

Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency Act Report

**New Lenox Public Library District
120 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox, IL 60451
www.newlenoxlibrary.org**

I. Information about our Library

- A. New Lenox Public Library is a district library located in Will County; there are 20 other district libraries in Will County.
- B. The population of the territory in which our Library is located is 40,094 (as of 2020 census).
- C. We have 40 employees of the Library (not including Trustees).
- D. Our annual budget for FY 2024 is: \$3,555,035.
- E. Our Library's current net equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for 2023 is \$1,635,896,667.

II. Information about Our Committee

Committee Members:

Board President	Alex Vancina
Board Vice President	Michelle Monbrod
Board Treasurer	Dr. Edward A. Tatro
Board Secretary	Erin Moncek
Trustee	Colette Loecke
Trustee	Cari Didion
Trustee	Terrence Nolan
Executive Director	Michelle Krooswyk (Committee Chairperson)
Library Resident	Sandra Zurawski
Library Resident	Leslie Lovato

Dates that our Committee Met (50 ILCS 70/20)

First Meeting:	May 8, 2023 7:30p
Second Meeting:	December 11, 2023 6:00pm
Third Meeting:	March 11, 2024 6:30 pm

III. Core Programs or Services Offered by our Library

- A. Our Library offers the following core services and programs:
 - a. Readers Advisory - suggesting fiction and nonfiction titles to a reader through direct or indirect means.
 - b. Storytimes – programs for baby, toddler, preschool, and family audiences that promote early literacy and social skills through stories, songs, and activities
 - c. Educational programs for all ages – from newborn to seniors, the library provides programs a wide range of educational topics, including but not limited to early literacy, health and wellness, entertainment, early literacy and social connectedness
 - d. Databases and eContent – access to digital educational resources, books, magazines, audiobooks, and more is provided by the library free of charge

- e. Crafts – opportunities to create, connect, and imagine are made possible through passive and active craft activities for adult, teen, youth, preschool and family audiences
- f. Outreach – dedicated library staff perform dozens of outreach initiatives which include but are not limited to storytimes in the park, daycare visits, preschool visits, elementary school visits, middle school visits, high school visits, assisted living visits, attending many community events, and reaching out to local businesses
- g. Home delivery service – the library’s outreach coordinator ensures residents have the ability to receive library materials dropped off to their residence monthly
- h. Circulation – the library prides itself on circulating books, audiobooks, magazines, movies, music, video games, Library of Things, book bundles, STEAM kits, early literacy backpacks, Museum Adventure passes and so much more
- i. Passports – select library staff are trained and certified as passport agents
- j. Study rooms and community meeting rooms – spaces are available for little to no cost for individuals and groups to meet
- k. Glasses collection and recycling – thanks to a partnership with the Lions Club, the library is a drop off site for eyeglass recycling
- l. Community office equipment – the library provides access to services such as fax, scan, print, and copy devices
- m. Technical support – the library is able to provide one-on-one technical support appointments, access to free computers and wifi, hotspots and additional technology training
- n. Studio and Maker Space - with expert guidance from skilled staff, patrons can explore and utilize new and sometimes cost prohibitive technology and equipment
- o. Severe Weather Shelter – during large community events, the library acts as a severe weather shelter as needed

B. Other core services/programs we could possibly provide:

- a. ESL (English as a Second Language) programs
- b. Warming and Cooling center

IV. Awards and Recognitions

Our Library has received the following awards, distinctions and recognitions:
New Lenox Chamber of Commerce Partner of the Year 2014

V. Intergovernmental Agreements

We partner with or have Intergovernmental Agreements with the following other governments

A. Entity & Services Offered:

- a. RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Libraries) -training, discounts, special offers, forum, support on a consortium level
- b. SAILS (Supporting Administrators in Libraries) - support and collaboration for area library administrators
- c. SLAM (Suburban Libraries Administrators Meeting) - support and collaboration for area library administrators
- d. ATLAS (Area Training for Libraries and Staff) – additional training opportunities for staff and Trustees

- e. Prairie Cat - integrated library automation system
- f. Illinois Library Presents - provides premier online events at equitable prices for participating member libraries of all sizes and budgets
- g. Village of New Lenox – partners on events, provides additional parking for residents, assisted with setup and implementation of the story book walk in front of Village Hall and Commons area
- h. New Lenox Township – library works with the food pantry to support onsite micro food pantry
- i. New Lenox Community Park District – Outreach staff attend events and present storytimes
- j. New Lenox Fire Protection District – Fire District provides CPR and first aid training to library staff free of charge
- k. LIMRiCC (Library Insurance Management and Risk Control Combination) – a consortium of libraries to decrease costs in medical insurance for all participating libraries through group purchasing
- l. New Lenox School District 122 and Lincolnway Community High School District 210 – the library partners with local schools for Winter and Summer Reading Challenges in addition to outreach partnerships, back to school nights, library tours, and availability of subject matter
- m. Joliet Junior College – provide internship opportunities through their Library Technical Assistant program

Our Library's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following ways:

Our efficiencies have increased through partnerships which allow us to avoid duplication of services, utilizing applicable discounts, partnering for training, Professional Development and education, as well as the sharing of data and technology.

VI. Community Partnerships

We partner with the following organizations (Organization & Services Offered):

- a. New Lenox Safe Communities America Coalition – occasional host site for TRIAD, One Fall Can Change It All for seniors, Seniors with Sole walking group meetings
- b. Rotary Club of New Lenox – occasionally host meetings and events
- c. New Lenox Scouts – design, build and install onsite micro pantry
- d. 4H Explorers Club of Will County – updated and painted benches at library entrances
- e. Miracles for Mya – collection point for charitable gifts
- f. New Lenox Women's Club - collection point for charitable gifts
- g. New Lenox Area Historical Society – occasionally host events and support seasonal initiatives
- h. Hopewell Career Academy – Provide internship opportunities
- i. Silver Cross Hospital – Partner to provide awareness of Library resources to patients

VII. Review of Laws, Policies, Rules and Procedures, Training Materials, and other Documents.

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Library in order to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

- A. State laws applicable to Libraries - <http://tinyurl.com/av8hmsaf>
- B. Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.) - <https://tinyurl.com/4ktxs52b>
- C. Policy on public comment – section 105 of the Library’s General Policy - <https://tinyurl.com/bdfpid5k>
- D. Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- E. All Board Members have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- F. Schedule of Regular Meetings of the Library Board (5 ILCS 120/2.03) - <https://tinyurl.com/yckbjrsk>
- G. Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.) - <https://foiapac.ilag.gov/> - <https://tinyurl.com/48vmaiha>
- H. Designation of FOIA Officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a)) – Section 214 of the Library’s General Policy - <https://tinyurl.com/bdfpid5k>
- I. FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- J. Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- K. Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))
- L. List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Library Control (5 ILCS 140/5) <https://tinyurl.com/3rm86h6p>
- M. Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d)) <https://tinyurl.com/yc6nmntt>
- N. IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3) - <https://tinyurl.com/4jmbf7dx>
- O. Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1 et seq.) <https://tinyurl.com/35yzvfsc> <https://tinyurl.com/bdecv88> *“Auditing official” means any elected, appointed, or hired individual, by whatever name, in a unit of local government whose duties are similar to, but not limited to, receiving, registering, and investigating complaints and information concerning misconduct, inefficiency, and waste within the unit of local government; investigating the performance of officers, employees, functions, and programs; and promoting economy, efficiency, effectiveness and integrity in the administration of the programs and operations of the municipality. If a unit of local government does not have an “auditing official”, the “auditing official” shall be a State’s Attorney of the county in which the unit of local government is located.*
- P. All applicable officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5 et seq.)
- Q. Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(C))
- R. Our budget and financial documents - <https://tinyurl.com/yckbjrsk>
- S. State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 et seq.) - <https://tinyurl.com/5b48r5e9>
- T. Reports on government efficiency, including “Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments” by Wendell Cox (2016); <https://tinyurl.com/5dbn8cxf>

VIII. What Have We Done Well?

Services, Programs & Events – the Library is constantly reassessing the success and relevancy of what is provided to the community. Services, programs and events are offered to all ages from newborns to seniors on many different topics and skills. The Library is always receptive to community input regarding future offerings.

Access to Technology – from upgraded and additional public copiers and computers to advanced technology in the new Studio, the Library offers access to resources to all community members free of charge. A Library of Things is hosted in the Tech 2 Go collection and be checked out by patrons. The Information Technology department is responsible for ensuring regular upgrades to staff and patron equipment.

FOIA & OMA – the Library has replied to every FOIA received and strictly follows the Open Meetings Act.

Community Outreach – due to the community’s need for outreach services, the Library reassessed staffing and added positions focused primarily on outreach duties. Preschools, schools, park districts, assisted living facilities, and local businesses are all included in the Library’s outreach efforts.

Summer Learning/Reading Challenge – to prevent summer slide, the Library offers exciting opportunities for patrons of all ages to participate in the Summer Learning Challenge.

Facility Upgrades – as a result of a successful referendum, the Library carried through on promises regarding facilities. Since 2020, the Library has updated carpeting, installed automatic doors to improve accessibility, updated the lobby area to provide additional community requested services, and increased the size of the Digital Media Lab and added a new Studio Space. The new Patron Services desk streamlines patron interactions with staff and the materials circulation process. In addition, the HVAC has been replaced to ensure the building sustains comfortable temperatures and replaced the entire parking lot. As facility lighting fails, it is replaced with energy efficient fixtures or bulbs.

Media Presence – the Library consistently posts in multiple social media outlets and traditional print media. In addition, a weekly newsletter is emailed to all patrons and a digital/print quarterly guide informs patrons of upcoming programs and resources.

Sustainable Funding – the Library paid off all bond debt for the current building early, which saved the community money in the form of additional interest. When the bond fund expired, the Library sought a zero tax rate increase referendum to create sustainable funding. The referendum passed in March 2020 and the Library is now able to support a healthy budget and increased hours open to the public. Since 2020, the library has increase hours by 15% and is now open 7 days a week. Sustainable funding also results in staff stability and a decrease in turnover due to fair compensation.

Organizational Processes, Procedures, and Policies – the Library ensures that strategic plan goals are consistently visited, reassessed and achieved. In addition, staff and Trustees regularly review all Library policies and procedures.

IX. What Are Our Next Steps?

- A. Continued support of the Strategic Plan and its associated long and short term goals
- B. Continue to share Library information through all channels available with the goal of increasing awareness of Library offerings and support to the community.
- C. Continue to maintain and update Library facilities as promised in the successful March 2020 referendum

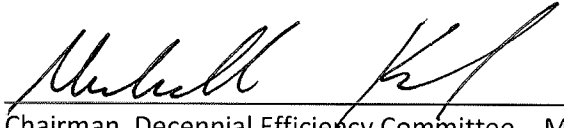
X. Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

In preparing this report, we reviewed several studies on local government efficiency. These studies show that the average local government in Illinois serves 1,800 residents compare to the national median of 2,850 individuals. It was found that smaller municipal governments tend to tax less, spend less, and borrow less than larger municipal governments. Townships have had a

smaller increase in taxation according to Wendell Cox (2016). They have a propensity to have good working relationships with each other and work to reduce costs by sharing services. The library is no different. According to Wendell's study the smallest municipal governments had the lowest median local tax revenues per capita. Based on Wendell Cox's study comparing Illinois to other states, "Fewer governments do not translate into lower government expenditures or taxes."

XI. Our Committee's Recommendations Regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency:

The Library and its Board of Trustees has good accountability and efficiency and believes that continued work with other libraries, library systems and community partners in the area will continue to help the Library be efficient and conscientious of how tax payers dollars are spent.

Submitted by: 
Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee - Michelle Krooswyk

Date of Committee Approval of Report: March 11, 2024