

**DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
NOVEMBER 16, 2022, 7:30 P.M.
KIDS PROGRAM ROOM**

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Land Acknowledgment.** President Gigani called the meeting to order at 7:33 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, Trustee Marti Sladek, President Swapna Gigani. Absent: None.

Also present: Library Director Julie Milavec, Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski, Business Office Assistant Scott Anderson, Media Lab Coordinator Ed Bromiel.

3. **Welcome to Visitors.** President Gigani welcomed visitors and thanked them for their interest in the library.
4. **Oath of Office.** Notary Public Scott Anderson administered the oath of office to new trustee Marti Sladek.
5. **Approval of Minutes.**
 - a. October 26, 2022 Regular Meeting. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Humphreys THAT the Minutes of the October 26, 2022 Regular Monthly Meeting be approved as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.
6. **Financial Matters.**
 - a. October 2022 Financial Report. Library Director Julie Milavec presented the report. The library is 83% through the year. There is a difference in the Cash Investment and Fund Balance report this month, due to voided checks that are being reissued. There were a number of checks from the September check run that were never received by vendors, with only one being returned to the library. All missing checks are being voided and reissued. The library has collected 103.5% of estimated revenue for the fiscal year and expended 79.4% of the budget. Milavec reiterated that there are a couple of expenditure lines that are going over budget due to known factors, including the Special Legal line due to FOIA requests and the Intangible Assets (Software) line due

to the licenses for Google Vault that are needed to obtain emails for the incoming FOIA requests.

- b. November 2022 Invoices. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Dougherty THAT the payment of November 2022 Operating Fund invoices totaling \$108,727.00, the acceptance of November 2022 credit memos totaling \$17.42, and the ratification of October 2022 payrolls totaling \$255,740.75 be approved. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

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

8. **Public Comment on Other Library Business.** President Gigani invited comment.

Terry Newsome, from Darien, is part of the Downers Grove community, unlike Director Milavec. His twins are sophomores at Downers Grove South High School, he's a Downers Grove Republican Committeeman and the Illinois President of Parents Involved in Education. He previously owned a business in Downers Grove. He is a reciprocal member of the Downers Grove Library through Darien. He is at the meeting to expose Julie and her woke leftist friends, such as Jill Bartholemule and Kylie Spahn, for the hypocrisy, hate, and extremism when replying to members of the community who have different views from them. Like Mr. Newsome, many other members of the community were falsely accused and aggressively attacked on social media for being responsible for the threats made against the library. Most importantly, he wants to inform the community about the ongoing safety concerns affecting this library. We all agree that violent threats are unacceptable and should be reported to law enforcement. Julie contacted the media and held a phony press conference to share the threats associated with the children's drag bingo. What Julie didn't share is the multiple law enforcement agencies that investigated all these threats and deemed them as not credible and not part of the Downers Grove community. Julie falsely claimed that she canceled the event due to her concerns for the safety and security of the staff. Tonight, he is going to prove that she is not really concerned with the safety and security of her staff and the record will prove that tonight. Julie knowingly defamed the entire community and parents who peacefully disagreed with her views. While Julie was voicing her phony safety concerns to the media, the public and library staff were in imminent danger. Julie knowingly hid the truth from the community and law enforcement. The clear and present danger affecting the library staff was happening on a daily basis. For years, Julie did little to enact policies to protect her staff and members. Due to her lack of respect for law enforcement, she rarely engaged the police. Most importantly, he wanted to state that Downers Grove is not hateful towards the

LGBTQ community. Downers Grove has an outstanding track record of supporting the LGBTQ community. For instance, Downers Grove has a LGBTQ youth center, dedicated Pride month, and many other events and activities celebrating the diversity throughout the year, which never experienced hateful or violent incidents. Prior to the highly controversial children's drag bingo event, he would like to know how many threats the library or Downers Grove community received as it relates to LGBTQ and Pride. After he reads through his stack of documented incidents, he is going to have a few questions for the Board, Mayor, and City Council. He's going to ask if they are aware of the number of incidents happening in the library and if so, what steps are they taking to make this a safe space. Why doesn't the library have a zero tolerance policy for calling law enforcement when the law is broken in the library? Most of the library's incident reports, PITS reports, are from offenders who do not live in Downers Grove. He summarizes what was found in the PITS reports. Destruction of property, verbal harassment of staff, illegal/prohibited activity, physical assault on library staff, weapons threats, profane language, masturbation, violent threatening statements, threatening to kill the staff, under the influence of illegal substances, preparing illegal substances, indecent exposure, and public indecency around minors all happened without the police being called. Tutors are scared to tutor at the library for their own safety. If Julie was really concerned about increasing the safety and security of staff members, she would have implemented a zero tolerance policy for all violations of the law that occur under the building. Either the library is going to be a homeless shelter or it's a library – it can't be both. The library has to accommodate for the safety and security of children and the police have to be called. Some of the offenders have 18 violations. If you call the police, maybe criminally you can do something. To Julie's credit, she can only give them a year's suspension based on Illinois law. If she respected law enforcement and did active shooter drills for staff, it would minimize homeless people that are making this into their own private shelter.

A resident of Downers Grove addressed what Mr. Newsome said. The only way to know if the threats were from Downers Grove is to investigate them. And that's what the library and police did. She has seen the PITS reports that Mr. Newsome referenced. She said they are not as thick a stack as he makes it look and there is a lot of repetitive information. She also refuted his comments about no one from Downers Grove being against LGBTQ people. She recognized someone in the room who stood up at the September Board meeting and said, "Having LGBTQ housed at the front of the library during Pride month – no thank you." She is a lesbian and she does not feel welcome. A zero tolerance policy is being asked for. In September, Trustee Nienburg asked that the sentence be lessened for a woman who slapped a child. A zero tolerance policy would have called the police on her. We are going for balance. This is all scare mongering. If you don't want the library to be a homeless shelter, then that's a different issue. And that's

one that can be addressed as a community, together. That is very different from the threats that the library has received, the threats the staff have received, and people like her being told people don't want to see things for her at the library. The Youth Outlook Center is great, but they have received a lot of abuse and threats. It is not safe for them to put information out publically. The library did safety training during its last staff day a few months ago. She thinks we can all talk about this without the scare tactics and that's what she would like to see happen. She's here to support the library, this Board, and this staff. If we can talk about how to see everyone's viewpoint, we will all be better for it.

Another attendee commented that she's here to support the library as well. In her 28 years in the community, there's never been an incident like this. She just doesn't believe all that's being said.

Robin Tryloff has been a Downers Grove resident for more than 30 years. She first wanted to say that whatever the debate is about people being un-homed and enjoying the library, she thinks it is completely inappropriate to devolve it into personal attacks on Julie Milavec. Tryloff had a long career in nonprofit management and she is known for being a "ball buster" when it comes to assessing nonprofits. She is on the library Foundation. She has seen a chance to see Julie and many other staff members at work and they are outstanding. With limited resources, they do an incredible amount of work for this community. They should be supported and applauded, not personally attacked. She went on to address homelessness. It's a perennial topic and problem at libraries. Staff at libraries interact with almost as many homeless individuals as staff at shelters do. Empathy and understanding, along with specific actionable advice drawn from experience, makes all the difference when working with this group. Staff at this library face these challenges professionally as they do with other concerning issues they face. Of course, they could use more support and this should be a consideration when budgeting. However, the library is a public space and everyone has the right to use it. That is indisputable. She hopes that those who have concerns about the homeless population will turn their energy to the places and organizations that have a role in addressing the needs of these people, such as Pads, many other nonprofits, and the Village Council.

Noel Manley is the co-chair of the Downers Grove chapter of Awake Illinois, a peaceful organization dedicated to the education and safety of all children. The library's Native American land statement still ignores the Potawatomi people, who occupied the area at the time of the founding of Downers Grove. Sadly, the statement continues to paint Native American people with a broad stroke. It needs to stop. In a recent series of FOIAs to the Downers Grove Library, it was learned that this library has become a magnet for criminal and inappropriate behavior. This activity includes lewd behavior, destruction of library property,

verbal harassment, threats to staff, and the taking of a photograph of a child in the bathroom. One individual, under incident 766 and 767, was banned from the library after acting in a disruptive and threatening manner. However, despite the strongly worded letter given to him, he returned to the library not once, but twice. In fact, a review of the public record shows that this person had over 113 encounters with the criminal justice system, including domestic battery, DUI, and aggravated DUI. A second individual, in incident 736, 754, and 789, was banned from the library for acting in an abusive manner and making violent statements. However, despite the strongly worded letter given to him, he returned to the library as well, on two separate occasions. Again, a review of the public record shows that this person has had multiple encounters with the criminal justice system, including criminal trespass. Finally, a third person was identified as engaging in lewd behavior on July 12, 2022 in the library. This person had multiple encounters with the criminal justice system, including battery, disorderly conduct, and cruelty to animals. So what is happening here? He understands that public facilities like the library attract a variety of people. However, this location has children as its primary constituency and yet it appears the library leadership is encouraging this criminal behavior. To be fair, he FOIA'd the Westmont Library and the Indian Prairie Library for their incident reports to see if this was a consistent pattern in public libraries in this area. Interestingly, the Indian Prairie Library reported multiple instances of middle schoolers talking in the library. There were two additional incidents of parents not minding their children. At Westmont, there were several instances of patrons looking at inappropriate material on library computers and warnings were issued. There was one outlier. Library personnel found syringes in the bathroom in what appeared to be intravenous drug use. Police were called immediately, triggering an investigation. Investigation materials were provided in the FOIA and the police have identified the individual. Back at the September Library Board meeting, several Board members asserted that the discredited threats made with respect to the canceled drag queen bingo event must be taken seriously. There are clear and present threats facing patrons and staff on a weekly basis in this library and there appears to be no will to address these things. Quite frankly, solutions to these problems are not difficult. Perhaps the library should hire a security guard or someone trained to handle these types of individuals. Another suggestion would be to interact with the Downers Grove Police Department. Another suggestion would be to work directly with County Social Services to get assistance for these individuals and their untreated mental health issues. The current status quo is not acceptable. It only continues to erode the quality of life in this village. Do your job; this needs to end and it needs to end now.

Ilene Briner is a Downers Grove resident and wants to take her comments in a different direction by looking into 2023. She has looked through the reports of incidents in the library where police were called. Often the police escorted the

patron out of the library. Also, she sees suspensions of library privileges where a letter of trespass notice is given for library infractions. It states, "If you refuse to leave, the police will be called and you may be subject to arrest for trespassing." She does think there needs to be a plan for some type of security response other than calling the police. The SAFE-T Act goes into effect January 1, 2023. There will be no arrests for trespassing. The police will give a trespasser a citation and it will be up to the homeowner or the establishment to deal with the removal of the trespasser. The police will not be allowed to even touch a trespasser. Does that mean the library will need its own security? She thinks so. The Board should be planning for that expense, instead of concern for imagined equity and diversity. They need to focus on security. Police will not be escorting patrons out. This is not going to happen in 2023. The Board really needs to prepare for the inevitable incident when someone needs to be removed from the library. Consider what will be done when at closing, someone refuses to leave. The question isn't if, but when staff will need help removing someone and the police will not be able to help. All this is brought to us by the SAFE-T Act.

Laura Hois commented that for two years, the Library Board has let its equity consultant, RGW Consulting, to push for radical changes to the library's culture and policies in ways that violate the Constitution, civil rights laws, and the Illinois Local Library Act, which says the library is forever for the use of residents and taxpayers. The Board can adopt rules and regulations that render the use of the library to the greatest number of such residents and taxpayers. It does not say that the library can be used to give preference to certain groups of people. In September 2020, the library's EDI consultant, RGW, sought to discover inequitable practices that systemically show up in the library's culture. RGW discovered that Downers Grove is systemically racist. This is not true. It is a big lie. Yet the Library Director and the majority of this Board readily acknowledge that there are systemic inequities here, the library team is predominantly white and that's a problem, and the people of Downers Grove engage in systemic inequities which must be cured by redistributing wealth, access, and privilege to oppressed, historically marginalized people. RGW's message is to take from oppressors and give to the oppressed in the library. It's a big power and money grab. RGW thinks residents should not have the right to expect taxpayer dollars be spent according to what they want out of their local library. No, they should not have this power and privilege. RGW says that a patron from north Downers Grove implies more privilege and respect than a patron from the south side of Downers Grove and that these power dynamics allow certain people to be prioritized above others. That's not true. RGW says taxpayers don't deserve to have library resources aligned to their value system. Instead, white-centered patrons must embrace the interests of neglected HITMPGs. RGW attacks American history, tradition, and rejects equal rights under the law. RGW says the library must be DEI-centered, not a neutral institution. It promotes deep

integration of DEI to spur the redistribution of power, wealth, and access. In its Discovery Report, RGW said that the library should expect pushback from patrons who are not on board with DEI. This is the pushback. Honest, hardworking patrons who do not want the library they pay for taken from them. The residents who have lived in Downers Grove for years know well that the community is not racist. It is friendly, it is charitable. Many patrons who have faithfully raised their children in the way they should go. As the Bible says, "believe that our boys and girls were perfectly and wonderfully made by God." Psalm 139:14. We know God's truth and we wish to live by it. We do not want our children indoctrinated, divided by race, or sexualized. Transgender influencing must stop.

Regina Hartnett is an ex-employee of Downers Grove Public Library. She worked for the library from February 12, 2018 to September 13, 2022. Until this year, she was very happy to work at the library and enjoyed working with the staff on her shifts. Her managers and supervisors were very happy with her and her performance. On March 18, 2022, there was an incident that took place that involved her. A man, who she later learned was known for approaching female staff and telling them dirty jokes, approached her and began to tell her dirty jokes. She reported it immediately to her manager. Later that day, he returned to tell her about his body parts in a very graphic way. He was talked to by staff and left. About a week later, he returned to harass her. He hid behind the bookshelves and attempted to take pictures of her. She went into the back room and talked to her manager, Christine. Christine immediately said that was harassment. Julie was talking to him and returned to the back room to express her take on the matter. In front of her fellow employees, Julie addressed Ms. Hartnett by saying, "It's not harassment and that's what you signed up for." She felt betrayed and humiliated. Staff agreed verbally. With the help of her manager Christine, Ms. Hartnett wrote a letter to Julie to express her disappointment in how she handled the situation as well as her safety at work. She thought that after their meeting that would change, however that was not the case. In the next incident, it was September 2022 when a man, who was banned after repeatedly having numerous conversations with staff members regarding guns, sat across from her and in a graphic manner in detail expressed that if he had a gun right then, he'd kill her. As soon as she got to the back of the room, she told her manager, who expressed that that was not acceptable. No police were called. He continued to come into the library and is still coming in today. She was so scared to come to work on one occasion that she parked her car, saw this patron, and laid down in her car until he was out of sight, for fear that he would see her and wait for her after work. On another occasion, he would yell at her from across the street while she was coming and going from work and follow her to the train tracks where she would fill the Rack and the Tracks. She told her manager Christine about these events and even stopped going to the train tracks out of

fear. At this year's In Service Day, Mr. Bill Budds gave a presentation on active shooter. After the presentation, he said that if staff had any questions they could approach him. She approached him and wanted to know if the police would be involved when the behavior of patrons rises to the level of illegal activity, for example threatening to kill or harm staff or patrons. Would active shooter training be done and why hasn't it been done? Could the police serve ban letters to patrons instead of staff sitting and waiting for the offender to return to serve them? On September 6, she attended a Village Board meeting and she approached a Village member about the library's approach to safety. He listened and said he would look into the matter. On September 13, 2022, she was brought into the room with her manager and given a letter of an employment improvement plan which included coming in once a week to go over her goals for three months. She was humiliated. The nature of the letter was nothing short of workplace retaliation because she expressed her concern to Bill Budds and the Village Council, Ian and Julie felt betrayed and undermined, adding two other instances which were either untrue or not accurate. She spoke to Bill Budds regarding the letter and expressed some of the details were inaccurate. He said he would talk to Christine, which he did. She's not sure what details Christine told Bill Budds about her employment improvement plan, but when she returned to work, a new and revised letter was waiting for her. Not only was it still very upsetting to her, but parts were still not true or inaccurate. She loves the library and never intended to leave, but she was so devastated and not only had she been threatened and harassed, but she was now put on an employment improvement plan for talking or expressing her fears. She knew she could no longer work where workplace retaliation was active. She knows she does not stand alone in her feelings. There are other staff who feel the same way but can't express it and now she knows why. She and her husband considered talking to an attorney, but they wanted to extend time to the Board to look into this matter. It is extremely devastating to her to have to resign out of fear and workplace retaliation.

Jim Devitt is a Downers Grove resident. Recent events have put the Downers Grove Library under a microscope and thanks to a few brave individuals, that microscope has become even more focused. The library uses a system called PITS to internally inform staff and track activities inside the library. A FOIA request to the library's law firm for year-to-date reports resulted in a file so large, they had to create a downloadable version, which was over 700 pages. Offenses included but were not limited to physical assault on a patron, shoving an employee, explicit language, interfering with another person's comfort or safety, drunk and disorderly conduct, indecent exposure, lewd gestures, and sexual harassment, preparing and possessing a controlled substance, assault and battery of a minor, and harassment. There were instances where Julie, Library Director, signed off on a one-year ban, but no police were called. When he goes

to the library, he sees young children there all the time. Do they really need to be put in harm's way in these situations? His wife works in childcare. He would hate to find out that a child under her supervision were exposed to these criminal activities going on in a place that was traditionally known as safe and welcoming. The library states it is a public place and therefore children's safety cannot be guaranteed. But doesn't the library have an obligation to its patrons to make sure the space is as safe as possible? Shouldn't people be allowed to use the facility without worrying that the person next to them has already been kicked out more than a dozen times? All of these activities have gone on under the supervision of Library Director Julie Milavec, who it seems has tried to sweep them under the rug. Why else would the police not be called for these illegal activities? It's time for her to step down or for the Board to remove her from her position for a dereliction of duties and mismanagement. He asks that the Board, leaders of the community, ask for her resignation as soon as possible and appoint someone who can abide by the laws put forth or explain to the community why they feel she should not be removed.

Terry Williams is a member of the community and worked at the Downers Grove Library for almost two decades. It was a fabulous job and a wonderful place to work. It was also a hard job; a difficult job. It's a fun job where you get to do wonderful things like buy books, interact with patrons, introduce people to new ideas and new authors, and you also have to deal with difficult people. You have to deal with people who are nasty to you, with the homeless population, and with a lot of people that have mental illness. This is not something that just happens at this library. It's not just under Julie, who she's never worked for. It's at every library in this country. Part of the problem is that we have populations that need a lot of help and aren't getting that help. Librarians and library staff aren't qualified to give them that help. There's very little that library staff can do besides do their very best. She knows a lot of the librarians in this library and other libraries and they do everything within their power to make sure that people who are in the library are safe and have access to the materials and the knowledge that they need. Staff can't make the library 100% safe. She had a couple scary moments in her years at the library. They had a couple of regular patrons who when they came in, staff knew it was going to be a really long day. Staff tried to approach them with the empathy that the culture of this library promotes. For the most part, it might have been difficult and uncomfortable, but it wasn't the end of the world or a horrible interaction. There is a big population of unhoused people in this community. There is a population of people who need mental help. The library and the Library Board is not the place to address that. That needs to be addressed through the social services and the safety net that the community can provide. With the amount of staff that work at a service desk during the day, it's hard for staff to know who has been kicked out. Her heart breaks for the ex-employee who had to deal with the difficult and scary interactions. She knows

what it's like – she received a threat while working the desk one time as well. Generally, she thinks that people in this library are empathetic and they work to do the best for the community and for people who come into the library and to get them the materials and information that will satisfy their soul. She thinks this library has done a good job of that over the decades. It's not a perfect institution but there is no perfect institution. Generally speaking, it's a wonderful place full of wonderful people who are doing their best.

An attendee spoke up saying she practically lived in this library for 22 years with her children. The staff and staff comradery was wonderful, she always felt safe, and thought the library had excellent services and programs. Now, why all of a sudden do we have these problems? That's the big question in her mind. But she commends the Board on the staff, on the services, and on the library.

It was moved by Sladek and seconded by Humphreys THAT the public comment section of the agenda be extended. Motion passed by voice vote.

Ed Briner is a longtime resident of Downers Grove. He is directing his comments to Julie Milavec, Director of the Downers Grove Library, and any trustees who support her and her agenda. The recent drag queen bingo event was appalling and fortunately canceled. Grooming of our children is inexcusable. But this was only the tip of the iceberg. Since then, he's learned about Julie's RGW Discovery Report. \$86,000 was spent by the library, and the results said that the Downers Grove Library is racist. The Administration and Trustees are racist and too white. The best part is that Downers Grove Discovery Report was almost word for word and identical to the Discover Report of the Glen Ellyn Library. Taxpayer dollars spent on a scam. The RGW scammed the library. If you read the report, they didn't even word check it. In it, there's another company mentioned. The Downers Grove Library was given a report that was also given to the Glen Ellyn Library and several other companies. Julie, did you ask for your money back? He didn't think so. When you thought it couldn't get any worse, the Downers Grove Library gets worse. Julie has turned the Downers Grove Library into a crime-infested homeless shelter. Our tax-paid library is no longer safe for our children. Let him recap what's already been said: lewd behavior, men exposing themselves, drug use, harassment, drinking, fighting, and cursing. This happens right outside the Kids Room, or in the back where they sleep and shoot up in the bathroom. Milavec and her staff have put our children in harm's way. Any of these topics, drag queen bingo, Discovery Report, and now crime in the library, should be sufficient grounds for her dismissal. He's calling on the Village mom's and dad's to call on immediate firing for Milavec's resignation and any like-minded trustees.

Audrey Staron is a resident of Downers Grove and has been coming to the library since she was a little kid. She played in the Mouse House, filled out summer reading logs, and watched the model train circle the ceiling right here in the Junior Room. She did high school group projects in the study rooms and as an adult, she's had the opportunity to work at the library as a Circulation Clerk for several years. She still works as a substitute from time to time. Her experience at the library has been amazing. She's had excellent coworkers, supportive supervisors, and connected with patrons going through many walks of life. She's found that many people have misconceptions about working in a library. It's not always the quiet workplace that people imagine. For example, she's heard about or seen the following items come through the book drop return: several balls of yarn, a snake, a sword, a DVD case filled with toenail clippings, and what appeared to be a cat's fresh hairball. We get many quirky patron requests and truly bizarre phone calls. She once had a girl at the checkout desk open her lunchbox and introduce Audrey to her pet hamster. Of course, not every situation is so whimsical. For months, she watched her supervisors struggle with how to help a patron with dementia remember to both check out and return library items. There were very rude patrons and behavioral incidents. Not long ago, she and her coworkers received a daily barrage of phone calls and messages calling them groomers and pedophiles. Needless to say, it's been hurtful and discouraging to see these comments spread misinformation, ignorance, and animosity around the community by people who sometimes don't understand how the library functions. Just about any library worker you talk to will have at least a few wild stories to tell you. The variety of the people that you meet in the library is to her, one of the most wonderful parts of working with the public. The issues and problems that DGPL deals with are not unique to our library. However, she does believe our library is uniquely fortunate to have administration to guide staff through all of these things with grace, flexibility, ingenuity, and thoughtfulness. During her time working for the library, she saw firsthand how deeply the people working here care about the library and the community. She would like to publicly thank the library staff and administrators for all the work that they do. And she would like to thank the Board for supporting them. She hopes the Board continues to support them, their EDI efforts, and their ongoing pursuit of the library's mission statement. As a resident of Downers Grove, she hopes to see the library continue to thrive for years to come.

Caroline McCabe asked everyone in attendance to take a look around at their neighbors to see what they all have in common. Everyone in the room wants to be a family, wants to be accepted by others, wants to be safe, wants to have secure communities, and wants to raise children in a secure place and a secure home. If no one's noticed lately, there is a very large agenda being thrown down through every single of the community's public institutions, whether it's the public school system, state and federal agencies, or the library. She has done a lot of

work with the homeless and she's walked with them in this community for many years, for at least five years. The library is a place where people come together to learn. They learn about each other, they learn about other cultures, subcultures, occults like Jim Jones, how people can so quickly drink the Kool-Aid on anything coming across the airwaves by Hollywood and other agendas. She has watched friends of hers help to carry out this very ugly agenda of sexualizing children, normalizing crime, whether it's in a school or a library. Every single person in the room, whoever they are – she's not white, she's of Italian and Irish heritage, worked her ass off here in America, worked three jobs and made something out of herself. Daddy didn't pay for it and she didn't screw her way into the man's world. Every single woman, every person, has that opportunity. But allowing crime to happen in a public library where people do come together to learn, to learn respect, respect for anybody of any heritage, of any gender. But for allowing kids and families to be exposed to needles, to pornographic things, it is wrong. And for any public employee to continue to help carry this agenda out should be removed and anybody who puts their staff at risk with a drug abuser – there's been 100 years of research, exposing themselves. A woman just told her a horrible story from last week of a family being exposed in a public institution. These people fund your jobs, fund the library. To have to deal with on a daily basis. We shouldn't even be here. This is a place where people should be protected, whether they're gay, whether they're straight. But this is not a homeless shelter. This is not a drug recovery center. This should be a place where every single person in this room should feel safe to come, look up books, read, check out, and expand their minds. Public employees do not have the right to expose people to dangerous things, to pornographic things. Any employee who has been exposed, please let her know, because she knows tons of wonderful labor attorneys who love to sue the library and any other public who is going to carry this out and expose you. But this is wrong. We should all come together. We should be uniting, but not uniting where you are putting people in danger, where children have to see guys jacking off in the bathroom. That's what's happening. She, of all people, is very empathetic of the homeless. But the bigger picture is why are these people homeless? Why are they on drugs? Why do we have a library person not protecting the people who fund her job?

Kathryn Deiss is a resident of Downers Grove. When she first came to Downers Grove, there was no programming for her in this library. She is lesbian and there was no programming for her or anyone else in the community who was like her. When Julie came, things started to change. This library has improved a million-fold in the time that she has lived in Downers Grove. This library is a model, it has won awards, it struggles with some of the very same issues that every public library in the country and even in the world has to deal with. But in particular, this country. This may not be a homeless shelter, but it's a public building. It's not Julie's job or the staff's job to change mental health in this country. It is not their

job. They have done an extraordinary job broadening programming here for everybody in the community. When she first moved here, it was very narrowly focused on white people and white, straight people. And that's a fact. We can go back and look at the programming from the olden days. Things are changing. She is a longtime leadership development trainer and consultant over the many years in libraries. She has not consulted for this library with the exception of one small occasion many years ago. There are many, many things that leaders in every kind of organization cannot talk about, because it is illegal to talk about them. And they typically have to do with either juveniles or personnel matters. Those two issues cannot be revealed. You will see many FOIAs redacted, meaning blacked out. That means it would be illegal to reveal. All leaders have to deal with this. As they say, it's lonely at the top. Because there are a lot of things you can't talk about. Anyone who has ever led an organization knows this. That there are things at the top that you cannot talk about. Personnel issues, juvenile behavior – you cannot reveal those things. There's been a lot of stuff thrown around tonight and she has a feeling not everybody understands that not everything can be spoken about, not everything is this library's job to fix, and this library is doing an amazing job of meeting the many, many needs of people in this community. She is proud of the library. She has been in the library when her organization was the Organization of the Month and she has seen children and their caregivers come in and their parents come in, joyfully, and exit joyfully. There is not an imminent threat in here. We need to step back and think about how much we are using one brush to paint everything in certain ways, when we don't have all the details. We literally do not have all of the details because we cannot have all the details, because it would be illegal. She thanks the library, the Board, the staff, and Julie for providing the amazing programming and resources that they provide here.

Janet is a longtime resident of Downers Grove and her comments are probably a little mundane, given the temperature that's been in here. She did focus on the strategic plan report and she has concerns about that report and what it recommends. She finds it without much substance at all, at best. One of the things that troubles her a lot is that the report cites that there aren't any diverse backgrounds in the senior ranks. This issue is reflected by requiring a masters in library and information science degree, which creates a barrier for diversity at the senior management levels. She hopes it creates a barrier for competence at the senior management levels. She thinks that the people of Downers Grove deserve a professionally trained library staff. The strategic plan implementation in this regard talks about advocating for opportunities to advance in the library field without requiring a MLIS degree. That's okay, but to eliminate traditional hierarchy of library positions to support the value of non-MLIS voices in library work – she thinks that we need excellence. If she has a bias, it's in favor of competence and excellence. She thinks demeaning professional degrees

diminishes our library and the resources that we have. She supports the library, all of the staff and Board very much, she appreciates the resources that they have but she thinks this report and this direction needs a second look. Without regard to gender identity, race, or anything else, we need good people in our library.

Warner Kiuntke is a relatively new resident of Downers Grove. During COVID, when there were a lot of things going on, he started using the library. He moved from another community where there was another large library. During the time that he and his family used this library, they have been exceedingly impressed with the staff, their friendliness, and the knowledge they possess. Before he retired, he was the director of an outpatient mental health center for 40 years. Many of the issues being talked about are issues that are decreased in funding for mental health services. When he was a director of mental health, they used the libraries for their clients to fill out job applications, to get resources. The libraries were very supportive of that. What we are seeing now is that drop-in programs or shelters in the evening are frequently closed from about 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Where are people who don't have housing to go? Mental health services with a decrease in funding have been severely cut back. He has not heard this evening about any desire to talk with the DuPage County Health Department in terms of addressing things related to mental health and treatment services and services during the day. When he was a director of mental health, they had a drop-in program that functioned during the day that served about 50 people. But another massive drop-in program, which hasn't been addressed, is the police department. Many of the clients they had would get involved with crimes just for the purpose of getting admitted to a jail, so they would have a place to stay, a roof over their head, and a meal to eat. We need to address the larger perspective as opposed to focusing on one aspect of our culture.

Zoey Ray lives in Downers Grove and she absolutely loves this library. She has always been incredibly impressed by the amount of resources, classes, and workshops that are available, including the changing art gallery. She has never seen another library strive to do what this library does. This library goes above and beyond and she is so grateful and so impressed. She is so empathetic with the challenges they are facing and she wants the library to know she is grateful for everything the library does. Her experiences at the library have always been positive, but she knows that's not the case for everybody. She is very grateful for all of the resources provided for everyone. Right now, she is feeling a lot of big feelings and she is feeling everyone else's big feelings. She's sure everyone here is feeling a lot of big feelings and feeling vulnerable. That's totally okay, because we are very passionate and we care about our community. What she's hearing are concerns about safety and inclusion. Those are things that are shared. She trusts that the library has been doing everything they can to navigate

all of the challenges and they are collaborating with the police department and other teams. They have been doing so much work internally and with the community. She wants to say keep going and that the library is doing really great work, which she appreciates. She is white, cis-gendered, and it does not take anything from her when people who are different from her are celebrated and provided resources. It is not a pie. The resources the library has is not a pie, because they put out books and have classes and workshops and speakers about other cultures and other life experiences and other ways of being in the world. That doesn't take anything from her and in fact, she feels safer when people different from her are celebrated and included; when her family, friends, and neighbors have access to those resources. She is so happy when her neighbors can come in and see reflections of themselves in the public library, so they feel included and like they matter and like they can access resources that enrich their lives, because they have a different experience from her. She grows and is so excited to learn about other people's different experiences and to learn together. It's not a pie and she benefits when people not like her are able to access resources they need. There is enough for everyone. She feels safe and happy when everyone in her community has access to those resources they need to enrich their life and grow. Because there is this great group of people who are passionate about things, she wanted to share an extra resource. There is a group called Braver Angels that brings people from opposite sides and they have workshops on how to speak and listen on very difficult issues. It helps people listen and feel heard and acknowledged and they have really effective conversations across the divide.

An attendee spoke about safety. She has gone to the Downers Grove Library and raised her kids in the Downers Grove Library and has been with wonderful librarians when her little one was running through the halls. They were very kind about it. Her oldest son, who is now 27, was a very shy little boy. Even at 10 years old, he wouldn't have the courage to go ask for cheese at his favorite pizza place. She would have to encourage him over and over again to go do it himself. So at the Downers Grove Library, he was very frightened to go to the bathroom by himself without his mom. She would sit in the mouse house while her son would go to the bathroom and told him it was going to be okay. She's happy to say that the 27 year old now flies around the country and works for a Swiss company and all is good, due to kind people. What she's concerned about and the reason she came tonight is because this summer, she was in the library and walking up the stairs, and a woman almost knocked her down the stairs, screaming, "Call the police! There is a man trying to take pictures of my seven-year-old son in the stall." If that had happened to her son, it would have absolutely scarred him and would have set him back years. The panic in this woman's eyes was horrifying and she was running around looking for people to help. The attendee is not exactly sure what happened, but the point she's making

is that this is an incredibly inclusive community. They are wonderful people. She is friends with a lot of the librarians and she thinks a lot of people agree that we should have diverse books, we should have inclusivity –it's a wonderful thing. Her concern is about safety. For years, she took groups of little kids to the library and as a bridge, she would have them stay in one part of the room while she sat down, so they could gain confidence. It's important. She appreciates that there are people in the world who are homeless and she's sure if she heard those stories, they would break her heart. The librarians she knows and all of the good-hearted people at the library and not equipped to deal with it. We need to call the resources – the police or the social services resources – that can deal with it. She's only at the meeting for safety. She thinks the library is a wonderful place, especially for kids, and we should be able to let kids be here and make those steps to get braver so that they can be out in the world and be happy, healthy people. We should be really cognizant of safety and call the police. We used to not have things like that happen and she's a big library patron, so something has changed. We have to be kind but we also have to look out for our most vulnerable, which is our children.

Nancy Sullivan is a Downers Grove resident. She also is a mental health nurse of 40 years. She retired about two years ago. She worked in inpatient and mental health addictions. She moved into this community about seven years ago. She was kind of taken back by the homeless population in our area, but she knows that times are changing, just like that lady said, times are changing. But what people don't understand is that this library is not equipped to handle this population. They're sick. They don't mean to be. They don't mean to be sick. They can't control it. She has seen them actively psychotic here. And psychosis is when they're hearing voices inside their head and they're talking, that's their reality. We're not their reality. And what's going on in that head, you cannot control. When she was in the hospital setting, she could control it. She could get help. She could call a doctor. She could medicate them. You don't have that here. And that's the population that is now in our community and in this library, and in our parks, and on our streets. Again, she has the greatest love of that. She lived with that community for 40 years, but she was also in a setting where she could help them. This isn't the setting. The parks aren't the setting. We've worked hard with the park district to get them out of Fishel Park. They were sleeping. They would eat at the church. They would come here until 9 o'clock and then come into Fishel Park until the morning and then the cycle would start all over again. They've been actively psychotic up on that stage, screaming until two in the morning. She was at the last library meeting, quietly in the back, listening. She just wanted to see what was going on here. She left early. As she was walking out of this building a month ago, there were two gentlemen here, actively psychotic, gesturing to themselves, the whole nine yards. Again, they're sick. They don't mean to be. But this isn't the place for them. We're not helping

them. We need to push them to where the services are. The library should be calling social services. DuPage Social Services every day. Get them out here. Push them to where the help is. This isn't the help. The church handing out food to them, and the library handing out toiletries to them, isn't the help they need. The library is actually encouraging them to stay out on the street. It's called enabling. She would see it all the time. She gave a little scenario: maybe you call the police, maybe they've done something illegal. The police pick them up, they get dropped off. The police don't lock them up. They go to the nearest emergency room. They get admitted to her. She takes care of them. She gets them back on meds. We get them social services. We get them a place to stay. We get them housing. And guess what? They don't want it because they got a library and they can get a place to drink, and they can get a place to do drugs. It's a vicious cycle, and the library is part of the cycle. We're not helping them. We're enabling them to stay on the streets. To stay drunk. To stay addicted. And that's another thing. These are bipolar, psychotic, schizophrenic, maybe major depression, not on medication, and then you add alcohol and drugs... that's a recipe for disaster. Then we throw them in a library where there's children? This is what's out there. And again, she is sympathetic. She took care of them for 40 years. She knows what she speaks. They don't mean it. They can't help it, yet that's the reality. They are sick. They can't help themselves. That's why they expose themselves. That's why they do things. They have no control. We need to push them to get help and this isn't where the help is. The library is not equipped. The library does not have psychiatrists on staff. The library doesn't have a nurse to pass meds when they need them. The library doesn't have social workers to find them housing. This is not where they should be.

Bernadette just wanted to piggy-back on a couple of things that were already said, but she thinks they're worth repeating, especially now that we're coming to the end of this meeting. The gentleman here spoke about the DLW bogus report that was word-for-word, the exact same report that was for Glen Ellyn. That cost taxpayers' \$86,000 dollars. \$86,000! She wants those dollars back. She wants to know what's going to happen. She wants to know if there's going to be an investigation into that. That's our money. You can buy a lot of books for \$86,000. In fact, you could buy a security person for the library, which clearly you need because after the SAFE-T Act passes January 1, like Chick said, the police can't touch them. The police can't even tell them to leave the building. This. What the woman was just saying--this isn't the place. The prime constituency here are children. The library's job is to keep our children safe. Needles. Drugs. Exposure. Not calling the police? Shame on you. She truly means it. Let there be shame upon you. We need to answer for that. This is a security issue. This is supposed to be a place for children. This is a crime. She's ashamed. This is horrible. This is ridiculous. She will follow up. She wants to know what's going to happen with that \$86,000. Word for word. That's a litigation right there. We'll spend \$86,000

litigating. This is ridiculous. It's unacceptable. Unacceptable! That's your dollars! That's ridiculous. This is a place to keep our children safe, not for drag queen shows for little children. You're creating gender confusion. That's ridiculous. This is a place for safety for our children. The one girl that was up here talking about resources...how many resources could \$86,000 buy? A whole lot. Right? And to pretend that the library is all lovey-dovey and it's so good? You just absolutely made this woman here who said she was threatened and this guy was outside waiting for her and he was going to shoot her? You just said that, "oh, she doesn't matter!" You just harmed her again. Shame on you. For goodness' sake. It's terrible. Shame on you.

Marshall Schmidt is white, straight, and he and his family have been in Downers Grove for the past 50 years. He wants to take an entirely different approach to this problem. People invoke the Constitution – two basic principles in the Constitution are Due Process and the First Amendment. The value of both have been on display tonight. All the comments have been made: all the things the library does are because we have the First Amendment. Because people have the freedom to speak their minds, but that comes with it, a danger. A danger of extremism and a danger of taking sides and eliminating the value that the First Amendment provides, which is creating a forum for ideas, where the value of those ideas determine what ideas are implemented. And when we make accusations, we call people names, that does not further the value of the First Amendment. He addressed Due Process for a second, then he has a proposal to address what he sees happening here tonight. It's very, very problematic. When it comes to Due Process, we have rules in this society where disputes about facts, and disputes about the situation are decided in orderly ways, so that the rule of the mob and the division that can be created through the First Amendment, do not prevail. You end up with reasoned decisions. They're not perfect. Mistakes are made in that context. Someone who has an employment complaint has remedies. Are those remedies perfect? Of course not. Mistakes are made. But there are remedies to address that. There are remedies to address when public officials do not discharge their duties. And it is not the forum to make accusations that they are not performing their duties. You need to create a forum where reasoned discussions determine, if in fact, that is the case. And here. This is a perfect example of it. These accusations of misconduct in the library are horrific. There isn't a person in this room who wants to have people exposing themselves in a public library. We can all agree on that. We have to look at common values—where we can come together. But the problem here is these accusations; these accusations are very severe being made about someone, who by all accounts, is trying to do her job. Maybe she's not doing it right. But those accusations arise in response to the Drag Queen Bingo event. You are all here. Many of you are here because you are upset by that. And coming here and speaking your mind is your right. It is good. It's a good thing.

But when you then start to make accusations at someone who isn't doing their duty because you thought she did something you really despise, reduces your credibility. When those accusations are made, how does he weigh that in his mind? Is that being made because we had a library board that wanted to have a drag queen event here? Or, is that accusation being made really because there's a serious problem in this library? And if there is such a serious problem, it didn't just occur overnight. It didn't just occur in the last several months. And again there are remedies for that. People who are concerned about that should go to the Village Council, should go to the police department and say, "Look, we have a serious problem here!" What needs to be done, and this is his proposal, is we need to create a forum where people are comfortable speaking their minds, whatever side of the issues they're on, and they can speak reason. And they can bring evidence. If they have incident reports that show a systematic neglect of safety in the library, that can be laid out and people can come in and make counter arguments. This Board is somewhat hamstrung by the fact that if someone makes accusations about harassment in employment or retaliation, this Board is constrained by law from responding to those. They can't come back and say, "Well, no, this person..." I'm not saying that this is the case here but they cannot come back and say, "No, no. This person was a terrible employee. She didn't do her job. She was released, not in retaliation, but because she didn't do her job." They cannot defend themselves in this forum. This is not the forum to do that. But a lot of these other issues that have been raised today—Village Hall cannot respond. They are bound to confidentiality on those kinds of issues. This is what he suggests: He suggests that this Board, the Village Council, and agencies within the Village Council that have responsibilities for certain aspects of the village, like social services, convene community discussions where you can have an orderly discussion, not on a Wednesday night, where people are angry, and people are tired, and people have to go to work the next day. Where people have an opportunity to look at an agenda, and say to themselves, "This is the issue we're going to address." Bring your best evidence. Bring your best arguments. Make those arguments. What he suggests is to convene that.

It was moved by Gigani and seconded by Dougherty THAT the Board take a five-minute recess. Motion passed by voice vote. The Board took a five-minute recess at 9:08 p.m.

9. New Business.

- a. 2023 Board Meeting Schedule. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Nienburg THAT the 2023 Board Meeting Schedule be approved as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.
- b. 2023 Library Closings and Holidays. Library Director Julie Milavec noted a deviation from the regular closing schedule, to add Sunday, January 1 as an

unpaid closing for New Year's Day and have a paid closing on Monday, January 2 for New Year's Day Observed.

It was moved by Humphreys and seconded by Khuntia THAT the 2023 Library Closings and Holidays be approved as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.

- c. Resolution 2022-1 Recognizing Milestone Anniversaries and Retirements. President Gigani read the resolution aloud into public record. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Humphreys THAT the Resolution 2022-1 Recognizing Milestone Anniversaries and Retirements be approved. Motion passed by voice vote.
- d. Cancelling December 14 Regular Board Meeting. It was moved by Humphreys and seconded by Sladek THAT the December 14, 2022 Regular Monthly Meeting of the Board of Library Trustees be canceled. Motion passed by voice vote.

10. **Unfinished Business.**

- a. Award of Strategic Planning Consulting Proposals. Virtual interviews were conducted by the Board at the October meeting. The two finalists were ReThinking Libraries and Fast Forward Libraries.

It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Nienburg THAT the strategic planning consulting proposal from ReThinking Libraries with the time and materials option for \$22,000 to \$25,900 be approved as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: Sladek.

11. **Library Director's Report.** Library Director Julie Milavec presented her report. Her written portion is included in the Board Packet and in the packet posted on the library's website. She commented that the elevator project is on track and the library hopes to have the elevator reopened by December 5. The temporary desk at the Information Desk in the lobby is being staffed by Ask Us Desk staff. There are temporary computers in the café and staff from the Computer Help Desk are stationed there to assist anyone who needs help. That has been going well. For the workroom renovation project, the Children's Services Department has vacated their workroom in anticipation of that project beginning. The staff are using temporary work stations in the Meeting Room. Three additional FOIAs have been received since the report was published in the Board Packet. Milavec commented that the library works very closely with the Downers Grove Police Department. When anything happens, staff are in contact with the police department. Building Operations Director Ian Knorr has a very close relationship

with two of the lieutenants over there and they are at the library regularly. The library has asked for a Community Resource Officer to be placed in the library, but they have chosen not to do that at this time. However, they have indicated that they've stepped up patrols in the library's area, due to the number of incidents that have happened in the library and in the area of the library. Staff do work very, very closely with the police department. Staff do know that there are a number of individuals who use that library that some may say by looking are homeless who are actually residents of the community. There are also a lot of people from other libraries who come and use DGPL. The word "public" in public library means that it is open to anyone who chooses to walk through the door. And just like going to the grocery store or the mall, we don't know who the person pushing a cart down the aisle next to us is. They don't have to show a card to get in, just like you don't have to show a card to get in to the public library. This is not the Downers Grove taxpaying residents' library; it is the public library. The library's mission statement is that the Downers Grove Public Library is a place for everyone to discover, grow, play, and learn. That is the essence of what the library does; to be a place for everyone. The library will continue with that mission and will continue to work closely with the Downers Grove Police Department to ensure that it is as safe as it can possibly be. As someone eluded to earlier, the library did have active shooter training in August at the staff In Service Day. The library regularly has the police in the building and staff receive training not only on active shooter, but also on de-escalation and customer service. The library has partnered with NAMI DuPage and offered mental health first aid training to staff. The library has wonderful partners. There are social work interns at the library, paid for by the Foundation, to make sure that the library tries its best to connect those in the building who need services with the services that they so desperately need. The library has worked with the DuPage County Health Department and Social Services and asked for social workers to be placed in the library. While that did not happen, the idea of having social work interns in the library grew out of that discussion. The library is doing its best to provide resources for everyone who walks through the door; whatever they need to discover, grow, play, and learn. That is why the library is here, and it will continue in that mission.

It was moved by Nienburg and seconded by Sladek THAT Agenda Item 14, Trustee Comments and Requests for Information, be moved before Executive Session. Motion passed by voice vote.

12. Trustee Comments and Requests for Information.

Trustee Nienburg wanted to address some of the safety and security concerns that were brought up at the meeting. He acknowledged some realities. He acknowledged the limitations that are faced by the library regarding homeless and mentally ill patrons, reiterating Library Director Milavec's comments that this

is a public library. There are limitations on what can be done for strict access and usage of the public library. He also acknowledged that there has been a change; Library Director Milavec has pointed this out to the Board on several occasions. The library is seeing an increase in patron incidents, patron penalties, and there has been a change. He doesn't think it's too much of a stretch to see where the change is coming from. We are coming from a period where the issues of mental illness are well documented, stemming from the pandemic, and the fallout from the pandemic, and the general issues of mental health in our nation. However, he also wanted to acknowledge that it does seem like there is a problem, and despite the best efforts of the library and the staff, these incidents are unacceptable and he understands the concern from the community. He had a couple of requests for follow-up. He thinks it would be helpful for the Board to understand library policy and protocol regarding the involvement of law enforcement and other public health resources. It would be helpful to understand if there have been incidents where the police could have or should have been called but were not, and what the rationale was there. He could see that there could be rationale where the library would try to avoid involving police either out of compassion or because staff felt they had it under control. He thinks it would be helpful to understand that, from the point of examining the library's policies. He commented on Library Director Milavec's comment about requesting a community resource officer and having the request declined. He thinks it would be helpful for the Board to see if there was a formal response to that and what the reason was. Milavec noted that there was not a formal response and the request was made to the police chief and others in a meeting, not in writing. Trustee Nienburg also thinks it would be helpful for the Board to understand from a legal standpoint, what are the options regarding response to incidents, including where there is mental illness suspected. He thinks there are laws that govern law enforcement response to these kind of things, and he thinks it would be helpful to understand from a staff standpoint, what the limitations and constraints are and what the degrees of freedom are around that. There was a point made around the SAFE-T Act, and he thinks it would be helpful to get some clarity from the library's legal resources or the police on what will change regarding the library's options for dealing with patron incidents and mental health incidents stemming from homelessness or other incidents in the library with non-homeless patrons where there is a suspicion of mental illness. He thinks it would be helpful to find out what the options are for increased security around the library and are there options for bringing in other external resources as an element of security or to consult with staff on security measures. He thinks it would be helpful to broaden horizons and understand the full scope of options that the Board may have available. Trustee Nienberg heard a threat of potential litigation against the library in one of the comments during the meeting. He would like to understand what the options are for the Board for following up on that via

an investigation or additional understanding of the details around that matter. He thinks that would be appropriate.

Trustee Nienburg prepared some remarks about the upcoming strategic planning process, which he is excited to get started on. As the Board embarks on an updated strategic plan for the library, the first thing he wants to do is reaffirm his personal support for prominently representing diversity, equal treatment, and inclusivity in the library's goals and objectives. As he's said before, finding common ground across all of the library's stakeholders as the library pursues a DEI strategy in ways that build unity and understanding should be a prominent part of the strategic plan. With that position established, he wanted to shift the focus to a broader and equally, if not more important, goal for the library's strategic plan. He wants the Board to open its aperture and broaden its perspective as they go into the strategic planning phase. He started with some sobering numbers; 36% and 26%, 33% and 31%. These are the percentages of fourth graders and eighth graders who are proficient in math and reading, respectively. They are the most recent results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card. It was released a short time ago by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. 36% of fourth graders and 26% of eighth graders were deemed proficient in math. 33% of fourth graders and 31% of eighth graders were deemed proficient in reading. More lowlights include, nationally, the average mathematics score for fourth graders fell five points from 2019. The score from eighth graders dropped eight points. In reading, the average for both grades fell three points. The percentage of students performing below the NEAP basic level increased across both subjects in both grade levels. In math, 25% of fourth graders were below the NEAP basic level in 2022. That's an increase from 19%, just since 2019. 38% of eighth graders were below NEAP basic level, which is an increase from 31% in 2019. In reading, the percentage of fourth graders that fell below the NEAP basic level increased from 34% in 2019 to 37% in 2022. The percentage of eighth graders below basic NEAP level increased from 27% in 2019 to 30% in 2022. For context, the NEAP basic achievement level represents partial mastery of their prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for performance at a proficient level. The NEAP basic level is the least stringent of the three achievement levels for America's students. In broad terms, only one third of children are proficient in math and reading and a quarter to a third of children are below the most basic level of achievement. This is heartbreaking, unacceptable, and urgent, and it's been referred to as a national embarrassment. This must be the equal focus of the library's strategic plan. In addition to DEI, the letters STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) must be just as prominent in the library's goals and objectives. The library is uniquely positioned to support improvement in reading comprehension skills and he trusts the library will continue to fulfill its mission in that regard. These are not in opposition to DEI

goals; in fact, they are likely to overlap in a significant way. These types of academic performance declines are almost never equitable and they almost always impact the most vulnerable in our society. Focusing on STEM-based programming, including highlighting the achievements of people across all diverse groups in the community and nation as a whole, may actually be one of the best ways to forward the library's goals of equity and inclusivity. He believes this is something the entire community could get behind. He finished with a statement from Ms. Peggy Carr, the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics. Ms. Carr remarked about the profound toll on student learning during the pandemic and punctuated her comments with the following, "It's clear that we all need to come together – policy makers and community leaders at every level – as partners in helping our educators, children, and families succeed." He thinks that's a direct call to the library. The library was part of the toll of the pandemic. For all the right reasons, the library took the right measures, and this had the heartbreaking impact it had on children. Now, the library must be part of answering this call and making it a priority to help children regain lost ground. That will promote equity and inclusivity as much as anything else the library can do and that will ultimately help the entire community succeed. He's excited to start on the strategic plan and he wants to reaffirm his personal commitment to representing diversity, equal treatment, and inclusivity in the goals and objectives, but also encourages the Board to take a wider, broader view and focus on helping the children recoup what they've lost over the last three years. It is truly heartbreaking.

Trustee Khuntia commented that she agrees with Trustee Nienburg. One of the goals of doing an equity strategic plan is to lay out the framework and one of the goals is also to increase programming and to diversify programming and to broaden what is already offered. She agrees on that matter. She wanted to briefly say that she wants to be really careful about not assuming that all of the people who are causing issues in the library are unhoused people, because they are not. As Julie mentioned, some are residents of our community and she thinks it is really important that the Board is aware of that and acknowledges that not everyone who is coming in the library and having issues are unhoused people. She would love for people to also attend Village Council meetings and ask for these support systems. These support systems need to be built into the community and the library can only do so much as a library. The library is taking a lot of measures. During the time she has been a trustee, the library has hired more of a safety team, to avoid more of that burden being placed on staff. Staff members are stepping up and taking charge where they can but again, they are librarians and everyone needs to be kept safe. Trustee Khuntia commended the staff for making a commitment to providing stellar service to everyone who walks in the doors and excelling and engaging and empowering with the changing

community. She thanked everyone who was in attendance at the meeting for telling the Board how much the library means to them. It's important.

Trustee Humphreys thanked Bill for outlining his points. He thinks all can agree that the pandemic has been harmful in some respects to many of our children. The latest statistics show a little turnaround on those, but it's not fast enough and it's not enough. Library staff have worked closely with the school folks in District 58 and District 99 in Downers Grove in the past and he hopes and assumes that that will continue and that it is a part of the next strategic plan too, to specifically name and encourage that kind of activity. The Village attorney has issued a statement on the SAFE-T Act, saying what they feel it will do and he doesn't want to quote it, but it's on the public record and we can see that and talk to them about it. Bottom line, they are not going to stop enforcing trespass when any danger is present. Some other organizations in Downers Grove have asked the police department to provide some resource officers on site for certain kinds of programming and the police department has said they do not have staffing for that purpose. We can ask again, but he thinks that the Village of Downers Grove, including the police, social services department, and other agencies in the Village and County need to get together and work on these issues together. As it's been pointed out, the library does not have either the resources or the training to directly aid and solve the issues of homelessness and mental illness and food insecurity and so forth. We can help demonstrate the need and perhaps participate in some community discussions on that topic, but they need to be community discussions. Trustee Humphreys thanked the library staff.

Trustee Sladek thanked the library staff who scrambled to give her an orientation and materials the afternoon of the meeting. She slid into the chair on short notice and she appreciates the smooth welcome she's received from her fellow trustees and from the members of the community, many of who were present at the meeting and introduced themselves and thanked her for serving. She looks forward to the opportunity to do that. She also had one comment/request for information. She lives in the Village of Downers Grove but she is in Lisle Township, and she was one of the people who helped work on the 708 Mental Health Board on the last ballot. She doesn't know whether Downers Grove Township has looked into doing that or not; that's something that the Library Board may want to bring up to the powers that be, since it seems to be a flashpoint for many of the issues that are brought up. 708 Mental Health Board is a community-based Board to set up mental health services and access to social services. It's a result of the statute that was passed by the General Assembly two or three years ago. It's just starting to roll out now. She believes Highland Park has one and a couple of other places up north. It's a fairly new experiment in community-based access to social and mental health services. At this point, with the way it has been rolling out, it's township-based, which is a whole different

group of people than this Board usually works with through the Village. But there's obviously an overlap of concerns.

Trustee Dougherty is also excited for the strategic plan. There's a lot of opportunity there and there's a lot of opportunity to get different perspectives and really think through a lot of the things that are being discussed by this Board and outside of the room as well. She thanked the Board for approving the action to move forward with that planning process. She wanted to say a couple of things. If there is a silver lining to drag queen bingo, it's that it has brought attention to the library, for better and for worse, and she appreciates all of the attendees who stuck around until almost the end, which is quite a smaller group than what was present at the beginning. She's actually a little bit disappointed by that. As a Board member who sits there and is really trying to listen to all of the different perspectives that are represented by the community that take the time to come to the meeting and join the Board on a Wednesday night to talk about these issues that affect them. To sit and listen and then not have those folks stay to hear what the rest of the meeting is about is disappointing. A lot of the comments that were made tonight, or the requests or FOIAs, are things that have been discussed by this group in the last couple of years, and they are a matter of public record. The trustees have all talked about how great some of these opportunities have been and all the experiences. Jen often puts in her report all the trainings she attends and all the different things we are doing as part of the library program. She would hope that those who attend and those who have left can take advantage of those records and those meeting minutes to understand what the Board has been talking about for quite some time now. It's a little disappointing to have things lobbed at the Board and feel like she wants a rebuttal, but that's not the Board's purpose as a Board and that would also take up so much time, and that's not what the Board is there to do. It's unfortunate that some of the Board meetings have become a place for people to lob things out there with varying degrees of evidence and support and she hopes that we can come to a point in the future where the meetings are productive and listening sessions for everyone that attends, and people come and listen to all the things that the Board is saying because the Board, staff, and Administration are doing a lot of great things and she really appreciates all of their effort and all of the things they've been doing. Trustee Dougherty also asked if there is an opportunity, given Open Meetings Act restrictions, for the Board to convene with other community agencies or groups to talk about the issues that all groups are facing. She's really interested in that, as she doesn't really know enough about what other Boards or other groups in the community are talking about. She thinks it would be really helpful for the other groups to hear what the library is talking about, in a face to face way rather than just reading each other's minutes. Trustee Dougherty also wanted to reiterate what Trustee Khuntia said about not equating homelessness and mental illness with being dangerous. If we equated shouting random profanity in the

library with any of those things, this meeting would have been visited by the police. The empathy that some folks talked about, that she knows is present in the staff, is important to her as a Board member and as a community member. She wants to be sure that's being kept in mind and that the Board is thinking about all of the challenges broadly.

President Gigani has been fortunate and proud to be on the Board since 2017; Trustee Humphreys is the only trustee that has outlasted her by twenty plus years. She commented that the patron incident situation is a new ballgame. It wasn't even something that was discussed in meetings until the beginning of 2021. The Board is all concerned and it's something they've been talking about at every meeting and brainstorming and for everything the Board has thought about and brainstormed, Julie has done twentyfold with her team. It's not something that's been in existence for decades that the director and staff have been sitting on quietly. It is concerning. President Gigani is concerned for the safety of the staff and for the safety of children. She has children and it is absolutely a concerning thing. The library and the staff have always been great at pooling the resources that they have. She pointed out to attendees that at the end of every Board Packet, there is a departmental report and it is the best part of the meeting packet. It speaks volumes to the amount of work that the staff puts into everything. For example, she pointed out that Amanda, a librarian in ATS, was a library representative with an organization named grit2, which is focused on mental health for young adults. That's powerful and that's huge. It takes a lot of initiative for the staff to go above and beyond and out there into the community. She encouraged everyone to be a part of that community that is helping to solve a problem. That problem is not going to be solved by one person, it's not going to be solved by Julie, and it's not going to be solved by the Board. It's going to take pooling public and private resources to find an answer. President Gigani also thanked Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski, who recently applied for a \$125,000 Live and Learn construction grant for carpet replacement. That is a huge number and she is the grant master. If there is money to be had in Downers Grove, she is in the running for it. The Kids Department is always a good time for Halloween activities. There was just a huge Ghostbuster event that drew 1,000 people in a few hours. The IT Department has continued to work with People's Resource Center, another great organization that works to build skills for those that are housing insecure or unemployed, which is really important. Lastly, the Downers Grove Library Foundation recently helped the library with some Kids Room enhancements, and President Gigani thanked them for their contributions.

It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Khuntia THAT the Board move into Executive Session. Motion passed by voice vote.

13. Executive Session.

- a. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), for discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee. It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Khuntia THAT the Board move into Executive Session. Motion passed by voice vote.

The Board moved to Executive Session at 9:56 p.m.

President Gigani reconvened the Public Session at 11:10 p.m.

14. Action for Items Discussed in Executive Session. There was none.

15. Adjournment. President Gigani adjourned the meeting at 11:10 p.m.