

**DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
JUNE 28, 2023, 7:30 P.M.
LIBRARY MEETING ROOM**

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Land Acknowledgment.** President Gigani called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm and led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance. President Gigani then 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.

Library staff present: Library Director Julie Milavec, Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski, Business Office Manager Katelyn Vabalaitis, Media Lab Coordinator Ed Bromiel, Adult & Teen Services Manager Van McGary.

3. **Welcome to Visitors.** President Gigani welcomed visitors and thanked them for their interest in the library.
4. **Approval of Minutes.**
 - a. May 17, 2023 and May 18, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meetings and May 24, 2023 Regular Meeting. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Humphreys THAT the Minutes of the May 17, 2023 and May 18, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meetings and the Minutes of the May 24, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting be approved as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: Nienburg.
5. **Financial Matters.**
 - a. May 2023 Financial Report. Library Director Julie Milavec presented the report. She reported that as of the end of May, the first installment of property tax was received and revenues were as expected. On the expenses side, line 5323 Special Legal will be over budget due to the third-party personnel investigation. Expense line 5470 Other Equipment Repair and Maintenance is at 119.4% due to repair needs. The Building Operations Director offsets any overages by going under budget in line 5430 Building Maintenance Services.

- b. June 2023 Invoices. It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Humphreys THAT the payment of June 2023 Capital Replacement Fund invoices totaling \$25,129.02, the payment of June 2023 Operating Fund invoices totaling \$132,812.53, the acceptance of June 2023 Operating Fund credit memos totaling \$60.50, and the ratification of May 2023 payrolls totaling \$267,266.50 be approved. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

6. **Public Comment on Agenda Items**. President Gigani invited comment.

Laura Hois stated: "I will address three topics regarding the bylaws. Number one, the direction this Library Board is going. Number two, the direction we would like you to go. And number three, the reasons we ask you to engage in true nondiscrimination, inclusion, and local rule. Number one, the direction this library is going. Since 2020 this Library Board has pushed for radical leftist and anti-racist changes to the library's culture and policies in ways that violate the U.S. and Illinois constitutions, civil rights laws, and the Illinois Local Library Act, which is referenced in the current bylaws. The Local Library Act requires the Board to render the use of this library for the greatest benefit to the greatest number of residents and taxpayers. This Board's proposed new bylaws, to be considered tonight, leave any reference to the Illinois Local Library Act. This may be a way to avoid future violations of the Act and may signal that you no longer intend to answer to local residents and taxpayers, notwithstanding the strategic planning that has been active here. Article three of the proposed bylaws under governor governance states that this Board will operate under legal authority of the State of Illinois, including but not limited to the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions and the Illinois Library Act, not the Local Act, the Library Act, and other regulations propagated by the Secretary of State. The buzzwords "operating under legal authority of the state" means submitting to state authoritarian control. The state prioritizes sexualization of children for the national sex education standards, gender influencing that has been pushed by Governor Pritzker, and woke practices supported by the Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, State Librarian. On TV, Giannoulias said parents and only parents have the right and responsibility to restrict their children's and only their children's access to library resources. But what he really means is that only parents can try to restrict their children's access, while schools and public libraries have sexual materials on display everywhere, and they continue to push sex education on our kids. The amazing thing is, Giannoulias ran on a platform of rebuilding trust in our public institutions. Downers Grove Library's newly proposed article three reveals plans to subscribe to and affiliate with the American Library Association, a Marxist-led organization. It says they will look to the American Library Association Bill of Rights for guidance and will adopt such guidance when required by law. This is disturbing. The American Library Association Bill of Rights linked to the proposed bylaws states that books and library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people in the community, and so on. Sounds good. But the language is designed to deceive us. The American

Library Association presents only the left-wing point of view that supports exposing children to leftist ideologies and sexually explicit materials and the Bill of Rights says a person's right to use the library should not be denied because of a person's age. Does this mean that minors have the right to freely access pornography in Downers Grove Library? Let us test the ALA Bill of Rights as it would apply to recent restrictions taken by this library. On February 9, 2023, Allyson Renell, Children's Services Manager, denied a resident's request for children's story time featuring the book **As You Grow** by Kirk Cameron. In her email, Allyson said, "We don't think **As You Grow** is a good candidate for inclusion in our regular storytimes. Because story times are open to the community, including those of various faiths, we make it a point not to share any storytimes that come from a particular faith. Further, our goal is for anyone who walks into our regular storytime to feel comfortable and welcome." Kirk Cameron's faith-based book has been denied at 50 woke libraries across the country. Unfortunately, these libraries feature sexually explicit materials for children, drag queen story hours, and the trans cult is widely known as a religion indoctrination. They all refused to allow children to hear a book about biblical values and wisdom. On June 1, 2023, a local resident asked the Adult and Teen Services Manager here. He said he had never seen a conservative-leaning book in the Hot Reads section of the library. So he asked, could there be some balance? The request was denied. Van McGary said, "Unfortunately, such a display or section would not be possible for us to create. The materials in our collection are curated by library staff using library's collection development policies." So, the Downers Grove Library curating policies allow left-leaning books but don't tolerate conservative views or books. So, here's what we are asking. The direction we'd like the Downers Grove Library's to go is to not approve the proposed bylaws as drafted, but instead publicly disavow the American Library Association and affirm local control for issues pertaining to this community's library, review the library budget and determine whether grant money is, how much is received and appropriated by the library system. Limit the chaos around book banning."

Jenny Levine stated: "The Library Bill of Rights is the American Library Association's basic policy on intellectual freedom and library service. It is based in part on the legal framework for the provision of public library service provided by the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects and promotes library users' intellectual freedom through its guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to receive information. It is comprised of seven articles intended to guide the provision of library services for users of all ages. The framework provided by the Library Bill of Rights addresses the library's obligation to provide users access to all available materials and all points of view. To that end, I have seen plenty of conservative books in this library in the new book section and featured elsewhere. It also addresses the obligation to avoid discrimination in the provision of library services. It is thus rooted in the United States' long commitment to protect individual liberties. The courts have repeatedly said that children and students have first amendment rights. ALA's

commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of inquiry, and freedom of belief without government interference is reflected in its landmark statement, the Freedom to Read, which we should all be grateful turned 70 years old this year. It says among other strong statements in support of individual rights, and we are individuals, the freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights. That includes parents. I am a Dowers Grove resident who is proud that our library has faith in free people. A quick history lesson. The first version of the Library Bill of Rights was created in 1938 by Boris Foley, who was the director of the Des Moines Public Library. He wrote the document to address mounting concerns over the growing intolerance, suppression of free speech, and censorship affecting the rights of minorities and individuals that Spalding observed in Nazi Germany and in the United States itself. He presented it before the Des Moines Library Board and the Board adopted it as a proclamation that they would not give in to pressures to censor items from their collection. One year later, the revised document was adopted by the American Library Association. It did not come from ALA. From its origins as a document to address Nazi book burning, suppression of free expression, and political dissent, it has been used to campaign against McCarthyism and discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and immigration status. It is firmly rooted in the first amendment and the profession's commitment to protecting intellectual freedom and protecting the rights of all library users. I am grateful to this Board, this Director, and this staff for protecting my first amendment rights as well as everyone else in this room. Thank you for your commonsense approach."

Sasha Provtic stated: "I'm a resident of Downers Grove. I'm here to show my support for the Board, and the library, and the ALA Bill of Rights. And just to further what she [Jenny Levine] was saying, the adoption of the Library Bill of Rights was in 1939 and it was introduced with the following statement: "Today, indications in many parts of the world point to growing intolerance, suppression of free speech, and censorship affecting the rights of minorities and individuals." I am stunned that words written in 1939 in the face of fascism and Nazism resonate so strongly today and I fully support what you're doing. Thank you."

7. Public Comment on Other Library Business. President Gigani invited comment.

Jim Wool stated: "My name is Jim Wool. When we requested to paint the library's windows to honor Memorial Day, we were told by Julie Milavec and Jen Ryjewski that there was a standardized procedure to be followed by all groups that requested to paint the windows. We were told that we had to submit an email request seeking permission and explain what we would paint on the windows. This was a reasonable request and we obliged. However, the simple request to paint the library's windows became mired in unnecessary controversy which

uncovered Julie and Jen's dishonesty. Their dishonesty caused me to be suspicious of this supposed standardized procedure. I asked Julie and Jen for the 2022 and 2023 emails by the group who paints the windows in the month of June. After all, Julie and Jen said that all groups had to abide by this formal process. I did not receive the requested emails. It was only after I submitted a FOIA request that I received the emails for 2022, but I did not receive the 2023 emails that I also requested in the FOIA. Upon reading the emails, I understood why Julie and Jen were so reluctant to share the emails with me. The group in June never sent any emails to Julie or Jen requesting permission to paint the windows or explain what they were painting. Instead, the email showed a coordinated effort by Cindy Khatri, who is the library's Marketing and Communications Director, Janene Cerulli, who is the Public Relations Specialist for the town of Downers Grove, David Humphreys, a member of this Board, and Kathryn Deiss, the co-chair of the EQDG as to how they would promote Pride Month. Not one email was addressed to Julie or Jen and not one email requested permission to paint the windows. In other words, this formal process of requesting to paint the windows was only established when we asked to paint the windows to honor Memorial Day. Julie and Jen, both of you lied about the procedure to paint the windows. This whole ugly episode has exposed Julie's behavior and Jen's behavior as unprofessional and disgusting. There is nothing political about Memorial Day, but Julie and Jen, both of you made it political. We just wanted to honor the men and women who died for this country. Julie and Jen, you were worse than deceitful. You lied and as a result, you made our men and women in uniform who died a political issue. The people who gave their lives in defense of our liberties allow us to have these conversations today, allow me and others to freely address this Board. Why do other groups' messages take precedence over our fallen men and women in uniform? In the library's Framework for Releasing Anti-Hate Statements, one stated goal is to model behavior that we would like to see in the community. Is lying a behavior you would like to see in our community? This is shameful behavior from two people who hold positions of public trust in this community. I am baffled, but sadly, not surprised by Julie's behavior and Jen's behavior. Your true character is on display. Julie and Jen, both of you are liars. Do the rest of you stand by their behavior?"

Kathryn Deiss stated: "I'm the co-chair of Equality Downers Grove. My co-chair, Frank Cody, is over here. I just wanted to address, first of all, my father was in the armed services. I know what the armed service is doing, and I have great respect for the armed services and everything that they have done for this country. I want to say as someone who's worked with organizations before, I know that policies change and there are new policies that are introduced. Last year there was not a policy for painting windows, and this year there was. We were advised of such a policy for the windows; we wrote and had our artist who was assigned to the library windows describe what she was gonna paint. That was then given to the library staff to approve or disapprove. They approved that design. The words had to be approved as well as the visual. And so I think that

the policy changed; we were observant of that policy and complied with it. I think last year there wasn't this policy, but policies are introduced for a good reason. And so, I just wanted to sort of straighten out those facts and to thank the library for being a good supporter of all of us, and I appreciated the window that was up in May. And I think the library does a good job of representing all of us. Thank you."

Ilene Briner stated: "My monikers are Catholic woman and I too am proud of who I am. Please again give us an update to the personnel matter that the library is involved in. What's the current stage that it's in? Investigation, arbitration, litigation, or settlement? Thank you in advance for that information. Tonight, I'd like to address the Land Acknowledgment statement that's read right after the Pledge of Allegiance and appears prominently on the website with more that can be read. In listening to the August 2021 Board Meeting where you approved the Land Acknowledgment statement, you agreed that this was a living document that could be altered. I'm here tonight to ask you to amend the statement in two ways. In paragraph six, it reads the "Federal government and Catholic Church officials coerced Native families into sending their children to live and attend classes at boarding schools without visitation." In your cited materials, it says, "The Federal Indian Border School Policy has been a collaboration of the Christian churches and the federal government since its earliest inception." Several Protestant faiths are named but not Catholic. In 1872, the Board of Indian Commissioners allotted 72 Indian agencies to various denominations. The Catholic church received 7% of the students; 7%. That's hardly a majority. On page five of the same document, it reads: "The Catholics, having been initially excluded from the Board, argued fervently that the children should have the freedom to choose their religion." I demand that paragraph six of the Land Acknowledgment be changed to reflect the information in the cited materials and that an apology be given to the Catholic Church. I would also like to add an article to your resources following the extended statement. The article is from the Washington Free Beacon, June 12, 2023, titled "Our Financial Loss Is Nothing to Celebrate: Navajo Protest Biden's Ban of Drilling on their Sacred Land" by Colin Anderson. I'll leave a copy with the secretary. It reads, "Go home, Native protesters tell Interior Secretary Deb Haaland ahead of the Sunday event. Members of the Navajo nation blocked the Biden Administration official from entering a New Mexico National Park on Sunday where the Administration planned to celebrate its ban on oil and gas leasing in the area. At issue was Haaland's June 2nd decision to ban for 20 years oil and gas leasing within 10 miles of Choco Cultural National Historical Park, a move she said would protect a sacred place that holds deep meaning for the indigenous people. Many Navajo nation landowners, however, disagreed as they depend on the revenue they earn from leasing the land to oil and gas companies. Haaland planned to celebrate the ban at her Sunday event, prompting condemnation from Navajo President Buu Nygren. The financial and economic losses that are impacting many Navajo families as a result of the Secretary's recent land withdrawal are nothing to celebrate, Nygren said in a statement. As leaders of the Navajo Nation, we

support the Navajo Allottees who oppose the withdrawal of these public lands. Navajo nation leaders say, Haaland, whose office declined to comment, failed to adequately consult them before issuing the 20-year oil ban on gas and oil drilling. But Haaland did provide access to her daughter's Green Group, Pueblo Action Alliance, which works to end both oil and gas production as well as imperial capitalism. Haaland last year met with the group's executive director who referred to the Biden appointee as anti-Deb. Haaland's daughter, meanwhile, represented the group on a December Washington DC lobbying trip aimed at securing the oil and gas ban around the historical park. Just months later, Haaland's daughter got her wish." As you can see after 200 years, the government is still dictating to the indigenous people. I'll leave a copy with the secretary. Thank you for your considerate attention."

Werner Kiuntke stated: "Hello, my name is Warner Kiuntke, and I'm a resident of Downers Grove, and I am really proud of our library and the welcoming community that it fosters. So, I'd like to make the remarks tonight to the Board as well as to the audience. What I'd like to begin with is that when the Board begins, you always make reference to the indigenous people. I am not from a nation of indigenous people, but indigenous people are one of us. Several weeks ago, we celebrated Juneteenth. I am not Black, but the African American is one of us. As we end Pride month, I acknowledge what Downers Grove and the library have done. I am not gay, but the LGBT community is one of us. In our community, we have synagogues, mosques, Buddhists and Hindu temples. These are not my faith, but the religion is one of us. I am not Hispanic, Asian, Arab, or from indigenous tribes from many of those countries, but each of those persons is one of us. A person who is homeless, indigent, or disabled; I'm not one of those people, but they are also one of us. So, what actually is DEI, which has come under conversation so much during these Board meetings? It is me, my fellow European heritage persons, and my community learning about the backgrounds and experiences of people who do not look like me. And the way to do this is by reading the books at the library, educating our children, and welcoming people who are not like me. Our community also needs to have more events like Pride Month, Juneteenth, and others. And we need to begin talking to one another. Over the weekend, there were two demonstrations in Atlanta outside of two synagogues with Nazi flags and outfits. With the Fourth of July bearing down on us, I would like to leave us with these thoughts. Let us honestly say with liberty and justice for all."

Robin Tryloff stated: "My name is Robin Tryloff. I've lived in Downers Grove for more than 30 years and I've served on the Downers Grove Public Library Foundation Board of Directors since 2017. First, I want to address the accusation that the ALA is Marxist. It is not. It is a body of professionals that represents the profession and leads and maintains its standards. ALA is governed by an elected council which is its policy-making body and an executive board which acts for the council and the administration of established policies and programs. The Board delegates management of the Association's day-to-day operation to the

executive director. It is in our best interest for our library to benefit from the best practices and standards the profession offers and that requires affiliation with the ALA. I'm pleased to see that the library's revised bylaws, which will be voted on tonight, include in Article Three, Governance, that the American and the Illinois Library Associations standards and the ALA Bill of Rights provide guidance to the Board and are adopted when required by law. We benefit enormously from the programs and services state funding offers, funds we would lose if our library disassociated with ALA, which leads me to the question of whether the library needs this funding. My answer: Absolutely. The library is a place where people who can't afford a home computer and internet connection can access them, that serves as an information commons and gateway to global collections, supports informal self-education and civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations, and so much more. In a library, what services or help you get does not depend on how much money you can spend. It's a place where if you need help, all you have to do is ask. In short, libraries, and the Downers Grove Public Library especially, are bastions of this country's founding principles of liberty and democracy."

It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Nienburg THAT the Public Comment portion of the agenda be extended. Motion passed by voice vote.

Janet Wittingham stated: "I'm a Downers Grove resident and I want to congratulate the Board and thank you for the Legacy Wall exhibit. It is informative, educational, very moving in many respects, and beautifully presented. Folks I talked to who have seen it have agreed. It is well worth the view. I hope the caliber of this exhibit will be the standard for displays and activities going forward, and the formality of it, the presentation is so wonderful that it's beyond criticism and it's just fabulous and some of the other activities are maybe a little ill thought or ill-advised in my opinion. But I think that the standards that we have for excellence in this library are displayed in the Legacy Wall and I again thank you for that."

Dorothy Crawford stated: "My name is Dorothy Crawford. I live in Downers Grove and have lived here forever, since I was about 24. Anyways, I just want to make a statement and the statement is this: I have no right to pick anybody else's books. As a teacher, I always said I have no right to choose your books, I have no right to make a judgment on your books. Those are the things that you wish to read. I want you to read. That's what I want you to do, I want you to read. So, all I want to say is that I don't have a right to tell anybody else what to read. I think the library should be full of all different types of ideas and points of view and not one way or the other. Because I think a library is what gives us all the ability to grow and develop and not stick in a place where we are. And I will not tell anybody else what they have the right to read. And I don't think anybody else has the right to tell me, my children, and my grandchildren what it is they will read or what it is they will not be able to read in a public library. If you want to go to a library that only has certain kinds of books, great. Start that kind of library. If you

want to go into a library that has these kinds of books, start that kind of library. If you want to come to a communal library of a community that includes everybody in this entire room, then you come to this library and you find the books that you are interested in, and then you give them to your children, and you don't give your children the ones you don't like. It's real simple. You know, take the books off the shelf, you put the books on the shelf, and you let your children read them or you choose to reduce their reading. That is your prerogative as a parent, as a grandparent, as an aunt and an uncle. But it is not anybody else's prerogative to tell me and mine what we can and we cannot read. I don't make excuses for what I read and nobody in here should ever make an excuse for what you read. Reading is everything. You cannot take it away from anybody and you as a library need to stand up and say so, no matter what anybody says. You gotta have the courage, you've got to do it because you know it's right. Nobody has a right to take it away from us. Anybody out here who wants to take something away should not, they should just not let their kids do it. Look at your kids, see what they're doing. If you don't like what they're reading, tell them so, don't make it my responsibility or their responsibility to watch out for your child because you have a certain set of ideas and it's great to go at them, but it's your responsibility to watch your child, not theirs. That's all I'm saying."

David Deal stated: "I'm David Deal. I'm a Downers Grove resident and I too was completely moved by the Legacy Wall. It was one of the most powerful and educational pieces of information I've seen in any library anywhere. I was especially appreciative of the incredibly rich, accurate information about transgender people, for example, the history of two spirit, transgender people in Native American culture. We live at a time when there are more than 500 anti-transgender laws being proposed across this country. Up from 200 something in 2022. That type of hostility against transgender people is being motivated by misinformation coming from hate groups, coming from people who fear the other, coming from people who fear what they don't understand. Sadly, that's a division in our country going back centuries since our founding. One of the less likable things about our country that I love. But, for every person who fears the other and wants to besmirch the other and attack the other, fortunately, we have people who also love this country, who want to spread accurate information. We want to shed light on the other, make them part of us, which they are. And I am especially appreciative of what you're doing to educate the community with accurate information about the transgender community as you've done in your Legacy Wall. I really thank you for doing that in a very respectful way that teaches everyone in our community and I encourage everyone to check out that Legacy Wall to learn because that's why we come to a library. Thank you."

A resident stated: "I agree with my fellow citizen here. It is parents' responsibility to control what their kids read. Okay, I grew up in this library, I raised my children in this library. And when I grew up in this library, when I came here, my parents didn't have to worry about what I might be exposed to because the library maintained appropriate materials for children. They didn't have pornography and

lewd books available to children. My parents didn't have to worry about that when I was at the library. Parents today have to be concerned about what the kids are going to be exposed to in this library. And you people are painting with a really broad brush because nobody is talking about banning books. We are talking about the appropriate placement of materials. I don't care what perverted, you know, material anybody wants to read here, but I don't want it available to children. Thank you."

Mary Vercellino stated: "My name is Mary Vercellino and I am a long-time resident here, and I'm very concerned that in the media and hate groups that librarians have been disrespected. And now, I will have to say in terms of pornography for children, to me that's just total misinformation. I have looked in the children's department and I have yet to see any of the librarians strolling around looking for young people and putting pornography in their backpacks. So, all I can say is, I think the librarians are a very noble profession and they deserve all the respect that we can give them. Thank you."

Ed Pawlak stated: "I am Ed Pawlak and have been a resident for 38 years now; I'm a taxpayer here. So, I have a strong sense of ownership of this and I care a lot about what's happening here. I wanted to build out some of the past recent comments that were made. In fact, in particular, I was at the Legacy Wall and there was a name on there that had a particular meaning to me and that was Alan Turing. I got a degree in computer engineering and Alan Turing was a giant in the industry. He came up with the concept of a Turing Machine and proved a lot of fundamental theories. He came up with something called Turing's Test, which is relevant for AI, which is a very hot issue today and he did this 70 years ago. So, he's just a giant in history, but for more than that, during World War II, because he was such a brilliant mathematician. If you see the movie **The Imitation Game**, I won't take you through the whole thing, but I think is very relevant here. The Germans were winning the war because they had a code system that we could not break. He was brought in as part of the team of people and he led the effort that cracked the code. He is credited with enabling things like the D-day invasion. He turned the tide of the war. So, he should be a war hero. After the war ended, he was arrested. His crime was that he was gay. They sentenced him to castration and gave him a lot of drugs that just messed with his mind. He couldn't think straight. He was just completely lost. He ended up committing suicide. He died at 41. A giant in history dead at 41. A horrible, immoral thing that they did this to him, a war hero who gave us the world we've got today. And this was his thanks for his service. What's relevant about that here is that was all considered normal. Nobody thought that was something odd. And so, I think things like The Legacy Wall, like the policies that you're doing here to make sure that this is welcoming to everybody, this is so important because there might be a young Alan Turing in Downers Grove someplace and if he feels like he's welcome and he can come here and learn things, who knows what we're going to get from those kind of people in the future. Small-minded bigots that try to bully and destroy people have no place in our community. And so, I want the

Board to continue to resist people that are fighting to promote bigotry and please continue to keep this open for everybody.”

Terry Pavesich stated: “Hi, my name is Terry Pavesich and I’m a longtime Downers resident and I’m going to be very brief. I am going to change this whole subject and talk more about the circulation department. I am here again, the same thing about last month, for the ability of the circulation department is not able to switch hours within the department. And the question I have is, is there an increase in sick calls in that department because they’re using sick time instead of being able to switch? Is that really a good thing to use your sick time for something like having to get your flat tire changed? That doesn’t make sense. With the winter coming, people may have used a lot of their sick time and they’re going to come to work sick. And is that a good thing? I don’t think so. I know most of the people here wouldn’t want to be exposed to that. And this is a poorly thought-out policy for everyone. Also, the circ department is the only department that can’t switch; the other departments in the library can. Is that right? They should not be singled out because they’re a large department. Is it a good thing for their morale? I don’t think so. I’m also curious to see about turnover numbers in that department. Have people left or have they happily moved to another department that they don’t have this situation? In this employment climate, isn’t it important that we hire and keep quality employees? Are these policies working to that end? You have the ability to rectify this situation. You need to do that. Thank you.”

It was moved by Khuntia and seconded by Humphreys THAT the presentation by Van McGary be moved up prior to New Business.

Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

8. **Library Director’s Report.**

- a. Electronic Resources and Adult & Teen Services Department presentation by Adult & Teen Services Manager Van McGary. Van McGary presented her report on electronic resources. She spoke about e-books and audiobooks, the budget, and the demand for the materials. The budget has increased over the years, but not enough for the demands of the services. In response to a question, Van McGary explained the difference between OverDrive and Cloud. She reported that OverDrive has a much larger selection with more demand and longer wait times. The Cloud Library is a different app with fewer users. Students can use the Cloud Library with their student ID. In 2018, there were 37,000 checkouts for Overdrive.

There was a jump in 2019, 2020, and 2021; for 2023, the numbers are on pace for nearly 68,000 checkouts. The budget has grown for OverDrive by

36.4%. For e-audio books, checkouts have also grown since 2018 by almost 181%. The budget only increased by 99%. An additional challenge is that e-books and e-audiobooks are very expensive. The metered access model is often utilized in which the title will expire after a certain amount of time or several checkouts. Due to the expense of e-books and e-audiobooks, the average wait period is approximately 53 days. The oldest current hold is from 2020. She reported that for e-books, there needs to be six Downers Grove holds to purchase a new copy. Looking back at the latest 12 months, she reported that Downers Grove Library is growing faster than all the libraries in the consortium. Van McGary provided examples of the number of holds and hold times for popular books. She reported that if there are three holds per copy, more copies are bought for physical materials, but the standard for digital copies is 10 holds per copy. Van McGary stated they were grateful for the feedback from a strategic planning survey. She reported that they were looking to have a significant increase in the budget from last year. In 2023, there was currently \$36,000 for e-books and she requested that the budget be matched with the growth. The total budget request would be 7.5% higher than last year's. In the coming year, a 3.3% increase will be requested for print material.

In response to a question, Van McGary reported that there were some lawsuits against publishers to try to get them to reduce the pricing. A law currently on the governor's desk would allow the state to negotiate pricing for e-books and e-audiobooks for the libraries. It was discussed that there would be even more short-term licenses and price inflation. Offering individuals a physical copy was suggested, and it was discussed that the Marketing and Communications Department could work on this. It was reported that the numbers presented were just for ATS. There was not as much of a demand for digital materials for children. Van McGary reported that there were just under two dozen libraries in the consortium. It was asked if there was a point at which no more copies were purchased, and it was reported that there was, and that was why there were so many holds on certain titles.

9. **New Business.**

- a. Update to Library Services Policy 5.2.6 Non-Resident Fee Card. This item is based on the Cards for Kids expansion from earlier in the year and allows the library to waive non-resident fees for cards for children under 18 that otherwise qualify for a non-resident fee card. This will add a paragraph to the Library Services Policy. The impact on the cost is not yet known. It would pave the way to the library's goal of having children register for a library card when they register for school.

It was moved by Nienburg and seconded by Khuntia THAT the update to Library Services Policy 5.2.6 Non-Resident Fee Card be approved as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.

- b. Addition of 3.52.1 Substitutes and Interns to Personnel Policy, Vacation section. This was driven by the Paid Leave for All Workers Act, which goes into effect January 1, 2024. This would provide one hour of paid time off for every 40 hours worked. All staff qualify for vacation time, but this would be for substitutes whose hours fluctuate widely and interns who have a set number of hours.

It was moved by Nienburg and seconded by Sladek THAT the addition of 3.52.1 Substitutes and Interns to Personnel Policy, Vacation section be approved as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

- c. Changes to 2023 Library Closings and Holidays. This proposed change would make Sunday, December 24 and Sunday, December 31 unpaid library closings and the observed holiday for Christmas Eve on December 26. This would help immensely with staffing and the floating holidays. This is a similar structure to how holidays were handled in 2022.

It was moved by Nienburg and seconded by Sladek THAT the changes to the 2023 Library Closings and Holidays be approved as presented. Motion passed by voice vote.

It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Nienburg THAT the Board take a five-minute recess. Motion passed by voice vote.

The meeting resumed at 9:15 p.m.

- d. Preliminary Budget. The preliminary budget draft was presented and discussed. This provides an estimate of where the current year would end and estimates expenses and reserves for the following year. The library fund balance at the end of 2022 was \$1.2 million, which was a strong ending. The end balance for 2023 is expected to be approximately \$1 million. It was stated that the estimates would evolve from June to when the final budget is presented in August. The two largest factors for the budget are insurance for the staff and the library. It was discussed that it would be likely recommended that the carpet replacement be moved back by a year or two. The biggest change in revenue projections was the personal property replacement tax, which has drastically increased. There were not many other changes on the revenue side. There would be an approximately 5.1% increase in personnel

expenses, including a re-benchmarked salary schedule with pay grade changes that went from a decrease of 3% to an increase of 13.5%. There was also a lot of turnover, leading to many changes in salaries and benefits. A factor of 10% was included for insurance. There was a slight increase in the IMRF pension. The non-personnel lines increased by 5.8%. It was reported that the largest increase in non-personnel lines was for cleaning. A \$12,000 increase in capital expenditures would expand the current pickup lockers.

The pre-COVID levels of travel for professional development have also resumed. There was an expected 20% increase in liability insurance offset by the insurance not going up to the budgeted level for the previous year. It was clarified that the electronic resources increase of \$48,000 was the combination of Van and Allyson's requests. The overall increase in the budget was 5.3%, which included everything the management team requested. The estimation of the proposal for the preliminary draft was a 5% levy increase with an assumption of approximately a 2% increase in the EAV. It was discussed that the EAV has increased, and the tax rate has fallen in the past years. The estimate for the actual tax rate was 0.2060, which was the highest tax rate since 2020. The cost-of-living salary increase was 4%. The estimated ending balance for the library fund was \$445,000, which is approximately what the operating reserves policy states need to be there. It was requested to see a scenario with a flat-tax rate instead of an increasing one. There is more insurance information expected in mid-July.

10. Unfinished Business.

- a. Bylaws Update. Trustee Sladek confirmed that the library's governance by the Illinois Local Library Act had not been removed from the draft of the bylaws; it now lives on the addendum. It was moved by Dougherty and seconded by Khuntia THAT the Bylaws be approved as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Dougherty, Humphreys, Khuntia, Nienburg, Sladek, Gigani. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

- 11. Library Director's Report.** Library Director Milavec presented her report. The high-level strategic plan draft should come before the Board in July. A management team meeting was tentatively set with ReThinking Libraries on July 12 to review the initial draft of the plan. The state put forward \$5 million in new funding for library databases statewide. The Downers Grove Public Library Foundation is planning a fundraiser for early October. Miriam began as a Building Operations Monitor. Jim Wool had discussed window painting by an outside group in his public comment. Library staff decided to stick with community-wide organized painting events for the time being rather than doing individual groups. It was reported that staff members in the Circulation Department can switch shifts, but there are distinct parameters under which it can be done. Shifts must

be switched prior to the month's schedule being published, and if staff members need to take time off after the schedule is published, the staff is expected to use some of their paid time off. It was discussed that there were excellent sessions at the ALA Annual Conference. There was an update on the personnel matter. The lawyers completed the staff interviews and they are in the process of writing up their final report. The Board should have the final report by the July meeting.

12. Trustee Comments and Requests for Information.

Trustee Sladek asked about the possible error in the Land Acknowledgement that was brought up in public comment and Milavec noted that staff will investigate and suggest any changes.

Trustee Humphreys commented: "The 2023 Rotary GroveFest broke a number of records for success and we want to thank the library for their cooperation in many areas. We get in their way quite a bit, but the community seems to appreciate both sides of that. Just want you to know that GroveFest is a charity event and in 12 years or so, not counting this year, we've returned over \$600,000 to the community in the form of grants to not-for-profit organizations and scholarships and so forth. This was a banner year so we'll be able to continue that trend. Thanks to many groups, including the library, on that."

Library Director Milavec gave a shout out to Immanuel Lutheran for allowing library staff to park in their parking lot on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday because with Forest North completely shut staff ran into a problem. The D lot was full by 8:30, by 8:45 level two of the parking deck was full.

Trustee Khuntia commented: "I actually had a lot more to say about the ALA and Right to Read but I think that we had some incredible speakers today that I don't need to say all of that. So instead, just a couple of notes and some personal comments. First to Van, thank you for that incredible, phenomenal presentation. Obviously, you highlighted exactly why we need to increase your budget and the importance of the digital collections that we have. But I also wanted to comment on your Next Chapter Book Club. I love it when staff kind of gives us a little highlight into things that maybe we don't know about and that's one of those things that I didn't know about. It is a shining example of the things that our library does to reach every single community member. If you don't know what it is, I believe it's a book club for adults with intellectual disabilities. It's incredible that we have so many book clubs for everyone. I just wanted to point out that's one of those tiny little things that you put in there and thank you for including that. Just the vast array of programming, the opportunities for kids of all ages. My kids are currently volunteering to help with the little book clubs. They come home every day with stories of the children they're talking to, the library staff that they work with, how much fun they're having, and the opportunities they're getting to engage within our community and to work in a place that's safe and a place that they love. So another thing I love about our library, President Gigani and I were able to man the table at the Farmer's Market. We were in an incredible position

because people walking in and walking out got to see us. Everyone stopped by to say hello, we love you, we love the book club, and they wanted to tell us their stories about the book that they read or get recommendations. And there were two new residents of Downers Grove who signed up for their cards because they wanted to sign up right away; that was so important to them to become part of the library, to be able to come here. And then a couple of things, I was rereading the findings book and just the number of people who responded to that survey; over 2,000 people. That's a really large number of people and the commitment and the number of people, verified by a third party unbiased opinion, that think EDI is important and reaching out to the community is important and getting everyone involved is important and providing reading books and digital books and programming to everyone. I'm sort of excited. Lastly, I am very excited about the Right to Read Act. I really am. I'm excited about Governor Pritzker signing it into law and everything that's happened this week reminded me of my favorite quote by one of my favorite authors, Toni Morrison, which says, 'Access to knowledge is the superb, the supreme act of truly great civilizations. Of all institutions that purport to do this, free libraries stand virtually alone in accomplishing this mission.'

Trustee Dougherty commented: "I have one question and a probably slightly longer comment. I was excited to see that the new security system that will be replacing PITS will be coming online in the next couple of months. Will we be able to demo that as a Board or see that in action?"

Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski responded that she's hoping to go live with Incident Tracker on August 1. All of the data from PITS has been moved to Incident Tracker and she is working with the library's liason to finalize all of the infractions and suspensions. She would be happy to demo the system for the Board.

Trustee Dougherty continued her comment: "I want to start with thanking Van as Barnali did for her detailed and informative presentation. I really appreciated the storytelling you did using that data and it was very compelling. I also want to say I arrived early today – which helped me avoid the congestion of the parking situation that happened. But it gave me a chance to spend some time checking out the Legacy Wall. As several people mentioned, an impressive amount of great information. I learned a lot from it. So, thank you to EQDG and others for making that happen here. The early arrival also gave me the opportunity to pick up my summer reading club prizes, which I'm excited about. On a more serious note, I did want to point out the library's stance against book bans and censorship is nothing new. Our previous bylaws, which were in place for at least as many years as I've been on the Board and likely even before many of the staff or other trustees, really contained even stronger, more explicit language around censorship. They stated, 'Trustees must be prepared to support the fullest efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.' And that was in the previous bylaws. We've now adopted bylaws because of the

Right to Read Act that kind of incorporates that to begin with. But it's been clear for many years to anyone who took the time to read our bylaws that we were pro free speech. The ALA Bill of Rights, that's not new either, as mentioned by Jenny and Sasha earlier. It was first adopted in 1939 long before the current leaders of that organization were born and maybe even their parents were born. Libraries have long been recognized as places for learning and because they're one of the last free, openly accessible sources of information, they're an invaluable part of our community and essential to the continuation of our democracy and our constitutional rights to free speech. And that includes speech we don't agree with. As the Right to Read legislation came to pass, I did the thought exercise, which I invite you all to do, imagining myself on the side of folks wanting to restrict access to certain books. Would, for example, I want my child to read something that I find morally reprehensible, like a treatise on replacement theory or something that outlined women's natural role as subservient? No, I would not. Would I have a talk with her if she started quoting things from those books? Yes, I would. Do I think those books should be restricted by our public library? No, I don't. As Warner and David pointed out earlier, the library is a place for learning, a place to acknowledge different perspectives even if, and maybe especially if, they're anathema to our personal beliefs. And last I wanted to reflect on something a friend asked me earlier this week when they found out about this. This is a Downers Grove resident who wasn't aware of kind of the last year or so of Library Board meetings and the discussions that have been happening. They asked, well, how can you sit there and take it when people are saying things about you and the Board that are not true? And I said, well, it does bother me, but I don't mind that much because I know it's not true and I'm not going to change their mind, so I let it roll off my back. After I said that, I looked at her and I realized I had said the wrong thing. This is someone who had gone through some experiences in her adult life where she didn't feel like she had a voice. And there I was sitting there with the privilege of having a voice in my community and I wasn't saying anything or saying that it didn't bother me. Unfortunately, there's just not enough time in the day for me to research and refute the things I hear that are untrue or based on misinformation because I really believe strongly in evidence and facts and it takes a lot more time and energy to research and thoughtfully compile factual statements than it does to repeat misinformation from un-vetted sources or to present one's own opinion as fact. So, I was very impressed and deeply appreciated the remarks by Robin and Jenny and others who did their research and presented them in an informative and straightforward way. I still find it strange that I and other Board members continue to be accused of things for which there's no real basis. We've been called Marxists and groomers and worshipers of some type of demon. But up until my conversation with this friend of mine, it never even crossed my mind to counter those falsehoods with facts because it seemed too ludicrous to address and not worth my time to engage. But as a very smart individual from my Great Discussions discussion said earlier this week, if people say it often and loudly enough, it becomes accepted as truth. So given the number of times I've been called a Marxist, I thought I'd better set the record straight: I'm not. Not that there is

anything wrong with that, you know, free speech, being free speech and all. But now you all know and there won't be any question about it in the future. Because here's the thing, we trustees are members of the community, just like you, and we're doing our best to serve and contribute to the continual improvement of our library. We're unpaid volunteers and use our own experiences and those of our neighbors to help shape the future of this really important Downers Grove institution. We're doing our best and we bring our best to these meetings every month in the face of disagreement and celebration, in the wake of conflict and accolades. I hope everyone here takes a minute to reflect on that, on your own responsibility to create and sustain respectful relationships with other folks in this room as fellow Downers Grovers."

Trustee Humphreys stated: "I don't want to prolong anything but I want to note one other quick thing that you just reminded me of, and that is the section of our agenda for public comments. Those are public comments to be directed to the Board of Trustees of the library, not to the staff of the library. Too many times in the recent months, there have been comments made, not about but to, and I could use stronger verbs in that sentence but I won't, but to the Director and the Assistant Director, certainly other individuals, which is uncalled for. If you want to address the Board and say they did this, that's one thing. But to look them in the eye and say you did this is inappropriate."

President Gigani stated: "I have just a few things. They're literally a repeat in order of what you two went on to say, very much less eloquent than Carissa. But thank you to Van again for your amazing and very data-driven presentation. I feel very fortunate to have gotten a hold of **Lessons in Chemistry** and **The Spare**, and the audio book is, in fact, better if a prince is reading it to you. Thank you to EDQG for allowing the library to host the Legacy Wall. I was very fortunate to get here and spend an hour, probably would have spent two hours, reading every single amazing biography. I learned so much. That was a wonderful addition to the library. Thank you to Cindy who trained Barnali and I to work at the Farmer's Market. It was a lovely morning and I look forward to doing it again and meeting amazing individuals from the community. I feel a little frustrated that the trustee comments come at the end of the meeting. I feel like there are people that just want to say their piece and they are not interested in having a respectful dialogue or hear other people's viewpoints. And that's very frustrating for people to come and say what they want to say, wag their finger, accuse people of things, call people names, and then bolt out. It's disappointing. So that being said, I will go ahead and say that I'm very proud of the State of Illinois for passing the Right to Read Act. I'm very fortunate to know the Representative Mike Simmons that initiated it and very excited that Secretary of State Giannoulas and JB Pritzker signed it. Someone earlier had spoken about how when he was young, he didn't have to worry about books being on the shelf that offended him or were, you know, questionable. And to that, I respond and say when I was a youngster in my hometown, when I went to the library, I didn't see any books that pertained to me at all. There were absolutely no Indian American authors on shelves. So, I

couldn't find anything that I related to. I'm currently reading a book that's banned in many states because it is about a woman or a female born, going through her change in identity. I wonder how many of my friends that came out in their late twenties, because they were afraid to come out, how much their lives would have been impacted if they had read that as a high schooler or a middle schooler. So, these experiences matter, these books aren't pornography, they're life experiences that people are allowed to document and they're your choice to pick up or walk past. So, I'm excited for the ALA to continue fighting its fight and thank you to everyone that spoke at the meeting tonight."

13. Adjournment. President Gigani adjourned the meeting at 10:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Minutes Services and Katelyn Vabalaitis