



PALOS HEIGHTS
PUBLIC LIBRARY

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Palos Heights Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
November 21, 2024

Library News

This November and December were fairly standard for us in that they were simultaneously the busiest and slowest times of year for us all at the same time. We ramped up for the holiday season in November with programming that culminated in our week of Merry & Bright in the Heights programming in early December. You can read about this programming in our Public Services and Youth & Teen Services Department Reports. That week was capped off by the untethered joy of the Kringle Market followed a week later by our holiday party. At the same time, we ramped down our ordering in November to prepare for the end of the fiscal year. Staff took a lot of time off in late November and throughout December. And we had around half of our annual holiday closures in the span of the final six weeks of the year. Add into this that we hired a new department head and began looking for a new librarian, and it's been a good, hectic, and somehow still relaxed few months.

New Head of Circulation

I know you are already aware, but this is our first Board Meeting since Beth Stevens has taken over as our new Head of Circulation. Beth has been a cornerstone of our Public Services Department for a number of years, building great relationships with our patrons in everything from running book clubs to genealogy and local history to baking. Prior to this position, she was a librarian at the Palos Park library, where her duties also included Circulation tasks. And Prior to her work at Palos Park, Beth spent a number of years managing retail book stores. So she has management experience. She has circulation experience. She already knows and has a great rapport with our patrons. She already knows and has a great rapport with our staff. She is thoughtful, reliable, and hard-working. All of these things taken together made her the clear choice for this position, despite an exceptionally strong and well-qualified field of applicants. I'm thrilled to have Beth join our Management Team, where she is already making an impact!

Matt has been busy interviewing candidates to fill the full-time librarian vacancy left by Beth in the Public Services Department, so you can expect an announcement about that hire next month.

Hawley Memorial

The Hawley Memorial is now complete. You can see it in the Reading Room on the south wall. Many thanks for Trustee Rhodes for that artistic work and putting it all together. Also, thanks to Celeste Kappel and the Palos Heights Woman's Club for initiating this project and agreeing to fund it. I think it looks very nice!

Building & Grounds News

Building & Grounds issues don't take a break for any holidays. While we didn't have any huge issues, we did call in Dependable Building Maintenance to do some repairs on our first-floor restroom partitions, which was sorely needed. We also had GT Mechanical do some work to repair the seals on the pumps that connect our boilers to the heating system. With the new year (and a new budget to work with), we are working with Dependable to do some wall repair and paint touch-up work throughout the building. And we have ordered some new server hardware to keep our network infrastructure in good shape. Other projects on the horizon this year include replacing the building's phone system and keeping a good eye on our building envelope issue.

Budget News

The budget continues to be healthy. There are no surprises on the expenditure reports, and November's high spending total is a result of paying the parking lot bills. We end the year with healthy bank balances, which will allow us to make a transfer to the Special Reserves Fund for the first time since 2022.

The annual audit process will begin shortly with fieldwork scheduled for early February. Terry and I are looking forward to working with Riley and the Lauterbach team again.

Upcoming Events

- Thursday, January 16th – Long Range Planning Committee Meeting, 6:00pm
- Thursday, January 16th – Regular Board Meeting, 7:00pm
- Friday, January 31st-Monday, February 3rd – Friends of the Library Book Sale
- Thursday, February 20th – Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 6:00pm
- Thursday, February 20th – Regular Board Meeting, 7:00pm

Agenda Items

Item 1: Discussion of Public Services Department with Matthew Matkowski

As Tina did for us last month, Matt will be with us this month to talk about his background and approach to running our Public Services Department. It will be riveting!

Recommendation: No action is needed on this item.

Item 2: Resolution Authorizing New Contract with LIMRiCC

LIMRiCC, or the Library Insurance Management and Risk Control Combination, is the pool that we belong to for our staff health, vision, dental and other personnel benefits. Back in 2023, membership voted to update the terms of the intergovernmental agreement that governs its existence. The changes were minor. They included things like how many members had to attend the annual meeting and terms that would allow new member libraries to join. It was all pretty straightforward and common-sense, in my opinion. But what they forgot to do was actually have all of the member libraries sign the new agreement. Their process for “signing” includes each library’s board of trustees passing a resolution or ordinance, as applicable. I have included the entirety of the contract in this month’s packet, but the resolution itself is found on the last two pages. It’s a pretty straightforward resolution that will allow us to continue participating in the LIMRiCC pool and will allow us to continue to provide benefits to our staff.

Recommendation: I recommend that you approve the Resolution Providing for the Execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Library Insurance Management and Risk Control Combination (“LIMRiCC”).

Item 3: Move February Staff In-Service Closing Date

My priority for this in-service has been to arrange CPR/AED training for staff. It is typically recommended that we do this training every two years. It has been four years for us. In the past, the fire department has always done it for us at a minimal cost. Last year, I went around and around with them before having them back out at the last minute. So we put it off for another year. This year, I reached out a couple of times and never got a response. This clearly seems to be something that they aren’t interested in doing for us.

So I reached out to some private companies that provide the same training. The company that I settled on is a firefighter-owned business that a few other libraries have used and been happy with. Their rate is the lowest that I was able to find. The catch is that they are not available on our previously set in-service date of February 7th. After going back and forth with them about what they might be able to do for us on the 7th or perhaps spread out across a few other days, I landed on moving the whole session to the 21st as the most viable option.

The 21st is also a Friday, which is our lowest traffic day of the week. We have no programs scheduled on that day, so there are no conflicts to resolve. And with a month's notice to the public and for staff scheduling, there is enough time to let our stakeholders know about this change. If approved, we would be open for normal business on Friday the 7th.

Recommendation: I recommend that you approve the library closure for Friday, February 21st for staff in-service day.

Item 4: Trustee Ethics Statement

It is time for our annual reaffirmation of the Trustee Ethics Statement. It is unchanged from previous years, although it can obviously be changed if you see fit. Once approved and signed, it will be put on display near the main entrance for another year.

Recommendation: I recommend that you approve and sign this year's ethics statement.

Respectfully submitted,
Jesse Blazek
Library Director