

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

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING
HELD AT BETTY CHEEVER COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DOWNERS GROVE CIVIC CENTER
JANUARY 28, 2026, 7:00 P.M.**

TRUSTEES:

Matt Topic	President
Barnali Khuntia	Secretary
Swapna Gigani	Trustee
Dave Humphreys	Trustee
Nathan Williams	Trustee

GUESTS:

Julie Milavec	Library Director
Jen Ryjewski	Assistant Library Director
Katelyn Vabalaitis	Human Resources & Finance Manager
Kate Ouwenga	Technology Services Manager
Grant Hoover	Symphony Systems, Inc.

Minutes prepared by Human Resources & Finance Manager Katelyn Vabalaitis.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Matt Topic led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

All members of the Board were present.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion made by Dave Humphreys, seconded by Barnali Khuntia, it was resolved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll call: Ayes: Gigani, Humphreys, Khuntia, Williams, Topic. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Included the Consent Agenda:

- December 10, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes
- January 12, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
- January 12, 2026 Executive Session Minutes
- January 16, 2026 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
- January 16, 2026 Executive Session Minutes
- November 2025 Financial Reports
- December 2025 Invoices

- December 2025 Financial Report
- January 2026 Invoices

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

6. TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Swapna Gigani reported on the library director search, noting that the Board is right in the middle of the process. The final day of interviews is January 31. This month's packet included a summary from the search firm. There was an amazing turnout in applications, with over 50 applicants from 13 different states. Six semi-finalists were selected by the search firm and the Board interviewed each of them. They were all excellent and qualified for the job. The Board narrowed it down to two candidates and is confident either one will move the library forward in the right direction. She is excited to meet with them on Saturday. Each candidate will give a presentation to trustees and staff, participate in an interview with the library's management team, and then complete an interview with the trustees. The Board will then deliberate.

President Topic thanked Trustee Gigani for all of her work during this process.

Swapna Gigani commented on the 2025 Strategic Work Plan Year-End Review that was included in the packet. It is a summary of what the library accomplished last year and how those accomplishments relate back to the Strategic Plan. It is amazing to see on paper.

Barnali Khuntia thanked Trustee Gigani for leading the director search process. She announced that the previous action that was passed to take away grants from libraries was reversed. Barnali also commented that she had the opportunity to attend a meeting where she saw firsthand how library staff are making the website accessible. She saw how detailed the process is and how hard it is to change everything over. She gave a kudos to staff for taking this on early and knowing what was coming up. It is so much work.

Nathan Williams echoed the other trustees' comments. He thanked Trustee Gigani for leading the director search. He thanked library staff for all of the things they do. Last meeting, he requested an update on immigration protections under new IL law. This law does not affect Illinois libraries. He thinks the Board should consider, once the Village takes action relating to immigration enforcement, if any policies or procedures need to be changed to align with the Village. The Board should consider it and think about it at that time. Nathan noted he is very excited about the final candidates for the library director position. He appreciates that both are community-oriented in their lens and approach to managing people and operating the library. This will manifest in a variety of ways, such as outreach, integrating into the community, and diversity of viewpoints. He is excited about the fact that they are strong advocates for community-building. Nathan commented that tomorrow is National Puzzle Day and the library is hosting a puzzle race event. He encouraged everyone to look at Discoveries.

Matt Topic noted that the library was nominated for Best of 630 chamber awards in a number of categories. He thanked staff for doing the work necessary to be good at those things and making sure we are getting recognition for that work. It makes Downers Grove an attractive town to live in.

Dave Humphreys echoed the thanks for Trustee Gigani for her leadership in the search process. Between her work, the work of the consultants, and the work of the Board, it has paid off. He feels very confident in the two final candidates.

7. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Julie Milavec commented on the December 2025 Capital Replacement Fund report, noting that the expenses look well over budget at 211% spent. She reminded the Board that there were two projects in the 2024 budget but were paid in 2025, at the beginning of the year. At the end of 2025, the down payment for the AMH replacement, which is budgeted for 2026, was paid. The 2024 report looks well underspent and the 2025 report looks well overspent – it all comes out overall. Julie noted that she answered the two questions from last month's meeting in her written report that is included in the packet. She highlighted the new Illinois Public Library Per Capita Grant application, which is included in the packet. She applauded the state library for making something easier, noting that the new version of the application is primarily check boxes. Julie commented that everyone is excited for the final candidate interviews. Staff are very grateful to be able to attend the presentations so they have an idea of how these two candidates are.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1 2025 Strategic Work Plan Year-End Review

Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski noted that the current strategic plan is on the library's website and linked in the packet. There is also a link to the 2025 Work Plan in the packet. Jen ran through a review of what the library staff accomplished in 2025 under each strategic focus as progress towards the High-Level Strategic Plan.

8.2 2026 Work Plan Update

On a motion made by Swapna Gigani, seconded by Barnali Khuntia, it was resolved to approve the 2026 Work Plan updates as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

The Board approved the 2026 Work Plan in July 2025. After evaluating the 2025 Year-End Review, the Management Team made some timeline and action item changes to the 2026 Work Plan. Jen Ryjewski reviewed the updates for the Board, which included removing the recataloging of sheet music from the plan, as it was completed in 2025; adding the implementation of Diligent Community Board software to improve digital and physical access to Board materials; creating an ADA-compliant job application to improve accessibility and reduce unconscious bias; and creating a training and onboarding pathway and timeline for new trustees.

8.3 Trustee Handbook

Jen Ryjewski presented the Trustee Handbook she created as part of the onboarding process for new trustees. The handbook consolidates information for trustees from the American Library Association, Illinois Library Association, Downers Grove Public Library policies, and other relevant sources. It is designed to be a one-stop ready reference for trustees as they onboard and serve their terms. The Board received a copy of the handbook to review prior to the meeting and no further edits or changes were suggested.

8.4 Personnel 3.18, 3.30, 3.61, 3.62, 3.63, and 3.64 and Library Services 5.11 Policy Updates

On a motion made by Barnali Khuntia, seconded by Swapna Gigani, it was resolved to approve the Personnel 3.18, 3.30, 3.61, 3.62, 3.63, and 3.64 and Library Services 5.11 Policy Updates as presented. Motion carried by voice vote.

Julie Milavec presented proposed updates to the Personnel Policy to bring the library into compliance with new and updated state and federal laws. The proposed update to the Library

Services Policy is to increase the amount the library will cover for interlibrary loan fees, as the fees have been going up over the years and the policy has never been updated to keep in line with the rising costs.

8.5 Computer Replacement Purchase and Installation

On a motion made by Swapna Gigani, seconded by Barnali Khuntia, it was resolved to approve the Computer Replacement Purchase quotes in an amount not to exceed \$124,709.71 from the Library Capital Replacement Fund and the installation quote by Symphony Systems for \$56,643.75 from the Library Operating Fund. Roll call: Ayes: Gigani, Humphreys, Khuntia, Williams, Topic. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Technology Services staff are working with Symphony Systems, the library's Managed Service Provider, to update the library's hardware and software infrastructure. It was discovered last year that the majority of computers and laptops in the library fall well outside the recommended five year replacement cycle, with many dating back to 2009 and 2017.

Symphony Systems will have to replace 60% of the library's computers at once. Staff are working with them to value engineer as much as possible. The 2027 budget will start the 20% replacement cycle.

Grant Hoover, from Symphony Systems, was in attendance to answer the Board's questions on the timeline for the replacement, service disruptions, and further explanation into the skyrocketing prices of computers and the current RAM shortages.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Building Planning Study Next Steps

President Topic had asked staff to include this item on the agenda to refresh the Board on what has been done and what would be happening next, should the Board decide to move forward on a building project. Julie Milavec explained that the library's architecture firm already drew up proposals for building improvements, which the Board reviewed in late 2024 and early 2025. Shales McNutt Construction assisted the architects with cost estimates, which were presented to the Board at that time. The top priorities in the project were improvement to the ADA-accessible building entrance, a dedicated and enclosed teen space, a makerspace, a nursing/calming room, and some office updates.

When the cost estimates were received, the Village of Downers Grove was going through their Guiding DG process and stated they were not entertaining the selling of bonds at that time. The library cannot sell bonds on its own, without the Village. The Board decided to pause the planning process due to financial restrictions, the upcoming director search, and the desire to be in alignment with the Village.

If the Board decides to take up this planning again, the next step would either be to hire a financial planning consultant to discover funding options and their financial impact on taxpayers or to talk with the Village of Downers Grove first, to see what they would be willing to entertain.

President Topic said he would have a preliminary discussion with Commissioner Rob Rowe, who has been newly designated as the Council's liaison to the library. President Topic asked staff to put this topic back on the agenda for the May or June meeting, after the new director starts and the new trustees potentially join the Board.

Trustee Williams asked for a chart from staff that for each plan option that lists the changes, costs, what problems the changes are solving, and what is not being solved. He would appreciate recommendations from staff as well.

It was noted that the cost estimates will need to be updated due to rising construction and materials costs.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

11. ADJOURNMENT

President Topic adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

DISCLAIMER

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