



PALOS HEIGHTS
PUBLIC LIBRARY

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Palos Heights Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
January 15, 2026

Library News

Budget Update

There isn't much good news on this front, unfortunately. The County's distribution system appears to be completely non-functional at this point. Treasurer Pappas tapped into emergency funds to begin paying government agencies, but those weren't actual tax distributions. Emails to the County Treasurer's office last week were answered in a timely manner. They stated that actual distributions will begin this week. I will believe it when I see it.

You might think that tapping into emergency funds and paying government agencies would be good news. That isn't the case for libraries. Funds were distributed to primary taxing districts only and not to "sub-agencies." Because we (and most libraries) are a component unit of the City of Palos Heights, no funds were distributed to us. That came as news to the City's Finance Director, who had assumed that we would qualify to receive those funds directly.

But there is a silver lining here. It is the opinion of the City's Finance Director that funds distributed to primary taxing bodies were intended to be distributed to "sub-agencies" by those taxing bodies as needed. She proposes that the City distribute to the library its proportion of funds received, calculated based on the ratio of our issued levy to their issued levy. This would amount to approximately \$185,000 for us. She intends to bring that to the City's Finance Committee for approval along with approval to distribute a similar proportion of any future emergency funds before the actual distributions begin. It is unclear if the County will deduct these amounts from our levy distributions or if it will be up to us to repay this money to the City when all is said and done. I'm guessing it will be the latter, which is fine. The money exists. It has been paid by our residents. It just needs to be distributed. Once that happens, we will be able to make sure funds end up where they were meant to be.

At our typical spending rate, these funds would get us through February. If we cut back on non-essential spending, we might be able to stretch that through the first payroll in March. At that point, if no other funds have been forthcoming, we would need to pursue another loan. It is very frustrating that those agencies which have lived within their means, managing their finances well and responsibly, without stockpiling excessive reserves of cash, are those that are suffering because of this.

Building Envelope Project

The contract with the contractor, D. Kersey Construction, has been signed. Our Owner's Representative and Engineer were working with Kersey to set a date and specific timeline for construction. That is still planned for this spring, most likely in April.

Library Programs and Services

November and December were obviously big months for us in terms of special programming. Perhaps the most notable was our first ever holiday picture event, as outlined in our November Youth and Teen Services Department report. Families or groups could sign up to get a holiday picture at the library on November 22nd. We set up the green screen with a small selection of backgrounds that they could choose from, and they got a nice holiday picture taken. This event went very smoothly thanks to great organizing by our YTS staff. People were very grateful for the event, and we are planning to repeat and perhaps expand it later this year.

As we have for a number of years now, we had a table at the City's Kringle Market the weekend of December 5th and 6th. We gave out free cups of hot cocoa to shoppers. This year's event was very well-attended, as always, and people were grateful for a small cup of hot cocoa as they walked around. We set out the tip jar and brought in almost \$350 in donations. This more than covered our expenses for the event.

Our week of Merry & Bright programming to break in the holiday season was also very well-attended. We had approximately 85 attendees for the Sing Along, 30 for Baking with Beth, and 49 for our Friends-sponsored Classic Hollywood Christmas program. But perhaps the biggest hit of the season was our Christmas with Elvis performance, which drew 74 attendees and was a truly memorable event. YTS also hosted a Holiday Dance Party, which was a lot of fun.

Our new Kanopy video streaming service went live at the end of December. Technically, January is the first month of this service, so we won't have meaningful statistics until next month's meeting. But the early results are promising. In the first week, we had 67 accounts created and 21 titles checked out. Hopefully, we will see this usage increase dramatically in the coming weeks.

Upcoming Events

- Thursday, January 15th – Long Range Planning Committee Meeting, 5:30pm
- Thursday, January 15th – Regular Board Meeting, 6:30pm
- Thursday, February 19th – Committee Meeting, 5:30pm
- Thursday, February 19th – Regular Board Meeting, 6:30pm

Agenda Items

Item 1: Anna's Lemonade Stand

I was delighted in late November to receive notification of a donation of \$150 from Anna Kolkmeier. Anna is 5 years old, and she raised money through what has to be one of the most successful lemonade stands that I have ever heard of. I thought this was an amazing gift from one of our young patrons, and I thought it was worthy of your attention. I have invited her to the meeting and made a plaque for her, thanking her for her gift to the library.

Recommendation: No action needed.

Item 2: Trustee Ethics Statement

It is time for our annual reaffirmation of the Trustee Ethics Statement. It is unchanged from previous years, although it can obviously be changed if you see fit. Once approved and signed, it will be put on display near the main entrance for another year.

Recommendation: I recommend that you approve and sign the annual Trustee Ethics Statement.

Respectfully submitted,
Jesse Blazek
Library Director