

Minutes for July 22, 2025 Regular Board of Library Trustees Meeting

1. Call to order and roll

President Bloom called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Trustee Wilkinson, acting as Secretary for the meeting, took roll.

Present: Annie Wilkinson, Susanne Fairfax, Megan Butman, Colin Bird-Martinez, Kristina Rogers, Virginia Bloom

Absent: Mika Yamamoto

Also Attending: Elsworth Carman, Executive Director, Leigh Tarullo, Director of Collections

Public Commentators: Rory O'Neill

2. Approval of Minutes

June 24, 2025 Regular Meeting

Moved by Butman. Seconded by Wilkinson. Approved by Trustees Butman, Wilkinson, Bird-Martinez, and Bloom. Trustees Rogers and Fairfax abstained.

3. Public Comments

The board received a few public comments for the meeting through email and in person. A public comment submitted via email requested that the library reinstate its subscription to the *Wall Street Journal* and provide print copies at all three branches. The commenter noted they had contacted a librarian but did not receive a response. They emphasized the newspaper's importance, the preference for print format, and stated that the current periodicals are insufficient for research needs. Carman responded that the *Wall Street Journal* is available for online access through the library. The commenter replied that they were aware of the online option but found it difficult to read and preferred a paper version, as did others.

Bloom and Carman received an anonymous postcard addressed to the Library Board that said the following:

"I love our library, but it is not as accessible for neurodivergent people like me. The lights are too bright and overstimulating, I get anxious and have headaches. The hand dryers are too loud, and it makes my body hurt. Please consider fixing these things."

The board received an in-person public comment from Rory O'Neill requesting a meeting with Executive Director Carman to discuss the current cleaning contract with Alpha Building Maintenance Services. O'Neill stated that invoices submitted and paid between August 2021 and August 2022 included charges for work that was not completed, estimating the value of unperformed work at

\$35,000. He indicated he has proof of these claims and reiterated his request to meet with Carman to present the evidence.

4. Trustee Comments and Calendar

Bloom discussed the strategic planning session meeting coming up on Sunday, August 3 from 9 am-1 pm. Bloom noted that she will need to meet with Carman on creating an agenda and considering a facilitator for the meeting. Also on the calendar is the following regular board meeting which will be held on Tuesday, August 26.

Rogers observed that multiple meetings occur on Tuesday evenings, including those of the Village of Oak Park, Oak Park Township, and the Library Board, which may require community members to choose between them. She suggested the possibility of adjusting Library Board meeting dates for flexibility. The board agreed to keep the current meeting dates under consideration.

5. Executive Directors Report

Carman presented his report, highlighting his attendance at the American Library Association (ALA) Conference, where he participated in sessions on library governance, connected with other attendees, and noted the scale of the event. He provided a recap of community meet-and-greets held at all three locations, engaging with different groups at each and valuing the community's willingness to connect. Carman, along with Billy Treece, Director of Finance and Human Resources also met with staff to discuss the budget process and results of the staff satisfaction survey. Carman reviewed a draft six-month policy review schedule, suggesting it as a possible future Governance Committee practice. He reported attending a virtual meeting with the Hemingway Foundation, as well as one of the foundation's in-person events to strengthen connections.

6. Staff Reports

a. Strategic Priorities Report

Carman began his report by highlighting the expansion of the Multicultural Collection, which now includes materials from nine additional countries. The items have been arranged on shelves to improve browsing, increase usage, and generate greater patron interest. The Summer Reading Program was highlighted along with several programs, new and returning in Children's Services including: Lego Club for English Language Learners, Kids Chess Club, and Kids Improv. The results of the staff satisfaction survey were reviewed, showing a 79% participation rate and an overall score of 47—an increase from the previous scores of 17 and -1. Carman also highlighted Juneteenth and Pride celebrations integrated into Creative Studio programming, noting the positive ways staff have incorporated studio tools into these initiatives.

b. Library Core Use Statistics

The board reviewed the Library Core Use Statistics report, noting the increase in meeting room use and study room use. Discussed were the use of study rooms at the Main Library and if there are any possibilities of expanding into the branches or adding or creating more rooms. The

board discussed the continued growth in demand for online resources, noting the surge in usage during the pandemic and the sustained popularity of certain e-resources. Usage is expected to increase further, and the budget for online resources will be considered to meet this demand.

c. Additions and Separations Report

The board reviewed the Additions and Separations Report for the month of June 2025, noting the increase in additions of book bike assistants and teen interns for the summer.

d. Staff Changes Report

The board reviewed the Staff Changes Report for the month of June 2025.

7. Financial Reports

a. June 2025 Financial Reports

The board reviewed the financial reports dated June 30, 2025.

b. June 2025 Resolutions on Disbursements

Motion to approve the June 2025 Resolutions on Disbursements.

Moved by Fairfax. Seconded by Bird-Martinez. Approved by all present.

8. Additional Reports

- a. Intergovernmental Committee (IGov):** Did meet. Rogers reported on plans for a public event to discuss recent federal government changes and their potential impact on local governing bodies.
- b. Council of Governments (CoG):** Did not meet. Bloom noted that the next meeting may be scheduled for either September 3 or 4.
- c. PlanIt Green:** Did meet. Staff notes will be shared at the August board meeting.
- d. Friends of the Oak Park Public Library:** Did not attend. Bird-Martinez noted the next meeting will be held on August 18. Bloom commented on the Friends Book Fair, noting strong attendance, community engagement, and an overall positive experience and also mentioned a Friends Pizza Party where a post-summary of the book fair will be shared.
- e. Out with Purpose:** Did not meet. The next meeting is to be determined.
- f. Collaboration for Early Childhood:** Did not meet. Rogers noted reaching out to Shannon Ellison, Director of Programs and plans to report back at the next meeting.

9. Unfinished Business

The board discussed postponing committee discussions until after the Strategic Planning Meeting, noting that board members are welcome to join if interested. Bloom discussed ongoing conversations and options for board training for all trustees on the Open Meetings Act (OMA), the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and DEI training. The board discussed plans for attendance at the upcoming Illinois Library Association (ILA) Conference in October and confirmed ILA membership. The board discussed the facilitator for the Strategic Planning Session Meeting, who will be Mallory Edgar.

10. New Business

a. Exterior Signs Policy Review

Motion to approve the Exterior Signs Policy Review, with provided recommendations and edits.

Moved by Rogers. Seconded by Wilkinson. Approved by all present.

b. Duplicating, Displaying, or Publishing Materials Owned by the Oak Park Public Library Policy Review

Motion to approve the Duplicating, Displaying, or Publishing Materials Owned by the Oak Park Public Library Policy Review, where the recommendation is to eliminate the policy in full.

Moved by Fairfax. Seconded by Butman. Approved by all present.

11. Closed Session (if needed)

The board did not enter a closed session for this meeting.

12. Adjournment

Bloom adjourned the meeting at 8:32 pm.