

PARK FOREST PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

April 18, 2019

The regular meeting of the Park Forest Public Library Board of Trustees opened at 7:30 pm.

ROLL CALL

Those present were:

Park Forest Public Library Board Members: Sevena Merchant, Linda Marron, Felicia Rangel, Beverly Helm, and Joseph Woods

Absent: Sandra Flowers and Keith Supler

Olympia Fields Public Library Trustees: Diane Pierson and Holly Fingerle

Park Forest Public Library Staff: Barbara Osuch, George Manno, Jennifer Oosterbaan, Millie Robles, Brittany Coleman, Penny Shnay, Braunz Baker, Allison McCray, and Mary VanSwol

Also present: Andrew Costa, Village Trustee Georgia O'Neill, Dan Graham, Tiffani Graham, Gail Graham, Jerry Shnay, Phyllis Bacon, Rich Whitehead, Keri Miller, Glenna Hennessy, Village Manager Tom Mick, Ryan M. Dupee, and Sue Gould

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Helm noted a change in the finance committee meeting minutes. The "board" should be changed to "finance committee."

The minutes of the regular meeting of March 21, 2019, and the finance committee meeting of March 27, 2019, were approved as corrected.

COMMUNICATIONS

Library Director Osuch had nothing to note.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Library Director Osuch stated that the Library is in good financial shape for this part of the fiscal year.

REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN

Library Director Osuch thanked the police department for their presence in the Library and their work in community building. An officer was present at the last Library staff meeting to discuss safety. Officer Varga was noted on the Facebook page for interacting with the children in the Library.

Library Director Osuch stated that she gave a tour of the Library to the Civic Leadership Academy. She talked about programs and passed the sharing basket of flyers. The Friends of the Library has donated birdseed bells to be given away at the birding program on Saturday. The Thorn Creek Audubon Society gave a grant to the Library to start a Junior Audubon Club.

REPORT OF THE OLYMPIA FIELDS PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEE

Olympia Fields Public Library Trustee Fingerle stated that the Olympia Fields Public Library Board is following up on the focus group information. She and Olympia Fields Public Library Trustee Johnson attended a trustee conference in Oak Brook. Olympia Fields Public Library Trustee Fingerle expressed her gratefulness for Library Director Osuch.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Finance: The finance committee met March 27. The budget will be approved at a special meeting.

REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

President Merchant read a statement regarding the recent Library trustee election and action taken by the Cook County State's Attorney Office regarding the eligibility of Marcus Hampton to serve on the Library Board.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS

Park Forest Village Trustee Georgia O'Neill stated that it was her last meeting as Trustee Liaison for the Village of Park Forest Board. She has served for 35 years in the public sector, and she passed around invitations to a reception. She thanked the Board, and the Board thanked her for her support.

Glenna Hennesy of Park Forest asked for President Merchant to reread the statement. President Merchant introduced Attorney Andrews Costa. He stated that the matter will be resolved if Marcus Hampton gives written confirmation that he is not eligible to give office. If he does not, legal action will be taken by the Cook County State's Attorney or the Attorney General to prevent him taking office. The Library Board cannot take action unless the State's Attorney does not take action.

Sue Gould of Park Forest asked whether background checks for those running for office. Attorney Costa answered that there are no background checks. You may run for office if you obtain 25 signatures and process the paperwork.

Dan Graham of Park Forest asked how citizens can protect themselves from this situation in the future. Attorney Costa stated that the law would have to change.

Phyllis Bacon of Park Forest asked whether residents should attend the next Board meeting. Attorney Costa answered that the public are welcome at all Board meetings. She asked about citizen complaints. He stated that the process is already in place.

President Merchant stated that this situation has been eye-opening for her.

Phyllis Bacon stated that we should talk to the Non-Partisan Committee to screen people on the ballot. Attorney Costa stated that you cannot stop someone from being on the ballot beyond what is state law. Trustee Rangel stated that other villages have had this situation happen as well. She recommended contacting your legislators.

Jerry Shnay of Park Forest talked about another local election in which the mayor had a criminal record. He was pardoned by the governor in order to serve as mayor.

Glenna Hennessy of Park Forest stated that baseball programs and Boy Scouts can do background checks. She asked why the Village could not do background checks. Attorney Costa stated that it is not within the law.

Trustee Marron stated that Marcus Hampton never showed up at any of the forums. She talked about contacting the Non-Partisan Committee about making attending forums mandatory for candidates.

Rich Whitehead of Park Forest said that Mr. Hampton ran unopposed. He asked what the steps are for the next month. Attorney Costa stated that the swearing in is next month. If there is a vacancy, the Board advertises to appoint a trustee.

Park Forest Village Manager Tom Mick stated that the mayor with a criminal record was from Markham and that his case was very different from the case in Park Forest. He stated that the law says that anyone can run for office. The Library Board has done everything it could do. Tom Mick stated that he thinks the world of the Library.

Penny Shnay of Park Forest stated that the problem is that we all need to know our candidates and make informed decisions.

President Merchant stated that when candidates are running unopposed, you are not obligated to vote for the person.

Sue Gould of Park Forest stated that she contacted the state's attorney office and did not hear back.

President Merchant thanked the visitors for their comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Trustee Helm moved to adjourn to executive session.
Trustee Woods seconded.

At 8:04 pm, the Board adjourned to Executive Session for the discussion of the selection of a person to fill a public office, or the discipline, performance or removal of the occupant of a public office under section 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3).