



PALOS HEIGHTS  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Palos Heights Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting  
June 15, 2023

## Library News

Our **Summer Reading Kickoff Party** was a huge success! The official attendance count was 438. Patrons enjoyed the petting zoo, face painting, Dough's Guys donuts, yard games, water games, bubbles, a photo booth, sidewalk chalk, and more. We had 142 youth patrons sign up for our Summer Reading Program along with 40 adults. Our staff did an amazing job organizing and executing this event, especially Susana, who chaired the committee. Other committee members who deserve individual recognition were Lorena and Dora from Circulation, Emily from Public Services, and Carla, Mary Kate, and Audrey from Youth and Teen Services.

We have two more big events coming up in the next month. We will be at the Concert in the Park on June 22<sup>nd</sup> for an evening of "authentic 60s garage rock" with The Way Outs. Those concerts are always a lot of fun! We are also planning to march in the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. The parade starts at noon, and we are meeting at the library at 11am to decorate our "float." I hope you're able to join us for both of these events!

Statistically, we continue to see huge increases from last year in terms of item circulation, total visitors, computer use, and just about every other category. It's great to see things moving in such a positive direction!

## Building & Grounds News

**Handrails:** We were finally able to get three quotes to install new handrails by the front entrance. They ranged from just under \$1,000 to \$2,200. I'm still considering the options, but I'm leaning toward engaging Railings and More at a cost of \$960. Though they appear to be a small operation, they have good references and have been doing this work in the Chicago area for a long time. The other quote being considered is from Skyline Metal Fabrication, which is a larger company with a lot of references and reviews and a strong BBB profile. Their proposal is \$2,200 for similar scope of work, which is substantially higher. They are a more polished operation, but I'm not sure that the extra money is going to get us anything extra in terms of quality.

**Fence:** We have also started getting quotes to repair the crumbling fence behind the building that encloses the air conditioning unit. This is a 20+ year old fence that is now falling down. With the exception of our neighbor to the east, this fence is hidden from public view behind the building. It is there to protect the unit from the elements and from tampering. It's 69 linear feet and 8 feet tall, so it isn't a huge project. If the low bid comes in above \$5,000, I will bring that for your approval at the August meeting.

## Budget News

The budget continues to remain steady. We received one small tax disbursement this month, bringing us to 95.0% of expected first-half receipts. That is a bit lower than I would like, and I expect that we will continue to see most of that trickle in over the coming months. In the meantime, draft levy edit reports for tax year 2022 have been issued, which is as it should be. This gives me hope that the second-half bills will be issued on time this summer, and we will continue to receive funds as expected in a normal year. I have heard nothing to indicate that there will be any delay in this process.

See my accompanying document about proposed amendments to the budget. If accepted, I am projecting that we will finish the year with a little over \$600,000 in the bank, which is more than enough to get us through the first few months of the coming year and allow us to take on the parking lot project next year. Because of the size of this project, it will still be another two years before we start accumulating meaningful reserves for future major projects. So while we don't have a lot of wiggle room right now, everything is going according to plan.

After our May meeting, I sent copies of our approved FY2022 Annual Financial Report to the City's Treasurer and Finance Director for inclusion in their annual audit. I offered to meet with them to discuss any questions that they might have, but they haven't taken me up on that offer as of yet.

## Upcoming Events

- Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup> – Personnel Committee, 6pm
- Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup> – Regular Board Meeting, 7pm
- Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> – Concert in the Park at Memorial Park, 7pm
- Tuesday, July 4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day Parade, 12pm
- Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup> – Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 6pm
- Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup> – Nominating Committee Meeting, 6:50pm
- Thursday, August 17<sup>th</sup> – Regular Board Meeting, 7pm

## Agenda Items

### Item 1: Annual Budget Revisions

Per our conversation last month, I am bringing a tranche of budget revisions for your consideration. I have detailed those proposed revisions in a separate document. I am proposing this as a very realistic representation of our budgetary requirements at this point in the year. We will almost certainly want and need to amend the budget further later in the year. I have already spoken with the City's Finance Director about meeting over the summer to strategize about the timing and structure of our final budget amendments later in the year.

**Recommendation:** I recommend that you approve the proposed revisions to the FY23 annual budget.

## **Item 2: Approval of 2021-2022 Non-resident Card Fee Resolution**

(For those of you familiar with how the non-resident fee works, please feel free to skip to the end of this discussion for this year's calculation.)

The Library is required by law to offer Non-Resident borrowing privileges to people who live outside of the Library's service area on an annual basis. The law stipulates that a Non-Resident must use the Library closest to their residence, so our Non-Resident borrowers all come from the area of unincorporated Palos Heights (approximately) between Ridgeland Avenue to the west, Central Avenue to the east, College Drive to the north, and 135<sup>th</sup> Street to the South. This service is to be paid for by that non-resident as calculated by one of three methods, although only two of these methods are available to us. Most of what is in this resolution is non-negotiable. The main issue here is which of these calculations the Library wishes to employ in determining the Non-Resident rate for the next year.

**Option 1:** Historically, the Library has opted to use the "general mathematical formula." This formula takes our property tax revenues from the previous fiscal year, divides that by the total local population (which gives us an average tax dollar per resident value), and multiplies by the average household size (which gives us an average tax dollar per household value). The result is the average amount that was paid per household by residents for the use of the Library in the previous fiscal year.

Advantages of this method:

- it is very simple and straightforward for both staff and patrons
- previous Non-Resident card purchasers are already familiar with this method

Disadvantages of this method:

- It isn't necessarily the fairest method on an individual basis because to use an average value means that the Non-Resident isn't paying the same amount that they would pay if they were a Palos Heights resident. If they live on a less expensive property than the average for Palos Heights, the average household amount is more than they would pay if they lived on that property within the City. If they live on a more expensive property, they would pay less for Library services than if they lived on that same property within the City.

**Option 2:** This option involves calculating a Non-Resident rate for each individual Non-Resident borrower using either the valuation of the property assessment (for homeowners) or a minimum of 15 percent (or a higher value that the Board is free to set) of the monthly rent (for renters).

Advantage of this method:

- It is fairer to each individual Non-Resident as the fee they pay is exactly what they would pay were their property located within the City. Renters and those living on lower-than-average-value properties won't pay a disproportionately high rate and vice versa for those living on higher-value properties.

Disadvantages of this method:

- It is more cumbersome and invasive for both staff and patrons. Staff have to make the calculation for each Non-Resident applying for a card. Patrons have to gather and present more documentation than they would otherwise, i.e. a property tax bill, and they might find sharing that information to be invasive. This might be a turnoff for current and past Non-Resident users as they are accustomed to a much simpler process that does not involve the disclosure of personal financial information.
- It is more difficult for the Board as you all will have to decide what rate is fair for renters to pay, i.e. determining what percentage of a person's monthly rent represents a value that is low enough to not be overly burdensome to someone who isn't in a financially strong enough position to own their own home but is high enough to be fair to residents of Palos Heights who are paying an average of \$302.19 per household for the use of Library services.

I recommend using **Option 1** because it is the simpler solution due to the following considerations:

- This is the method that we have always used, and it is easier to continue a longstanding previous practice than to change it if there is no compelling reason for making a change.
- Monetarily, the difference to the Library should be close to nothing because the average amount paid using the second option should average out to be the same as the first.
- The second method requires a bit more time and effort on the part of Library staff and collecting and bringing in more paperwork on the part of non-resident patrons. It would also require training staff to accurately make this calculation and having someone check after-the-fact that it was done correctly.

Assuming we are using the General Mathematical Formula, here is the calculation based on the most recent official census data:

Property tax income received in 2022:	\$1,430,129.53
Local population (2020 census):	12,068
Average household size (2020 census):	2.55
<b>Nonresident Card Fee:</b>	<b>\$302.19</b>

**Recommendation:** I recommend that you approve "2023 ANNUAL RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PUBLIC LIBRARY NON-RESIDENT CARDS."

Respectfully submitted,  
Jesse Blazek  
Library Director