

**MINUTES
ELMHURST PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Tuesday, September 17, 2024
Kossmann Room
7:00 PM**

President Marsha Baker called the September 17, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:00 p.m.

Board members in attendance in the Kossmann Room included: Marsha Baker, Cindy Wellwood Burke, Jane Chornij, Carol Jacobsen, Rill Ryan, and Sue Sadowski.

Trustees Ingrid Becton, Taylor Holop, and William Shanklin were absent.

Also in attendance were Library Director Mary Beth Harper and Assistant Director Marcy Rodriguez.

Visitors Randy and Amanda Cooper were in attendance.

President Marsha Baker read the following correspondence:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing concerning events being held by a group called Elmhurst for Palestine/ Chicagoland for Palestine who are made up of individuals including Irman Ali, Linda Medina, Mandy Osbrorne Puchalski and Samer Odeh.

In August, this group hosted Tarek Khalil as a speaker at the library. Tarek Khalil is a violent antisemite. Here is his page from Canary Mission which is a group that fights antisemitism. This came up with a simple google search of his name showing me that the library is either not aware of what is going on under their own roof or did not do their due diligence. Welcoming a known antisemite into the community, especially the public library, is atrocious, unacceptable and puts Jews of the area in danger.

https://canarymission.org/individual/Tarek_Khalil

Then there is the question of multiple antisemitic movies being shown at the library in September and November. There was a post from your all that at least one of these films is not being shown. That is not the case. This group had full plans to show Israelism on Sept 27 and we have flyers and links to prove that. We have also found links that say that the showing of Israelism was moved to November and that now this group will be showing another movie called Where the Olive Trees Weep on September 27. There is an active Facebook event for this. Israelism is a documentary produced by the Hadid family who are known for spreading antisemitism and lies about Jews and Israel. The film attacks Zionism and respected Jewish American educational institutes and falsely claims that they are pushing blind support for Israel in American Jews. This is a dangerous false claim as it further perpetuates antisemitism which is currently up 400%. The film Where the Olive Trees Weep also promotes false claims that are dangerous to Jews. The movie claims that Israel is an occupier of the land. That could not be further

from the truth- Jews have been in Israel for 3000 years. Nearly every group of people who has ever been on that land in history has noted the presence of Jews in that land. I am sure that there are many books in the library that talk about the long history of Jews in the land that is now Israel.

Let's talk about some of the other groups connected to these events. First there is JVP or Jewish Voices for Peace, which is not Jewish nor peaceful. JVP has been active in the mass antisemitic "protests" that have been held all over the country and on college campuses. They promote false antisemitic tropes and have ties to terrorism. Here is some info on JVP:

<https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/jewish-voice-peace-jvp-what-you-need-know>

Another organization involved is AMP or American Muslims for Palestine who is currently being sued by the victims of Oct 7 for their connection to that day and Hamas terrorists. Here is some info on AMP:

<https://m.jpost.com/israel-news/article-799716>

<https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/american-muslims-for-palestine-2013-03-29-v4.pdf>

CAIR Chicago also appears to be involved and is another organization that promotes antisemitism and false narratives about Jews and Israel. Here is some info on CAIR and an article about the atrocious comments their leader made about Oct 7:

<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgroundunder/council-american-islamic-relations-cair>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/us/politics/white-house-cair-nihad-awad.html>

Having these organizations connected to these events is welcoming antisemitism and false narratives into the community. It makes Jews of the community unsafe and makes them a target.

I want to note that multiple organizers have been on the post you made on Facebook about this. Linda Medina has openly shared blatantly false information about what is currently going on and about the history of Jews and Israel. She has posted multiple false narratives that put Jews in danger. She has made comments showing support for and threatening violence. Her bias is clear and one sidedness is clear in her comments. In multiple comments she twists the meaning of Zionist and makes false claims about Zionists. What she means is Jews. The vast majority of Jews in the world are Zionist. Here is some info on what Zionism is so that you are informed about what Zionism is:

<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgroundunder/zionism>

Irman Ali, another organizer, is also on the post spreading false information. He is bullying and gaslighting Jewish women on the post. I spoke to a Jewish female Elmhurst resident who shared that Irman has previously bullied her via private messenger for being Jewish.

Why's are these bad actors with clearly bad intentions allowed to host events at the library that further perpetuate their hate...?

In closing, I encourage you to cancel these events. They promote and welcome antisemitism, false narratives and violence into the community. These events make Jews in the community unsafe and makes the library an unsafe place for Jews. There is legal precedent that the library can be held liable and seen as promoting terrorism. I am including the Elmhurst Police on this email as I think it is important to be aware of what is going on. I hope you all stand on the right side of this and don't allow antisemitism and hate into Elmhurst.

Sincerely,
Estelle

There was no public comment.

The first order of Business was the approval of the minutes of the August 20, 2024 Regular Board of Trustees Meeting. Trustee Wellwood Burke stated that the Trustee Sadowski's last name was missing a letter. Trustee Sadowski moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the August 20, 2024 Regular Board of Trustees Meeting be approved with correction.

Trustee Jacobsen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next order of Business was the approval of the August 20, 2024 Annual Board meeting minutes. Trustee Sadowski moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Annual Meeting minutes dated August 20, 2024 be approved as presented.

Trustee Wellwood Burke seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next order of business was the approval of the September 17, 2024 Accounts Payable. Trustee Wellwood Burke moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the September 17, 2024 Accounts Payable be approved as presented.

Director Harper responded to questions about the invoices.

Trustee Sadowski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director Harper discussed the financial reports. Ms. Harper stated that a property tax payment of \$88,326 and a replacement tax payment of \$15,073 were received. She answered several questions from the Board. She reviewed the expenditure lines. Under Contractual Services, the audit was completed and paid out this month. Overall the other lines were on target.

In the Director's Report, Ms. Harper stated that EPL welcomed three new staff members in September: Erin Emerick, Assistant Head of Kids' Library, Gabby Palomino, Kids' Library Assistant, and Kanako Shuaipaj, Makery Specialist.

She also talked about the One Book, One Elmhurst program, which will take place at Elmhurst University in the Frick Center on November 20th. Over 220 people are registered to attend the author visit featuring local author, Shelby Van Pelt. Van Pelt will discuss her book *Remarkably Bright Creatures*.

In the President's Report, Ms. Baker read a statement in support of the Director, the management team, and the staff for their commitment to their jobs and the community.

The first order of Unfinished Business was the approval of the 2025 and 2026 Budget. Trustee Jacobsen moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the 2025 and 2026 budget be approved as presented.

Director Harper resumed the budget discussion from last month and answered questions about the budget. There was a consensus among the Trustees to approve allocating funds for the Kids' patio renovation project. Trustee Sadowski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The first order of New Business was the acceptance of the 2023 Annual Audit. Trustee Wellwood Burke moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Elmhurst Public Library Board of Trustees accepts the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Elmhurst Public Library, December 31, 2023.

Director Harper reviewed the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Trustee Chornij seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next item of New Business was the review of Closed Session Meeting Minutes. Director Harper handed out the minutes and stated that closed-session meetings are reviewed twice a year. Trustee Sadowski moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Executive Session Minutes dated September 20, 2016 remain closed.
That the Executive Session Minutes dated July 16, 2024 be opened.

Trustee Wellwood Burke seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next order of New Business was the acceptance of the bid for carpet installation. Trustee Jacobsen moved:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

Therefore be it resolved, that Commerical Carpet Consultants, Inc. be awarded the carpet installation project.

Trustee Sadowski seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The next order of New Business was the education and review of the use of the meeting rooms.

There being no Other Business, the meeting was adjourned 7:57 p.m.