resident of Downers Grove. His father is in attendance as well. He was born and raised in Downers Grove. As he stood in line and listened to everyone speak, he heard a lot of "we", "us", "them." The taxpayers of Downers Grove hold the Board accountable for how they spend the money and if there is so much angst about an activity called Drag Bingo, be the adult. Step away and say, maybe this is not the appropriate location. Julie opened the night with statistics. Are those statistics the people that vote and pay or is it just an opinion poll? Julie is in charge of a budget. She's a librarian for the kids and for the future. Taxpayers give that to her in charge and hold her accountable that the library is a place for their kids. If something is this contentious, she has to go to bed at night and ask is it appropriate. What the taxpayers are asking for, what Norm is asking for, is accountability and truthfulness. When he hears that there were threats – he's a 20-year member on the Police Pension Board. The FOIA request did not come out supporting threats. Maybe he didn't get it all. But we have to be truthful to everyone and we can't make a narrative that's not truthful. Taxpayers will demand accountability. The Library Board has grown the budget to over six million dollars. The Village of Downers Grove has an annual revenue of 62 million dollars. The library has grown almost 10 percent and north of the Village's budget. Tonight, he sat and listened to no support or questioning going over budget by \$400,000. Westmont runs a library at half the cost. He's not

saying that's the sufficient number, he's just saying the taxpayers need accountability and they need to make sure where the people's money is being spent. The people who put Julie where she's at. She works for the taxpayers.

Josh Busby, he/them, is a resident of Downers Grove and a clergy person in the neighborhood. He wanted to speak in favor of the Board. He sent an email several weeks ago. He fully supports events that promote inclusion and acceptance in the community. The Trevor Report was referenced a few speakers ago. That Trevor Report also says that 1.8 million LGBTQ youth have strongly considered suicide in the last year because they're not represented. It also says that for every 45 seconds, an LGBTQ youth in the United States attempts suicide. That means in the time that the group has debated this event, 200 youth in the country have attempted suicide because of the things being debated. If one wants to put a face to that statistic, he is one of those survivors who attempted suicide at 13 years old because he was told that representation wasn't a good thing. He was told that being out was bad. He works with LGBTQ youth in the Downers Grove neighborhood. If attendees don't know LGBTQ youth in the neighborhood, it's probably because they don't trust you enough to tell you that's who they are. He hears their stories. He could name dozens of children in this neighborhood who are too afraid to tell their parents or their friends who they are. Because we have debates like this and tell them that it's not okay. If he would have had a drag queen bingo at 13 years old, he wouldn't be a survivor, he would just be someone who had gotten to live his teenage years. That's the issue with these events. If people don't want their children going to these events that's fine, but there are children in this community that it could be a matter of life and death if they get to see people who look like them. If they get to see people who feel the way they feel about themselves and tell them it's okay to live authentically as who they are. Whether Drag Queen Bingo is allowed or not, there are still going to be gay and lesbian and transgender and all other forms of folks in the community. The question is, are they going to be accepted for who they are or told that they have to hide away from the public light. He fully supports inclusive events with the library and anywhere else in the community because he thinks it's worth telling children that whoever they are, they are important and they're loved by this community.

Hilary Denk is a lifelong resident of Downers Grove and has been a lover of the Downers Grove Public Library for 58 years. She supports what the library is doing. She supports diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is so pleased that Julie is the Director and she will do everything she can to make sure Julie stays with the community. She has meant so much to the community. The community was in this place five years ago when a trustee was speaking out against diversity, equity, and inclusion training at the public library. He made some terrible statements and he lost his job as the trustee, as he should have. This community

supported that decision and this community supports what the library is doing. The library is saving lives. They are representing the community, all of the children, all of the adults that felt like they didn't matter and they weren't included and they weren't cared for. Not just the children, but the transgender, gay, lesbian, bisexual – all the people who have been a part of the community and haven't been seen or included for decades. They should be seen and they should be embraced and they should be loved. The collection at the library has included biblical literature, analysis of the Bible, and all kinds of religions. It's time that it also includes literature and materials that represent all other viewpoints. The LGBTQ viewpoint should definitely be represented in the library's collection and activities. Those who don't want to participate don't have to participate. Hilary thanked the Board for listening so patiently and kindly and with incredible fortitude to the messages they've been hearing at the meeting. She thanked them for their public service.

David Thompson has been in Downers Grove for 20 years. He and his wife picked the town when they got married in 1990. He has absolutely no interest in bingo. Not whatsoever. Never been to a bingo game. No interest at all. Personally, he has no interest in drag queens either. If he was concerned about the kids that were going to this program, he'd be there. He'd check it out. He wouldn't sit back and complain and shut it down. He was abused by a homosexual man when he was in high school. After years of therapy, the only thing that he could recognize was that if he had been authentic, if he had been able to be authentic, if he had been able to be himself that night might not have ever happened. He sat in the audience at the meeting and listened to a lot of vitriol. He's actually glad the event was cancelled because he wouldn't want some of the people in the room there at the event. Some of the vitriol he's heard is horrible.

Lee was in the library the other day and was looking at the Norman Rockwell pictures there. He thinks somebody's got a very good style there for that. He saw a picture that says MILF on it and he wondered what that meant. He told the audience to grab their phone and look at it, because he does not want to say it but they will not like what they see. That was totally inappropriate and it had a picture of a woman sitting in front of a vanity and a girl sitting there. So basically, if you get to the definition of this, the picture with the label on it totally objectifies women. You're just a piece of meat according to that picture and it's inappropriate for the library.

Janelle Robinson works in Downers Grove with a diverse population – racial, ethnic, and economic group of folks who come in and need help. These are folks who often don't feel seen in this community that they live in. She appreciates everything the library does to make sure that their programs make people feel

seen. She has had a close experience with the DEI work that's being done and she appreciates that it challenges the status quo and the fact that this community, as evidence that she sees every day when she goes into work, is not homogeneous. We need to have programming that speaks to everyone that lives here. Janelle thanked the Board for the work they are doing.

An attendee thanked the Board for serving in their volunteer role and she truly appreciates their work for the library. She and her wife have lived in Downers Grove for 15 years. They love it here. One of the reasons is because of the wonderful library. They've watched and felt the community become more accepting of LGBTQ+ people and they are heartened every time they see a pride flag or love is love sign in someone's yard. Part of that is know the library sees and serves them. She supports the library's inclusive programming. She's not going to say much more than that because other supporters have made the same points she would. Instead, she wanted to provide some perspective on the public comments made that evening. She knows the Board has received a lot of other feedback via a lot of other channels because she's seen the FOIA requests. At the point she saw it, the library had received 739 responses. She read every one of them, categorized them by sentiment, and tried her best to categorize which responders lived in Downers Grove. Like our country, she found Downers Grove is divided on this type of issue. She posted the response files from the library, the spreadsheet where she categorized the feedback, and some charts at bit.ly/dgpl-responses, so anyone is free to look at them, see how she chose to categorize comments, and draw their own conclusions. She tried to err on the side of generosity for both sides. The results show what one might expect. Counting the responses she could tell were from residents plus those she thought might be residents, she found that 52% of respondents support the program while 47% oppose it. The rest were neutral, just asking neutral questions. Of the 739 responses, 177 Downers Grove residents support it and 159 Downers Grove residents oppose it. She notes this not to say her view is more popular, but to show how few residents actually took the time to weigh in on this issue. More non-residents weighed in, 403, than residents, 340. But even the non-residents showed more support for the program than opposition. The updated numbers provided at the meeting track with this. Again, she's not trying to convince anyone that any of these numbers represents how Downers Grove feels about the program. Quite the opposite. She notes this to show that no one knows how the whole community feels, including everyone in the room. Downers Grove has a population of approximately 50,000 residents. In total, the Library Board has heard from 1.5% of them about this issue. The vast majority of residents don't feel the need to weigh in or don't have time because life happens. 49,261 people have yet to give an opinion. She hopes they do. While she appreciates the time and focus the library has taken to read every comment it's received, please know that while she cannot say the community supports

programs like Drag Queen Bingo for teens, she can say that this part is likely around the same figure as those who oppose it, at worst. On a personal note, from reading the comments, she had no idea there were so many LGBTQ+ residents in Downers Grove – y'all let's be friends.

Joseph Lemay is a lifelong resident of Downers Grove. He wasn't going to come up and speak but upon hearing the clergy person convince the audience that drag queen bingo was going to save people's lives, he'd ask him if his Lord and Savior is Jesus Christ or Aurora Devine. He quoted Jeff Goldblum from Jurassic Park – the library was so concerned about whether or not they could, they didn't stop to think about whether or not they should. If you've seen Jurassic Park, you know things did not go well by making dinosaurs. If something this controversial is causing this much stir, maybe the answer is we shouldn't do it and if a parent wants to take their kid to see a drag queen, they go downtown Chicago and enjoy the show like the one speaker did. If you want to take your kid to go to bingo, then go to bingo. He thinks the library should have a good compromise and just have regular bingo. We wouldn't have to waste everybody's time with this silliness. The question we should ask is, is it good or bad? Yes or no? If it's going to cause this much trouble, let's just cancel it as we did.

Rochelle Gorey has lived in Downers Grove for 17 years. She thanked the trustees for being on the Library Board and thanked Julie for her leadership. She wasn't planning on speaking but she feels compelled to speak because there has been so much hate and intolerance that has gone before her remarks tonight. She wants the Board to know that she supports them and she wants a library that represents the entire community and supports the values of inclusivity, empowerment, empathy, and diversity. These are the tenants that define a prosperous and free community. She also believes that hate has no home in Downers Grove even though tonight, she has felt that hate. She has been scared. She has felt sad that violence has been threatened in the community because of Drag Queen Bingo. She also believes that we need to remember the proclamation made by the Mayor last June, proclaiming equal rights, civil rights for the Village and it must be followed up by actions and be demonstrated by those that represent board seats and other leadership and decision-making positions that directly affect the community. Appointing a board member that aligns with this proclamation – that's why she attended the meeting. Drag Queen Bingo has been canceled – hate won in that instance. But she came to say that the Board matters and she would really like to see a board that promotes diversity, empathy, and inclusivity. Aligning a board that has those values is something that this community needs and if not, then the proclamation made by the Mayor for this community is just that – it's only words. A community is defined by its actions and its history by its leaders. She implores the Board to think about

that as they choose the next board member. She thanked Julie and the current Board members.

Don Sutton has lived in Downers Grove for 55 years. He is directly opposed to the Drag Queen Bingo. Number one, at the beginning of tonight, we said the Pledge of Allegiance and said the word God in the Pledge of Allegiance. He has coins and dollars in his pocket and they all say In God We Trust. How many on the Board have children? How many go to church? How many believe in God? He hasn't been to church in 20 years but he is very religious in his way of living. He believes that God is present and that He has created Earth and all of its people. He created man and He created woman. He cannot make mistakes. He either makes one or the other. It's up to people to judge what they want to do afterwards. But they are not born something different at birth. He has a big history with children. He grew up in Chicago on one street with eight friends his age – boys, five girls. He had 40 male friends in Chicago. He had his choice of walking to six grammar schools or four high schools. He's been around people his entire life. He had eight in his mother's family and eight in his father's family – nothing but cousins around. He had four children of his own – could have been five. Went in the service. Had four godchildren the first two years he was in there. He now has 12 godchildren. He spent four years with the Cub Scouts in Downers Grove, eight years with the Boy Scouts in Downers Grove, and spent four years with the Civil Air Patrol with boys and girls. If anybody knows children, he does. He was a contractor – he worked in this building, the building next door, all the schools. All over this town. He knows probably 300 teachers in the school district. But he doesn't know the Board as teachers. Is anyone a real teacher? If not, he does not believe they should be teaching children. He is opposed to what the library is doing with the drag queen. If somebody wants to have it, that's okay with him. Maybe the Moose Lodge or any private organization. But he does not believe that the public, 50,000 people in Downers, have to pay for the library to have that for a couple of kids. That is not the library's position. It is not there to teach kids anything except books and music. That's his feeling. He doesn't mind the library having it, but not with taxpayer money – have it somewhere else.

Mary O'Dell is a resident of Darien. She thanked the Board for their time and service and for allowing her to speak. She is a resident of Darien but she borrows quite a lot from Downers Grove Public Library. She is a member of the theatrical profession and DGPL has an amazing collection of plays and scripts. The library has saved her a ton of money. She also has some friends who are other members of the theatrical profession – designers, actors, musicians – and a couple who are drag queens. She's not going to get into that. Today is the anniversary of her grandfather's passing. He was Cherokee and she thanked the Board for the Land Acknowledgement. He was also a proud patriot so she thanked the Board for reinstating the Pledge of Allegiance. He was a man of faith

and peace and he raised eight kids. He was a farmer, survived the Great Depression and World War II – tough guy. He taught her a prayer: Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless, and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible. Please, look kindly upon us and increase your mercy in us that in difficult moments, we may not despair nor become despondent. But, with great confidence, submit ourselves to your Holy will, which is love and mercy itself.

Abby Goodman grew up in Downers Grove. As someone who has come to terms with her sexuality over the last couple of years, she wished she had something like Drag Queen Bingo to make her realize or come to terms with it sooner. She is sorry for all the threats the Board has been facing – it's disgusting. She thanked the Board for all that they do.

It was moved by Nienburg and seconded by Dougherty THAT the Board of Library Trustees take a five-minute recess. Motion passed by voice vote. The Board took a five-minute recess at 10:02 p.m.

11. Trustee Comments and Requests for Information.

Trustee Khuntia thanked President Gigani and the members of the community who were in attendance, whose care and commitment to the Downers Grove Public Library is noted and appreciated. She thanked the Village for allowing the Board to use their facilities and she thanked the Downers Grove Police Department for their presence at the meeting. As a trustee, one of her duties is to be prepared to promote the purpose, values, and services of the library. The Downers Grove Library is a place for everyone to discover, grow, play, and learn. To honor that purpose, to truly commit to it, the library must broaden its view and ensure all members of the community are seen, heard, and valued. Many attended the library's listening sessions. The library heard from community organizations and community members on where it was doing well and where it needed to improve. The library heard the community. The community asked the library to do better; the library needed to do better. It wasn't enough to just say the Downers Grove Public Library is a place for everyone; the library needed to live by that purpose. The library's strategic focus has four "E's" and through those first three, excelling, engaging, and empowering the community, the library also needed to actively evolve with the changing community. She is proud that in April 2022, the Board unanimously approved the Equity Strategic Plan. This plan is guiding the library as it continues to move forward. There is a goal in the plan that as a public library, DGPL advocates for and welcomes all people, including those who are marginalized, historically and intentionally, and those whose voices have traditionally been censured. This is done by activating library programming that builds community awareness and a capacity at anti-prejudice, anti-racism, and anti-hate. She is proud to support those goals and as a trustee, she supports the director and the staff in working towards those goals.

Trustee Nienburg shares Trustee Khuntia's commitment to the library's mission. Diversity, inclusivity, the objective of creating a place where everyone feels welcome is a noble and worthwhile goal. He has taken that to heart and as a member of the Board of Trustees, he takes that responsibility very seriously. He sincerely wants everyone, including the LGBTQ+ community, to not only feel welcome, but comfortable, engaged, and excited when they come to the library. He is the father to two young boys and his wife is an elementary school teacher. She's taught at the elementary school level and the high school level. The library is an important part of his family and an important part of the community. It's a near weekly routine for his family and he cares about what happens there. He also cares about what happens in the Downers Grove community at large. He is going to share his position on the Drag Queen Bingo event but first he wants to say that his position absolutely does not represent any attempt to diminish or disrespect the LGBTQ community. With that said, he was unequivocally opposed to the Drag Queen Bingo event and he wanted to explain why. His reasons may be surprising. It's because of the particular choice, not because of the objective. It's also because of the missed opportunity that the library had. The Library Director stated when this event was planned that this was going to be a library and age-appropriate drag performance. He thinks it's worth considering when you have to modify something to be age-appropriate that that may be a signal that you should not be doing it in the first place. At least not at a public library. Creating an age-appropriate version of something that has an objectively adult and often sexual context does not place the library on moral high ground. Furthermore, the featured performer for this event, Aurora Devine, definitely has a public persona that is absolutely adult and absolutely sexual. Many library patrons have correctly observed that she boasts about a raucous and raunchy time at her shows. He believes that it displayed a lack of judgement to engage with somebody who publicly portrays that image – to ignore that and to expose the library to that element. The library has opened itself up to justified criticism and they should not be surprised about the response that was received. Finally, and this is the most important point, he cannot understand why this event represents the best that the library could have done. This is the missed opportunity he spoke of earlier. If the intent was to celebrate the LGBTQ community and to coincide with National Coming Out Day, was this really the best that the library could come up with? Did staff exhaust the undoubtedly long list of LGBTQ individuals who have led inspiring lives, overcome obstacles, and made valuable contributions to our country and society? Were all these people booked? Did the library bother to try? Instead, the library brought in an adult performer, which is not up for debate, to perform an adult show that was modified for teens, which is not up for debate, and to play bingo. Is this what the library aspires to for the LGBTQ teens? Is this the inspiring example the library wants to give on this day of significance? Or did the library sell them short? Opposed doesn't really even begin to describe his feelings on this matter. He's dismayed

with the poor judgement, the lack of creativity, and the absence of foresight in scheduling this event. He is disappointed in the library for exposing itself to this kind of controversy. He is frustrated at the costs and the disruptive effect this has had and will continue to have on the library's operations. He is mostly disheartened that the library has created division in the community. To be clear and to reiterate, the library had a real opportunity to create understanding if it had only chosen a different path. To those in the community who were supportive of this event, thank you for speaking up at the meeting. He hears you and to the extent that their intent is to support inclusivity, he wants them to know he shares their commitment to that principle. He simply feels the library could have made a much better decision on how to accomplish that objective. To those who are opposed, he wanted to say that he completely rejects the notion that their opposition represents hate or intolerance. He doesn't believe most people who have voiced opposition don't want LGBTQ patrons to feel welcome at the library. He does not believe that they are not supportive of an event that coincides with National Coming Out Day. He also rejects the premise that if you don't like it, you don't have to come. The community is taxpayers and stakeholders in the library's mission and the wider group of library patrons alike has every right to take an interest in the sum total of what happens at the library. What they are is concerned parents and concerned citizens. They are on firm ground in voicing opposition when they see something that is counter to what they feel is an appropriate way to conduct that mission. He rejects the notion again that their opposition is hate, hate speech, stochastic terrorism, or any of the other inflammatory accusations that have been directed their way. Threats, intimidation, and workplace harassment are unacceptable and that form of hate has no place in the community's discourse. In fact, the opposition's feelings echo the mother of an LGBTQ child who spoke out in opposition at Village Council. It also aligns with the theater professional who acknowledged drag's legitimate performance genre, but also as an objectively adult one. They reflect the former community leader who is part of the LGBTQ community, who Trustee Nienburg intentionally scheduled breakfast with and wanted to listen to sincerely, who winced at the thought that this was the way the library sought to represent his community to young people. In fact, he would have made a better choice to come in and do an event at the library. He is going to shift his focus to the future. As a Board Member, he has significant concerns about the leadership and the judgement applied here. He has many questions about the way this was handled from a process and a protocol standpoint, especially regarding how the Board was engaged by staff and the role of the Board when there is a situation that is decidedly out of normal operations. Website postings, frequently asked questions, press releases, conferences, and responses to emails were all done without sufficient Board engagement and collaboration in his opinion. Lastly, he has questions about how the library's mission, which he supports and takes very seriously, is being pursued. Exclusive programming as a way to drive inclusivity

is something that should be debated. What is not up for debate, however, is that when and if exclusive programming does occur, especially when it's done for inclusivity, it should be in a manner that brings us all together and creates and builds understanding. Against that measure, the library has fallen far short and must do better. Nothing's going to be decided tonight – the Board was here to listen as the first order of business – and following tonight, the real work will begin to have a complete accounting of this situation and most importantly, to make the appropriate changes going forward. His primary goal in that will be the integrity and transparency of those deliberations and he looks forward to working with his fellow trustees and to keeping the patrons and taxpayers fully apprised of the process that will follow this situation and tonight's meeting.

Trustee Dougherty thanked all who came out to the meeting and said it was great having so many people come out and learn about the library and engage with the Board in whatever form it took. She echoed Trustee Khuntia's gratitude towards the Village for the use of the hall, the police for their support during the meeting, and for the Library Director and staff for their continued work. She wanted to start by saying she is speaking only for herself and she is not speaking on behalf of any of her fellow trustees, the library, or all white women of a certain age or any other group of people. She is simply going to share her perspective. She wanted to reflect on discomfort, which might seem like an odd choice of words given the intensity of the situation the library has been experiencing. When the Board first went through DEI training together several months ago, the facilitator said that talking about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion could bring on feelings of discomfort. At the time, she just kind of nodded and thought, sure, some of these topics are going to be uncomfortable. She didn't really get a chance to really experience that discomfort until this month. She first started feeling that discomfort when the Drag Queen Bingo event began getting its own attention; more attention than any of the library's 800 plus annual programs have gotten in her experience. This attention was uncomfortable for her personally, because she really does not like being the center of attention, even if the attention is good attention. It's also understandably uncomfortable when your community is the focus of "controversy" and she worried that anyone who was reading or hearing about what was happening in Downers Grove wasn't getting the full picture and that they would jump to conclusions about the community that she calls home and the library that she loves. The second way she experienced discomfort was as the subject, either directly or indirectly, of name-calling, accusations, and bullying. You can call her sheltered or naïve, but she does not spend a lot of time on social media and she's just not used to it. The Board and staff of the library received a tremendous amount of feedback, both positive and negative, about Drag Queen Bingo. She recognized only a handful of individuals who sent messages, which means that the people who wrote them know very little about her. Which is fine. But the assumptions people were making about her were

astounding. Words were being put in her mouth, people knew exactly what her moral code was, and they knew she had an ideology and an agenda. Apparently she has some kind of mind control ability, which is really giving her entirely too much credit because sometimes she barely remembers what she has for breakfast. So she was uncomfortable and if she's honest, a little bit scared. But then she realized that she's in an incredibly privileged position. She chose to serve as a Library Trustee. It's part of who she is as a citizen of Downers Grove, but it's not something that's obvious when she walks down the street. This experience of being judged by folks who don't know much about her, based solely on one attribute of her identity, being made to feel unworthy or unwelcome or less than, actually awakened and strengthened her empathy for the members of the LGBTQ community, people of color, individuals with disabilities, and other marginalized people who live this experience every day. She is privileged to feel safe in her workplace, her home, her local business, her library, and for the most part, not be judged by some aspect of her identity. But that's not the experience of all Downers Grove residents. There are people, our neighbors, whose very identities and their existence determines the amount of hate and prejudice they experience on a daily basis. She does not think Downers Grove is a hateful place. On the contrary, she thinks it is an exceptional town where people genuinely care about their neighbors. But hate does exist in Downers Grove, and it certainly exists in the world and especially on the internet. She can handle being called a few rude names on social media, but she doesn't have to be okay with it and she definitely doesn't want it to be the norm for herself, her family, patrons of the library, or for any resident of Downers Grove. She's not comparing her few moments of discomfort to the lived experiences of the LGBTQ community, but what she's saying is that made her remember the very reason why the library is doing this work in the first place. That leads her to the third source of discomfort. The discomfort of not knowing whether the library was doing more harm than good for the individuals and community whom the library was trying to support with this particular program. She can imagine that seeing the village so starkly and publicly divided was traumatic for some individuals. As heard tonight and through emails and other messages received, the Board did hear support from those communities but she looks forward to hearing and understanding more about how the library can serve them in the future. For that awareness, that increased empathy, and for those opportunities to understand, she's very grateful for her discomfort. She is also grateful for what she thinks is a potential silver lining, if people choose to see it that way, which is an increased awareness of and visibility for the Downers Grove Public Library. The director and staff are doing great things. The Board operates openly and has been meeting in the library meeting room on the fourth Wednesday of each month for years and years and years and does not usually get this many visitors. If the community had been at some of those past meetings, they would have heard about the hold lockers, the Memory Kits, the Beatles exhibit, the SAT prep

sessions, the genealogy workshops, the cameras and sewing machines that can be checked out, and all the other really creative programs and services that the library is really proud of. Among those offerings, she hopes everyone can see their interests reflected. Not to speak for her fellow Board members, but she would be interested in that constructive feedback of what those offerings are. Finally, she wanted to use her platform as a Board Member to pitch a couple of programming ideas or thoughts for the Board to think about for the future. She thinks it would be really great to run programs that help members of the community understand how to effectively and respectfully lobby for a particular position or to take a particular action. She can't speak for the Mayor, Village Council, school board, or her colleagues, but she can say at least for herself, verbal attacks won't convince her. Misinformation won't convince her. Conversation might. Sitting down and discussing issues takes longer and probably isn't as satisfying as getting likes or follows or retweets, but it might lead to more civil civic discourse. She'd also love to see the library offer more programs about information literacy and social media literacy for teenagers and adults. Books are great but we no longer get all of our information from the printed page. There's a vast amount of information on the internet of varying degrees of quality and accuracy reputability and everyone would benefit from learning how to make sense of all that noise. Now, everyone in the room knows enough to call her at least one name that's accurate, an idealist, and she thinks we can do better.

In her role as President of the Downers Grove Public Library Board of Trustees, President Gigani feels a responsibility to speak out in support of the library staff and their decision to offer a Drag Queen Bingo event for teens as part of the library's vibrant, diverse programming for all ages. To begin, she wanted to stress that the Board does not have oversight over specific library programming decisions, nor should they. As the Board of Trustees, their role is to hire the library director and then to provide her with the support she needs to succeed. Library Director Julie Milavec is doing an exceptional job for the library and the community. She has hired a talented staff that is bringing innovative, patron-focused ideas to this vital public institution. It's worth reminding everyone involved that the root word of trustee is trust. She absolutely trusts Director Milavec to provide thoughtful, age-appropriate programming for all patrons and to assure the safety and security of everyone who enters the library. More personally, she wanted to share some of her own experiences as a young person growing up in a community where she felt that she didn't really belong. For her, the public library was a place of refuge. A place where she felt safe and valued as a member of a larger community, a community of books and ideas. It's hard to describe the profound feeling of sitting in a library, reading a book, and realizing that you are no longer alone. Especially for young people, a public library can open the door to another world of people who look like they do, think like they do,

and feel like they do. Now, as a grown woman with children of her own, President Gigani is so proud to live in a place that understands the fundamental value of a public library and its power to build community and transform lives in deeply positive ways. She's especially proud to serve on the Board of Trustees of a library that works so hard to fulfill its responsibility to every person in the community at every age. Every person who lives in Downers Grove should be able to walk into the library and feel recognized, accepted, valued, and served. The library has no right to deny full membership in the community to anyone because a few people don't like the way they look or the way they dress. The Downers Grove Public Library's Drag Queen Bingo Night, featuring Aurora Devine, was intended to provide a few hours of age-appropriate fun for teens in the community. As part of this event, the library was making the statement to all of the young people that the community accepts and celebrates them for who they are now and who they will be as adults. She's disappointed that people from Downers Grove and other communities have chosen to express hatred and fear towards the young people in the library that serves them. In closing, she wants to stress to the young people in our community and youth in surrounding communities that this event was canceled solely for their protection. The library feared that young participants would be harassed or even harmed by these hate-filled antagonists and the Board couldn't let that happen. The public library is here for them. Within this building, they will find books written by people who see the world the way they do and by others who do not. She encourages them to keep on coming to the library to read, to discover, and to explore new worlds in a place that is free, safe, and welcoming to all.

Trustee Humphreys is going to take the clue from the president who said, please don't repeat what has already been said. He thanked all of the people who attended the meeting for exercising their right to free speech and expressing their opinions. He sometimes misses the civility that he thinks has been lost a bit, but he does respect the right to differ and he will always listen and he has listened tonight. He learned a few things tonight as well. He went back to the fact that he has lived in Downers Grove his whole life so far, which is a lot of years. He was a kid in the Junior Room of the public library. He was not a jock; he was a nerd and he can specifically remember the librarians having programs for him. They also had programs for the jocks and he can remember a program where they brought the two groups together and how to share experiences with each other. He thinks the library through the years has always presented different points of view for different people, because the library should reflect all of the community. As such, the library did engage a consultant to help them improve their DEI appearances in the community. There were both library staff members and members of the community who felt a little less than welcome at their place of work and at their place of research, at their library. The library could do better and he believes the EDI Strategic Plan shows that the library can do better. He fully supports that

plan. The library needs to look like the community. The library needs to reflect the different people in the community and also display the intellectual freedom and the freedom of speech. The library also has to know that when there is a segment of the community that feels not only unwelcome but hurt and needs to see somebody like them and hear from somebody like them, there are a few places where that can happen and the library can and should be one of those places. He heard the phrase, no one should be ashamed for who they are, and the library needs to support that. He supports the Library Director, he supports the library staff, and he supports his colleagues on the Library Board. They will work together, they will listen to each other, and they will keep the library the fine organization that it has been and that it is and that it will be and can be.

12. **Adjournment.** It was moved by Nienburg and seconded by Dougherty THAT the meeting be adjourned. Motion passed by voice vote. President Gigani adjourned the meeting at 10:33 p.m.