

Candidates for Library Board Q&A

WHAT ARE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF LIBRARY TRUSTEE?

Zachary Crowner

In the past, I have canvassed communities alongside elected officials and learned an important skill in listening to residents and relaying their desires and concerns to the appropriate party. As a Library Trustee, I will be tasked with doing the same and making certain that the community's needs are well represented at Board meetings.

Alicia Malec

I currently serve as a Library Trustee who was appointed in 2020 and elected to a two-year term in 2021. I currently chair the Personnel committee for our board. My qualifications for this position include:

- Current Library Board Member – As part of the board for almost three years now, I have learned so much from this team and the library staff about library financing and funding, policies, architecture, and building management. I have participated in ILA sessions for board members. I keep myself current by reading about current library happenings here in Plainfield and other municipalities.
- Teacher for 10 years in Plainfield – As a teacher, it was my responsibility to build literacy skills and a love of reading in children. I provided parents tools help raise readers. Educating parents about the library and its rich resources and offerings were part of that work.
- Community member for the last 22 years – As our four sons were growing, we used the library often. We have good memories of participating in the annual summer reading programs and many library activities.
- Library Patron – As a patron, I have participated in summer and winter reading programs, and many library-sponsored programs. I love hearing about new books and using the PAPL library app to put holds on interesting books. It is so convenient.
- Educator in both school and corporate settings with a BA in Elementary Education and an MBA in Human Resource Management – I bring to the table a unique set of skills which has allowed me to teach children, interpret a financial report, educate parents, and help managers become strong resources for their teams. This skill set helps me focus on all of the entities, our staff included, that the library supports.
- Continuous Learner – I ask questions at our board meetings and I appreciate the opportunity to learn from staff, experts and board members about the library's past, current state and possible opportunities for the future. I like to stay up-to-date on current library trends and I read quite a bit as a frequent user of social and print media.

Carl F. Gilmore

I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve as Plainfield Area Public Library Trustee for the past 10 years, currently serving as Board President and previously as Treasurer. That experience has allowed me to work with two PAPL Directors as we have pursued two rounds of expansion planning and their associated referenda (as well as responding to the results of those efforts), along with collaborating with fellow Board members as the Library Staff navigated the COVID pandemic. In addition, I keep abreast of current issues facing libraries through participation in Illinois Library Association activities and trainings. I do my best to stay connected to other civic leaders in the area to coordinate on and maximize investment in the communities and individuals we serve.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR SEEKING A POSITION AS A LIBRARY TRUSTEE?

Zachary Crowner

I enjoy finding opportunities to serve my community. As a Library Trustee, I can bring perspectives currently missing on the Library's Board by improving both its racial and age diversity.

Alicia Malec

I am passionate about reading and early childhood literacy. In this role, I can ensure that our library continues to offer these resources to our community. Over the last three years, I have had the opportunity to learn a lot about library systems. I am now at the point where I am more of a contributor – helping point our board toward facility improvements, strong policies, and prudential financial decisions for our constituents. I believe I add value by listening to all information, asking specific questions and providing thoughtful feedback that ultimately helps our board make the best decisions we can for our community.

Carl F. Gilmore

I have from an early age been a user and fan of libraries, including working at my undergraduate university library while attending there, and have done my best as a parent and patron to introduce others to the vital role that libraries play in the life of a healthy citizenry and community. My time to date on the Board has only strengthened my resolve to do my part in ensuring that PAPL continues to thrive as a bedrock institution of our community, providing the resources, connections, and expertise necessary to create the inquisitive, informed, and engaged populace essential to a healthy democracy and world.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE MOST ESSENTIAL SERVICES THE LIBRARY SHOULD PROVIDE FOR ITS COMMUNITY?

Zachary Crowner

The most essential services for the Library to provide its community include the ability to borrow from a large and diverse collection of books, access to technology, research resources, events and activities, and classes providing the opportunities to learn new tools and skills.

Alicia Malec

- An array of books and other print materials that can be easily accessed through library pickup, deliveries to the homebound, lockers, etc.
- Online Access to newspapers, resources, and sites that I may not be able to purchase on my own
- The go-go gadgets collection and seed collections are things I would never have thought about a library providing but I have taken advantage of both. If you haven't checked either out, please do – the library has some really cool stuff.
- In-person and online sessions for all ages – story times, take-home projects, homework help, curated sessions about a variety of topics
- Summer Reading programs
- Services and program for our local educators and schools
- This list could go on and on but stopping here for brevity

Carl F. Gilmore

While libraries have traditionally been known as repositories for books and other print resources, their services include so much more than that. A modern library is more accurately described as a source for connections to all types of information, whether local or from around the world. At its heart - and at the heart of our library - are the library professionals who enable access to any of our services. They are essential to providing not only the materials that contain and transmit information, through careful curation and management, but also the knowledge and relationship-building to enable all patrons to easily access, better understand, and put into use the information they seek. It is these connections to the wealth of knowledge that is available to all that are the Library's most essential service.

IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD YOU SEE AS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LIBRARY'S COMMUNITY?

Zachary Crowner

One responsibility to increase awareness of the Library's resources and services in the community. I want to make certain that people are aware of all of the programming

available at the Library. An additional responsibility is to listen to the desires of the community and to explore the viability of new programming that is requested. Finally, you must be a good steward of the tax dollars paid to the library.

Alicia Malec

My responsibility is to think about all the constituents and taxpayers that our Library District serves – those in Plainfield and our surrounding communities served by our District, young children, early learners, students, teens, young adults, parents, caregivers, teachers, the elderly, the homebound, and our community members who don't currently use the library. We need to think about what access to the library looks like beyond the building itself. In an increasingly online world, I want to help answer the question, "What does a library provide to the community?" My answer is "how much time do you have, this is going to take a while." If re-elected, I will remain focused on our entire community and continue to look at ways we can enhance what our great library is already doing while recognizing the need to be a good steward of taxpayer monies.

Carl F. Gilmore

As a trustee, my greatest responsibility is to carefully steward our resources to ensure that the Library is able to serve the community as it is intended to. Primarily this means working collaboratively with the Library Director, who then engages with other library professional staff, to make careful annual and long-term plans to deliver the resources needed by the community.