



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE WORK AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF KAREN DANCZAK LYONS

WHEREAS, the Evanston Public Library has announced that Karen Danczak Lyons will step down as Executive Director on June 17, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Danczak Lyons graduated from Loyola University in Chicago with a bachelor's degree in 1981 and holds a Master of Library Science degree from Dominican University. Danczak Lyons joined the Evanston library ten years ago, after spending 19 years with the Chicago Public Library system; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, the Evanston Public Library adopted a new vision and business model for the library that goes beyond the walls of library buildings and book stacks to engage and resource residents where they live and gather. That vision led to several new initiatives for the library: expanding and bringing new, innovative services to Evanston; lending technology like Wi-Fi hotspots and job search tech kits to bridge the digital divide; expanding virtual programming and digital offerings in response to the pandemic and the community's changing needs; and hiring a library social worker to connect the city's most vulnerable residents to community resources; and

WHEREAS, WHEREAS, the library also concentrated on refocusing its work and decision-making processes through an equity lens. The library adopted an equity statement and transitioning policy as declarations of the library's values. As part of the equity focus, a new branch opened in the Robert Crown Community Center with an emphasis on programming for underserved residents and Spanish-speaking patrons. Other initiatives included evaluating options for a branch in the Fifth Ward, developing a more diverse talent pipeline of librarians with tuition reimbursement program, new positions designed to engage underrepresented communities, and eliminating overdue fines to reduce barriers to access; and

WHEREAS, Danczak Lyons said she is proud of the work the library has done to strengthen partnerships throughout the Evanston community and engage residents more deeply through community listening sessions and an asset-based community development model; and

WHEREAS, "Karen has been an extraordinary and visionary leader for the Evanston Public Library, and she has made a lasting impact on our community through her decade of service," said Interim Evanston City Manager Kelley Gandurski

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors the work and contributions of Karen Danczak Lyons, and herewith expresses its sincere gratitude for the invaluable contributions she made to the Citizens of Cook County, Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of same be tendered to Karen Danczak Lyons and to the Evanston Township Public Library.