

MINUTES OF THE NORTHBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING
January 15, 2026 | 7:00 pm

CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at time 7:01 p.m. by Stacy Oliver.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Jennifer McGee

Trustees Present: Adam Bazer, Maura Crisham (arrived at 7:29 pm), Stacy Oliver, Nimesh Patel, Janet Spector Bishop, Barbara Unikel,

Trustees Absent: Bryce Budin

Staff Present: Kate Hall, Kelly Durov, Anna Amen, Becky Moore, Jennifer McGee, Arielle Raybuck

Others Present Virtually: Lilly Zheng and Alexis Victor, Zheng Consulting

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

- 3.1 Approval of the Agenda
- 3.2 Approve Regular Session Minutes – November 20, 2025
- 3.3 Approve Cash Balances & Income Statement November
- 3.4 Approve Cash Balances & Income Statement December
- 3.5 Approve Bills and Charges from November 2025 in the amount of \$1,988,620.48
- 3.6 Approve Bills and Charges from December 2025 in the amount of \$725,606.95

Barbara Unikel made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Janet Spector Bishop seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote, Trustees voted:

“Aye”: Adam Bazer, Stacy Oliver, Nimesh Patel, Janet Spector Bishop, Barbara Unikel

“Nay”: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

Stacy Oliver motioned to amend the agenda to move item 8.1 (EDI Survey Report Presentation) to immediately follow the Staff Report.

STAFF REPORTS

Executive Director Report

Kate Hall thanked the Board for their help during the record-breaking Finals Café, noted upcoming SEOI filings and the January 20 State of the Village event, and received consensus to delete the Board Portal calendar. She also clarified board email protocols, advising that she will coordinate official responses with Stacy Oliver to maintain a unified Board voice.

EDI Survey Report Presentation

Lilly Zheng presented a comprehensive project overview, highlighting the results of the 2025 EDI Assessment. The presentation analyzed findings across nine core survey factors, identifying key areas of improvement and outlining strategic next steps for the initiative. Following the presentation, Lilly Zheng addressed the board's questions, with a more comprehensive discussion formally scheduled for the February meeting.

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

Janet Spector Bishop commented that the pizza was popular and went fast at the Finals Café.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Health Insurance Benefits Proposal

Becky Moore presented an overview of the benefits review project, which included an evaluation of current employee coverage, associated costs, and the overall review methodology. The presentation detailed two primary directions, Option A and Option B, along with supplemental benefit enhancements for consideration. Kate Hall provided a five-year cost projection analysis, projecting a 5% annual cost increase based on the current health insurance climate. After discussion, the Board reached a consensus to move forward with Option A and the proposed supplemental benefits.

Maura Crisham made the motion to approve Option A as laid out below and to add additional benefit plan options 1 and 3 to be effective for the next plan year.

Option A

- Current PPO is replaced with two new Blue Choice PPO plans
- Add a HDHP PPO with HSA
- The HMO plans cost-share is now 100% / 0% (employer/employee) for single coverage, and 90% / 10% for dependent coverage.
- The new PPO plans cost-share remains the same as the existing PPO plan (90%/10% single coverage and 80%/20% dependent coverage)

Additional Benefits Plan Options that can be included with Option A:

1. Employer Covers 100% Dental/Vision premiums (costs an additional \$6,648)
3. Voluntary Term Life Insurance (no cost to library)

Adam Bazer seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote, Trustees voted:

“Aye”: Adam Bazer, Maura Crisham, Stacy Oliver, Nimesh Patel, Janet Spector Bishop, Barbara Unikel

“Nay”: None

Board paused meeting at 8:49 pm. Board returned to general session at 9:00 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Master Plan Timeline & Next Steps

Kate Hall presented the Master Plan timeline, noting that the project will be executed as a single, comprehensive initiative rather than a series of individual projects. The main project stages include Pre-Design, Design, Bidding, Procurement/Permitting, and two construction segments. Following a discussion with Kate Hall and Anna Amen, the Board agreed on the Strategic Oversight Model to guide board involvement. Under this framework, the Board will focus on major approvals and milestone-specific meetings, while staff will provide regular progress updates during standard Board sessions.

Third Way Space Evaluation Proposal

Kate Hall reviewed Master Plan pre-design proposal options from David Vinjamuri of Third Way Space; noting that a space audit would be particularly valuable to analyze public usage of the library. Following discussion, the board agreed that a space audit integrating staff focus groups would provide impactful data to guide the Master Plan’s design phase.

Maura Crisham made the motion to approve the Third Way Space to conduct a Space Audit for \$12,000. Nimesh Patel seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote, Trustees voted:

“Aye”: Adam Bazer, Maura Crisham, Stacy Oliver, Nimesh Patel, Janet Spector Bishop, Barbara Unikel

“Nay”: None

Auditor Proposal FY26 to FY30

Anna Amen recommended a five-year contract extension with the current auditor, Seldon Fox citing their specialized library and governmental accounting expertise. Anna Amen emphasized their strong working relationship and the limited number of qualified firms as reasons for continuing the partnership.

Maura Crisham made the motion to approve moving forward with Seldon Fox for the Library’s audit services for FY26-30 as outlined for \$13,500 in FY26 and a total 5-year cost of \$70,000. Janet Spector Bishop seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote, Trustees voted:

"Aye": Adam Bazer, Maura Crisham, Stacy Oliver, Nimesh Patel, Janet Spector Bishop,
Barbara Unikel

"Nay": None

Quarterly Strategic Plan Check In

Kate Hall reported that Year 1 activities are complete, excluding the Master Plan. A report detailing outcomes and progress toward long-term goals will be presented at the March meeting.

Class 6b Request for 2525 Shermer Road

Stacy Oliver requested feedback on the 2525 Shermer Road Class 6b request. The Board expressed indifference to the request and agreed to place all future Class 6b requests on the consent agenda.

Director Evaluation Process Review (closed session)

The board discussed the Director's evaluation process during closed session.

CLOSED SESSION:

Janet Spector Bishop made the motion to go into Closed Session at 9:36 pm pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)1: the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. Barbara Unikel seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote, Trustees voted:

"Aye": Adam Bazer, Maura Crisham, Stacy Oliver, Nimesh Patel, Janet Spector Bishop, Barbara Unikel

"Nay": None

The board returned to general session at 9:53 pm. There was no action taken from the closed session.

AGENDA BUILDING

The board discussed and decided to keep the following items on the February agenda:

- Potentially a continuation and final decision on the Benefits Review
- Follow-Up discussion on Zheng EDI report
- First review of the draft budget
- A presentation from Marketing on our brand refresh
- A presentation from OSG on our Cyber Security
- Annual Building Tour
- Director Evaluation Process next steps
- File detailed statement of all receipts and expenditures for previous 6 months as required by 50 ILCS 305/1

ADJOURN

Stacy Oliver declared the meeting adjourned at 9:54 pm.

FINAL VOTE OR ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THE MEETING ON ANY AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT MATTER LISTED ABOVE, UNLESS THE AGENDA LINE ITEM SPECIFICALLY STATES OTHERWISE.



Stacy Oliver, President



Jennifer McGee, Recorder