



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Palos Heights Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
April 16, 2026

Library News

Budget Update

The County has yet to release any reports on the Tax Year 2024 distributions made in January or on its distributions of the Tax Year 2025 collections made earlier this year. The TY25 distributions have been coming out to various agencies, and we haven't received any of those funds. This tells me that the County is aware of our previous overage and is withholding our TY25 distributions to compensate. I've reached out to a few contacts at the Treasurer's Office to see if there's an accounting that could be had for TY24 and TY25 distributions. My concern is that they don't actually have any such accounting and aren't aware that we should still receive about \$250,000 from the current TY25 collections. I have been unable to get a response as of yet but will keep trying. The City's Finance Director is equally in the dark at this point.

As for the interest on the January overage, my current count is that it accrued another \$2,138.80 of interest in March bringing the total interest accumulation to \$4,677.64. However, I believe it is moot at this point considering the current withholding of TY25 distributions. It's frustrating not to have any reports to reconcile distributions with, but I believe we are even with the County at this point and should have some more money coming in the next few weeks.

Building Envelope Project

Construction was scheduled to begin on our building leak repair on Monday, April 6th. The City was a bit slow issuing the permit, which wasn't received until Wednesday the 8th. Our contractor did some staging work but opted not to begin demo as there was rain in the forecast for Thursday and Friday, the 9th and the 10th. So work is expected to begin in earnest on Monday the 13th. Other than that, there have been no surprises in the final stages of the planning phase of the project. All that's left is to do the work.

Lighting project(s)

As those of you who have been around for a while know, we have had some issues with our lighting over the years. In 2018, we retrofitted most of our lighting with what were then the newer LED bulbs. It was a fairly successful project in that it allowed us to keep and hopefully extend the life of our existing light fixtures. The weakness in this plan is that those fixtures still rely on old-fashioned electrical ballasts to supply power to the bulbs. Since 2018, many of those ballasts have worn out and had to be replaced. At this point, finding those old-fashioned ballasts is getting more and more difficult and expensive. So we talked to our electrician about our options, and there now exist LED bulbs with integrated ballasts.

These would also allow us to keep our existing fixtures and would simply require removing the old ballasts entirely and directly wiring the bulbs. That sounds great, but we have something like 500 bulbs in the building that would require rewiring and replacing. The total cost for that is a little over \$35,000.

BUT this kind of work, retrofitting our old fixtures to work with the latest energy efficient bulbs, is eligible for ComEd's energy rebate program. Our electrician put together a proposal with ComEd that would bring the total cost of this work down to \$4,152. I have signed that proposal, and the electricians will begin this work as soon as ComEd gives their final sign-off on the project, probably some time in May.

The one wrinkle in this proposal is that they weren't able to find a way to retrofit the parking lot light fixtures. There's no way to rewire the existing lampposts to work with some kind of all-in-one LED bulb/ballast, the way they can for the indoor lights. As I understand it, the wattage and lumens required for parking lot lights is too high to be cost effective for manufacturing standalone LED bulbs for this purpose. Modern LED parking lot lighting has non-replaceable bulbs that are built into the fixture. Because the bulbs are built to last so long, typically coming with a 10-year warranty and 50,000-hour average lifespan, you just replace the fixture instead of the bulb if the bulb ever goes out.

Separate from the above lighting project, an issue has come up with the new can lights that were installed as part of the YTS renovation in 2022. Almost every single one of the 20 or so new can lights are no longer working. When our electrician looked at it, they discovered that there was a deficiency in the design of these bulbs such that the wire melted causing the bulb to fail. Terry did some tremendous leg work to find out that these bulbs are still under warranty, and the manufacturer is sending us replacements. We plan to have our electrician install these new bulbs when they perform the other lighting work.

Other News

In other news, I accompanied the Mayor and leaders from various City departments on a tour of Trinity Christian College. The mayor is thinking ahead to how the City might handle the property if it needs to take it over in the event that no sale is forthcoming. He wanted us to see the property and try to get a sense of what role various departments might be able to play in making good use of the property, in that remote eventuality. I'm not sure I see a role for the library, but I want to be supportive of the Mayor regarding this stressful issue.

The FY2025 audit is moving along smoothly. First drafts of all reports are complete. As always, we are awaiting the release of the IMRF figures, which constitute a sizeable portion of our annual report. Once that has been received, we will be able to move toward final approval.

Planning for our Summer Reading Kickoff Party is going great! We have another exciting event lined up. This year's event will take place on Saturday, May 30th from 10am until 2pm. The library will be closed for business that day as we host games, R/C cars, an obstacle course, food trucks, and more. It's going to be an exciting day!

Upcoming Events

- Thursday, April 16th – Building & Grounds Committee Meeting, 5:30pm
- Thursday, April 16th – Regular Board Meeting, 6:30pm
- Thursday, May 21st – Committee Meeting, 5:30pm
- Thursday, May 21st – Regular Board Meeting, 6:30pm

Agenda Items

Item 1: Amend Leaves of Absence Policy

This issue was brought to me by staff. Our current Leaves of Absence Policy grants two days of paid time off for full-time employees in the event of the death of an immediate family member. The current policy explicitly excludes part-time employees, which staff feels is a bit harsh. The proposal is to also extend this benefit to part-time employees. I propose using the same standard that we use in calculating personal time for part-time employees, i.e. two-fifths of the employee's average weekly hours. This would be the equivalent of two days off.

There are no other proposed changes to this policy.

Recommendation: I recommend that you approve the amendment Leaves of Absence Policy.

Item 2: Rescind Board Privileges Policy

In reviewing our policy binder, the Board Privileges Policy stands out as unusual. It extends special privileges to Trustees that are vague and possibly unethical. I'm not sure what "extending privileges" is supposed to mean. "Waiving fines" is no longer relevant. And "use of the copy machine" is already available to everyone. To the extent that this policy is intended to provide services to the personal benefit of Trustees above and beyond what is available to the general public, I believe such personal benefits to be unethical. To the extent that such services are needed in the course of performing duties as a Trustee, those are granted as a matter of course. I propose that this policy just be rescinded in its entirety, as I don't see any value in having it and the optics are undesirable.

Recommendation: I recommend rescinding the Board Privileges Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Jesse Blazek

Library Director