

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
JOINT AD HOC COMMITTEE OF THE
DOWNERS GROVE VILLAGE COUNCIL
AND THE DOWNERS GROVE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Civic Center
Betty Cheever Council Chambers
850 Curtiss Street
Downers Grove, IL**

**July 31, 2025
7:00 PM**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of Minutes of the June 26, 2025 Meeting**
- IV. Discussion of Draft Report**
- V. Public Comment**
- VI. Adjourn**

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Betty Cheever Council Chambers

June 26, 2025

7:00 PM

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

Present: Village Commissioner Tully, Village Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt, Library Trustee Khuntia, Library Trustee Williams

Absent: None

Non-Voting Present: Village Manager Dave Fieldman, Village Attorney Enza Petrarca, Library Director Julie Milavec, Assistant Library Director Jen Ryjewski, Deputy Village Clerk Mary Kate Guy

III. Approval of Minutes of the June 5, 2025 Meeting

Trustee Khuntia made a motion to approve the June 5, 2025 meeting minutes, Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

IV. Discussion of Draft Report

Commissioner Tully shared that the committee would be sketching out what the report will look like tonight. He asked the committee members if there is anything else that they think should be looked at or researched before beginning to draft a report. Trustee Williams noted that if the committee has decided not to invite Professor Shoked to speak, a response should be generated to communicate that. He said he does not have anything else to add besides that. Commissioner Tully said it will be communicated with both potential speakers that the committee is not in need of any more guest speakers.

Commissioner Tully spoke of the information that has been gathered thus far. He suggested an executive summary to be written after the report is complete. He broke down the sections of the report into: introduction, charge, summary of meetings and

activities, summary of findings, Downers Grove Library structure versus other libraries with statistics on elected and appointed, trends, sample/case studies for context, attributes of an elected board, attributes of an appointed board, common elements between elected and appointed boards, conclusions and key takeaways. He noted that Illinois library history, library governance, and Downers Grove history and governance would be subcategories for the summary of findings section. Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt asked if the summary of meetings and activities section would include Village Council meetings or just the Joint Ad Hoc. Commissioner Tully said just the Joint Ad Hoc. Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt suggested including context on how and why the Ad Hoc committee was formed. Commissioner Tully said it would be important to note the committee did not request nor was it assigned additional duties. Trustee Williams asked if the trend data would be narrow to just municipalities that are similar in size. Trustee Williams asked what the committee means by attributes and if this refers to pros and cons in the context of the committee's task. Commissioner Tully said this is a structural discussion and that the substance that will be added later will ultimately answer his question. He said this will be more of a narrative than a table with pros and cons. Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt agreed this should be a narrative. Trustee Williams said he thinks this would be more impartial. Commissioner Tully said this question might be better addressed when the report is put together, he said he does not think they need to describe the attributes of the Downers Grove Public Library as the community is already aware of those.

Commissioner Tully said this would be the starting point and things can be added at the next meeting on July 31st. He said he is hoping for a near-final report by the next meeting. He said he wants to make sure the important information from the subject matter experts is included. Trustee Williams asked if it would be worth it to get a verbatim transcript document. The committee agreed upon the framework proposed by Commissioner Tully for the draft report.

Commissioner Tully asked about execution of this draft report. Manager Fieldman said staff is pretty comfortable putting a draft report out in this format by the next meeting. Commissioner Tully said it would be helpful to get the draft out significantly in advance of the meeting for review. Manager Fieldman suggested a process similar to Guiding DG. Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said she just wants to make sure the report effectively captures the input from the subject matter experts. Trustee Williams asked if a final report would be approved at the next meeting. Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said big changes can be made prior to and a final draft could be prepared at the next meeting. Commissioner Tully said the committee is ahead of schedule and his suggestion is to meet on July 31st with a well developed draft and at the next meeting after that, have the report ready to approve. Trustee Khuntia suggested meeting in mid-

August. The committee concurred. Attorney Petrarca confirmed they will look at dates for the August meeting.

Manager Fieldman said Staff has a really good starting point to draft the report.

V. Public Comment

Janet Winningham asked if the draft report will be posted for public consumption.

An unnamed resident suggested putting the attributes of appointed before elected because that is the current model.

Kylie Spahn asked if the Cicero and Berwyn case studies would be included. She also asked if the report would include that an elected board would result in a new tax district.

VI. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Khuntia and seconded by Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Joint Ad Hoc Committee of the Downers Grove Village Council and Downers Grove Library Board of Trustees

DRAFT Final Report

July 31, 2025

Joint Ad Hoc Committee Members

**Martin Tully (Chair), Village Commissioner
Leslie Sadowski-Fugitt, Village Commissioner
Barnali Khuntia, Library Trustee
Nathan Williams, Library Trustee**

Acknowledgements

The Committee was supported by several Village and Library staff members including:

Julie Milavec, Library Executive Director
Jen Ryjewski, Library Assistant Director
David Fieldman, Village Manager
Enza Petrarca, Village Attorney
Mike Baker, Deputy Village Manager

The Committee is grateful for the contributions of expert guest speakers:

John Chrastka, Executive Director for Every Library and the Every Library Institute
Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director of RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Library Systems)

**Joint Ad Hoc Committee of the
Downers Grove Village Council and
Downers Grove Library Board of Trustees**

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Executive Summary

The Village Council (VC) created the Joint Ad Hoc Committee of the Village Council and Downers Grove Library Board of Trustees (Committee) with the adoption of [Resolution 2025-21](#) on February 18, 2025. The creation of the Committee was based on discussions of the VC and Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) that took place from November, 2024 through February, 2025. At the March 25, 2025 meeting, the LBOT adopted [Resolution 2025-1](#), appointing LBOT members to the Committee.

The key duties and responsibilities of the Committee are to:

1. Review and research alternative methods for the selection of LBOT members;
2. Seek and consider appropriate expert information
3. Submit to the VC and the LBOT, no later than September 30, 2025, a report summarizing the attributes of:
 - (1) an elected library board selection process;
 - (2) an appointed library board selection process; and
 - (3) any other alternative selection process.

The Committee convened six times over a six-month period to perform their duties. The Committee explored alternative methods for selecting LBOT members—appointed, elected, and “hybrid”—through public meetings, available research, evaluation of different governance structures, and discussions with experts: John Chrastka Executive Director for Every Library and the Every Library Institute and Joe Filapek, Associate Executive Director of Reaching Across Illinois Library Systems (RAILS). The Committee also reviewed Illinois library law and history and governance structures of similarly-sized municipalities. The Committee found that:

- The Downers Grove Public Library is unique among municipal libraries in Illinois. The 6-member LBOT is appointed by the VC pursuant to Section 5/4-2 of the Local Library Act (75 ILCS 5/4-2) which is applicable to Villages operating under the Commission form of government, although the Village operates as a Managerial form of government. The library operates as a component unit of the Village with the authority to set its own tax levy. All other Villages operating under the managerial form of government have an elected board with 7 members and cities operating under the managerial form have an appointed board with 9 members.
- The key attributes of both elected and appointed library boards are essentially the same. Effective board governance relies heavily on education and training, a strong understanding of constitutional principles and library law, and the ability to appropriately handle issues related to materials challenges, privacy, budget, and patron confidentiality. Board members must take the oath of office seriously, fully recognizing its legal and ethical weight in order to govern effectively.

- While both appointed and elected boards can function effectively, the main distinction lies in their taxing authority.

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Introduction

The Village Council created the Joint Ad Hoc Committee of the Village Council and Downers Grove Library Board of Trustees with the adoption of [Resolution 2025-21](#) on February 18, 2025.

Joint Ad Hoc Committee Purpose and Deliverables

The duties and responsibilities of the Committee, as noted in the Resolution, are to:

1. Review and research alternative methods for the selection of LBOT members;
2. Seek and consider appropriate expert information
3. Submit to the VC and the LBOT, no later than September 30, 2025, a report summarizing the attributes of:
 - (1) an elected library board selection process;
 - (2) an appointed library board selection process; and
 - (3) any other alternative selection process;
4. Hold regular meetings to discuss and consider accomplishing the above-mentioned items; and
5. Perform any additional duties and tasks as the VC may from time to time direct.

This final report from the Committee compiles all of the information gathered over the past six months in response to the [Village of Downers Grove's Resolution No. 2025-21](#). More specifically, it is a comprehensive overview of the Committee's work, including summaries of the committee meetings and activities; findings to date on Illinois library history and Illinois library legislature and governance, trends, and case studies; current available research; excerpts from the discussions with two library governance experts on the attributes of elected and appointed library boards; and final conclusions and key takeaways.

With the publication of this report, the Committee completed its charge. The VC did not request that the Committee take on any additional tasks and duties noted in the Resolution.

Creation of the Joint Ad Hoc Committee

The creation of the Committee was based on discussions of the VC and LBOT that took place from November, 2024 through February, 2025.

At the November 12 and 19, 2024 meetings, the VC discussed a New Business item that proposed placing an advisory referendum question concerning the library on the ballot for the April 1, 2025 consolidated election. The proposed language for the question was: "Shall the Downers Grove Public Library become an independent unit of government, with its own levy and a separately elected library board of trustees chosen by and directly accountable to residents of the community?"

At the December 3, 2024 meeting, the VC considered a resolution directing staff to place an advisory referendum question on the April 1, 2025 ballot. The proposed language for the

question was revised as follows: "“Shall the trustees of the Downers Grove Public Library be elected, rather than appointed?” The VC did not take action on this resolution.

The VC and LBOT held joint meetings on January 2 and February 3, 2025 to explore a framework for discussions between each entity, explore potential alternative approaches for selecting LBOT, and the pros and cons of such alternatives. The VC and the LBOT determined that it was in the best interest of the Village, Library, and residents to establish a Joint Ad Hoc Committee to discuss the attributes of an elected board and those of an appointed board and a resolution to this effect was adopted.

At the February 18, 2025 meeting, the Village Council adopted Resolution 2025-21 establishing the Joint Ad Hoc Committee of the Downers Grove Village Council and Downers Grove Library Board of Trustees

At the March 25, 2025 meeting, the Library Board of Trustees adopted Resolution 2025-1, Appointing Board of Library Trustees Members to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Downers Grove Village Council.

Summaries of Ad Hoc Committee Meetings

The Committee convened six times over a six-month period to research, discuss, and review alternative member selection processes, and to converse with two highly seasoned public library governance experts. The meeting and respective activities are summarized below:

- [March 13, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes](#)
 - Members reviewed charges of the committee: to explore alternatives for selecting library board of trustees
 - Some members expressed opposition to the proposed advisory referendum
 - Discussion focused on gathering information on the pros/cons of appointed vs. elected trustee selection, possible hybrid models, and the possibility of hiring an expert for further analysis
 - Decided that a final report is due by September 30, 2025
 - Quorum set at four members
- [April 3, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes](#)
 - Members discussed the Village's governance structure, the need to understand the differences between the current managerial form of government and the former commission form of government, and the history and rationale behind the change
 - Members discussed identifying all conceivable library governance models (e.g., elected, appointed, "hybrid," etc.)
 - Discussed whether the library could become a district and how that could potentially affect services and intergovernmental agreements with the village
 - Agreed to define the scope of work and deliverables, and identified potential experts to interview
- [April 21, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes](#)
 - Members discussed the district library option and whether or not other alternatives existed—no known examples of hybrid library board models
 - Members stated their interest in identifying other managerial governments in Illinois with either elected or appointed boards
 - Decided to move ahead with experts John Chrastka and Joe Filipek before moving ahead with paid consultants
 - Began planning for expert interviews, which included preparing a summary of research to date and a list of questions to guide discussion with experts
- [May 29, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes](#)
 - Discussion with John Chrastka, Founder and Executive Director of EveryLibrary. A transcript of this conversation is attached as an appendix to this report.

- [June 5, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes](#)
 - Discussion with Joe Filipek, Associate Director at Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and Board President of Aurora Public Library District. A transcript of this conversation is attached as an appendix to this report.
- June 26, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes
 - Discussed the format and contents of the final Committee report
- July 31, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee meeting minutes
 - Reviewed and discussed the draft final report

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Summary of Findings

To contextualize the process of establishing public library governance structures, this report draws on a basic understanding of Illinois library history and law, along with an analysis of available research on various governance models.

Illinois Library History - Timeline

The [Illinois State Library Heritage Project, 1839-2013](#), provided much of the information on the history and evolution of public libraries in Illinois. The undermentioned, streamlined chronology highlights significant milestones regarding the growth and development of Illinois public libraries throughout its 174-year existence, with a particular focus on the creation and expansion of library districts:

- [1925](#): The number of free public libraries in Illinois reached 248 (up from 179 in 1914), reflecting the success of the Illinois Library Extension Commission in promoting library creation. By 1925 only six towns of populations 5,000+ lacked a library. The Illinois Library Extension Commission was created to aid in establishing and developing public libraries throughout the state and by means of its loan collection, to furnish good books to individuals, clubs, and rural communities.
- [1939](#): The Illinois State Library Act of 1939 established a permanent advisory board and 12 regional library districts (organized by county) to coordinate library services statewide. This was a key legislative step linking local libraries into a state-supported network.
- [1956](#): Lack of public library service continued as a national problem, with over 27 million Americans remaining unserved. For many years, library leaders across the nation joined in calls for federal funding to spur public library development. On June 19, 1956, those calls were finally heard when President Eisenhower signed Public Law 597, better known as the Library Services Act.
- [1960s](#): Federal grants under the Library Services Act and earlier Library Services Act projects provided funding for public library services in both rural and urban areas and supported the development of library districts and regional library systems throughout the state, in addition to new construction, building renovations, and technological improvements

The Library Services Act was replaced by the [Library Services and Construction Act \(LSCA\)](#) in 1964. The intention was to broaden the scope to include urban and suburban areas and added funding for library construction and remodeling. Later, in 1996, the LSCA was replaced by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which shifted the focus from construction to technology and infrastructure for libraries.

- [1965](#): The Illinois Library Systems Act, a plan for a network of public library systems, was passed (signed Aug. 17, 1965). For the first time, Illinois law expressly made the state responsible for supporting public libraries and authorized county-based library systems (multi-type networks serving 150,000+ population). This law launched 18 regional library systems across Illinois.
- [1970s](#): In order to enhance library services, improve resource sharing, and ensure long-term sustainability across communities, Project PLUS (Promoting Larger Units of Service) was developed by the State Library in 1972 to encourage the consolidation or collaboration of smaller libraries into larger, more efficient service units, namely library districts.
- [Early 1980s](#): State funding for libraries grew dramatically. In FY 1982 the IL State Library's budget was \$27.8 million (a 61% increase over 1974). Of this, \$24.9 M (89%) was distributed to Illinois' 18 library systems (up from \$6.6 M in 1974). By 1982, the library had implemented statewide automation (e.g. OCLC cataloging) to streamline operations.
- [1985](#): The State Library introduced another plan to encourage larger units of service. Project LIME, a shortening of "Library MErgers," was created to encourage small libraries to merge, forming larger library districts.
- [Late 1980s–1990s](#): Facing economic pressures, Illinois studied consolidating library systems. The 1987 "Vision 1996" report recommended cutting the 18 systems to about six large regions. A Blue-Ribbon Task Force reviewed this plan (1988) and ultimately set the stage for mergers and realignments of systems in the 1990s and 2000s.
- [1990s](#): Illinois libraries expanded services to special populations. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act required library buildings to be accessible; the State Library also enhanced its services to disabled patrons. By 1993 circulation of materials for blind/visually impaired users exceeded 895,000 items (an increase of 30,000 over the previous year).
- [1996](#): Congress replaced the old Library Services & Construction Act with the Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) (effective Oct. 1, 1997). LSTA broadened federal support to all types of libraries (not just public) and emphasized technology and lifelong learning. Illinois promptly used LSTA funds to help libraries update technology, train staff, and expand access.
- [2000s](#): Federal LSTA funding continued as a major source for Illinois libraries. For example, in FY 2007 the IL State Library disbursed over \$3.3 million in LSTA grants to 493 projects statewide (categories included digital collections, early literacy, broadband, etc.). State support also remained strong: through 2013 Illinois library systems received

heavy state appropriations and shared electronic catalogs (ILLINET/Enterprise) to extend their reach.

Illinois Library Legislature and Governance

Public Library Act of 1872

According to the [Illinois State Library Heritage Project, 1839-2013](#), the governance of public libraries in Illinois was formally initiated by the [Public Library Act of 1872](#), which authorized cities, incorporated towns, and townships to establish and maintain free public libraries and reading rooms “for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of each city.” When a town made the decision to establish a public library, a board of nine directors, “chosen from the citizens at large with reference to their fitness for such office,” was to be selected, with no more than one city council member on the board at any time. The board was charged with creating rules and regulations for governing the library, as well as the expenditure of all proceeds garnered from the “Library Fund,” collected from a specified tax levy.

Illinois Local Library Act

The [Illinois Local Library Act](#) reorganized and clarified the Public Library Act of 1872, providing standardized governance models for municipal libraries and defining the powers and responsibilities of library boards. Numerous updates to the Act have occurred since then. Under the current Act, there are four governance models:

- City Libraries
 - Appointing authority: Mayor with approval of City Council
 - Board size: 9 trustees
- Villages Under the Commission Form of Government
 - Appointing authority: Village Council
 - Board size: 6 trustees
- Incorporated Towns, Townships, and Villages Not Under the Commission Form of Government
 - Elected
 - Board size: 7 trustees
- Aurora Public Library (never implemented)
 - Appointed (like other city libraries) w/ option to convert to an elected board by referendum. Referendum may be triggered by Aurora City Council ordinance or petition signed by 10% of voters
 - Board size: If the change to an elected board has been approved by voters, the total number of trustees equals the number of wards in Aurora plus one (the at-large trustee). If the board remains appointed, it defaults to the same size as city libraries at 9 trustees.

Public Library District Act of 1991

[The Public Library District Act of 1991](#) established the legal framework for public library districts in Illinois. The act outlines the procedures for establishing, maintaining, and managing these districts, including how they are governed, funded, and how library services are provided. The Act also specifies how districts can annex to or be included within other districts.

- District Libraries
 - Appointing authority: Upon creation of a district library, if it lies within a single county, the presiding officer of the county board, with the advice and consent of the county board, appoints the initial trustees from a list of nominees. If the district lies in multiple counties, each county board's presiding officer appoints at least one trustee, with remaining appointments made proportionally to each county's share of the district's population. These initial trustees serve temporarily until elected trustees take office.
 - The first election is held at the next regular election for library district trustees that occurs more than 4 months after the district's creation.
 - Board size: 7 trustees

Downers Grove Public Library Structure

The Village of Downers Grove adopted the managerial form of government—moving away from a commission form of government—via a referendum in a special election held in 1962. Despite this change, however, the VC continued to appoint members of the LBOT pursuant to the commission form of government process ([Illinois Local Library Act 75 ILCS 5/4-2](#)). It is unknown why the VC continued to follow the commission form of government process of appointing members of LBOT, as opposed to following the election process similar to neighboring libraries like Westmont, Hinsdale, and Clarendon Hills that also have a managerial form of government.

Under current law, for the Downers Grove Public Library to change its governance structure to that of Public Library District, the library would need to:

1. convert to a public library district, which would require a petition signed by at least 10% of the registered voters in the village; OR
2. have the VC and LBOT each pass an ordinance approving the conversion to a library district, which would then be finalized in court.

On August 13, 1993, a petition was filed requesting that a proposition be placed on the ballot to convert the Downers Grove Public Library into a Public Library District. Several objections to the petition were filed. On August 31, 1993, the Downers Grove Municipal Officers Electoral Board held a hearing regarding the objection petitions and upheld those objections, and as a result, the proposition failed to appear on the ballot.

Current Governance Structures: Appointed vs Elected

The Committee identified 38 Illinois libraries with a community or service size of 30,000 to 70,000 people, excluding Downers Grove. Table 1 below summarizes the libraries by type.

Table 1
Illinois Libraries Serving 30,000 to 70,000 Population

	Municipal	District	Total
Elected	11	21	32
Appointed	6	0	6
Total	17	21	38

Of the libraries reflected in Table 1, 30 have a seven-member Board of Trustees and eight have a nine-member Board of Trustees. The Downers Grove Public Library—not reflected in Table 1—has six.

Expanding the comparison beyond libraries serving populations of 30,000 to 70,000, only seven additional libraries in Illinois reported having six trustees, according to the [Illinois State Library Illinois Public Library Annual Report \(IPLAR\) \(pp.21-22\)](#). However, most of these libraries appeared to have misreported due to a trustee vacancy. After eliminating those libraries, only two of the seven—Forest Park Public Library and Palos Park Public Library—are similar to the Downers Grove Public Library, whereby trustees are appointed, six in number, however, both of those municipalities operate under the commission form of government.

Downers Grove Governance: Library and Village

The Village of Downers Grove transitioned from the commission form of government to the managerial form following a referendum in a special election held in 1962. The VC continued to appoint members of the LBOT pursuant to the commission form of government process (Illinois Local Library Act 75 ILCS 5/4-2) with a 6 member appointed Board of Library Trustees. The library operates as a component unit of the Village. The Board of Library Trustees has the authority to set the library's tax levy.

Attributes of Elected and Appointed Boards

Many libraries in the State of Illinois have successfully [converted to district libraries](#). These conversions were generally undertaken to solve two main problems: 1) reach the unserved areas outside the municipalities; and 2) ensure the future funding for the library.

Expert Discussion on Appointed and Elected Boards

The Committee met with two experts, John Chrastka and Joe Filapek, to discuss the attributes of appointed and elected boards. The following sections summarize the information and comments provided by the experts. Transcripts of the Committee's discussion are attached to this report.

Both experts provided information on three other public libraries. The information is summarized below as case studies.

Aurora

Mr. Filapek has served on the Aurora LBOTas both an appointed and an elected member. He noted that when the legislation to change to an elected board was brought forth, one of the things pointed out was the diversity of the board and concern that it would be diminished as an elected board. He said the Aurora LBOT did become slightly less diverse when they became an elected board. He stated that appointed boards have a more direct path to achieving diversity. He spoke of the lack of hispanic representation on the Aurora LBOT, even though hispanics make up a significant portion of Aurora's population. Mr. Filapek said that when the board originally converted to an elected body, there were only five candidates for the seven seats, with the two remaining seats being filled by write-in candidates.

Mr. Filapek noted that there were some controversies occurring around the time that the Aurora Public Library changed its form. He said the library was not as transparent as they should have been in making the change, which led to a lot of frustration and disappointment. He said this led to the conversation about an elected board to solve some issues of transparency. He shared that there was opposition to the bill. He said from the perspective of the city, they were interested in a full separation. He spoke of the organizations that were opposed to this legislation. He noted that Aurora's process was not as intentional or transparent as what is currently happening in Downers Grove.

Berwyn

Mr. Chrastka stated that the Berwyn Public Library recently explored converting from a municipal library to a district library. The consideration was prompted by a significant decline in the municipality's property tax base as a hospital with a high property value converted to a not-for-profit entity. This resulted in a decrease in the municipality's taxable property value. The library conducted a financial analysis and determined that a large increase in the property tax levy would be required to cover its operating expenses if it were to convert to a district.

Cicero

Mr. Chrastka said that the Cicero public library, after operating as a municipal library, converted to a district. After several years operating a district library, they converted back to a municipal library. This decision appeared to be based on two key factors. First, there was a shortage of people running for the elected library board positions, and second, it was more expensive than originally anticipated to operate as a district library.

No Hybrid Models

The Committee was not able to identify any “hybrid” models that combine elements of election and appointment procedures.

Appointed and Elected Boards

Based on the conversations with Mr. Chrastka and Mr. Filapek, the Committee identified the different attributes of appointed and elected boards as well as the common characteristics the boards share.

The fundamental difference between elected and appointed library boards in Illinois is the power to tax. Mr. Chrastka stated that elected library boards have the authority to tax while appointed boards have the power to advise on taxation and make recommendations to the municipality.

Elected boards provide direct representation to the voters. The frequency of elections (length of terms) provides accountability to the public. In Illinois, elected board members are not subject to recall or impeachment.

Appointed boards serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority; in this case, the municipalities. The appointing municipalities may have the power to remove board members.

Regarding financial performance, boards with the power to tax and that have dedicated property tax levies appear to be in a better position to respond to financial challenges. Boards without the power to tax and /or without a dedicated property tax levy appear to be linked to the financial position of their municipality.

Regarding the handling of challenging politicized issues, Mr. Chrastka said that there does not appear to be a difference based on the board member selection process. The handling of these types of issues appears to be “all over the board.”

There are factors which appear to affect the performance of boards to a greater extent than whether they are elected or appointed.

Modes of Board Operation

Regardless of the board member selection process, boards’ operations fall into five categories or modes of operation as noted below. Boards may use multiple modes of operation

concurrently. Mr. Chrastka noted that over the long term, the modes are more important than the member selection process (appointed or elected).

Governance Board - focus on providing a framework and structure for work to be performed and services to be provided.

Policy Board - focus on establishing policies in compliance with regulations and statutes.

Advisory Board - focuses on advising other governments and/or the library leadership.

Interventionist Board - focuses on bringing about change and intervening on how things have been done.

Planning Board - focuses on developing and implementing large scale plans such as the construction or renovation of facilities.

Board Governance

Effective performance of both appointed and elected boards is related to board governance. High performing boards tend to have strong governance models and a commitment to adhering to established expectations of how board members interact with other board members, staff and the public.

Oath of Office

In Illinois, both appointed and elected board members take oaths of office which address how board members go about conducting their business. Both appointed and elected boards have a duty of care and fiduciary responsibility.

Training and Support

The performance of both appointed and elected boards is related to the training and support that the board members receive. Boards consisting of members that are educated on board topics and have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities tend to be high performing.

Literature Review

The merits (as stated above) of libraries converting to library districts are obvious; however, there is neither readily available nor substantive data on the merits of appointed versus elected public library trustees.

Despite the literature being lean on such matters as the merits of appointed versus elected Board of Library Trustees member selection processes, the Joint Ad Hoc Committee staff members found a handful of [scholarly articles](#) that highlight differences between other elected and appointed officials, including mayors, judges, treasurers, school board members, regulators, etc. Abstracts from each article are provided below.

Hessami, Zohal, "Accountability and Incentives of Appointed and Elected Officials," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 100:1 (2018), p. 51-64.

Political agency models suggest that elected public officials choose different policies than appointed officials do. This paper is the first (a) to apply a clean empirical design to study whether the selection rule has a causal effect on public officials' policy choices and (b) to investigate transmission channels. I exploit a unique setting in Germany, where a reform has created quasi-experimental variation in the selection rule for mayors. As the outcome variable, I use data on grant receipts for highly visible investment projects for which mayors must apply to the state government. Elected mayors attract 7% to 7.4% more grants in election years; for appointed mayors, there is no cycle. Using hand-collected data on mayor characteristics, I find suggestive evidence that although the selection of mayors changes following the reform studied, a likely reason for the observed cycle is that elected mayors have stronger electoral incentives.

Eric Posner, G. Mitu Gulati & Stephen J. Choi, "Professionals or Politicians: The Uncertain Empirical Case for an Elected Rather than Appointed Judiciary" (John M. Olin Program in Law and Economics Working Paper No. 357, 2007).

Although federal judges are appointed with life tenure, most state judges are elected for short terms. Conventional wisdom holds that appointed judges are superior to elected judges because appointed judges are less vulnerable to political pressure. However, there is little empirical evidence for this view. Using a dataset of state high court opinions, we construct objective measures for three aspects of judicial performance: effort, skill and independence. The measures permit a test of the relationship between performance and the four primary methods of state high court judge selection: partisan election, non-partisan election, merit plan, and appointment. The empirical results do not show appointed judges performing at a higher level than their elected counterparts. Appointed judges write higher quality opinions than elected judges do, but elected judges write many more opinions, and the evidence suggests that the large quantity difference makes up for the small quality difference. In addition, elected judges do not appear less independent than appointed judges. The results suggest that elected judges are more focused on providing service to the voters (that is, they behave like politicians), whereas appointed judges are more focused on their long-term legacy as creators of precedent (that is, they behave like professionals).

Whalley, A., "Elected and Appointed Policy Makers: Evidence from City Treasurers," *Journal of Law and Economics* 56 (2013), 39-81.

This paper investigates whether the method of selecting public officials affects policy making. I compare the policy choices of bureaucrat city treasurers and politician city treasurers, who are selected and held accountable in very different ways. The analysis draws on rich data from California to examine whether cities with appointed or elected city treasurers pay lower costs to borrow. The results demonstrate that having appointive treasurers reduces a city's cost of borrowing by 19–31 percent. Holding officials directly accountable to voters can result in lower levels of performance in complex policy areas.

“Should School Board Members be Appointed or Elected?” *The Journal of Education* 49:8 (1899), 117.

This article explores the debate over whether school board members should be appointed or elected. It examines the advantages and disadvantages of both methods, considering factors such as accountability, efficiency, political influence, and community representation. Proponents of elected school boards argue that they enhance democratic participation and ensure that board members are directly accountable to the public. On the other hand, supporters of appointed boards contend that this method allows for the selection of highly qualified individuals who can make decisions based on expertise rather than political considerations.

Besley, T., and S. Coate, “Elected Versus Appointed Regulators: Theory and Practice,” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 1 (2003), 1176-1206.

This paper contrasts direct election with political appointment of regulators. When regulators are appointed, regulatory policy becomes bundled with other policy issues the appointing politicians are responsible for. Because voters have only one vote to cast and regulatory issues are not salient for most voters, there are electoral incentives to respond to stakeholder interests. If regulators are elected, their stance on regulation is the only salient issue so that the electoral incentive is to run a pro-consumer candidate. Using panel data on regulatory outcomes from U.S. states, we find new evidence in favor of the idea that elected states are more pro-consumer in their regulatory policies.

Nahmod, Sheldon H., “Reflections on Appointive Local Government Bodies and a Right to an Election,” *Duquesne Law Review* 11:2 (1972), 119-132.

While few would dispute the importance in a representative democracy of the right to vote for government officials, there appears to be relatively little discussion of what might be termed an individual's constitutional right to an election.' Granted, the reapportionment cases and other voting rights cases direct attention to vote dilution and voters' qualifications, but they involve situations where elections have already been provided. Suppose, however, that elected officials of a properly apportioned municipality are permitted by statute to appoint members of a school board which will be exercising important governmental powers, such as the power to levy and collect taxes, issue bonds, and acquire property by condemnation. Might an argument be made that those school board members must constitutionally be elected by their constituents? What could be the constitutional source and judicial apportionment cases which prompted them. The following discussion is primarily intended to stimulate further thinking in this area—standards of such a right to an election? And, what might be the implications of this right? This article will explore these questions, beginning with the reapportionment cases which prompted them. The following discussion is primarily intended to stimulate further thinking in this area.

Ferrer, Joshua, “To Elect or Appoint? Evidence from Local Election Administration,” (2024)

Do elected or appointed officials produce better outcomes for their constituents? Elections should improve representation by providing a direct link to voters. However, some argue that citizens may have too little information to select good leaders and hold them accountable, especially at the local level. In order to assess these conflicting claims, I examine the performance of local election officials, an office that has come under immense strain to deliver democratic elections and for which selection method is a live policy debate. Using an original collection of election administration structures in 1,116 counties across 13 states and over 62 years, I leverage changes in selection method over time to credibly measure differences in the election outcomes produced by local election officials based on whether they were elected or appointed. I find that appointed officials out-perform their elected counterparts, increasing voter turnout by one to two percentage points and raising registration rates by one percentage point. Appointed officials appear to boost election administration resources, more actively communicate with voters, and reduce voter wait times. I present evidence that the quality of selection and sanctioning are higher for appointed officials, leading to better educated and more closely monitored agents. My findings speak to the challenges in designing local institutions that advance and protect democratic ideals.

Ferrer, Joshua, “How Partisan Is Local Election Administration?” Cambridge University Press, (2023).

In the United States, elections are often administered by directly elected local officials who run as members of a political party. Do these officials use their office to give their party an edge in elections? Using a newly collected dataset of nearly 5,900 clerk elections and a close-election regression discontinuity design, we compare counties that narrowly elect a Democratic election administrator to those that narrowly elect a Republican. We find that Democrats and Republicans serving similar counties oversee similar election results, turnout, and policies. We also find that reelection is not the primary moderating force on clerks. Instead, clerks may be more likely to agree on election policies across parties than the general public and selecting different election policies may only modestly affect outcomes. While we cannot rule out small effects that nevertheless tip close elections, our results imply that clerks are not typically and noticeably advantaging their preferred party.

[Furstenberg-Beckman, Hannah, Greg Degen, and Tova Wang, “Understanding the Role of Local Election Officials: How Local Autonomy Shapes U.S. Election Administration”](#)

This policy brief will examine the independence and discretionary powers of local election officials and offer a framework to better understand local autonomy in our electoral system. It will also describe the larger system within which the local election official operates and demonstrate how local power and voter-focused decision-making varies across the country. The brief will use illustrative examples of the exercise of autonomy by local election officials from past elections as well as examples of shifts in local discretionary powers from the recent wave of state legislative efforts that seek to restrict autonomy. It will also address the implications of

local autonomy for those with an interest in increasing voter access and promoting voter participation. This brief can be a resource for those seeking a better understanding of the possible levers of change in their own state or locality's electoral system.

[Rubin, Paul G. "Political Appointees vs. Elected Officials: Examining How the Selection Mechanism for State Governing Agency Board Members Influences Responsiveness to Stakeholders in Higher Education Policy-Making" *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 29:115 \(2021\)](#)

Through an exploratory comparative case study of two U.S. states (Georgia and Nevada), this study investigates how the selection mechanism to state higher education on governing agency boards influences the responsiveness of board members to stakeholders and their role in the policy-making process. Framed around the recent national policy agenda to improve postsecondary degree attainment and college completion, findings suggest that state agency board members in both states prioritized the opinions, insights, and goals of the state governor and governing agency staff, regardless of selection mechanism. However, for more localized issues and on the ground decision making, stakeholders formally involved in the day to day operation of higher education, such as administrators, faculty, and students, serve a larger role, though this influence can be mediated by the selection mechanism of board members.

[Guillermo, Toral. "The benefits of patronage: How political appointments can enhance bureaucratic accountability and effectiveness" \(2021\)](#)

The political appointment of bureaucrats is typically seen as a rent-seeking strategy that helps politicians sustain clientelistic networks and manipulate public administration to their advantage. I argue that political appointments can also increase bureaucratic accountability and effectiveness because they provide political and social connections between bureaucrats and politicians. These connections grant access to material and non-material resources, enhance monitoring, facilitate the application of sanctions and rewards, align priorities and incentives, and increase mutual trust. In certain conditions, political appointments can thus enhance bureaucrats' accountability and effectiveness in public service delivery. I test this theory using data on Brazilian municipal governments, leveraging two quasi-experiments, two original surveys of bureaucrats and politicians, and in-depth interviews. The findings challenge the traditional view that patronage is universally detrimental to development, and highlight how political appointments and connections can be leveraged to enhance public service delivery.

Conclusions and Key Takeaways

In conclusion, based on the research and interviews conducted throughout this process, the Committee found that the Downers Grove Public Library is unique among municipal libraries in Illinois. The 6-member LBOT is appointed by the VC pursuant to Section 5/4-2 of the Local Library Act (75 ILCS 5/4-2) which is applicable to Villages operating under the Commission form of government, although the Village operates as a Managerial form of government. The library operates as a component unit of the Village with the authority to set its own tax levy. All other Villages operating under the managerial form of government have an elected board with 7 members and cities have an appointed board with 9 members.

Based on the research and interviews conducted throughout this process, the Committee found that the key attributes of both elected and appointed library boards are essentially the same. Effective board governance relies heavily on education and training, a strong understanding of constitutional principles and library law, and the ability to appropriately handle issues related to materials challenges, budget, privacy, and patron confidentiality. Board members must take the oath of office seriously, fully recognizing its legal and ethical weight in order to govern effectively.

Transcript from Committee Discussion with Mr. Chrastka

May 29, 2025

Commissioner Tully (00:01:12):

We are very, very pleased and very, very grateful to have a special guest here who I'm going to invite up while I sort of set the table here. John Chrastka is with us and we're really grateful for you take the time and to come and see us. We really appreciate it. Your reputation precedes you. So we are looking forward to hearing your thoughts on some of the topics that have been raised. As you know, the members of the Ad Hoc committee have an opportunity to provide some questions in advance, not so much as to those are the questions, but more of a courtesy heads up as to the types of questions that my colleagues and I will be asking and then I'm sure we'll have some other questions that we go through it. So with that, unless there's any preliminary comments that anyone wants to make, I thought we could just go to a brief self-introduction because while we know you by reputation, everyone who might be listening to this at some point in time may not know you as well. So you would be so kind to give us of who are you, why you're here, and why should we be in the edge of our seats listening

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:02:21):

Thank you very much. Hello, I'm John Chrastka. I'm the executive director for every library and the Every Library Institute, so Every Library is set up as a five one C four organization, which is technically a political action committee for libraries. In that capacity we work on local library funding measures and local library governance measures, whether it's bonds to build new buildings or levies or warrant articles or referendum or parcel taxes. We provide technical assistance to the library boards or the municipalities that are putting those measures before the voters. We also provide assistance to either vote Yes committees, which we separate from the technical assistance that we do to the boards and to the municipalities, but technical assistance to the Vote Guest committees. Up until recently, it's been mostly vote guest committees. It's got to be vote no committees around the country as well. Things have gotten a little bit odd with library election days.

(00:03:13):

The work that we do as a political action committees all pro bono for free, we're a donor supported organization. The reason that we do it pro bono and for free is two reasons. One is that we should not be using public money to advance the outcome of a campaign. We want to take that off the table so we don't get paid for it. Our donors come from small donors, kind of a Bernie Sanders model, as well as corporate donors in the library space and other benefactors. We also are state pro bono for free in order to make sure that when we're offering advice to technical assistance, it's not with the idea that we're going to get paid if you do what we say,

we're here to provide insights based on best practices. Since we're founded at the end of 2012, we've done 147 election days for libraries and we've taken all the way to the ballot.

(00:04:01):

We have an 85% win rate and we help communities, large and small, red states, blue states, complicated campaigns quite often. Our C3 side, which is called the Ever Library Institute, it's public policy, tax policy and education policy research. The kind of work that's necessary to do to understand not just voter sentiment, but what's the structure of government, what's the structure of a tax code pro things like should we be using revenue from recreational cannabis to fund public libraries? Those kinds of research questions, those kinds of big public policy questions. That work is done as a C3 nonprofit but not a membership group. So not having members allows us to listen to and help amplify the local legitimate stakeholders. To that end, it's really a pleasure to be here with the board members, the commissioners, and I appreciate Julie for bringing me in as a technical advisor on this conversation. We spend a lot of time helping communities think through the form of their government in the form that allows 'em to function as a library for the benefit of the citizenry. So it's my pleasure to be here tonight and to entertain your concerns and your questions. I'll bring my best information INAUDIBLE.

Commissioner Tully (00:05:18):

Terrific. Once again, thank you very much for being here. We really appreciate it and you sold us on the price. That was great. You liked Pro. Pro was great. I was going to spend a moment or two introducing the members of the ad hoc committee, which is probably still, it sounds like you already know who we are and are familiar. So we have two members of the Downers Grove Village Council and we have two members of the Downers Grove Public Library Board of trustees that makes up the composition of the joint ad hoc committee. And I'm guessing you may have also probably taken a peak at our charter, which is what we're supposed to do. So I can dispense with that as well. But before we get started, any questions you have about sort of what our mission is? It sounds like you've done all your homework. Not surprisingly. We can get right to it. I know we have a number of questions that we had floated ahead of time, but we also have additional questions. I want give you an opportunity,

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:06:14):

I'm not blowing smoke at y'all. The dossier is very extensive, very thorough, and I feel well up there.

Commissioner Tully (00:06:22):

Alright, very good. Well, we try to be efficient and keep these meetings shorter in the library board meetings and those council meetings. So with that I will defer my colleagues and who wants to start with questions. There's no need to go in any order. We all know what we want to ask. I think we should go

Trustee Williams (00:06:35):

I think we should go from general to specific. Go for it. So why don't we start with the first two questions which talk about the attributes of an elective library board versus the attributes of an appointment library board.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:06:47):

Sure. Fundamentally, the differences between an appointed board and an elective board are the differences between responsible to the taxpayers. In that 1776 mode of American governance, the elected board allows for that direct representation from, for, the taxpayers to a body that levies taxes. It is one of the gravest responsibilities that any elected official has is to levy taxes. And it's not just about how do we choose to spend it, it's all the things that go into what structure of government do we want to put to work. And then accountability that comes from direct elections is a very American small republic kind of approach. So fundamentally it's whether or not the board has a fiduciary and not just accountability, but the power to tax. Now of course in Illinois library districts are non-home rule units of government. They do not have certain powers that municipalities do.

(00:07:55):

They're more akin to school districts. There's no police power, for example, where you would of course need even a higher level of accountability from the voters to the electeds. But fundamentally for it's that power of attacks, it is the most impolite thing that you can do. Sort of talking about religion. So the opportunity then to look at an appointed board as a power to advise and who are they advising, of course is the library director and the staff and the conduct day to day. But fundamentally the advisory role is to the municipal partner who has that power to tax. So neither is incorrect as a form of government, neither is incorrect as an expression, the people's will, but the fundamental accountability of an elected official to the taxpayer is the difference.

Trustee Williams (00:08:56):

Could you go into the pros and cons of that type of accountability? Sure. Because direct accountability is something that can be a double edge sword, in the sense that direct accountability can create instability over time, for example, and that may be good because citizens want the change and so it reflects the thing, but there's also sort of the institutional element beyond sort of what the citizens see as the fiduciary obligations of a trustee.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:09:35):

Well, in our system we have terms for elected, federally it's two years, four years, six years, depending what your office is, and the frequency of elections provides, depending on a body, a level of accountability. You normally don't see two year cycles on elected officials at the library trustee level, it's usually a four year around the country though there's variations on it.

Trustee Williams (00:10:03):

Are boards classified? Are elective boards such that different members are up for election at different times, therefore creating continuity over time?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:10:17):

Depends on the state, there are certain states in Illinois. In Illinois there's standard elections. Generally speech though sometimes you find situations where elections sync up based on retirements, resignations, people moving out of jurisdictions and such. Yeah, the fundamentals here, and I'm going to my notes on this because I have several different modes that I want to talk about that happen with a board regardless of whether it's an elected board or

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:10:46):

An appointed board,

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:10:47):

And these modes are much more significant I think over the long term than whether or not there's a certain election that'll have a third and a third and a third of the board turnover or if it's serving at the pleasure of an appointed counsel or for a term like that. The reason I want to bring this up is that those two modes of elected and appointed sort out fundamentally with a couple of different kinds of responsibilities based on either the political exigencies of the moment or the conversations that are happening in the community transparently. Regardless of whether or not it's an elected board or an advisory board, there are times where you have a board that is a governance board. They are there to put the whole thing to work as a structure. They build out the frameworks and they initiate those frameworks around taxes and there's a pathway to levies as a pathway to issuing debt.

(00:11:42):

There's a pathway to advise councils and elected officials. Another mode is a policy board that they're there to write and ensure that policies that are fair and compliant with both the federal law and state law and the constitutions of both of those are implemented and enacted. Their whole responsibility is about policy and they might have to levy taxes, they might have to refer or approve ideas for taxation, but really what's their purpose? Another type of board's purpose could be advisory even if it's elected, because sometimes a junior district in Illinois, in Louisiana, in Missouri, in Colorado, a junior district isn't setting the big agenda for the neighborhood. That's a council. It's a commission that's doing that. And that local board for that, even if it's elected for a library, is advising somebody else about literacy or about the community work that's being done by that library, and not necessarily even exercising its full responsibilities.

(00:12:52):

There's another mode for boards that could work for either elected or appointed, which is an interventionist board. Sometimes people are elected, they say, I'm going to go and clean up house. I'm going to go take care of this problem and I'm here to intervene in the way things have

been done. And appointed boards are appointed to intervene from time to time as well. The council says we need to clean this up. We got to get back on the right track or get back on the track that we see it needs to be. That interventionist mode of behavior, doesn't matter if it's elected or appointed, it's still, it's the political and social repertoire of the day. Likewise, there is the board, forgive me, I want to make sure I got it, planning boards. Planning boards are the last one. So sometimes a board has to be planning a new building.

(00:13:48):

Sometimes we have to plan to change something very significantly in our structure and that board is either elected or appointed to carry that heavy load. I mean, I'm not an architect, I'm not a space designer. I have no idea, if I was on that board, I'd have to learn a lot. But sometimes you bring in those folks or you elect those folks. So those visages of the board, those necessary activities of that board are agnostic about whether or not they're appointed or elected. It's more about the training that the board has. It's more about the support structures that they have in order to do those particular kinds of jobs. And I'm not here visiting Downers Grove to tell you what type of board to have within those other categories, but to look at and say, how are we supposed to be structured, elected, or appointed? How are we supposed to be responsible? Is that governance, that interventionist, that planning, that advisory?

Trustee Williams (00:14:46):

It sounds like those modes or categories could exist together. Is that You could have several of 'em at one time. They're not mutually exclusive.

John Chrastka - Speaker

There are different balances to course.

Trustee Williams (00:15:02):

Yes. But the important point is if you need one in place at a specific time, it can exist and be in place regardless of whether you have an appointed structure or an elected selection process. But that's what you're saying.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:15:17):

The incumbent board has a set of responsibilities for that moment in time that Trump, whether they're incumbents because they were appointed or incumbents because they're elected, assuming one of the most dangerous things for board members present company accepted on this, and I was on the board in Illinois for eight years. I was board president for six years. I was an appointed board member there. You're going to hearing a week or two from Joe Beck. He's on the board at Aurora as an elected position. There's other great, I loved my service. I loved doing my service. The long and short of it was we had a task to do during that incumbency. And

when we were prepared to do it, we were able to do it in an open, transparent consultant way for the benefit of the taxpayers and the people we're trying to serve. When we were not, we could have been appointed by the new Chicago Pope could have appointed us. It would've made a difference because we were not prepared properly then we couldn't exercise that responsibility.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:16:29):

I kind of have a follow up to that. I feel like we got here a lot because we wanted to make sure that our boards were accountable to our taxpayers. And I feel like we got here a little bit because of that kind interventionist piece of we really want to make sure that we are doing right. And so I'm just kind of trying to figure out, and there were some issues that had come up in the community. We're seeing just kind of huge waves nationally of just turmoil, political turmoil. And so from your experience, do you see any differences in terms of elected versus appointed boards of having influence from those national political waves of turmoil? Is one more prone to issues than the other or is one more perhaps protected from those issues than another? Or do you see any differences in how they behave over time?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:17:32):

That is a very interesting question. And we went after receiving some of the rumination points, some of the questions in advance I went and looked at, so every Library Institute supports data collection on book bans, attempts to ban books, challenges to books and affronts essentially the first amendment around the country for the last several years, it's not self-reported data. It's collected by an investigator named Hanselyn Magnusin. She's essentially a private investigator for the first amendment here. And the data set is extraordinarily large and extraordinarily deep. And I started to look to try and answer that question in public libraries. And so I started breaking open whether or not it was elected boards or appointed boards. And I rapidly realized that I spent a tremendous amount of time trying to answer this question forensically. But then I just looked at all of the school board situations.

(00:18:31):

There's a tremendous amount of censorship and book band activity campaigns to erase or suppress different populations and different people in K 12, and this is big of a fight in K 12, is there could possibly be, over a free expression of civil rights. And in the states where they're all elected, there's plenty of them going on, in the states where they're appointed by a county commission or a town board. There's plenty of 'em going on. And I can more categorically look at it like that Massachusetts and Connecticut are having the same kind of problems that Mississippi and Wyoming are having.

(00:19:12):

We are not immune to political pressure when we sit in these seats and having to say in the same seats that you folks have, I have not sat in this seat. But that political pressure gets obvi by the understanding of what does the law actually say? And we around the country, we in

Illinois have a problem of both political literacy and legal literacy deficits in our appointments and not knowing what the law actually says about freedom of speech or what the law actually says about civil rights, what the law says about public accommodation, what the law says about freedom of religion and the establishment clause, all those things that go into a limited public forum that is the public library and a place of public accommodation that is the public library without having an understanding of what the law actually says. People either want to do the right thing, but it's based on a hunch. It doesn't matter if you're elected or appointed, it's based on hearsay. They watch a lot of law and order and they think that's how the world works. Seriously.

Commissioner Tully (00:20:22):

Yeah. Every single case starts with a client walking in and later that day they have a full jury trial.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:20:29):

Absolutely, yes. Yeah. So there's a lot of conventional wisdom in library governance and that is the singular problem.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:20:40):

So do you feel like that training and education piece that you were talking about earlier really plays a huge role in this?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:20:45):

If somebody comes up to you and says, this book is a problem, if somebody comes up to you and says, this program offends me. Let's have a conversation based on the laws of the state of Illinois, the constitution of United States, and then as alleged are appointed in Illinois, there's a beautiful thing that happens when you sit down and you've done this yourselves. You've taken an oath of office, and that oath is the most serious part of it, whether you have been appointed or elected. And the gravity of that oath goes back again to that 1776, 1818, 1787 kind of mode of America.

Trustee Williams (00:21:26):

There are different statutes that govern certain elected versus appointed library boards. Correct. But ultimately they're fiduciary obligations and the types of oversight that they have over the library, the library director and so is the same. They're roughly exercising the same responsibility in both cases. Is that right?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:21:47):

In Illinois, the paths diverge slightly because you do have the power to tax if you're in a district and you have the responsibility to advise if you're in an appointed board setting. So those two

responsibilities do diverge, but you still do duty of care and you still have a fiduciary, even if it's to spend an accountability and feeding back to the electeds in other states. Colorado, if you take a look at the way Colorado boards are structured, there are six different modes of appointments for library boards in Colorado and they all come down to this funnel point where all their responsibilities are exactly the same. So we're actually participating in an early conversation in Colorado about why they have six different modes of appointing folks? Why don't we just have one? Because when you write it down, this is one rail of activity that they do. One real responsibility.

Trustee Khuntia (00:22:42):

And kind of piggybacking off of what Leslie asked you, when it comes to a national crisis, let's say COVID major funding cuts, is there a type of board that you think better would handle or handled those cons situations?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:22:55):

Sure. So during the Great Recession, the forecasting that we were, sorry, during the COVID financial issues, we were forecasting two different sets of problems prior to the CARES Act and ARPA being issued by the federal government. Federal one track was library districts with their own power to tax based on property tax and the stability of the property tax. Even the growth of the property tax market meant that boards that have the power to tax or the power to re-index on an annualized or buy basis should exercise those powers. They should go back onto the voters. So we were forecasting that they would weather it better financially than municipally attach libraries without dedicated levies because of the impact in COVID shut down through our sales tax and around use tax and all that kind, sorry, hotel tax now with ARPA and before the CARES Act, the smoothing out of that.

(00:23:58):

But as you look at financial disruptions, municipally tied libraries are, they're inextricably linked to the health of their municipality. So while the library board itself doesn't have the direct power of tax, it does have a responsibility to forecast and help the elected officials understand what the tax rate should be. And we do see more stability in places like Illinois and Iowa and Missouri when there is a dedicated levy line in the local textbook. So it's not that the council has aggregated its responsibility, it's designated a particular tax line which allows for more transparency and visibility and some micromanagement as well. But in the end, if you can't set your own dials, which nothing work can do, then you are of course beholden to whatever the municipalities multiple contingencies are. If we're in Wyoming, the Wyoming County Commissions own the library, the schools, the city dump and the airport. There's a tremendous amount of responsibility at the state county fair. All of the things that go into a county, it's very hard to find that little spot, but 4% of the revenues for libraries.

Commissioner Tully (00:25:20):

Just picking up on the last two questions if I can. At the onset, when you introduced yourself and you explained the role of every library, so the activities you've been involved in, it struck me that in your experience in promoting these different campaigns for a variety of different libraries, I'm assuming that you've dealt with different forms of libraries, municipal district, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Some have been elected, some have been appointed. In your experience, advocating on behalf of libraries for whatever. Have you experienced any different challenges in supporting or advocating on behalf of an elected board versus an appointed board? It's just been all over the map.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:26:02):

It's all over the map. The comfort, familiarity and competency of the board and the comfort, familiarity and the competency of the staff around the issues that they're being asked to face when it comes to being a tax, issuing a tax measure, putting out a bond. We've worked with libraries where they have to put out a bond to build a new building because the current building's falling apart. It's literally the nicest falling apart building alone. Banister comes off and we walk by and if the library board and the staff have never done anything more than buy a house, they've never considered a municipal debt service. They've never heard about debt servicing. There's fear. There's fear that kicks up and that primary effect paralyzes boards, whether they're elected or appointed. It paralyzes commissions as well. That's why you bring in lawyers. It's why you bring in potential advisors. It's why you bring in architects and engineers. I mean, why are we doing carpeting in here instead of tile? I don't know, but somebody who knows what they're doing should tell me if I'm responsible for it.

(00:27:15):

I'm not trying to dodge the question. No, it really is. There's the visage, sorry, the elected versus appointed here is not what's going to happen in the next 5, 7, 10 years for this library, for this community. What's the 20 year long range plan for Downers Grove and what kind of responsible domain do they have? If one of 'em lends itself more appropriately because you feel that you can get a better pool of people who want to run for or stand for election or if you feel like we have a better pool because we can say we need some experts, we need some thoughtfals, we need some competence, we need some empathetics on the board.

Commissioner Tully (00:27:57):

I didn't perceive to be dosing the question because it was just purely delving into your experience and experiences all the map and that's been your experience. Yeah,

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:28:10):

There are fewer libraries that want to embrace their responsibilities to build a new building or to put up tax measures than there should be around the country. It takes tremendous courage to say, we're going to talk about raising your taxes and that that's a big civic conversation and that's really where the shortfalls are. Do we have the skill sets and knowledge and the experience INAUDIBLE. Thank you. Sure. Okay.

Trustee Khuntia (00:28:50):

All right. Now these are questions that I think are important to us. Diversity of composition, representation, what you just led into. The word representation can mean the goal of the public, and I'm going to read this because I'll make sure that I say everything. The public selects board members to represent their interest, but it can also mean the board is representative of a diverse community, including those who do not vote and those who do not have economic means or temperament to run for office. Are elected or appointed library boards more representative in this broader sense

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:29:25):

Is a very good question. So elected officials, generally speaking, are motivated by either people place or platform to run for office, people is not voters. People is my people. Okay. And my people is driven sometimes by demographics, sometimes it's driven by origin. Sometimes it's driven by community detention and development over time. Um, place, in a small jurisdiction like Downers Grove or in my hometown of Berwyn, Illinois, we still have a lot of places. We have 22nd Street, south 22nd Street. So place is a driver and then platform. Platform is when somebody says I'm going to run to fix or to do or clean up or enact. So the self-identified person wants to run for office as a representative of either people place or platform. It's going to come from a lot of different people, a lot of different places and a lot of different platform perspectives provided that there's a path to enfranchisement and access to being on the ballot, can't control for that.

(00:30:33):

Otherwise, appointed boards are not necessarily more, oh, I'm sorry. So for elected boards, I don't believe that there is a mechanism available in Illinois or in 49 other states to have a diversity quotient on election day. Unfortunately or fortunately, it depends on how you want to look at how governance is done. The best similocum of that is wards or writings or places dividing up geographically with the hope that the census tracks those wards, somehow or another reflect diversity in the process. And you see how a portion of districts are built for congressional seats or it's gerrymandering and we don't like it. It's fair representation when we are on an appointed board, there is not a mechanism in Illinois for municipalities to consider characteristics other than qualifications on an appointment board. If we were in Connecticut or even Washington state or Oregon where there are a lot of 501 C3 nonprofit boards, you could theoretically have a conversation about the state's corporate board rules making around diversity representation.

(00:32:02):

But that would be a stretch because even those C3 boards have been considered by the state as being a public library and therefore that freedom of speech issue about service and the no fear, no favor issues in fifth 14th. I don't know how you do it other than we have conversations, in an appointed board setting, where people from many different backgrounds, different age

stages of life, different needs are supported to be able to raise their hand and say, I would like to be considered for service. And then the elected officials who do that have to hear from their constituents, their people, their places to say, we would like to see us in a new way or a different way on that. And the same thing goes for electoral politics. Somebody says, I'm going to make a run at it. Otherwise, I don't know the mechanisms in public bodies to do that appropriately under law.

Trustee Williams (00:33:12):

So you just talked about how things work under law, but can you make any observations about how things work in practice? For example, there's some sort of selection bias associated with choosing to run for an election, right? You identify people, place and platform. Conversely appointment, you have a village council. Village council understands the composition of the existing board. They understand if there's an opening that they're trying to fill some sort of gaps in qualifications that's within their statutory obligations there, but that different process may lead to a different type of representation, and I don't even necessarily mean intrinsic qualities. It could be other qualities, such as a specific time you want someone with a specific set of experience. Have you made any observations across all of the different boards that you have observed that elections versus appointments make a difference in that sense?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:34:17):

I have been considering that since reading the questions in preparation here, and going through in my professional role or professional dossier about places that have had trouble and places that have had no drama. And the thing that is missing from libraries where there's trouble, is either an adherence to the oath of office or an implication of the oath of office with an ethical framework within a set of violence. Places where there's no trouble, either have no trouble because nothing's going on and there's 9,850 library districts around. So you take a distribution curve, a bunch of 'em have nothing going on, it's fine. This is no drama because there's no drama. But in places where they have taken a deliberative step to say, how are we going to apply our oath of office and the laws of the land, not only to our patriot services, but how would we do EEOC for our staff and how do we treat each other not as parliamentary foils, is again, you can have a parliamentary system or parliamentary procedures for an appointed board, you have to have rules, as Roberts rules an elected board, you have your INAUDIBLE, whatever. How do we apply that in terms of ethical framework? So that ethical code, that ethical pledge that doesn't supersede or supplant the oath of office but extends it to application is something that does inoculate against problems and it does allow for healing I think after problems have been had.

Trustee Williams (00:36:04):

So you're saying if you have a code of conduct or some sort of ethical framework that's within bylaws governing the trustees, that mitigates the likelihood that there's going to be trouble even in situations where they're appointed.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:36:24):

Because what that does is it allows for who's calling balls and strikes in a board meeting. The board president is there to moderate a meeting but not to call. You're out of order. You're out of order. That's based on the rules. We hold each other accountable both to the law but to the conduct of the board. And that conduct is not governed exclusively by the law. It's governed by those bylaws. And...

Trustee Williams (00:36:54):

Could it also be governed by the council's framework for removal?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:37:05):

So that's a very interesting thing.

Trustee Williams (00:37:06):

I mean it's obviously at the pleasure of the council, but the council can set their own parameters for that. Correct.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:37:13):

In Illinois, it's the pleasure of the council. There's a certain administrative holdback for mayors as well, in terms of almost vetoing the dismissal. It's not appellate, in the way the judiciary is. It's very much administrative. Yes, there is always the accountability in an appointed position in Illinois. Funnily enough, there is no impeachment of elected library board members in Illinois and you go to a place that's had trouble and there's folks in the audience who are like, why can't we impeach Mr. And Mrs. Smith? That mechanism doesn't exist under Illinois law, but the board's accountability to oath of office, and itself, as a deliberative body, and to each other, the corporate nature of it.

Trustee Khuntia (00:38:12):

Can we continue on diversity just for a second? Is there one forum that tends to have a more diverse board, elected board versus an appointed board where we speak just intrinsically diversity?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:38:25):

So I don't mean to speak ill of New Jersey, but if you look at a place like Newark or Bayonne or Jersey City where the community is historically, back in the day it was French and Italian, and now it's French, Italian, Asian, Somali, all INAUDIBLE of Mexico. It took him just as long to get there. It took him just as long to get those different communities where somebody had both the personal ability to say, I want to run and the community support and the latitude, and we're here on a Thursday night, for fun right now. This takes a tremendous amount of personal ability to put

your hand up and say, I will, if asked. And then you go over to a town, I don't want to talk about the school again, but you go to Northvale, New Jersey, right on the New York border right across the there and they've got a really big Korean community, but I haven't seen a single one of 'em on the board because it's the white folks who get together and they're all here together.

(00:39:48):

We're doing a great job in governing on this board. It is a cultivation of candidates that's necessary, but that's super. I would suggest to the responsibilities of the board, one of the beautiful things that the library does is that civic and small democratic training, support and guidance. One of the areas that I've seen successful for boards to find new candidates, again, whether it's elected or appointed, is to have some mechanism for participation in the formal governance structure that is of citizens. It's more than just doing a survey. It's more than just seven people to INAUDIBLE to find out how they feel or think. There are occasions in planning, in budgeting, in forecasting and strategic planning where you can open up seats, but we don't advise on having a student member or something. We have to be structured within Illinois law and those aren't provided for, it's at an ad hoc kind of committee situation, but to encourage that also the set responsibility about who actually has responsibility to vote when it's time to vote. Because if you have a giant room and a lot of people have been participating and it moves to like, okay, are we going to tax and spend right now? Are we going to set policy? Then we also have to make sure that those counter rails are there, but to give people experiential learning to be able to self-identify and say, I can do this. My goodness. Those pathways I think, again, are part of the bylaws and practices.

(00:41:34):

The law is not very concerned unfortunately in Illinois or in 49 other states, with making sure that folks who are in and of the community are represented on those boards that serve the community trust.

Trustee Williams (00:41:51):

Follow up question to that too. One point of clarification, for New Jersey, does it require elected?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:41:59):

So New Jersey has appointed boards, to the exception of a handful of 'em, that have electeds,

Trustee Williams (00:42:08):

but you were referencing specific cities.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:42:11):

Yeah, those three are all appointed.

Trustee Williams (00:42:15):

So the second question, was where you have elections, is it your experience that there are turnout issues, that there's sort of low turnout? Our experience with the village council, until the most recent election with record turnout, is that it's a small segment of the overall population that may be using the library that ends up turning out for the election. And so if you extrapolate that from council members, to then to library trustees, you could say that the activists are then sort of the polar parts of our community that may be deciding who is governing the library. Is that theory something that you've actually observed in elections or does it tend to lead to a fairly broad spectrum of the public taking interest in.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:43:19):

There are folks who are doing doctoral level dissertation on this topic, that I think you should probably be consulting more than me on this one, only because in the micro, any particular election that we work on is for ballot measures, not for candidates, and our work is to forecast based on that particular upcoming election, and we know from the political sciences that the significant differences in terms of turnout between types of elections, timing of elections, and what else is on the ballot. We also know for library board elections, and referenda, and levies and such, that they're at the bottom of the ballot and there's this whole thing about fatigue on the ballot that we can get into, but I don't think it's germane in this conversation today.

Trustee Williams (00:44:20):

Thank you. Can I ask one more question? So I don't know where this concept got invented, but we came up with at some point collectively came up with a concept called the hybrid approach to governance. My understanding of it, although I've never received a definition, but we'll make one up, is that it involves a subset of trustees being elected and appointed. Now staff researched this concept and couldn't find anything. Yeah, Donald Rumsfeld famously said, absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence. So it's possible that it exists and that we just haven't found that needle in the haystack, that was on weapons of mass destruction. So I guess I'm asking in your experience of understanding library trends, are you aware of any jurisdiction that has a hybrid approach and if so, what was their experience with that?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:45:19):

I don't, and I've been professionally intrigued by that to the point of cranking open our 50 state library law survey that we did back in 2016, it's published on our open access journal book librarian if they want to check it out. That doesn't exist to the best of my knowledge. The closest analog to it is when, and Illinois's got this bad in the old days, is when there's an elected board. But the charter bylaws and statutory obligations of that board requires them to incorporate a member of a council that is either co hers or adjacent or somehow or other, so that this one member of the council or the designee of the mayor, for example, or the mayor has to be on that board. They're not elected in the same election frameworks, but that's it. That's the only time it ever is. So you'll have a six member board that's elected and then a designee from their

municipal contract partner or something like that. And so in California you have frameworks where there are elected officials who are not elected to be on the board, but they're part of a joint powers authority. That's particularly peculiar to California. There's some nuances to this, but under current law, you would have to pass something like a Pegasus unicorn law in Illinois to get that to happen here,

Trustee Williams (00:46:59):

Downers Grove thinks it's special. So maybe that unique situation could occur with the right legislature

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:47:05):

Absolutely. What unites us, I mean what divides us, is that.

Commissioner Tully (00:47:10):

If I can pick up on that point, just because we have been, we here, the broader community, have been talking for some time, what different structural arrangements whereby a library board of trustees can be appointed are a handful. One of the questions that I asked, I'll take credit for or blame for, as the case can be, is somewhat open-ended by design, which is, are we missing something? Is there some other form or some other structural way in which, other than a municipal library or a district, is there some other way that we're not aware of that a library board of trustees can go from appointed to be elected or vice versa? Is there something we're missing?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:48:03):

I'm sorry, when you say go from, you mean what's the enacting ordinance?

Commissioner Tully (00:48:09):

Well, and I understand that obviously there are statutes and regulations and things like that, but what we have been dealing with is a relatively limited number of hats. Basically you can have municipal or district, or we'll hear more in a couple weeks, about the Aurora model, right?

John Chrastka - Speaker

Right. INAUDIBLE

Commissioner Tully

Yes, yes. Although don't conflate INAUDIBLE, but point well taken. But is there something that we're just not aware of?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:48:42):

No, not in Illinois. There's other models, in other states. They're all academically interesting, but they're unavailable.

Commissioner Tully (00:48:51):

Well, right. They're not essentially available then. They do exist..

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:49:02):

That's right. I would caution not just Downers Grove, I would caution Effingham. I would caution Lincoln Illinois against trying to run something special without being more consultative with the rest of the Illinois library community, because if there is something to learn, it wouldn't just apply INAUDIBLE. It would potentially be applied more broadly. And we have a problem in Illinois, which is that about 1.5 million Illinois do not have library services because we haven't figured it out between the 1876 version and the 1972 version and 1986 version, as amended, and why aren't we providing direct library services for those folks? So if there is an exploration, it's mega bigger and the rest of the Illinois library community should get dragged into it, but within the form of Illinois law that allows you to function as a community that wants to have high quality library services. Again, I would look at it from the perspective of what's the next 5, 7, 10 years?

(00:50:15):

Are we an interventionist board? Are we a planning board? Are we going to be doing some big heavy lifting to rework the system, those kinds of roles because the political capital it's going to take to make a structural change, is it worth your investment? Quite frankly, we run library elections all around the country and there've been places where it is much easier to have a good conversation with a city council or county government, about debt servicing of a municipal project that's going to be around for the next 50 years, than it is to go out to all the voters in the community to get them to understand a financial literacy perspective, what debt means in a municipal context. I'm not saying that you shouldn't go out for a plug of site or a petition or those kinds of things, but the political capital where it should be applied right now, that's a leadership decision. It's not just a statutory allowable.

Trustee Williams (00:51:21):

Thank you

Trustee Khuntia (00:51:33):

We didn't really talk about this, but because I know that Downers Grove, I'm not speaking of our budget now, but what are some of the financial implications to our taxpayers, whether it's appointed, elected, and I know that you don't know our specifics, but just in general. Sure. Illinois specific. Thank you.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:51:54):

So the independent library district has to assume all of the responsibilities for the library has to have. It owns the building, it owns the collection, it owns the insurance to safeguard both the building and the collection. It pays the staff and has all the IMRF obligations. It's got slip and fall insurance for, it's got everything. It's got electrical, HVAC, internet, are you doing INAUDIBLE or not here? I don't know. All those things that are owning as the trustees, the sworn officers owning that. Therefore you have to have a tax base that is sufficient to support it, and that \$0 balance budget that's required for that non home rule unit of government means that you have to be able to tax enough to spend enough to serve the public for however many hours the collection and staffing that you want. Right now, I don't know what percentage of that is absorbed by the village and not done by the library.

(00:53:07):

I do know that in Berwyn we have a connection there and that library every so often says, why don't we go district? The most recent time was when McNeil Hospital, those of you who know McNeill Hospital, McNeil Hospital became part of Loyola and stopped being a taxable parcel, being a part of a nonprofit, and the city of Berwyn lost about \$3 million in property taxes. So they said, okay, how do we offload everything in the meantime? So we went back and I was brought in as a technical advisor having been on the board, it's nice, but also being able to bring this in brought in some help with financial planning. We modeled it out, and the financial planner said, if you don't increase your tax level prior to emancipating the library, by, it was basically you have above up the tax rate by about \$2.6 million, on a \$ 3.9 million levy, in order to get there, to be able to afford the insurance, and the HVAC and to pay the staff and to do IT and all that stuff.

(00:54:12):

As an independent, whether you're contracting with the city of Wyn or you're contracting with al's, house of IT services, doesn't matter. Somebody's got to do it if you're going to hire some guy in your mail to do it. All of that responsibility in Oregon, I brought up Oregon earlier because there is this certain, the further west you get, the more they figure it out. I think sometimes, and Oregon requires any unit of government that wants to come into existence to do what's called a statement of economic feasibility. Can we forecast 30 years worth of the tax base in this jurisdiction, in this map and know that we can afford to do it not on day one, but on day however many thousand that is and without having the feasible tax base for it. You have situations like a new Lennox where they built a wonderful building and they didn't pass the ordinance, they didn't pass the levy, the referendum to operate it we're house poor for the last 18 years. We finally got over the threshold a few months ago, really about 18 months ago. That kind of financial forecasting appointed or elected doesn't matter. It's like, can this tax base support this entity that will be here for our grandchildren?

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:55:42):

So continuing on that, in terms of the pattern of libraries either changing from appointed to elected or elected to appointed in Illinois, what are the reasons that you've seen in those shifts? I know there have been some changes to the Illinois Library Act. There have been changes to

Texas municipal governments, but are there any patterns that you've seen? I know this wasn't on here, so if you can't say that off the top of your head, I understand, but it just made me think of that.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:56:18):

Yeah, my very quick bullet spin of what was the last library in Illinois that helped take district, I think it was suburban Springfield and I cannot remember the name of the town, I feel very disrespectful. They did because they needed to build a building and they wanted it in one fell swoop, take care of it, but they've been moving from essentially a little farm town and as suburban Springfield, they were growing very quickly. It's a little bit like Aurora, 25 years ago where, so it was time to do it in terms of their population size and their evolution as a community, other states that have this opportunity. It's usually done in response to growth. So that's a factor that I think is important, but also to consider 5, 7, 10, 15 years from now, where's growth going to be? I mean Berwyn's pretty landlocked. I don't know how you guys are doing.

(00:57:26):

The one interesting fact in Illinois is that Cicero went district several years ago, and I have to go back and look at the dates, but they spent several years as an independent library district and there's two stories. One is that it was difficult to find folks that govern and to run, and the other was that it was more expensive than they thought because they didn't do all the proper financial modeling and they voted to go back to the town of Cicero. They went back to it being an advisory board, and that was an interesting American curiosity to me until this conversation came up.

Commissioner Tully (00:58:14):

We're glad we can provide.

John Chrastka - Speaker

Absolutely.

Commissioner Tully (00:58:23):

On this formal government structural question, we again, broader, we have been unable to locate another Illinois municipality that operates under a council manager form of government that has an appointed library. Are you aware of it?

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:58:43):

Whoever put the INAUDIBLE together, as I said before, did a hell of a job.

Commissioner Tully (00:59:13):

Great staff. I have one last question. You're not supposed to ask open-ended questions at that point. First of all, thank you again very much for your time for being here. Great. We really, really appreciate it. This has been fascinating and very illuminating. You obviously have done your homework before coming here, so I feel like it's fair to ask you this question. Knowing what our mission is, and knowing what our purpose is, and what we're trying to accomplish on behalf of the community, which is largely educational, what else should we be asking? I know our charter is our charter, but what else should we be asking that we haven't? And if you don't have an answer now we know where to find you.

John Chrastka - Speaker (00:59:53):

Fine. No, this is a very good question. The question that I would ask is what problem are we trying to solve, the fundamentals on this?

Trustee Khuntia (01:00:06):

I said I've been asking that too.

John Chrastka - Speaker (01:00:07):

Okay.

Commissioner Tully

Yeah, that question's been asked.

John Chrastka - Speaker

Yeah, and I'm sorry, I'm not trying...

Trustee Khuntia (01:00:12):

No, that was my question from the beginning.

John Chrastka - Speaker (01:00:14):

Yeah, and that's a very fundamental question to ask. If it is one of the quality of candidate, there's mechanisms civically to start cultivating people who can put their hand up and say, I want to run. If it's the capabilities of the incumbents, then there's trainings to offer. If it is a situation where there is a fundamental form issue, that does not allow you to function unless you change that form, then it's worth the political capital and the civic time that it takes. But otherwise, if you back it up enough, can we support a better civic dialogue or a better set of financial or legal or facility of political literacies amongst the leadership community? This ad hoc committee surfaced a tremendous amount of information about libraries. You are all now qualified to get your MLS, no, really, seriously. You could probably teach at Dominican right now, and

Commissioner Tully

it's so nice to say about Dominican

John Chrastka - Speaker

What I'm saying is that this community has already surfaced those big conversations and many, many, many communities in the United States of America have never even..they have a library, the lights are on, people drive by, and think everything's fine. You've already started to do this kind of good work. Now again, is there a problem that needs solving that has to be about the form, the governance form? Otherwise let's back it up and see where the holes are.

(01:02:11):

Thank you. You've been very gracious to me. Thank you for your time

Commissioner Tully (01:02:14):

No, thank you very much. As courtesy, is there anything that you would like to ask of us or anything you would like to say? Really appreciate you sharing all of your experience and knowledge.

John Chrastka - Speaker (01:02:29):

I would like to suggest that you're doing the right kind of work right now, and what comes out at the end of this, is I think people in this town love the library enough to show up as elected as an appointments, but people in this town love the library enough to show up on a random Thursday night. You all have beautiful political capital.

Commissioner Tully (01:03:06):

Thank you. Well, thank you. We reserve the right to follow up with any questions. So we appreciate your time here, but officially we'll bring this part of the meeting to a close and thank you very much. Thank you.

John Chrastka - Speaker

Pleasure.

Commissioner Tully

And obviously if there are other questions later, we can always email next time.

John Chrastka - Speaker (01:03:34):

I will be at your disposal.

Commissioner Tully (01:03:38):

Oh, that's very kind. Be careful what you... No, we do appreciate your time and thank you very much. It's been very, very, helpful. okay.

Trustee Williams (01:03:50):

Yes. One other element is, if the public has any questions for us that we would want to consult him on,

Commissioner Tully (01:03:57):

I was just going to say that. So thank you very much. I was going to say we're going to move that of five, which is public comment, but we're not taking public comment directed towards our guests. If there are questions that you would like to suggest that we ask either our guest tonight or future guests, by all means communicate those to us, and we will follow 'em accordingly. But to spare you the Spanish Inquisition that we tried to avoid at the very beginning, but so now we'll turn to the point of the evening, which is for those members of the public. Yes. Thank you very much for taking the time, there is a good reflection upon our community. Any questions or comments you have? Again limited to the narrow scope of our term.

Laura Temple (01:04:44):

Thanks very much for this. Very helpful. I think the last thing I heard him say was that people, this town love the library and that you would have the political capital. And I think we learned that. I think the election showed that. The library, I think really galvanized voters. And so then I would ask how do we want to extend that to capital and is making this kind of switch the energy that we want to put into it and the fight that it could engender? And I'm not sure it is. Again, I'm not sure what's broken because of what we've learned about how people love the library. So I think the exercise and digging it out and digging it up and making sure that the cards are all out there and the information is there to look at has been great. But I'm hoping that we decide that we're doing great and we're just going to keep that up. So thank you. Thank you.

Trustee Williams (01:05:42):

Is the microphone in a place where it will be? Yes, okay.

Commissioner Tully (01:05:48):

Other questions or comments? Welcome.

Laura Kamedulski (01:05:53):

Hi Laura. Can I all speak? I heard some things in there, I hope correctly, that there's no impeachment of library trustees as elected library trustees within Illinois law, and that I think would be a problem just from my perspective, knowing what we went through twice. So I would

think that's in favor of keeping appointed board process, but since the community from both sides of this issue, I think rightly wants more transparency and appointed processes, then that stuff you said about bylaws and code of conduct in the bylaws, and I guess that would be village councilmen because they really have the power I think. But maybe also library trustees code of conduct or bylaws would be great, because I think that's what everyone's looking for. More transparency or rules in that appointment process or just code of conduct within the library trustee board. So that's kind of what I took away, and those problems with the tax levy having to rise, probably, is probably really the case as well, from the short interaction with the expertise we saw tonight. So thank you, that really, that tax base might have to go up. So I guess that's it. Thank you so much.

John Chrastka - Speaker (01:07:28):

Thank you.

Commissioner Tully (01:07:33):

Good evening. Welcome.

Janet Winningham (01:07:34):

Thank you. First I'd like to INAUDIBLE audience here and the general public, thank our guest for giving us all the education and the time because it was helpful to us too. One thing about the conversation, and if I missed it, it is that so far I have not not heard what specifically changes would be or mean to Downer Grove residents, the services the village provides to the library, the economic impact of taking those services away. It shifted into an elected board and the kind of microeconomics of the conversation, I'm with Laura and others here who hope we never get to that level, because I don't think it's an advantageous discussion and hopefully we'll never will not ask the question about whether we need to shift to an elected board. But the information that started some of this about how specifically would impact down grove residents, their tax bills, their services, if we shifted it to an elected format, I don't think has been addressed in any kind of clarity. If you all have more information than I do, then apologies, but I'm still as in the dark on that particular aspect of this as I was before.

Commissioner Tully (01:09:10):

Thank you. Other questions or comments from the audience?

Ed Pawlik (01:09:17):

Welcome. Good evening. Trying to formulate this because I was listening in real time and didn't have a chance to prepare, but the discussion seemed to be based around two models. One was elected having taxing decision authority versus appointed not having that, having advisory. And that was confusing to me because the current line report we've got is appointed but sets its own levy. So it seems like that's part of the issue being debated right now as it's appointed and yet the library board determines what the tax levy is going to be. So I didn't understand how that fit

in. It seemed like it didn't really get addressed, but that just may, I didn't follow it. So that was something to follow up with. The other thing along those lines, certainly beginning the talk was about, I think through the question I was asked about the differences in terms of governance and how it's reflecting the will of the people, the community.

(01:10:30):

And it seemed like the discussion was all around, again, around the tax issue and saying an elected board decides the taxes and because they're elected, they're directly representing it and the employment board is not. But to me it seems like there's a larger question beyond that, the same sort of topic comes out in terms of discussing what's the issue of business. There's one school of thought that says a business exists to make money and whether you sell hot dogs or make nuclear reactors that's secondary and you just try to make money, those tend to not be successful. The other school of thought is, or the way of looking at this is that a business exists to serve its mission serving certain customers and fulfilling their needs and that the money follows if you do that well. And that seems to be where the successful companies follow and serve the ones that grow to be very large ones.

(01:11:30):

So I think along those same lines here in terms of this question for the library, does the library exist to make optimal use of the tax revenue and the other things are secondary? Or does the library exist to serve the needs of the community in providing the types of library services that we use and are very widely appreciated here. And then the tax is the means of fulfilling that kind of mission. I tend to favor that sort of view because I think the needs of the community should come first and the taxes are basically how we make those kinds of things operate. And I felt like that didn't get covered in the discussion tonight, so maybe that would be in the future.

Commissioner Tully (01:12:16):

Thanks. Thank you for your comments. Other questions or comments?

Trustee Williams (01:12:24):

I was going to suggest, before Kylie speaks, maybe we can just clarify that one point, that I'm sure you guys actually know, it's your role in setting our tax levy budget. You approve the budget,

Commissioner Tully (01:12:38):

We approve the levy. We don't approve..

Trustee Williams (01:12:38):

And then second

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:12:41):

We approve our, what I'm saying, our budget, and the levy is included.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:12:44):

Levy is included in ours.

Trustee Williams (01:12:47):

So second point is, is there a dedicated levy line?

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:12:53):

Yes, yes. We have a dedicated..

Trustee Williams (01:12:54):

So one of the points that John was making is that that creates more transparency and accountability. Go ahead.

Kylie Spahn (01:13:04):

Thank you very much. Very helpful. I have two questions or points. One is, will the village be providing financial information about how much resources the library uses by the cost value like the electricity, payroll, all those services that the village provides for the library? Going back to 1995 when there was an attempt for an elected library board, it was estimated that the electricity was \$80,000 a year that the village provided for the library for free. Now that's 30 years ago. So obviously with the fact that the building is now a lot bigger because of the renovations and the additions that have gone on since 1997, costs probably will have increased. So will the knowledge be able to provide information to us as to what those costs would be for the library if they went to an elected library board only? And then the other thing that really stood out for me tonight was what problem are we trying to solve? And I think that comes back to why we are all here and how this ad hoc committee is here. I still believe that the problem is a village council problem. It's an appointment process problem. And I do not believe that investing all of our political capital or our financial capital in trying to fix something that's not working, is not in the best interest of our community, especially when the most obvious starting point would be to fix the appointment processes. That's all. Thank you.

Commissioner Tully (01:15:04):

Thank you. Any other questions or comments from members of the audience? Thank you for your comments. Thank you for being here. Thank you for taking all this in. I hope you'll come back for part two on June 5th. But before we go to that, any questions or comments from members of the ad hoc committee? Just a couple for me. One, I'm just going to repeat

something I said, I think when we first started this ad hoc, my thinking has evolved over time and I think I actually tend to answer the question on what's the problem we're trying to fix. Some people may be trying to fix a problem, but my thinking has evolved to work not a problem to be fixed, but a question to be answered. There has been a question about is there an advantage to being elected versus appointed? And I don't think, I know not everyone necessarily agrees with this.

(01:15:55):

I don't think that that necessarily means that there's a problem in the current or past library board of trustees. And an example I think I gave a few months ago was the village looking at expanding the village council back in the day. And when the committee looked at imposing term limits, both of those were questions that were asked that were both pros and cons to, but don't, I don't recall, either one involving any accusation that the current council was effective or the village was being run poorly. It was, should we have this or shouldn't we have this? And the community had a conversation about it on both of those. And in both cases, ultimately the answer was yes, but that doesn't mean anything. That was just a question that was answered. So just from my own personal perspective, I don't see it as a problem to be fixed.

(01:16:44):

I see it as a community question. We answer and we've done that before. So we're having a conversation and it may or may not be a question, the community answers, but I think it's important, at least from my perspective, to say that I don't view it as there's a problem with the library to fix. But I have come to view this as a question that people ask, well why are we elected? Why are we appointed? Is there one better than the other? Very good information on the pros and cons of both. And the other thing I just want to add is, we have gathered and can probably gather some more information about what the Downers Grove specific costs would be of moving to a district. And I want to say the district, not elected, because I'm not convinced that's the only way to go to elected.

(01:17:31):

But if going to a district, certainly there are a lot of things that have been talked about and I don't think it would be fair to ask our guests to ask a very specific Downers Grove question on that. I think that's our responsibility to get that information because only we have that level of detail. We probably could talk more generally about challenges when our guest has supported communities going to a district and what that involved. But I think the question is fair. What is the need for us? We talk about New Jersey, but ultimately we really want to know what it needs for us. And then I think that while we have some information in our packet tonight about kilowatts of electricity, I think the question is fairly asked about price

(01:18:14):

And that could be something too, although for my colleagues, that then begs the question of are there other ways to address that, such as intergovernmental agreements and things like that. So

it gets very complicated. Sometimes you can get to the same place in a different way. But that's a fair question. So we'll take that into account. I just wanted to add those few thoughts, but I didn't have anything else other than our next meeting, which is June 5th. I have that right? Yes. Okay. Otherwise I'll be the only one here. June 5th, same time, same place. And then we will have our next speaker, which is already mentioned, which will be Joe Filapek.

Trustee Williams

So that's next Thursday

Commissioner Tully

Did I say two weeks. That's next week. It's next week. Time flies.

Trustee Khuntia (01:19:05):

Don't do it in two weeks. I won't be here.

Commissioner Tully (01:19:07):

Yes. No, we won't do it. It's June fifth. You're good. Anything else from the members of the Ad Hoc.

Trustee Williams (01:19:14):

No, just thank you for setting up this process. Today's session went well. Thank you.

Commissioner Tully

How do we like the layout?

Trustee Khuntia (01:19:27):

INAUDIBLE and I felt like they were way over there.

Trustee Williams (01:19:29):

I like making eye contact with our experts, so I appreciate that. It's much better.

Commissioner Tully (01:19:36):

That was the big thing right? Very good. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

Trustee Khuntia

Motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fuigt

Second

Commissioner Tully

All in favor.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt, Trustees Khuntia and Williams

Aye.

Commissioner Tully

Opposed? Adjourned.

Transcript from the Committee's Discussion with Mr. Filapek

June 5, 2025

Commissioner Tully (00:00:46):

All in favor say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Minutes as corrected have been approved. Terrific. Alright, we'll get to the highlight of the evening, which is again, as I teased a moment ago, continuation of our speaker series. As part of our ad committee, we have a very special guest again with us tonight, Joe Filapek, who we're very grateful and while I'm going on Mr. Filapek, if you could please come off that one. We're very glad to have Mr. Filapek here and thank you very much for taking the time to join us. As you know, we have provided a fair amount of written information in advance of today to give you an idea of the scope of what we're interested in talking about. Some of the questions that you've already received or already seen will be asked here for the benefit of the public and those who may be watching this later.

(00:01:32):

But certainly there'll be other questions and follow up and then of course we'll give you an opportunity to add anything that you would like to. So again, on behalf of all of us, and I'll let everyone introduce themselves real quickly, we're very grateful for you taking the time to be here tonight. It's very much appreciated. We'll just go around real quickly and I'm going to ask you to maybe give a brief introduction of yourself because I know we know you well. A lot of people in the room know you well, but we want to make sure everyone knows you well. So then we'll start with Nathan. Quick, who are you and why are you here?

Trustee Williams (00:02:00):

Oh, we're doing around the corner. Sure. My name is Nathan Williams. I am a trustee of Downers Grove Public Library. I've been a trustee, so most recently appointed one, so I've been a trustee since October of last year.

Trustee Khuntia (00:02:16):

My name is Barnali Khuntia. I'm also a library trustee and I have been a trustee since 2015.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:02:23):

Leslie Sadowski-Fugitt, a village commissioner since 2019.

Commissioner Tully (00:02:28):

And Martin Tully, chair of this committee and also member of the Village Council, a commissioner, my third tour of duty. I've been doing it longer than I care to admit. So with that, if you could maybe tell us a little bit about yourself. Absolutely, please. Thank you.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:02:44):

Pleasure to be here. I'm also grateful for when I first was invited, I thought we would be in there and I would be at the podium standing there talking to you all and so the endurance factor, I'm relieved, so grateful the just start by saying we thought that the conversational element would Yes, much more discussion. Be a little bit more conducive to conversation. So Joe Filapek, I wear a couple different library hats if you will. First of which I am the associate executive director at Rails, which is reaching across Illinois library systems. I imagine many of you are familiar with Rails. We serve over 1200 libraries on the northern half of Illinois. So that means we support public libraries. Of course, Downers Grove is one of the 400 public libraries in addition to academic schools and special libraries that we serve. We are, of course, state funded through the Secretary of State's office.

(00:03:38):

The support that we do, probably the most visible are those white trucks driving around delivering thousands upon thousands and thousands of books every day to libraries across the state. But in addition to delivery, we do things like continuing education, consulting, negotiating and getting discounts for our member libraries among other things, so I've been in that position as I said, 11 years, two years as associate executive director and about 10 as director of consulting and continuing education. Another service we provide is training for member libraries and the staff of course, the other hat that I wear that of course is probably of interest to you all is my role on the Aurora Public Library board, I should say. Well, library district, board of library trustees, which we didn't have that word up until about 2020 when we came to district. So I began on that board in 2017 when I was appointed, when we were a city library.

(00:04:37):

And then of course we converted around 2020, 2021 to a district library at which point I was elected and I'm just being now my third term as president of the library. So that is who I am. You can decide if that's worth enough worth listening to. I have a hard act to follow. I know you all spoke with Mr. Chrastka last week who of course is every bit a library leader nationally. We're really lucky to have him here in Chicagoland as a resource. So I imagine that conversation was helpful and I hope I can do the same.

Commissioner Tully (00:05:11):

Thank you again for being here, particularly because I know you do not need any more meetings in your life. We really appreciate you coming to us. So thank you very much. With that, I will open things up to my colleagues on the ad hoc committee to inquire.

Trustee Williams (00:05:26):

Sure. Do you want to go general to specific or do you want to start with the Aurora? Which would be specific, but it's an interesting story. Either way is fine with me.

Commissioner Tully (00:05:38):

Either way is fine with me too.

Trustee Williams (00:05:39):

Okay, so let's do general to specific. Sure. Okay. So could you describe the attributes of an elected library board and also the attributes of an appointed library board?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:05:53):

Let me say again, it was helpful to receive questions ahead of time. I scribbled out some notes. **INAUDIBLE** see me looking down just because I didn't want to forget things, but I guess I'll start with a couple of disclaimers. Certainly everything I'm sharing tonight is anecdotal and observational and it comes from my experience both at Aurora of course as a library board member and for the 11 plus years that I've been at RAILS and the degree to which that I've worked with and interface with different libraries around the state. I think that when we talk about appointed boards and we talk about elected boards, in my experience I'm thinking about elected boards and certainly when I think about my own board at Aurora, when we became elected, I think there are certain attributes and the attributes of an elected board or an appointed board is largely made up of the attributes of those individuals sitting in those seats.

(00:06:46):

Correct. So with elected boards, what I tend to see a lot of are what I might describe as library power users, a lot of people that are motivated to run for and be elected to the board, the library

is important to them. They have history with the library. Beyond that, they have strong connections in their community, people that they may have particular skill and **INAUDIBLE** and it's the idea that residents went with an elected board, you are able to cast a wider net, right? If you live in the district, you live in the city, you can get those 50 or 60 signatures, whatever it is to get on the ballot. You have an opportunity that I think that with an appointed board, depending on the size makeup of that particular municipality, I think can be a barrier for some to serve. And because of that, I think that when we look at elected boards, and I'm sure we'll talk, I know there are a number of questions about diversity and it's an interesting topic when we are kind comparing these two, but I do think with elected boards you see a lot more sort of diversity in the sense of individuals sort of experience, their professional experience, the sort of skills and attributes that they bring to the position.

(00:08:06):

Again, I think largely because with an elected board, you're passing a very wide debt and everybody there is a sort of equal playing field in the sense of everyone has an opportunity to, again, assuming that they have the desire to do that. I think that with elected boards, you also find particularly given the time and circumstances, individuals that are motivated to run because of a particular issue. **INAUDIBLE** brighter.

Commissioner Tully (00:08:38)

Oh, thank you very much for coming.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:08:40)

My pleasure. **INAUDIBLE** recess or would you like me to keep talking?

Commissioner Tully (00:08:48):

We'll find out what happened.

Trustee Khuntia (00:08:51):

I'm sure it's just **INAUDIBLE**

Commissioner Tully (00:08:54):

Right next door. Okay. So mental note for the future.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:09:04):

So the idea that individuals may be motivated by particular issue, and I think we are looking at the current climate and things in libraries, you're talking about those that intellectual freedom, freedom read is important to 'em and they run for the board because they want to preserve that

there may be a specific or a particular project at the library may be a building renovation that they want to be involved with. The fundraising or campaigning element to that or I mean just frankly when there is general dissatisfaction with the board, with the direction of the library, and I think there are many examples of years that I could point to where a board, an elected board has a lot of people running for that position because they are motivated by the direction or the lack of direction to go of that particular board at that time.

(00:09:59):

So those are some of the things when I think about elected board and in the case of an appointed board, I would just say that in my experience, and again this is coming from a community of 200,000 people of course, and I think that in a lot of instances, appointed board we'll have individuals that may have particular relationships or connections within the city that are involved civic engagement, again within that city or municipality and or individuals that are chosen that have particular skills or again, their profession, whether that be, that's why I think I see a lot of attorneys, I see a lot of people with finance, background, education, and certainly when I was appointed to the board Aurora, we had all of those represented and that didn't change when we became a district library with the elected board.

(00:10:54):

I think that it's also important to acknowledge that whether we are talking about appointed or elected boards, it's certainly my belief. And I think that whether you're looking at the local library act or the Library District Act, whether you are a library board in a township or village or city or a district, that the job, the responsibilities, the duties really doesn't change. And when I occasionally do board training very one-on-one, often for small and mid-size libraries, I typically don't even look at what type of library I'm looking to in terms of the city life. And I'm not particularly interested if they're elected or appointed. It's about the responsibilities and accountabilities to not the voters, but the residents and the taxpayers. And I think that that doesn't change no matter what the method is that those people got into the board. I will pause there and take a drink and happy to clarify over any follow-up questions for that case.

Trustee Williams (00:12:00):

Yeah, it's interesting that you say that the responsibilities and duties do not change even though you're subject to different statutory schemes. Yeah. One distinction we heard with our last speaker is sort of the taxing function versus the advisory function. And we have elections and it's a district library, separate unit of government. They have their own tax, it's not then sent over to the village council as is here at one where we're appointed. Sure. Can you talk to that distinction and what maybe are some themes as to what the experiences are when you have a taxing function versus an advisory function? Because obviously there are some people that might perceive having direct accountability through an election process as appropriate when you are taxing, either way you're taxing. It's just how the approval process goes.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:13:03):

So clearly with the library district, of course there's that independent unit of local government. There is of course broad tax authority when it comes to city libraries and other municipalities and municipal libraries. It's a question that is, I will say this, when you look at city libraries, village libraries, no two seem to be alike. So when you have described yourself, I think as a unicorn or something like it here in Downers Grove that this is a common theme when we talk to city libraries and village libraries that while the Illinois Local Library Act certainly lays out what that government structure should be, how that actually happens looks very different often from city to city. And for example, we have a city library director networking group, and they need and regularly talk about how everybody seems to approach things differently, particularly when it comes to the budget.

(00:14:07):

But I will say that when you look at the local library act, the board, even in an instance where they are sort of a component of, again, the municipality or the city, I think that the local Library act still grants the board broad authority when it comes to the finances of the library, the sort of autonomy they have. That is not to say that it is the same autonomy that they have with the library district, but when I was talking about the fact that the position, no matter which type of library board we're talking about, it's actually the same. That's kind of what I'm talking about. And there are legal opinions that sort of I think reinforce the authority of the library board when it comes to the financing of the library. There was a second part of your question I think that you asked around accountability and sort of accountability to the voters. Is that part of it as well?

Trustee Williams (00:15:09):

Yeah, there is a perception amongst some that if you are elected that you are going to be more responsive to the public's desire to be taxed at some sort of appropriate rate, whatever that

(00:15:24):

Is.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:15:27):

So I think the accountability component or aspect to this is certainly an interesting one to explore in an ideal world, if you will, elected officials, ABORN members who are elected our accountable to the taxpayers and to the voters. And that accountability, the way that manifests itself is of course through elections. One of the things that I was thinking about is, and again, I applaud you all on the questions that you asked. I thought that, I mean, if I'm ever asked to find experts on this topic, I will probably contact info because the conversations, the questions, the information I have, I think it's impressive. But I digress. One of the things I looked at, and this is very kind of back of napkin kind of calculations. I was curious, looking at the last consolidate election, I picked a few collar counties and I was curious about the library elections in those counties and what they looked like. And what I found in looking at, I just picked three of the five collar counties and looking at 63 library elections, 42 of those elections were uncontested. So you had two people running for two spots, one for one, et cetera. I think it was something like

190 total vacancies and or 190 people running for a total 160 vacancies. So the idea of accountability, I think what you have to have are two things. You have choice and you have to have information, I would say for voters to really hold elected officials accountable.

(00:17:12):

And this is where, again, I can't make any assumptions about donors road, and I think you have very engaged community, so it would seem that there would be interest. But it's just to say that in a lot of for elected boards and a lot of communities, there is an absence of choice. And I think that there is also, unfortunately can be an absence of information. When we look at a time when local press coverage is submission issue, you'll have everything exists sort of on the spell curve, and you have voters that are going to seek out the information, they're going to come to ad hoc committee meetings, they are involved and they're motivated to get all the information they need. You have a class of voters that are just going to pick the first name on the ballot and they're done with it. And then you have those in the middle that will perhaps rely on information, they want information to make informed decisions, but they are not going to go to great lengths to find it.

(00:18:07):

And then the question becomes is those voters, can the voters hold these elected officials accountable if there is an absence of information and again, choice. So in some communities there is definitely both and many communities both. But in some there's not. So the accountability can be dependent. And I guess it's just to suggest that just by virtue of being an elected official, there still has to be other things, other mechanisms to make that accountability. Accountant. I would also suggests that, and again, I don't know the situation here or in other appointed library boards, but there is a level of accountability to whether it's the mayor or the council or both. And in a example of a library district with an elected board, yes, accountable to the voters, but there's a reality that once an individual is elected, we just sworn in three new trustees or two incumbents and one new trustee at Aurora, there is a scenario where somebody gets elected and they're on the board for six years, and that's a long time. And there is no mechanism for removal outside of missing a year's worth of meetings without cause I think certain misdemeanors moving out of the district or not paying your library taxes, but otherwise,

Trustee Williams (00:19:44):

So there's no impeachment mechanism. That's what we learned from John. And what you're saying is there can be four cause situations, but they're narrow

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:19:53):

Very, I mean, again, literally missing a whole year's worth of meetings without costs.

Trustee Williams (00:20:01):

So part of the accountability that we understood from John was accountability to one another and then in the election context, and I think that's probably an important element of it, regardless of your governance structure, elected versus appointment, but for elected, part of the accountability is pressure that the voters may change their mind about you and you wanting to run for a reelection.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:20:25):

Yes.

Trustee Williams (00:20:26):

So there are some people that may be like, I want to get this building through because I have this special interest and then they're let, I'm not going to run for reelection. In that case, there's no accountability to them. They can't be impeached and they will serve their six year term, which is quite a long term, longer than our terms are now. And then they're done. And they may not care if they have no aspiration to move from library to village council or whatever.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:21:00):

And that's what with these questions you're asking, as I read through them, I was musing like, boy, these would be great to hand to us grad students somewhere so they could actually give us some research. We tried to find, we tried to hire a Northwestern law professor. We didn't get the budget for it. Understood. But I mean, there is a void, obviously there is data and analysis when it comes to just broadly speaking, elected officials, but how much can we correlate certain elected officials to library board specifically, how much do we think that those who are motivated to run for election on a library board are using it to advance, to move on, or simply because they love the library, they want what's best for the library, and their accountability is to the residents first and foremost, and they are not thinking about reelection. Both have, and really, I talked to several library directors who have elected boards and asked them the question, do you think that your board members have made decisions or are motivated by reelection? And it was 50 to 10, some said very much. Some said it's never been thought. And certainly I could say for myself now, I've only had to run one time, but thinking about my own board, I do not think that that sort of attitude and that thinking about reelection has manifested itself my opinion. Yeah,

Trustee Williams (00:22:40):

Yeah. One more question. One of the other things that John was saying was that one of the things that makes for our elected or an appointed board really effective is the training and the support structure that education, the camaraderie amongst one another. Cohesiveness. So you agree with that, is that your experience

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:23:13):

To observational experience, and it's something in libraries we talk about constantly is in general libraries do a pretty poor job of onboarding. Again, not speaking of this library, I'm guessing that

it was terrible. I don't, but I think in a lot of libraries, here is your packet, good luck. And guys, there's this assumption that you'll figure it out as you go along. And there's probably some truth for that and certainly for library district, understanding the levy process, the finances, it's like a job. It takes a year to really go through the full cycle of everything. But yes, the idea that the relationship aspect and the training aspect, so that library board members, I think it's often helping them understand even, yes, of course what the job is, but often what the job not is. And it's when you have board members who are extending the end and thinking and get into the operational aspects of a library, which is assigned to library director and staff as opposed to board. I mean, I get a call once a month from a library that I should say Rails. Something about Rails is we're kind of a hotline for libraries like community members, board members, directors, when things are not going well and they're not sure who else to talk to, they might call myself our executive director. They want to just talk through with someone who's maybe a board member. Would you

Commissioner Tully (00:24:55):

Say when things go off the rails, that's what people contact

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:24:59):

Well played. Yes, absolutely. Current now and what I will say, maybe two years too, too, but it's difficult and it is oftentimes the issues boil down to, and again, this is a generalization, but board members who come in and maybe we often assign blame to these board members that they're not doing what they're supposed to. But then I ask the question, were they ever told what they were supposed to do? Because if you go to statutes and just read what you're, it's not a handbook of how to be an effective library board member. And I think that's what the role of systems and Library Association of others is trying to do is to better equip and again, appointed elected, it's universal, the need for training. So a

Commissioner Tully (00:25:57):

Thousand percent agree with John on that one. Just as one comment on something you said earlier about the level of interest in the community historically, and this isn't the library, this is the village council, this is the park district, this is school districts, the interest of community waxes and wanes. We've had uncontested council elections, believe it or that, and there've been times when the park district board elections were the hottest ticket in town, and then we've had yours where they didn't have people open enough people running so very, and there've been appointments where nobody paid any attention and really get excited about it. And there are others that were very, very high profile. A lot of it just tends be what's going on and issues and people of course, right. That's good influx of different

Trustee Williams (00:26:44):

Things. That said, I think we do have a local communication structure from podcasts to newspapers and different impacts and whatever, where people are fairly well informed here. Not saying they're not informed, it's the level

Commissioner Tully (00:27:02):

Of

Trustee Williams (00:27:02):

No, but I think he had two points there.

Commissioner Tully (00:27:05):

He had sort of informed, right, there were two pieces, choice pieces and information. Choice and information or necessary for accountability. Yeah.

Trustee Khuntia (00:27:13):

What Martin said kind of leads into another question is do you see influence depending on let's say more prone to influence depending on between appointed boards and elected boards, national politics, extremism? Do you see anything like that?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:27:32):

Yeah, I would've been interested to hear John's answer. I didn't catch that part of the recording because of course, as John told you, he works with libraries all around the country and obviously sees this. I have not seen anything empirical or otherwise to suggest that there's a fundamental difference between the two. This question did make me think about, so again, going back to this hotline concept and thinking about over the last 10 years, the libraries that have reached out to me where, and I could just name them, hear some of 'em, very much public, a lot of press coverage, others that it's only been a phone call between myself and another person at that library, but I thought about all those libraries over the last 10 years and I have notes on some and not on others, and really there's no pattern that I could speak to.

(00:28:27):

And in fact, the last two libraries that reached out to me, both experiencing something related to in the materials challenge sphere one, a city library, one, a district library, and both very similar in the challenge in how it's manifesting. With appointed boards, you have government officials, potentially government officials, that may be utilizing political appointments as a way to sort of extend some kind of agenda. But with an elected board, of course you can have factions, you can have slates that run with a particular agenda. And so I don't think either is really necessarily insulated from, but then it kind of goes back to the accountability piece and if those motivations to put them on the board is now antithetical to the mission of the library, what are the mechanisms again for accountability? And that's what we were talking about, yes, selections, but that could be a long tail in the case of appointed board, they may have some accountability to the mayor and then if things are bad enough, but that to me is kind of, but to your question specifically, I haven't seen a pattern to suggest one is kind of more than it's a good condition.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:29:52):

He said about the same thing, if that helps.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:29:53):

What's that?

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:29:54):

He said something similar, if hat helps.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:29:58):

I will probably see John later this month, so I said that we could debrief. We'll be at the American Library Association conference. So yes,

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:30:08):

Slightly similar to the last one, but not quite. Do you find any patterns in terms of whether appointed or elected boards can kind of weather some of these difficult or tumultuous times better, whether it be something like that or even something like COVID-19?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:30:26):

Yeah, that's a good question.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:30:30):

And whether it could be either of those just dynamics or even financially.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:30:34):

Yeah, of course. Well, I think the financial piece, and not so much elected or appointed, but when we talk about library districts and that sort of complete and total autonomy that they have, I think can position 'em to be from a kind of independent budget process standpoint, more nimble and more responsive than perhaps other forms. But then it does kind of then beg the question of how is a board better positioned to whether that's going again beyond just finances. And then I think it has a lot to do with the competencies, the capabilities of the individuals sitting seven, six, the biggest library board six six, it's different. Okay. Like I said, everyone's different. So however many are sitting there, what are the things that they bring in terms of strategic thinking and all those other competencies that are important in the end, what is the method in which we are best positioned to find those individuals that have those capabilities that are going in a situation like that? But with that said, in the case of the city library, obviously access to city resources and expertise within the city, that's an aspect to it as well.

Trustee Williams (00:32:16):

You've been through an election and maybe we won't talk about Aurora specifically, but can you make any observations about the pool of candidates you might get as a result of election campaign funding? I just observed that in our 25 village council election, three candidates spent between \$7,000 and \$ 10,000. I know some of the trustees that currently sit on the Downers Grove Library Board would not be able to self-fund and they may not have the personality, I won't speak for that, but may not have the personality where they would want to try to find donors. And so I think that would narrow the field of candidates. Has that been your observation being on an elective board or what is your

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:33:04):

Observation? Of course. Your question, I do not, in my experience, going through a couple of different elections in Aurora since we converted the extent to which candidates for the board, if they spent any money, it would've been some yard signs and that's about it. Okay. I mean, if I'm being honest and speaking for myself, I ran, it was during the pandemic when we converted, so just being able to be a stranger, going up with my mask on to people's doors asking for signatures was a hurdle in itself. There are a lot of, I would say there's a lot of elections where there's not much more than that. So I think for the majority, I would say, and I should just sort of acknowledge that when I talked about my experience rails, as I said, we are the northern half of Illinois. There are a lot of small libraries away from suburban **INAUDIBLE**, so very small libraries. And when we talk about elected boards there, the conversation is around can I even find boards that have vacancies for nine months simply because they cannot find a single person to run? But yes, I do not see many campaigns, elections and library boards where there is a significant amount of money expended, but that's just anecdotal. I certainly can't speak to many of them.

Trustee Khuntia (00:34:43):

So thinking about that, I mean, I hear what you're saying, but I'm thinking about diversity and makeup of boards and not just racial diversity or financial diversity. And here in Downer Grove we have this weird North downer Grove and South, we have this 55 devices somehow, and then there's the train tracks and all these divisions. So thinking about something like that,

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:35:05):

Sure,

Trustee Khuntia (00:35:06):

She's clearly not campaigning enough for me. That was great. Thinking about that diversity and thinking about elected boards and appointed boards, where do you see that? Because I always worry that, and I'm happy to hear that you hear people don't spend that much money because I always feel like that limits a lot of people from putting their name in the hat because they won't have the financial ability to do it, or perhaps a language barrier or perhaps, I mean, there's just a lot of things I think about when I think about diversity that maybe would hinder someone from running for office. So

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:35:44):

Yes

Trustee Khuntia (00:35:44):

Have you seen anything like that or

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:35:49):

Specifically when it comes to financial barrier. That is not something that I fully believe that that probably is a barrier in certain communities, but if I were to make a general characterization, I think that there are other barriers. Some of 'em as simple as not wanting to go and get some simple as it sounds, everybody wants to do that . There is reticence simply to be an elected official in this moment. We think about our role on the library board. We have meetings, so it's a time commitment. Of course, trustees serve without sensation and it can be quite stressful, and I think all of us can probably speak to that and there is a, and I will share some of my own experiences at Aurora that have kind of informed how I think about a lot of this, but I think that those are greater barriers and maybe even just an understanding of the process. A lot, you could say, yes, you have to get 60 signatures, but simply the form, am I going to put the staple in the wrong place and they won't accept. I mean there's an understanding

Trustee Khuntia (00:37:11):

Robert's Rules, which I'm still **INAUDIBLE**

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:37:12):

Yes, parliamentary. I mean those are barriers that I think more so than financial and as you say, some of the other things just in terms of language and others, absolutely.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:37:39):

I'm interested in hearing a little bit more about the experience. Are we ready? Oh, yeah, I am.

Commissioner Tully (00:37:45):

Before we do that, I just want to make sure that you talked about diversity, so we might as well dive into that, but then also I'll ask a real quick question, which I think we know the answer to because we asked John, we're going to ask you too. Sure, yeah. And you've already noted that we are not just a unicorn, but maybe a flying unicorn. Sure, there are those as well. We are not aware, but we're going to ask anyway. We're not aware of any other municipal municipality that operates under a council management form of government that has as a component part, a library that doesn't have elected seven member board. So in that sense, we seem to be unique in the state of Illinois, just not that there's something hiding in a closet that we haven't. Right.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:38:31):

No, no, of course. You're still flying the court in that regard. I have not. Now, that's not to say no, there's a sense of pride in being, and that's not to say that there couldn't be, again, we have 412 public libraries, majority of those districts, but obviously many municipal, and I'm sometimes surprised at certain things I discover in talking to boards and then directors. But to your question on answer,

Commissioner Tully (00:38:56):

Okay, then on the topic of diversity, would like to hear because you have a unique role of having both been appointed and elected, so I want to get your thoughts on the whole issue of the diversity and the composition of the board and to pronounce diversity in the broadest sense, but particularly making sure that it's well represented in terms of the makeup of the community. I personally see a lot of advantages to having an appointed board because if the person making the appointments finds it important to seek out people who will add diversity to a board, there is a more direct way to do that,

(00:39:33):

Assuming you have a pool of candidates willing to participate and serve because you can make that concerted effort to either find people in a pool or actually go seek them out and encourage them to serve when they might not otherwise and then thus diversify. The board on the other hand, elected you mentioned that's everybody has an opportunity and a shot. So to me, it's you have appointing authority that if it's important to them and they're willing to take the effort to make it happen, it can be much more effective to do it that way. Where on the other hand, if you're saying, well, let the community choose the diversity of their board, I suppose there's advantages to that too. I'm not coming down this on one side or the other, but what has your experience been from the perspective of having both been on an elected board and on an appointed board?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:40:31):

I mean, the first thing we have to acknowledge whether six, seven or nine, it is of course always going to be a challenge to have the kind of diversity that we feel represents all because there, as I think we alluded to, there are so many things that are important. So of course we think about race and socioeconomic status, age and gender, and then it gets to things like where the people live, the geographic diversity. You think about their sort of abilities and experience, and again, the list kind of goes on and on. And so it is very overwhelming and there's a balancing act of that representation, which is really important, but understanding that it also doesn't automatically achieve the things that you want from a diverse sport in the first place in terms of the policies they set and making sure that those policies are equitable. It is just to say that the work doesn't stop when you just have a diverse board, but representation matters.

(00:41:43):

So in my experience, going to Aurora now, one of the things, and it's been interesting taking a stroll down memory lane, going back and trying to remember everything that kind of led up to

our conversion, but one of the things that I recall is when the legislation was proposed to make Aurora an elected board still as a city library, this was opposed by our mayor and opposed by the city of Aurora, this legislation. And one of the things that I would call the mayor pointing out in his sort of statement about this legislation is his concern around diversity and the fact that at the time, and he pointed out the kind of racial ethnic diversity that we had in the board and his concern that that would be diminished through an elected board, that there wasn't any kind of intentionality around it. Of course, we became an elected board, and I think that there is some truth in that we became a bit less diverse as a board through the elective process. And with all of these, it isn't to suggest that it can't be achieved one or the other. I think commissioner, what you said about in a scenario where mayor, council, whoever is to an appointment is intentional about that, there is a pathway I think, where you can achieve greater diversity for the reasons and

Commissioner Tully (00:43:15):

more directly. Exactly. Whereas if you're not doing that and the community feels it's important, then they can in an elected situation, do things that the appointing authority can't. It's got to be important in the first place.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:43:26):

And to what extent do the voters, again, going back to choice and information, do they know simply by looking the names on the ballot, what those individuals represent? And again, is that information there for them and then going beyond that to really make an informed decision If that is a value and a characteristic that's important to you, you also have to be sort of cognizant of what the board composition is in that moment as well. So it is all to say that I think it is, there is a path for it if we are intentional in terms of succession plan as a board, thinking about that representation. But again, when Aurora became an elected board, our first election, Aurora has, I want to say we're around 44% Hispanic and Latino population. We did not have a single voice in that community represented on the board, and the only way initially we were able to achieve that is through the appointment process when we had a vacancy, and then the board had the ability to think about that among the other things in terms of what we wanted, what we thought was important for the board, but that again, did not happen through that initial election, which was for all seven positions on board as it was.

Trustee Williams (00:44:53):

And on that initial election, you have only five candidates for seven board seats.

Joe Filapek - Speaker

That's correct. Yeah.

Trustee Williams

So you didn't get sufficient candidates to build the board, right.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:45:04):

I mean, it really was when you think, and you're talking about a community of 200,000 people, so we had five candidates, several that were incumbents like myself who were on board appointed board, and then we had two writing candidates to fill those seven positions. That's one we could say, well, it was during the pandemic, so there were certainly challenges there, but again, it's still in a community the size of Aurora to only have that level of interest. I was very surprised.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:45:35):

Do you think it was lack of awareness?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:45:38):

Probably it had something to do with that

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:45:39):

That it switched over to elective?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:45:41):

Probably, yeah. I mean to try to convey, and again, as you probably are aware, converting to a district is much more than just appointed to elected. But yes, I think awareness had something to do with it. You could always do more in the way of promotion and making it easier understanding of people. There were some limitations I think during the pandemic to be able to really recruit in that sense. But yeah, you're exactly right. It was five only and then two writing in candidates to fill out the set.

Trustee Williams (00:46:19):

All right. Want to move on to the details on Aurora? So let's just start with some foundational things. So Aurora is a little different than Downers Grove. You have a council, but you have 10 wards and Alderman, correct?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:46:34):

Yeah.

Trustee Williams (00:46:34):

And two aldermen are at large, so they're representing not just awards, but broader places. You're also the second largest municipality in Illinois.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:46:50):

I didn't know that, but I probably did. It fluctuates, right?

Trustee Williams (00:46:53):

Net population growth is what I saw. So you are closing in on Chicago?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:47:06):

I wouldn't say that. I do get a little, when we're referred to as the suburb of Chicago, I take a little issue, but I digress.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:47:14):

Yes.

Trustee Williams (00:47:15):

Okay. So could you explain what was going on, why the city of Aurora pursued the special legislation that led to the so-called Aurora model?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:47:26):

Okay,

(00:47:27):

So first clarification, the city did not pursue that legislation wrong now, but Right, right. No, no. Okay. So at the time there were, so we had some controversy in Aurora, some of it was before I was on the board that kind revolved around some cutbacks, staffing, et cetera. That was, I want to say 2015, 2016. And then after I got on board there, we began some conversations around the relocation of one of our branch libraries. We have total three libraries. We have two branches, a branch that's connected to a middle school, a branch that's connected to a park district. It's sort of an interesting model, but the one specifically attached to our middle school, we had had preliminary sort of conversations around some potential relocation, but we were not, and I think it's fair criticism to say that we were not transparent in the way that we should have for something as consequential as the idea of moving a branch location out of a neighborhood and not engaging the community members first.

(00:48:45):

So between those two things, there was a lot of frustration and disappointment and anger with the board. And I think we had a couple of legislators that had outreach and that felt that and that thought that having a elected board that was going back to our previous conversation accountable to voters, would solve some of these problems or at least improve upon some of the issues of accountability and transparency. So what was very different is that there was no joint ad hoc committee of the Aurora city. I learned about this legislation in any email from our

director who learned about the legislation from the Illinois State Library. There were no conversations with legislators. I was at work and learned this through email.

(00:49:46):

There never were conversations that took place with the city or the library board. So there was not this sort of intentional process, at least in terms of involvement in communication with the city and the library board. These were legislators that just thought that this was the appropriate path. So for that reason, city officials, as I had mentioned before, our mayor were in opposition to this site. I think they filed an opposition to the bill before the hearing even began. And I think that it was mostly because of, well, it's a couple of things. I think it was some frustration of the lack of communication, but also in their mind they wanted, and that's what kind of makes it weird is that at the same time this is happening, we are also not because of this legislation, but thinking about the opportunity that become a district might present for our library because of that autonomy and because of where we felt in terms of our financial situation that there were some benefits.

(00:50:59):

So from the perspective, this is a city, they felt that what they wanted was not this piece of legislation to just make this one change. They really, I think were interested in the full separation and at that point, the board was having that conversation as well. So the city opposed it. I know the municipal league opposed it. The Illinois Library Association opposed this legislation I think largely because of the not wanting to have a piece of legislation that's about a single library, and still when I open up that library law book and see Aurora Public Library, it's still knowing that that sort of went through in that way didn't feel great. I certainly understand the frustration and the desire to have change, but again, the process was not anything as intentional as this in sort of thinking about the appointed versus elected. But of course, as I think sort of the end of the story is this legislation while it was passed, it became a moot point because we became a district, so never went to a referendum. We became a library district and thus we are elected by virtue of the public library act of 91, which legislates that we have to have a board.

Trustee Williams (00:52:26):

Can you walk through, there are various ways in which you can do that conversion to a district library. Can you talk through what are the procedural mechanisms to do that?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:52:39):

Yeah. Well, I would say obviously a lot of attorneys were involved, but when the cleanest and easiest is when you have both the city council and the library board that are interested in the severing, it's really just a matter of a resolution that both the council and the board do. And obviously a lot more goes into the actual process. And again, there was many, many attorneys, financial advisors, obviously our own staff, obviously those on the council end and their staff, but the actual, how does this legally happen then? Various filings. I mean, Aurora is unique too in that we are across four counties. So it's like anything we have to file, we have to four times

because of the different counties that we in. So yeah, that, yes, that's more for our director that has keep track of all that. But yes, it was really kind of as simple as that. Obviously there were more conversations leading up to that. There were meetings to make sure that everybody was aligned between city and library board officials, but ultimately it was this kind of resolutions on both sides.

Trustee Williams (00:54:04):

And if there isn't that alignment, then referendum.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:54:04):

Referendum, yes, there is. I know a path towards to that.

Trustee Williams (00:54:10):

Okay, that's helpful.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (00:54:16):

You talked a little bit about the financial benefits. I know that when John was here, he had mentioned that a lot of libraries recently have done that because they've had a population increase. What were the financial benefits that made Aurora decide that they thought it would be a good idea to convert to a district library?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:54:41):

Well, so there are benefits and there's obviously there are sort of adverse financial consequences as well. So I'll try to articulate those. I mean, when we, in 2016, 2015, I think our budget was around 10 million. And when we looked across at our sort of peer libraries that were similar in size, that budget was far below what a lot of those comparable libraries were for us. Again, given our size, three facilities, 200 staff, et cetera, et cetera, 200,000 people. And so we had barely anything in terms of reserves. We had very, again, some of this is what we felt led to the cutbacks that I alluded to in 2015. And at a moment too, when we were thinking about a couple of our facilities that really need to be renovated and other just services that we wanted to book mobile that was really on its last legs, that is an important part of our service to communities that cannot reach the library.

(00:55:55):

We didn't see a path to achieve the funding that we felt was necessary to provide the services to our community. So this sort of the ability to have control of our money, which is obviously not, that is of course it's not a free for all. There is the property tax extension limitation laws that limit you tax, which was why the sort of first levy that we had to establish sort of working with the city to be able to raise that initial levy because when we do that, that is the basis by which all other and future levees on future increases will be built on. So when we, again, 2016, our budget was

10 million, currently nine years later it stands at around 17-18 million. And so there has obviously been a lot more revenue generated because of this kind of change in governance structure. There were of course costs associated with the conversion, I want to say around a hundred, \$200,000 just initially to do things like the legal fees, the audit, appraisal, pay, and then you think about things as I'm sure you have utilities and legal fees that maybe the city has been paying for payroll, accounting software, all of those things where I think we had to hire at least one additional staff, maybe two because of the, with that authority comes a lot more sort of responsibility, both I think at the board level and also on staff and director, finance manager, et cetera.

(00:57:46):

So on the one hand, it allowed us to get to a place where we felt that we were funded appropriately for our size and for the services we want to. But again, that was of a consequence to our taxpayers and we really had to be transparent in the rationale and be able to communicate the things we were going to do. And right now we're renovating, we have a \$10 million renovation at our Eola Road branch. Heavily, heavily used, often more than our main location. And I don't know that we could have done this without this conversion for us.

Trustee Williams (00:58:26):

When you increased your overall budget by seven to 8 million, was that funded? How was that funded? Was that funded by increasing the tax revenue or was that funded by taking unincorporated parts of Aurora and having them pay into the system?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (00:58:45):

Well, no, and the opportunity, and you do bring up a good point to the question of why, and this is an obvious statement to make, but I would never advise any library to become a district simply because they wanted an elected board. I mean, there are so many other considerations and it just, certainly not right for many, but no, it was we a parcel land here, parcel land there in terms of bringing into our district, and that is a benefit that you have the ability, as you probably know, we, and I don't know exactly the boundaries and make up of Downers Grove and what you have around you, but there are a million people in Illinois without library service. We certainly have areas around Aurora that are unserved. So the opportunity that we could pursue annexing, that would have to be through a referendum. Of course that would bring in additional revenue to the district, but that didn't happen.

Trustee Williams

But that did not happen.

Joe Filapek - Speaker

No, other than a few kind of parcels here and there, it was largely adjustments to the levy, which again was an initial levy increase, I want to say that went from, that took us from 10 to 12 million

and that sort of incremental over the years, again limited to what we were legally allowed to do per the tax.

Trustee Williams (01:00:13):

Okay. So how has the elections played out? What's the quality of the board now? Is this difficult for you to be say as a current board member? Hopefully none of your colleagues are listening tonight,

Joe Filapek - Speaker (01:00:28):

But so we have our first election, so when I just think about how the library board changed, when I think about our first election, those five individuals myself, we have, I think that we have had an infusion of youth on our board. That has been one result I think we have, and I really hope they're not listening. I want to start guessing ages here, but I would say that we probably have two individuals in their twenties, maybe one early thirties, and just generally speaking, I think we became a much younger board as a result of the election. I do think, again, we are perhaps a bit less diverse overall than when we were appointed board, but I think we have made strides in that area since that initial first.

Trustee Williams (01:01:21):

And the intrinsic sense, you said there's no Latinos on the work board?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (01:01:28):

Initially there was not, but again, we went through an appointment and then that individual was elected to the board actually just in this last election. So we do have that representation.

Trustee Williams (01:01:39):

Okay. I think at the beginning you were saying the election process has created more diversity in terms of professional qualifications. You used to only have attorneys and finance people and education experts, but now you have sort of broader qualifications in that regard. Am I mishearing you?

Joe Filapek - Speaker (01:01:58):

No, and that may have been a slight mischaracterization. I think just the types of professions represented on the board we have now, I think we have one or two retirees. We have an engineer. At one time we had actually three librarians on the board, which was very different, which, so I think there was just not necessarily more or less, but just kind of a different, we did not have anybody sort of finance, legal, education background. We started then finding, and that's the other thing with elected boards, I think increasingly you find more people who work in libraries who are librarians or work within libraries. That again, for the reasons I said in terms of whether it's intellectual freedom or others that want to become involved with their local library.

And that's the case for us. We have as many as three that were working in libraries. So I think maybe a little bit of a mischaracterization.

Trustee Williams (01:03:03):

Of course, the sample size is really small here. Not really statistically significant. This was an anecdote.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (01:03:05):

No, and I think that the elections that have followed that initial election, this last election we did, there was more people running than we had vacancies for, so there was a bit more interest. Ultimately, we had two incumbents that were elected and then one for a four year tournament sort of run unopposed and someone that brought in a lot of library experience having served on both a city library board and a district library board as well. So brought in a lot of library board governance experience as well.

Trustee Williams (01:03:54):

I am done. So you want your catch all question,

Commissioner Tully (01:03:57):

My catch all question. Catch all question.

Trustee Williams (01:03:58):

Okay. Anything else you'd like to continue?

Commissioner Tully (01:04:01):

Oh, I was going to see if there were any other questions. We're getting to that. So I was getting there. So one of the questions that we asked last time, and I always like to ask in situations like this, because we appreciate your expertise coming here and having seen what we're trying to accomplish and the kind of questions we're asking, and thank you for the kind words about the quality of the questions. Of course compiled,

(01:04:27):

It was a joint effort largely from very intelligent, experienced people who are on the other side of the room. Are there things that we didn't ask you or that you didn't see us asking generally in the materials that you think we should be asking? Is there something that you saw? Why aren't they looking into this? Why aren't they asking this question? Is there anything that jumped out at you? You don't have to have something, right, as long as we have you here. If there was something that just struck you as, wow, I'm really surprised I'm not asking about X.

Joe Filapek - Speaker (01:05:00):

If this committee, if the committee was truly interested in the library district path and not so much the appointed or selected, there are certainly the conversation around whether a district library is right would be a whole other meeting because there are so many considerations, right? Much bigger. Yes. I mean, but to this question of appointed or selected solely, I did not feel like there was not a moment of, I can't believe they didn't ask about this. I think that really when you, other questions really become questions that I think you all have to be thinking about and asking one another. As you kind of continue on this path, and I know that part of what these questions are intended to do, not only so that you're informed, but to reduce unintended consequences when you make a change, what are some things that could happen? As you said, commissioner, the cyclical nature and the idea that in this moment you could probably find 25 people to run for the board, what will that look like 10 years from now? Will there still give you that kind of level of interest?

(01:06:24):

And the counter to that is when there is not so much interest when people are not paying attention, the potential, at least for an individual or individuals to get elected to the board that are not doing it for the right reasons. And that can happen to it with an appointed board as well for sure. But that is something looking out across Illinois and everywhere that happens and then we have to consider with an elected board. Again, none of us have unlimited resources, bandwidth, political capital, all the things that we think about. So it does always become a question of kind of priority in thinking about all the things that the board and the council wants to achieve. And it kind of dawned on me as I was driving here thinking about this moment for Doners Grove Library when you have a director sitting behind you not breaking news, right?

(01:07:30):

So thinking about and being very kind of intentional about in looking at any change, sort of like the timing and that is the kind of thing as a board member, library board member that is probably the most consequent decision board will ever make is that sort of the selection of the next executive director. So the idea of that transition somehow coinciding with a conversion of a point of board to elected board is a lot. So it's just again, thinking and of course you might, one decision there is to make of course is to not do anything. And I would just end by kind of well saying two things that whether or appointed, I think that there are a lot of things that a board can do apart from changing laws or bylaws or anything around succession planning and being intentional about getting the people in these positions appointed or elected.

(01:08:33):

So thinking about that, and I would end by saying that as someone who's been in libraries since 2003 in different, working at Naperville Library a couple times, Warrenville Library a couple times once and then Rails, downers Grove Library has always been a fantastic library. One that is really admired by the library community. So it's all suggests that, and it is difficult for a library to be successful in spite of board or any other sort of outside influences like that. So it's just to

say that there's a lot that is working here and I just kind of want to acknowledge that because I think that not only myself but my colleagues always

Commissioner Tully (01:09:22):

Appreciate that. Any other final comments or questions on while long as we have Joe here, thank you again very much. One of the other objectives of this was, and this committee as a whole was to elevate the level of information of course. And hopefully conversation within the community so that we do have more transparency and information Of course to do something or do nothing. Exactly. Yeah. Appreciate it. Thank you very much. Alright. Appreciate it. Really appreciate your time and nice to meet you. Thank you so much. It was great to meet you. Great to meet you. Thanks. Thank you. Appreciate it. We're not kicking out. You're free to stay. I don't think we're going to be much longer. A couple things before we move to public comment, our next meeting, I know we're talking about trying to plan a date for that. That's in process. Then the question is,

Trustee Khuntia (01:10:24):

I apologize for my, I was doing it on my, I should not, I'm too old to write emails on my phone about my glasses because I dunno what I wrote, but somehow I was gone month of July and I we were jealous I gone from until the end of June, but sorry about that.

Commissioner Tully (01:10:46):

So we don't have to do that right now, but we are picking our next meeting. We don't have one chosen at the moment. Number two, the question again, don't have to answer it right now is do we want to seek out any further speakers Again, don't have to answer that right now, but that is a question. Or do we close that portion of our charter? And the last thing I'll just share is I think we've done about everything that is in section three pertaining to the powers and duties of this ad hoc committee. Looking ahead to the report that we are supposed to provide to the village council and the community, we are to submit to the village council and the library board of trustees and the community by end of September. We all hope to do it way before then a report summarizing the attributes of one, an elected library board selection process. We've got a great deal of information about that. Two, an appointed library board selection process. I think we have a great deal of information about that. And a summary is already available from which to draw to generate a said report. The last thing is any other alternative selection processes, I would just simply ask them and we think about what that may entail that we haven't already done. Is there something more that we should be looking for information on that piece? And I only say it because it's in our charter.

(01:12:15):

Again, not expecting an answer right now, but something to think about. Maybe we can take it up to the next meeting. Sounds good. And the answer might be we're good, but I highlight, highlighted that as something that I just wanted to make sure we were all and achieve some

consensus that we either had done that or we needed more. So we can talk about that next time.

Trustee Williams (01:12:33):

Can you also reiterate the thing that you said at the last village council meeting about how We're not Going to be researching the

Commissioner Tully (01:12:41):

Cops? Good flag. Thank you. Thank you. So there was a question that was asked at our last meeting by I think a couple of attendees during public comment asking about are we going to provide specific financial information in terms of what it would cost the now present donors Grove public Library to convert to a library district? And not so much the process, but the process would be part of it, but then it would be just some of the things that Joe was talking about. Okay, now that you're independent, what does that mean and what need to do? And that led to a conversation at the village council meeting earlier this week about, well I don't think we're planning on getting that information, nor are we planning on asking for that information because number one, I just read what our charter is, it's not in there. So unless somebody tells us to go outside of our charter, we're not going to do that. But number two was also confirmed to the village council last night, and commissioner, do you be confirm this? We asked the full counsel, our understanding is that there's no interest in pursuing that analysis, so we're not going to do that. And I didn't hear anybody object to it.

Trustee Williams (01:13:47):

Nope.

Commissioner Tully (01:13:49):

We will not be putting together a report about what it would cost. Frankly, what's been made very apparent to me is that that would all have to be done as part of actually moving to a district.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:14:01):

We would likely need a consultant, whether

Commissioner Tully (01:14:02):

It be consultants or all kinds of things

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:14:04):

It's a big thing. We would need a budget for it

Commissioner Tully (01:14:07):

Particularly there are so many assumptions that go into that you'd have sit down and say, here are all the things to assume. Now go analyze it. And that is nowhere. Absolutely. So thank you for

Trustee Williams (01:14:21):

Flagging that and although we may not be able to enumerate it, we have some understanding of the scope of things in new intergovernmental agreements and so on, figuring out who's going to be paying for electricity.

Commissioner Tully (01:14:36):

Right. Well it sounds like there's whole financial analysis that has to be done to even do that.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:14:41):

Right? Exactly.

Commissioner Tully (01:14:45):

Almost as if you'd have to decide to do it in order to justify doing the investigation.

Trustee Williams (01:14:52):

So we're in line on that. I think the library's happy with that result.

Commissioner Tully (01:14:58):

Yes, no need to do. Okay. Anything else? Those are just a few things I wanted to raise while we had time before we go to public comment. Anything else?

Trustee Williams (01:15:11):

No, I just reiterate what I said last time and thank you for structuring it this way. I think it was very productive.

Commissioner Tully (01:15:19):

Thank you. It's a good process. I thought this worked out very well. More conversational than having you stand in a podium for

Joe Filapek - Speaker

I might not have made it.

Commissioner Tully (01:15:26):

I will say at my age I could not contact standing there for an hour answering a bunch of questions. Not going to do it. Okay. Well then that brings us to item five on our agenda, which is an opportunity for public comment. Obviously always glad to have members of the public here. If you have any questions or comments for the ad hoc committee with respect to again the narrow scope of our charter, we would welcome hearing from you. Please. Please. And welcome. Hopefully that'll be picked up. We have a fish eye lens screen.

Marti Sladek (01:16:00):

Okay. I'll identify myself for the record. Marti Sladek. I am a library trustee. You all know that. I've been going to other library meetings around as part of a thing we decided we kind of gave ourselves and I've had a little more time not being part of this committee to do some of that. One of my observations in the couple of years I've been on the board and then going to other meetings is that this having an appointed board, it seems to be less isolated from the rest of what is going on in the community. I have yet in any of the other meetings that I've gone to, elected or appointed frankly, where they have anybody from the community even show up. And I think what, particularly those that are the kind of islands under themselves, some of them have said they don't even really know the people that are on their village councils because they're so independent that they almost feel like they're not part of the overall governance and community resource. As a trustee myself and as longtime resident of Downers, I find it very valuable with that feeling that we are part of the overall structure of the governance of the village. And it's an intangible kind of thing, but I think it is something that needs to go into the consideration if this moves forward.

Commissioner Tully (01:17:40):

Thank you for sharing that.

Marti Sladek (01:17:41):

And by the way, there is one other thing. One other unicorn in the area, city of 200,000 people, that's multi-county that's Naperville. The other one that may or may not be the second largest city, they have a nine member mayoral appointed board and it's one of the most diverse boards that I've seen both in terms of professional backgrounds and racial age and so forth. So that's another sort of unique community here that obviously has an excellent library system.

Commissioner Tully (01:18:19):

Thank you. Other questions or comments from members of the audience?

Linda Schram (01:18:25):

Okay, please. I would just like to say Linda Schram, long time resident, as our speaker has said, we are in a situation right now. Where we've had to, unfortunately we have to find a new library board director and to contemplate doing something different like going to an elected board or going to a district would be so unsettling for the board, the library, the community. And so I

would just like to throw out there that I would like to have this process wrapped up as quickly as possible so the library board can get back to the work that they need to do.

Commissioner Tully (01:19:20):

Understood. We share that need for speed. Thank you for your comment. Yes, please welcome.

Laura Kamedulski (01:19:28):

Hi everyone. Laura Kamedulski. I don't know how you decided in the charter off the top of my head to think about the appointed model and proposing or outlining pros and cons to any changes to that. And I know that's village council, not really. And I know you aren't recommending per se, but is there a place for that?

Trustee Williams (01:19:54):

We discussed that first meeting and how we handle that?

Commissioner Tully (01:19:59):

Yes. If I may, it was, and correct me if I misrecall anything, it decided that that would be taken up if it was taken up by the village council as the current appointing authority. One of a number of topics the village council might discuss amongst themselves how they're going to approach different things.

Trustee Williams (01:20:17):

But I think you also agree that if there was a associated with the appointment process that could be handled by changing the current point, we would simply acknowledge that that could be handled that way.

Commissioner Tully (01:20:31):

Well, and that's a fair point. I mean to what degree and what, not to go backwards in the agenda, but to what degree and to what extent that's redundant. Sorry. To what degree should we be, should we as a joint a committee be reporting anything on that Reporting? Sorry, reporting any of the set cons. Other we've identified something. What, if anything, should we putting in the report? That's the question. I agree with what you said. The question is, so what do we do with that?

Trustee Williams (01:21:05):

Well, I guess that's a conversation where we're talking about from a summary to the report, which may be at the next meeting.

Commissioner Tully (01:21:13):

Yes. And then we can start talking about elements of the report. Because right now we have a summary of a lot of information. We have two fantastic speakers that provided, I wouldn't say that we feel like experts now, but certainly feel a lot more educated about this and informed than before. How much of that do we want to put in? What does it look like?

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:21:33):

Sure.

Commissioner Tully (01:21:34):

And then also making sure that frankly we are true to our chart.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt (01:21:39):

Yeah.

Commissioner Tully (01:21:41):

I certainly don't want to explain what we didn't do, what we were told to do. But back to your question, that is ultimately something that changes were to be, we can identify suggestions, but ultimately the changes to be made to the process, that would be the village counseling.

Laura Kamedulski (01:21:57):

I know that. I was just wondering what you intend as this committee to recommend or outline

Trustee Williams (01:22:05):

Worth that finding? So we're not recommending anything. The other reason for us not touching too much on the appointment process is the two of us are subject to the appointment process. And so if we're trying to tell them what they need to change when we're self interested in that way, good taint, reappoint. Anyone with the last name? Starting with W,

Commissioner Tully (01:22:38):

General rule. Let's give that some more thought between now and our next meeting. Thank you for the question.

Laura Kamedulski (01:22:44):

I guess it's just that's what the community on both sides seems to be asking for is more transparency or more input so that they feel like they know how people are chosen