



PALOS HEIGHTS  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Palos Heights Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting  
October 16, 2025

## Library News

It's been a strange and busy month at the library!

### Baker & Taylor

Baker & Taylor, a giant in the industry of supplying books to schools and libraries, has announced that it plans to shut down after plans to sell the company fell through. This is a change that would have been unthinkable 20 years ago. In any given year, B&T used to handle as much as 90% of our book orders. Things started to change when non-book collections began to grow in popularity, and then things changed dramatically with the rise of Amazon and competing online retailers. In recent years, we started doing significant chunks of purchasing through Ingram, a more diversified competitor with a different purchasing structure. We will shift most of our book purchasing to Ingram with Midwest Tape, Amazon, and others supplementing as needed. This isn't a change that I expect to affect us dramatically, either in terms of operations or budget. But it is somewhat seismic news in the world of librarianship.

### Building Envelope Project

We held the pre-bid meeting for our building envelope project on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The meeting was well-attended, and Dan (Owner's Rep) and Chris (engineer) led prospective bidders through the details of the project. Bids are due on 10/31. Chris and Dan will evaluate the bids and be on hand at our November meeting with their recommendation and a projected budget. Construction is anticipated in the spring.

### Parking Lot Lights

We've been having issues with our parking lot lights lately. It isn't an issue with the lights themselves but with the timer that switches them on and off each night. For some unknown reason, when these lights were installed half were put on a timer and half were put on a light sensor. So half come on when it gets dark and half come on at a specified time. The timers are those old-school rotary mechanism models, and they have bent to the point that they no longer trip reliably. Staff have been manually turning on the lights when they notice it's dark, but that's less than ideal. To address the issue, we had the electrician remove the timers and wire all of the lights through the light sensor, with a manual switch in case the sensor fails. Everything is working well at this point, and those failing timers are no longer something we need to worry about.

## Kanopy

Many libraries offer an online video service to their patrons, similar to Netflix or Hulu. There are actually a few competing products out there that offer this service to libraries. In the past, I have been very hesitant to sign up for these services because their pricing models are pay-per-use. What that means is that it's next to impossible to budget accurately for those services. There are libraries which signed up for the service expecting to spend \$1,500 per year only to have high usage resulting in bills 10 to 20 times higher than their budget. Many have had to put measures in place to limit the usage of the services, cutting off access to the platform for everyone once the usage hits a designated mark each month. This allowed them to stay on budget, but it led to very unhappy patrons who could only use the service for part of each month. So I'm very wary of signing on to a service that we might be unable to fully fund or fully participate in. If we're offering it, I want to our patrons to be able to fully use it.

Kanopy is one of the longstanding services that is offered by many libraries. They have begun offering flat-rate packages with generous usage limits. They now offer PLUS packs, which are themed packages of a rotating collection of a few hundred movies/shows with no usage limits. They have packages like documentaries, British TV/cinema, and kids programming. So we could sign up for a few of these packages and have a respectable collection to offer. But what really caught my attention is that they now offer a flat-rate "Kanopy for Small Libraries" subscription, which provides access to their full catalog with a limited but generous allotment of view per patron per month. The cost for this service would be \$2,000 per year, which would fit well within our database budget. I've been looking for an opportunity to offer an online video service to our patrons that wouldn't break our budget, and I'm excited that we appear to finally have one! We're still test-driving the service and making sure it has what we want, but I anticipate going live with this in the new year.

## Budget Update

As of this writing, there is still no sign of the County sending out the overdue property tax bills. My cash flow analysis indicates that we have enough money to make it until mid-December. At this point, I believe we have no choice but to pursue a tax anticipation loan of some sort, as we did when this happened in the past. As we did in the past, I've been talking with the City about borrowing funds from them at no interest. They currently have in the neighborhood of \$25 million in reserves, so lending us \$500k on a short-term basis would mean very little to them. It would also be a win for our taxpayers because any interest that we would have to pay to a bank for a conventional loan would ultimately come from our taxpayers. By borrowing from the City, we save our shared taxpayers the cost of the interest were we to borrow from a bank. So I've been working with the City to get this process moving forward. While there will inevitably be a question or two about whether the library is mis-managing its funds, I don't expect significant pushback on this issue. There will be a resolution on the November agenda to formally approve this loan with a check to follow shortly thereafter. If, for some bizarre reason, things don't work out with the City, I do have two banks on call from whom we could quickly organize this loan as well.

## Veterans Day Reception

Finally, Veterans Day is Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, and we're planning on hosting our annual reception at 11:30am. We'll have coffee, sandwiches, and snacks, and it's a great opportunity to show our appreciation to our local veterans. Please join us if you're able!

## Upcoming Events

- Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup> – Building & Grounds Committee Meeting, 6:00pm
- Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup> – Regular Board Meeting, 6:30pm
- Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> – Veterans Day Reception, 11:30am
- Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> – Long Range Planning Committee Meeting, 6:00pm
- Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> – Regular Board Meeting, 6:30pm

## Agenda Items

### Item 1: Nancy Sylvester

Professional parliamentarian Nancy Sylvester will Zoom in with us to present the second of her three-part series on parliamentary procedure and trusteeship.

**Recommendation:** No action needed.

### Item 2: 2026 Library Closing Dates

There are no surprises with regard to next year's closing dates. In addition to the normal holidays, we have our two staff in-service days and the three customary early closing days on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, July 16<sup>th</sup>, and November 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Recommendation:** I recommend that you approve the list of closing dates for 2026.

### Item 3: 2026 Board Meeting Dates

I have laid out our schedule of meetings for next year according to our current practice of meeting on the third Thursday of each month at 7pm, with the exceptions of July and December. Obviously, this is not set in stone until you approve it, so a new date and time could be chosen if you would like to make a change.

**Recommendation:** I recommend that you approve the 2026 board meeting dates.

#### Item 4: Staff Appreciation Awards

I have calculated the staff appreciation awards for the year, per our policy. That policy is also included in the packet, for your reference. The total amount of the awards for this year is \$4,425, which is within budget.

**Recommendation:** I recommend that you approve the annual staff appreciation awards in the total amount of \$4,425.00.

#### Item 5: Palmer Award

It is that time of year again when we recognize community members or organizations who have had an exceptional impact on the library. This year, I propose that you recognize former Trustee Geri Burek. Geri served on the Board for 10 years, including 4 years as Vice President and 5 years as President. She presided through the tumultuous pandemic years along with our YTS renovation in 2022. She was a strong advocate for the library in the community, always quick to step forward for everything from addressing issues with the Mayor to pounding the pavement for a fundraiser. Geri did tremendous work for the library, and I think it is entirely appropriate to recognize her for it.

**Recommendation:** I recommend that you approve the Palmer Award for Geri Burek.

#### Item 6: 2025-2026 Committee Assignments

This year's committee assignment list is in your packet along with a description of each committee's duties. This year, we tried to keep things largely the same as last year while slotting Trustee Koeppen into a few vacancies and keeping everyone's responsibilities balanced.

**Recommendation:** No action needed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jesse Blazek  
Library Director