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Agenda

**Pauline Haass Public Library Board of Trustees
Wednesday, March 17, 2021, 6:30 p.m.
Civic Center Community Room, 1st Floor**

- 1) Roll call
- 2) Consideration of, and possible action on, minutes of February 17, 2021 Board meeting.
- 3) Comments from citizens present
- 4) Communications received by Board members or Director
- 5) Financial report
- 6) Action on bills
- 7) Director's report on library services, legislative issues, staffing, funding, system services, continuing education, building issues, library users, technology, planning, Friends of the Library and Foundation activities, legal issues, and budget.
- 8) New Business:
 - a) Revision of annual report to the state, reflecting year-end numbers: discussion and action
 - b) Designation of operating fund reserves: discussion and action
 - c) Appointment of nominating committee for Board elections
 - d) Review of Trustee Essential 13: Library Advocacy
- 9) Items for future agendas: discussion
- 10) Adjournment

Lisa Bougie, President

Adele Loria, Library Director

Attendees: Please note that, upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service, contact Adele Loria at 262-246-5180.

Minutes of February 17, 2021 Board meeting
Pauline Haass Public Library

Called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Roll call: Bougie, Carran, Hacker, Jilling, Koenig, Roubik, Schultz, Vande Hei, Wegner, Zoellick present. Also present: Adele Loria, Library Director.

Bougie/Carran motion to accept minutes of January 20, 2021 Library Board meeting as presented; motion carried.

Comments from citizens present: none

Communications received by Board members or Director: none

Financial report: Revenue and Expenditure Guidelines from January 2021 accepted as presented by Koenig/Vande Hei motion; motion carried.

Prepaid bills in the amount of \$495.00, P-Card bills in the amount of \$2,762.30, 2020/2021 split bills in the amount of \$5,151.75, February 2021 bills in the amount of \$53,937.40, 2020 Closing expenses in the amount of \$3,272.10 and January 2021 expenses in the amount of \$67,597.41 approved by Koenig/Vande Hei motion; motion carried.

Director's report: Loria reviewed items in her written report and other items as allowed by agenda.

New Business: Bougie/Koenig motion to approve the 2020 Annual Report to the state with the understanding that it will require future amendments once the financial books are closed. Motion carried.

Following discussion, Carran/Koenig motion to approve the RFP for Space Needs Study as presented; motion carried.

Following discussion of the updated Library Computer Policy, Vande Hei/Wegner motion to accept as presented: motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m. by Roubik/Bougie motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Adele Loria
Library Director

Minutes prepared by Mary Olson, Administrative Services Manager

March 17, 2021
Director's Report to Library Board

Agenda items

Revision of annual report to the state, reflecting year-end numbers: The Library's books have closed for 2020, and we now have the final numbers needed for the state annual report. The only places where changes were needed were Section VI (library operating expenditures) and Section VIII (other funds held by the Library Board). I'm including copies of that page with the changes handwritten so that you can see exactly which items were revised. I'm currently waiting for the state to respond to my request to unlock the form for revision. If that happens before the meeting next week, I will send the form separately and the Library Board will be able to approve and sign it at the meeting.

Designation of operating fund reserves: In 2020, the library received more operating fund (Fund 000) revenue than was expended. The largest savings were due to staff eligible for health insurance declining coverage, and temporary staff vacancies (namely, the maintenance position). The remainder moves into the Fund 000 reserves. After consulting with Finance Director Nancy Whalen, I am recommending increases in several categories: working capital, building maintenance and building systems maintenance, and consulting/outsourced projects.

Both the approved current designation and the draft proposed designation are included in board packets to facilitate comparison. The agenda item is to discuss, and take action on, the proposed designation.

Non-agenda Items

Advocacy: In February I participated in Library Legislative Day to speak with state representatives about the importance of libraries. The format was virtual this year, which always presents some challenges, but I and other library supporters were still able to share stories about how we have responded to the COVID-19 crisis, and talk about the ways that libraries help people and transform communities even in "normal" times. In my follow up thank-yous to those legislators, I also included an infographic handout to illustrate the things our library did to respond to COVID-19. The handout is included in your packets this month.

The Libraries Step Up Campaign kicked off in February and will continue over the next several months. Staff members have been distributing postcards to patrons, who will send them to their representatives.

Because the topic of advocacy has been at the forefront lately, I chose that as our first Trustee Essential to review. We can discuss any questions or thoughts you have, and advocacy priorities for PHPL in the coming year, when we meet next week

CAFÉ App Updates: The app is getting close to an actual release date! Mary and I, along with other system staff, have been reviewing the beta version and submitting requests for changes and fixes. We plan to start advertising the app as “coming soon” the week of March 22, and the official launch date we’ll promote is April 1. The app should actually be available for download a few days before that, and I’ll let you know when that happens.

COVID-19 Update: I am very, very pleased to share that in early March, our staff became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Waukesha County’s Department of Health Services made the decision to include public library workers in the 1B classification for vaccine eligibility. A number of our staff had their first shot this week.

As cases continue to decline locally, staff and I have taken time to look at our current practices and procedures to see where restrictions can be relaxed or services restored. We have recently replaced a portion of the soft seating in the library, as that is the most frequent request staff hear from patrons and is something we felt could be done without compromising safety. We have also opened up additional study tables, reopened most study rooms, and reopened all restrooms. I hope to see us at full hours by April. Many restrictions will have to remain in place for the foreseeable future, but I believe it’s important to look closely at each of those and continually revisit our service levels.

Continuing Education:

Teresa Douglas attended the following webinars:

- “Successful Programs for Youth, this Summer and Year-Round” (February 5)
- “Showcasing Social Emotional Learning” (February 8)
- “Ryan Dowd: Unattended Children” (February 11)
- “Graphic Novel Showcase” (*Booklist*) (February 16)
- “Black Educators Speak” (PBS Wisconsin Education) (February 24)

Two circulation staff members, Heather Bartlett and Rebecca Hang, recently completed Gale courses on customer service. Circulation Manager Jennifer Steffes continues to encourage her department to place an emphasis on exceptional customer service at the front desk, helping the library maintain its patron-friendly reputation.

Home Delivery Service: We had our first home delivery in the beginning of March. Jennie Bahnaman and Sue Posh (Technical Services) have been continually working closely together throughout February to iron out all of the details and ensure a smooth delivery. We have 7 home delivery volunteers trained and available at this point, and applications are starting to trickle in. I have reached out to the Brookdale senior living facility in Sussex to advertise the service, and Jennie has been in touch with the property manager at Sussex Mill Apartments to do the same. I also highlighted this new service in the Courier/Activity Guide that goes out to all Sussex residents at the end of this month; I am hoping we will see the service grow at that point.

Marketing & Public Relations: Becca Werginz recently attended the Bridges Marketing Meet-Up on February 24, where the group discussed opt-out vs. opt-in emails, the Step Up Campaign, and LibraryAware summer marketing tools. Afterwards, Becca and I met to discuss switching to opt-out at our library, and redesigning our card application process to facilitate that.

National Developments: The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act that passed into law includes a large amount of funding for the Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS). The [ALA press release](#) states that “Of the \$200 million for IMLS, \$178 million is allocated for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and will go to state library administrative agencies on a population-based formula, with a \$2 million state minimum. State libraries will distribute ARPA funding to local libraries according to state priorities, to maintain and enhance library operations and services, including:

- offering greater access to technology, including through expanding digital networks and connectivity, purchasing hotspots, computers and digital content;
- establishing mobile digital labs;
- enhancing workforce development and jobseeker programing; and
- ensuring training and technical support for libraries, including to assist with the safe handling of materials.”

We don't know yet how much funding this will translate to on the system or individual library level, but much like the CARES Act last year, some funding will be appropriated to PHPL and the Bridges Library System to help with technology, connectivity, and workforce development efforts. I'll continue to report on this as we learn more.

Jennie Bahnaman, Assistant Director/Adult Services Manager and Becca Werginz, Adult & Teen Services Librarian, report on Adult and Teen Services activities for February 2021:

IditaRead - Adult & Teen Winter Reading

IditaRead, our all-ages winter reading program, ran from January 18 - February 26. We had 72 adults register. Fifty-five of the registrants actively read and 26 completed the challenge. Adults read a total of 1,100 hours for the winter reading program. Eighteen teens participated in the IditaRead Winter Reading



Program. Thirteen read actively and 8 completed the challenge. Teens read a total of nearly 300 hours.

Adult Programs & Services

On Thursday, February 11 at 6:30pm we co-sponsored the virtual presentation ***Pandemic Grief: A Grief Experience of Loss Beyond the Norm*** with Jean Horner the Senior Program Coordinator for the Village of Sussex Parks & Recreation Department. Our speaker Elizabeth Lewis, motivational speaker and certified grief support specialist, discussed the 4 types of grief that people are experiencing right now and coping strategies. We had 5 people in attendance.

On Wednesday, February 24 Rachel Ruetz (Technical Services Manager) led our monthly **Make It! @ Home**. Six participants enjoyed making a Valentine's-themed craft of yarn wrapped LOVE letters.



Thirty-five participants gathered virtually to play **Schitt's Creek Trivia** led by Becca Werginz and Rachel Ruetz, with trivia questions prepared by Teresa Douglas, on February 26. All nine teams had a fabulous time, and members of the winning team (aptly named *Simply the Best*) took home Rosebud Motel Keychains and a pack of stickers.

Eleven members of the **Mystery Book Club** met virtually via Zoom on February 3 to discuss *This is How I Lied* by Heather Gudenkauf.

Ten members of the **Wednesday Afternoon Book Club** met on February 17 for the much-anticipated discussion of *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens.

Teen Programs & Services

Becca Werginz reports that the February Make It! Teen craft was Hogwarts House Scarves. Twenty-eight teens picked up grab and go craft kits, and the video tutorial was viewed 313 times over YouTube, Facebook, and IGTV during the week of the program (February 8-13).

Adult & Teen 2021 Summer Program Planning

Jennie Bahnaman, Becca Werginz, Rachel Ruetz and Teresa Douglas (Children's & Adult Librarian) have been busy planning summer programs for adults and teens. As our February deadline was looming for submitting library programs to the Village of Sussex Activity Guide, we worked to finalize our program line-up.

Adult Summer Programs

We will hold a **Make It! Craft Outdoors Summer Series** at the Lions Open Air Shelter in Village Park. Rachel, Teresa, and Jennie will each lead a Make It. Activities include paint pouring art, mason flower jars and garden stepping stones. Presentations for adults include a virtual program with **Luke Zahm from Wisconsin PBS' Wisconsin Foodie** (this program is sponsored by 9 Bridges Libraries) in May. In June, we are co-sponsoring an event with Jean Horner, Senior Program Coordinator at the Village, to host Shady Lane Greenhouse for a **senior gardening program** at Village Park. In July we're hosting the **Ice Age Trail Alliance** for a presentation on the history of the IAT and highlights on local IAT trail segments to explore. And in August, Becca and Teresa will lead a **90s Trivia Night** at Village Park.

Teen Summer Programs

Becca Werginz has an exciting lineup of programs for teens this summer in grades 7-12. Programs include **Make It! Teen: Pet Portraits** in May, **Rock Art** in June, a **Teen Photography Contest** throughout July, **DIY Herb Gardens, Solar S'more ovens**, and a **Fandom Scavenger Hunt** around Sussex in August. Outdoor locations for teen programs will vary from the library's front lawn to the Civic Center Roof Patio.

Collection Updates

Rachel Ruetz continued to weed the Fiction collection in February, finishing the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Christian Fiction collections. Book bundles continue to be offered for teens and adults, and 5 book bundles were checked out in February.

Valerie Johnson, Children's Services Manager, reports on January 2021 activities:

Programs

Harry Potter Night

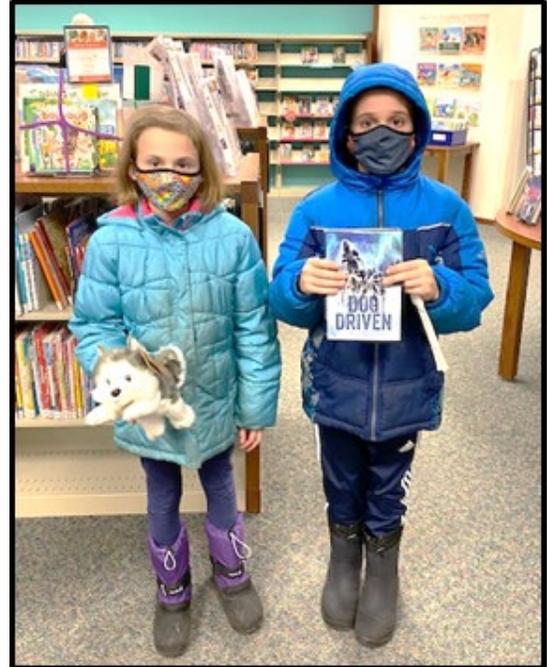
This annual celebration ordinarily draws over 100 kids to the library for the fun event, but the fun went home this year as pre-packed grab and go kits, claimed by 57 children Thursday through Saturday, February 4–6. Kids registered in advance through our website or by calling the children's reference desk.

The kits contained materials for making a wizard's wand and a golden snitch (just like the one in a real quidditch match). We asked families to text us photos of the finished projects, and they obliged, providing a gallery of creatively-designed wands and sparkly snitches as well as quite a few pics of the young wizards themselves.



IditaRead

The winter reading incentive program, IditaRead, finished its six-week run February 26. Children’s Librarian Teresa Douglas rose to the challenge of offering this program in a way that kids could participate remotely and socially-distanced. A whopping 141 children registered for the program, a 25% increase over last year when the program was in-person. Kids participated by reading, tracking their hours online, moving their paper dogs along the race track at the library, answering Musher’s Challenge questions, and earning tickets to enter drawings to win their own stuffed husky puppies and books. Children logged 91,779 total minutes, or 1,530 hours of reading. Our biggest individual reader was Lexie (pictured with her new husky pup), who read 4,670 minutes, or 78 hours.



Make It! Junior

Throughout the month kids picked up Make It! Junior kits to make Chinese Dragon Puppets. The puppets were made with origami “spring” bodies and manipulated with a straw at either end. This project, designed and prepared by children’s associate Katie Mueller, is a perfect example of the type of experience we strive to offer the children. It ticks all the boxes for seasonal (Chinese New Year), literary (fantasy lit/fantastical creature fans), and STEAM (spring-making, movement, and performance art) components. Like most of the kits offered, all 100 kits were claimed.



Family Storytime

Storytime continued through the month via Facebook Live. Manager Val Johnson offered a Very Messy storytime about many of the types of messes that happen in the life of a preschooler as well as a Clip Clop! Giddyup! storytime. Teresa Douglas presented Together storytime just in time for Valentine’s Day, and associate Sam Spottek cheered everyone up at the end of the coldest month with a storytime about Happiness and Joy. A good number of families continue to claim the weekly craft kit that enriches each storytime.

Book Bundles

February 2021 children's book bundles	number of bundles	number of items in bundles
staff-created book bundles	41	245
special request book bundles	5	61
Total	46	306

Professional Activities

Val Johnson and Teresa Douglas attended the SEWI (South East Wisconsin) regional children's services meeting February 17 via Zoom. Attendees from several counties shared insights and plans for another unpredictable summer reading program. As always, hearing and sharing ideas moves us closer to a program that will fit our community's needs for a summer of enjoyment and reading support.

Statistics

Adult & Youth Reference - Building Open	Totals
Youth Reference Ques. (In-person/phone)	400*
<i>Youth Information Ques.</i>	17
Adult Reference Ques. (In-person/phone)	441*
<i>Adult Information Ques.</i>	100
Email Reference Ques.	15*
<i>Email Information Ques.</i>	9
Chat Reference Ques.	10*
<i>Chat Information Ques.</i>	9
Soc. Media Reference Ques.	6*
<i>Soc Media Information Ques.</i>	3
One-on-One Tech Help	13
Value Line use	1
Study Rooms use	4
Study Table Reservations	20

Faxes	19
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Children's Virtual/Online Programs	YouTube	Facebook	Beanstack	Activity
Family Storytime 2/3, 2/10, 2/17, 2/24 (4 sessions)		80*		
Family Storytime grab and go (4 sessions)				90*
Make It Jr. grab and go distributed				100*
Make It Jr. report back (drawing tickets)				41*
Harry Potter grab and go distributed				57*
Harry Potter report back (drawing tickets)				18*
IditaRead incentive program registrations			92	
IditaRead Puppy program registrations			49	
IditaRead incentive program report back (tickets)				38*
IditaRead Puppy program report back (tickets)				10*
Total		80	141	354

Adult Virtual/Online/In-Person Programs	YouTube	Zoom	Activity	In-Person
Mystery Book Club (2/3)		11*		
Pandemic Grief Beyond the Norm (2/11) co-spon Village of Sussex Parks & Rec		5*		
Wednesday Afternoon Book Club (2/17)				10*
Make It! @ Home: Yarn Wrapped Letters (2/24)		6*		
Schitt's Creek Trivia (2/26)		35*		

Total		57		10
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Teen Virtual/Online Programs	Facebook	YouTube	Zoom	Activity	In-Person
Make It! Teen: Hogwarts House Scarf (2/8-2/13)				28* kits taken	

*** DPI Annual Report Programming Statistics**

Jennifer Steffes, Circulation Manager, reports on Circulation activities for February 2021:

The Circulation Department was busy in February, once again. Still quarantining items for 24-36 hours, processing many holds for patrons, content checking returned item for damages, and making sure transit items were ready early each morning for pick-up, the department was constantly moving. Helping to move things back to a bit more “normal”, the inside bookdrop was moved to the usual location next to the front desk. Having the bookdrop in the regular location makes it much easier for the circulation staff to keep the drop cleared.

Rachel Ruetz, Technical Services Manager, reports on Technical Services activities for February 2021:

Rae Peardon has begun volunteering with us again, this time assisting us with our RFID tagging project. She will be stopping by once every week for about two hours. She’s already tagged about 300 items in two visits!

With help from our pages, Sue Posh prepared and shipped a massive 21 boxes of weeded materials to Better World Books.

The Café catalogers met virtually on Tuesday March 16th. The group discussed cleaning up serial records in the catalog, the future of subject headings, the recent Polaris update, and scheduling future meetings. Rachel Ruetz will be assisting Bridges’ database management librarian Beth Bechtel with updating part of the Café Catalogers Manual.

Statistics: 753 items processed

Volunteer hours: Approx. 4 hours

General Fund (Fund 000) reserves available as of 12/31/2019, per Village Finance Director	\$630,827	Comments
WORKING CAPITAL at 15% of operating budget	\$184,547	VOS keeps 3 months operating costs on hand, but this includes their depreciation fund. Similarly, what we have here could be supplemented by fund 410.
Vacation payouts upon separation, beyond capacity of regular budget	\$38,000	If vacant position is filled quickly, there is no or little saving on salary/wages. Person leaving may be due current year's unused vacation plus what has been earned during the year (and ordinarily used in the following year).
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PHPL does not pay into the unemployment fund. This designation is to cover a potential obligation if an employee were to leave the organization. In addition, if part-time staff (most of our staff) lose their <i>other</i> job, PHPL must pay our proportionate amount of their unemployment compensation.	\$20,000	Re-build to \$20,000.
INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE to cover the deductible if we have a claim	\$10,000	Re-build to \$10,000
CAFÉ & Bridges overages, because PHPL annual budget is submitted well before CAFÉ & Bridges budgets are set.	\$10,000	Re-build to \$10,000.
COVERAGE FOR EXTENDED STAFF SICK LEAVE (If a staff member with significant accumulated sick leave were to take a long-term medical leave, we would be paying wages for both the employee and a substitute.)	\$40,000	Re-build to \$40,000. Earned sick leave can accumulate to 960 hours, and more than one staff member could be on medical leave.
LEGAL FEES	\$60,000	Re-build as necessary to keep at \$50,000.
FUTURE NON-CAPITAL EQUIPMENT & FURNISHING REPLACEMENT OR REPAIR (budget line 80610) e.g. automatic door openers, media cleaners, refrigerator, drinking fountains, etc. To smooth budget bumps for these expenditures & enable replacement when failure of item was not anticipated at budget time.	\$25,000	Re-build to \$25000.
SELF-INSURANCE FOR REPAIRS TO 3-M SECURITY SYSTEM, SELF CHECK MACHINE , and other equipment, beyond regular budget	\$20,000	Re-build to \$20,000. The 3M service contract for the security gates increased to \$1580 annually for 2009. The library canceled that and instead self-insures. We can do something similar with the self check machine.
BUILDING MAINTENANCE and BUILDING SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE overages, to supplement E000-61700 and E000-62150 when an unexpected amount of building or systems maintenance is needed in a given year.	\$50,000	Re-build to \$50,000 or higher.
INTERIOR PAINTING , as needed	\$6,000	Re-build to \$2,000 or higher. (I propose raising this for 2020 and beyond.)
Consulting/outsourced projects, with Board approval	\$90,000	Anticipating building assessment and building expansion studies. Possible need for next round of strategic planning.
GAS or ELECTRIC OVERAGES to supplement E000-61300 and 61400 as needed.	\$3,000	Re-build to \$3,000.
COMPUTER REPLACEMENT & NEW TECHNOLOGY FUND (funds are added at end of each year from budgeted line)	\$34,000	Add \$9K/year from operating budget, then replace computers in 4-year (\$32K) cycles: in 2019, 2023
DIGITAL SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT and additions	\$10,000	Re-build to \$10,000.
SHELVING & EQUIPMENT CHANGES and additions for materials collections	\$25,000	Re-build to \$25,0000
UNDESIGNATED	\$5,280	
	\$630,827	

Designation of General Fund (Fund 000) reserves

General Fund (Fund 000) reserves available as of 12/31/2020, per Village Finance Director	\$717,472	Comments
WORKING CAPITAL at 17% of operating budget	\$216,472	VOS keeps 3 months operating costs on hand, but this includes their depreciation fund. Similarly, what we have here could be supplemented by fund 410.
VACATION PAYOUTS upon separation, beyond capacity of regular budget	\$38,000	If vacant position is filled quickly, there is no or little saving on salary/wages. Person leaving may be due current year's unused vacation plus what has been earned during the year (and ordinarily used in the following year).
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PHPL does not pay into the unemployment fund. This designation is to cover a potential obligation if an employee were to leave the organization. In addition, if part-time staff (most of our staff) lose their <i>other</i> job, PHPL must pay our proportionate amount of their unemployment compensation.	\$20,000	Re-build to \$20,000.
INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE to cover the deductible if we have a claim	\$10,000	Re-build to \$10,000
CAFÉ & Bridges overages, because PHPL annual budget is submitted well before CAFÉ & Bridges budgets are set.	\$10,000	Re-build to \$10,000.
COVERAGE FOR EXTENDED STAFF SICK LEAVE (If a staff member with significant accumulated sick leave were to take a long-term medical leave, we would be paying wages for both the employee and a substitute.)	\$40,000	Re-build to \$40,000. Earned sick leave can accumulate to 960 hours, and more than one staff member could be on medical leave.
LEGAL FEES	\$60,000	Re-build as necessary to keep at \$50,000.
FUTURE NON-CAPITAL EQUIPMENT & FURNISHING REPLACEMENT OR REPAIR (budget line 80610) e.g. automatic door openers, media cleaners, refrigerator, drinking fountains, etc. To smooth budget bumps for these expenditures & enable replacement when failure of item was not anticipated at budget time.	\$25,000	Re-build to \$25,000.
SELF-INSURANCE FOR REPAIRS TO SECURITY SYSTEM, SELF CHECK MACHINE, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, beyond regular budget	\$20,000	Re-build to \$20,000.
BUILDING MAINTENANCE and BUILDING SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE overages, to supplement E000-61700 and E000-62150 when an unexpected amount of building or systems maintenance is needed in a given year.	\$90,000	Re-build to \$50,000 or higher.
INTERIOR PAINTING, as needed	\$6,000	Re-build to \$5,000 or higher.
CONSULTING/OUTSOURCED PROJECTS, with Board approval	\$110,000	Anticipating building assessment and building expansion studies. Possible need for next round of strategic planning.
GAS or ELECTRIC OVERAGES to supplement E000-61300 and 61400 as needed.	\$3,000	Re-build to \$3,000.
COMPUTER REPLACEMENT & NEW TECHNOLOGY FUND	\$34,000	Moved to lease environment in 2020; this line is intended to cover a possible switch back to outright purchasing next replacement cycle (2024).
DIGITAL SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT and additions	\$10,000	Re-build to \$10,000.
SHELVING & EQUIPMENT CHANGES and additions for materials collections	\$25,000	Re-build to \$25,000
UNDESIGNATED	\$0	
	\$717,472	

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

during the

COVID-19 CRISIS



PAULINE HAASS
— PUBLIC LIBRARY —

Despite being closed temporarily in the spring, the Pauline Haass Public Library continued to offer valuable services during the COVID-19 crisis. Virtual programs and remote reference help began in March, curbside service began April 27, and the building reopened to the public on June 1. Through the rest of 2020 we have continued to expand and adapt services to fit the unique needs of this time.

165

Virtual programs offered

5,521

Engagements with
virtual programs

1,337

Grab and go kits
given to kids,
teens, and adults

229

Gale Courses
class
registrations

2,252

Curbside pickup
appointments
April 27 - December 31

1,232

Hoopla
materials
checked out

34,112

Wisconsin's
Digital Library
circulation

Hearing From Our
COMMUNITY



PAULINE HAASS
— PUBLIC LIBRARY —

**WE ARE THRILLED
TO HAVE NEW
BOOKS TO READ!
- CALLIE**

You provide a very
valuable service

to our
community...
thank you for
caring.

- Mike

"It's a happy place to escape to during these times. The only two places I have gone to during the pandemic have been the grocery store and our wonderful library. It lets me read about anything I want and learn we too will come out of this someday. (Also, everyone who works there is very nice.) Thanks for being there for us!"

- LYNNE

You all have
done such a
great job
keeping the
community
engaged. We
LOVE your
virtual story
times and
maker classes.

- EMILY

“ Just wanted to thank you all for reopening and for doing it in such a safe environment. You folks rock! ”

Library Advocacy

One of your major responsibilities as a public library trustee is to act as an advocate for the library.

In simple terms, a library advocate is someone who understands the value and importance of public library service and who communicates that value and importance to the community, government leaders, and other decision-makers.

Your primary function as a library advocate will be to provide clear, accurate, and timely information on library issues to people who need it in order to make sound decisions on those issues. This information can be provided orally or in writing. It may have such diverse objectives as shaping public opinion in a general way or influencing a specific vote on a library issue by the local unit of government.

Libraries need their trustees to act as advocates for several reasons. Pressures on local, county, and state budgets makes it harder than ever for libraries to obtain adequate funding.

As a representative of the general public, you can make a more effective case on the importance of adequate funding for the library than the librarian who may be viewed as having a vested interest in a larger budget. Because public libraries have a unique place in local government, their needs may not be as readily understood by government officials as those of other units of government, and a greater effort is needed to tell the library story.

In addition, because library systems primarily provide “behind the scenes” services, an extra effort is sometimes needed to make government officials aware of their services and the value of those services to the public.

Establish Priorities for Advocacy

Since the advocacy role is a basic duty of a library board member, it’s important to channel these energies carefully. Early each year, the library board acting as a whole should decide which of its goals or positions to advocate most strenuously. Emphasis will vary by library. For instance, you and the library board might work for the adoption of an improved library budget, seek support for enhanced library technology, or inform the public of the need for a library building program. What is important is that you decide with other library board members what the areas of emphasis will be and how board members will go about advocating those goals or positions.

Your goal as an advocate is to shape the local decision-making process, which requires an understanding of how decisions are made in the community and who must be influenced in order to achieve favorable outcomes.

13

In This Trustee Essential

- What are library advocates and why they are needed
- How to establish priorities for advocacy
- Ways to act as an advocate

Staying Informed

Your effectiveness as an advocate depends on being well informed about library issues at the local, state, and federal levels. See [Trustee Essential #27: Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education](#) for information on where to turn to stay informed about these issues.

Ways to Act as an Advocate

As an advocate, you can influence decision-makers by:

- speaking to civic groups about library needs and issues.
- talking to friends about the library, its role in the community, and its needs.
- writing letters to the editor of the local newspaper.
- testifying at local and state budget hearings.
- talking and writing to state and federal legislators about the needs of the library.
- contributing to a library newsletter that is sent to decision-makers.

If you choose to advocate a library-related position not agreed on by the board, be sure to make clear that you are speaking for yourself as an individual, not for the board.

Your work as a library advocate is never done. Each success leads to a new area of effort. Library advocacy does not represent a narrow commitment to a single issue—it's an ongoing commitment to supporting library issues in a wide range of ways.

Discussion Questions

1. How is library advocacy different from other basic trustee duties?
2. What are some issues being faced by your library on which library board members can exercise influence through advocacy?
3. How does the advocacy role of an individual board member differ from the role of the board as whole?

Sources of Additional Information

You and your fellow library board members are not alone in advocating for high-quality public library service. There are a number of groups that share your belief in the value of public library service and can provide information and support you

in advocacy efforts. Some of these groups are listed below, along with other tools to help you advocate for your library.

- Your library system staff (See [*Trustee Tool B: Library System Map and Contact Information.*](#))
- Division for Libraries and Technology staff (See [*Trustee Tool C: Division for Libraries and Technology Contact Information.*](#))
- Wisconsin Library Association (WLA): wla.wisconsinlibraries.org
- Wisconsin Library Trustees and Friends (WLTF): wla.wisconsinlibraries.org/wltf
- The Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF): www.ala.org/altaff
- Who Are My Legislators webpage: legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx
- Resources on ethics and standards of conduct for local officials: gab.wi.gov/ethics
- Contact information for your United States Senators: www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm?State=WI
- Contact information for your United States Representatives: clerk.house.gov/member_info/index.aspx

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