

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE LEMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT  
COOK AND DUPAGE COUNTIES, ILLINOIS  
HELD AT THE LIBRARY LEARNING CENTER  
50 EAST WEND STREET, LEMONT, ILLINOIS**

**February 25, 2026**

**1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**

The Board President called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The following trustees answered present: Laura Burt-Nicholas, Patricia Camalliere, Melanie Grzesik-Duffy, Vytėnis Kirvelaitis, Renee Miller, and Michaeline Skibinski. Trustee applicants Stephanie Bullwinkel, Nicole Buti, Timothy Czuba, Heather Siegel-Hickman, and Lauren Wade, as well as Library Director Mary Golden were also present.

**2. Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

**3. New Business**

**Meet with each applicant**

The President advised the Board that there were initially six candidates for the open trustee position, but one withdrew their application. Trustees of the Lemont Public Library Board had to be registered voters in the Lemont Public Library District and file Statements of Economic Interests as required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act. Trustees served on one or more of the five standing committees and received no compensation for their work. The Board would decide on the appointment before March 10, and the new trustee would be sworn in at the next regular meeting. The candidates had submitted letters of interest and resumes by February 1, 2026. The candidates introduced themselves, highlighted certain qualities and accomplishments, and answered questions compiled by the Board:

1. Why are you interested in serving on the Library Board?
2. Which committees would you be most interested in serving on?
3. What areas of expertise do you possess that qualify you to serve on the board and on these committees?
4. What do you think is the most valuable part of our library? What services do you most often utilize?
5. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

**a. Stephanie Bullwinkel**

Ms. Bullwinkel introduced herself and said she grew up in her public library and found freedom in literature to escape and learn. She was an English major at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and wrote a screenplay based on a book for her senior thesis. In her opinion, a library board was more important to a community than a board of education, as the library provides a safe place to be untethered and undistracted, bring your children, form friendships, explore, seek verifiable information. Serving on the board would provide the opportunity to protect this special space for the entire community and future generations.

As the CFO-COO of Imperial Kitchen and Baths, Inc., Ms. Bullwinkel had experience leading groups, assuming responsibilities, being a team player, sharing ideas, and having them critiqued. She expressed interest in the Policy and Goals and Finance Committees. She was curious, committed, conscientious, and believed that leadership should be service-led— a facilitator for both the community and employees. She felt that leaders should not oversee but make sure things get done.

Ms. Bullwinkel attended talks, classes, and women's small business meetings at the library, and, when her children were small, accompanied them to classes and story times. For fun, Trustee Grzesik-Duffy asked what she was currently reading. Ms. Bullwinkel replied that she was slowly working through R. F. Kuang's "Babel" and had just finished listening to Evy Poupouras's "Bulletproof".

The trustees finished the interview by answering Ms. Bullwinkel's questions. The board generally meets once per month. Most committees meet at least once per quarter or sometimes more frequently, for between 30 minutes and two hours, depending on committee and the circumstances, Policy and Personnel Chair Camalliere said she spends 6-10 hours each month on board work. Finance Committee Chair and Treasurer Skibinski noted that the staff does most of the preparatory work. When the committee convenes, members review the work and propose the budget. The Planning and Goals Committee does review work, plans community surveys, and conducts research.

**b. Nicole Buti**

Ms. Buti recently graduated from Northwestern University with an M.S. in Integrated Marketing Communications. Libraries had always been her refuge. She grew up in Geneva, where the old library, while near and dear to the community, had been replaced by a multimillion dollar facility. She was excited by this development and the additional services the library would be able to offer.

Ms. Buti was interested in serving on the board because she thought the Lemont Public Library should add services and programming to meet the needs of the rapidly growing community, keep up with the evolution of technology, and embrace innovation. While she felt the library did a great job within its current means, it had the potential to become a state-of-the-art resource. She would be glad to serve on multiple board committees. Her skills and experience included fundraising, community outings, technology, and having worked with a multimillion-dollar budget in her current position at MAGNA-TILES, finance. She was involved in developing and implementing marketing strategies for retailers like Target, Walmart, and Amazon.

Ms. Buti was at the library as often as five days a week to use the quiet and meeting rooms for reading and studying and pick up material she had borrowed via the Libby app. Presently, she was reading "The Intruder" and listening to "Chasing Evil". Her favorite children's book to give to her nieces and nephews was Allan and Janet Ahlberg's "The Jolly Postman and Other People's Letters".

**c. Timothy Czuba**

Mr. Czuba has lived in Lemont for 23 years and retired recently. Since his wife is a librarian at the Indian Prairie Public Library, he has watched Indian Prairie grow from a storefront to a beautiful modern facility. He would like to see the Lemont Public Library become a pillar of the community. The library is not just someplace to get books, not just a quiet place to study and read the newspaper, but also to seek assistance and knowledge.

Mr. Czuba expressed interest in several committees. He had some technological experience but believed he could better serve the library in finance because he was a part of baseball operations for a multimillion-dollar baseball team and had owned his own business. Since he had participated in the construction of a high school manufacturing program and center, he was qualified to help with Building and Grounds. Regarding personnel, he drew on his wife's involvement at Indian Prairie. Having a background in teaching and school counseling, Mr. Czuba found it natural to be creative and contribute ideas and support. He was willing to work

within constraints.

His wife borrowed materials for him from her library, but Mr. Czuba enjoyed participating in Lemont Library's programming. He felt there was always room for improvement, and the library had the potential to be even more attractive. In addition to the Library of Things, he would like to see a Maker Studio in Lemont. Indian Prairie offered 3D printing, laser cutting, metal stamping, sewing, and other practical, hands-on activities. Media changes, and a library must adapt and be flexible in its offerings to patrons. Mr. Czuba responded to Trustee Grzesik-Duffy's question that he was reading Jane Goodall's "Hope", and his favorite author is Hemingway.

Mr. Czuba inquired about the board's exposure in the community. The trustees replied that the board was invited to the village and township meetings, interacted with the local schools and various governmental bodies, and took part in public events like the annual Keepataw Days parade and fundraising occasions. When Mr. Czuba asked whether the trustees would be open to engaging in more public exposure, the trustees were amenable. Board members were often invited but not obligated to attend outside functions. The director and other staff members were mostly involved in planning, implementing, and participating in community outreach, but trustee support was always appreciated.

**d. Lauren Wade**

Ms. Wade was in the social service field for the past ten years. She was excited to move to Lemont with her partner and open her psychotherapy practice in the village. Recognizing that the library was a valuable community resource and source of knowledge, she immediately got a library card.

Ms. Wade saw a big difference between the Lemont Public Library and the Chicago Public Library System. The library represented a very important part of Lemont's culture, and she would be honored to participate in furthering that relationship and meeting the demands of the ever-changing community—a change she was part of. The core values she developed via social work would be an asset to the board. She worked with children and adolescents daily, understood their interests and needs, and knew how to align their values with local resources and afford access to the community.

Regarding standing committees, Ms. Wade said she was flexible and would be glad to work wherever she was most needed. Most of her expertise would suit Planning and Goals, yet she was also tech savvy and understood policy and personnel issues and evaluations through her experience in social work. Although she was not proficient in the subjects of building and grounds maintenance or finance, she was happy to learn.

Ms. Wade liked the library's programming and praised the library's dissemination of information, particularly the newsletter. She enjoyed hanging out in the children's department with her stepchildren and availing themselves of the Library of Things, Libby, and the many advantages of the Pinnacle Library Consortium. From the perspective of a parent, Ms. Wade felt that breaking youth programming down by age group ensured that there was something for everyone. She was currently listening to John Green's "Everything is Tuberculosis" and reading the fantasy novel "Brimstone".

Ms. Wade asked to what extent the board worked with the library's employees. The President responded that the board sets policy and general direction, whereas the staff determine how to best implement the plan. Although staff members were welcome to bring ideas to the board or the director, the board did not generally involve itself in the details or micromanage. Trustee Camalliere added that the board's main responsibility was to hire the director, who was

primarily responsible for managing the library.

**e. Heather Siegel-Hickman**

Dr. Siegel-Hickman has worked as an educator for 25 years. She is currently the Director of Professional Development for the Will County Regional Office of Education and as an adjunct instructor at both Lewis and Elmhurst Universities. In these capacities, she has brought more books into schools, incorporated elements of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan into school programming, arranged author visits, procured grants, and served on related teams, committees, and boards. She has performed the duties of president, vice president, counsel, elections chair, and trustee in the West Suburban Teachers Union. Her time in the union provided her with experience in working with a board, reviewing board packets, financials, accountability, and participating in contract negotiations. Since her son is graduating and she has more free time, Dr. Siegel-Hickman applied for the board vacancy to give back to the community that has given her so much.

Vis a vis board committees, Dr. Siegel-Hickman has managed a large budget, but finance was not her primary interest. Planning is a major component in her role as a Working Genius Certified Facilitator. She has written policy and union contracts and was also passionate about technology.

Dr. Siegel-Hickman admitted she did not visit the library as often as when her son was small and participated in reading programs. The library was ideal for young families. Furthermore, she was fortunate to form lasting friendships through the library and come to feel welcome in its community. Now, she visited chiefly to check out books, both Kindle and audio. She regretted not attending more board meetings but took the initiative to acquaint herself with the meeting minutes. Her relationship with the library may have receded over time, but she hoped to renew it through service.

An avid reader, Dr. Siegel-Hickman had recently finished Erik Larson's "The Devil in the White City", as well as two James Patterson books, one from "The Women's Murder Club" and the second from the "Alex Cross" series. Last year she finished reading Sue Grafton's alphabet series.

Dr. Siegel-Hickman inquired whether there was anything in particular the board was looking for, anything missing from the team. The President replied that the current board did not have much expertise in building and grounds management. In addition, the trustee who resigned was heavily involved with planning and goals.

**4. Old Business**

None.

**5. Executive Session**

There was no need to go into executive session.

**6. Open Session**

The trustees discussed a date to deliberate on candidates, most probably on Sunday, March 8, at 2 p.m.

**7. Adjournment**

Trustee Skibinski made a motion, seconded by Trustee Miller, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. A voice vote was taken. All said aye. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ramona Stephens-Žemaitis  
Recording Secretary