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Lauren Zumbach

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The Orland Park Public Library is making some changes. (Taylor W. Anderson / December 27, 2013)

By Lauren Zumbach, Tribune reporter

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The Orland Park Public Library board is ready to appoint a new trustee and return to the debate about the library's Internet policy at a special meeting of the Board of Library Trustees Wednesday evening.

The library's controversial Internet policy, which lets adults use library computers to access any legal materials, including pornography, came under fire when two patrons complained in October. Dozens of patrons debated whether Internet access should remain unfiltered at the library's November board meeting.

But the board wanted to wait to fill an open trustee position before voting on any changes to the policy to prevent a tie, said library spokesperson Bridget Bittman. The trustee position opened

when former board president Carole Hillman stepped down in October, citing health reasons.

The board interviewed a short list of applicants and came to a consensus on who they would appoint during a closed-door session Jan. 23, Bittman said.

While board members couldn't disclose details of the interviews or discussion, board president Nancy Healy said they did not ask applicants about their views on filtering, Bittman said. Healy referred questions to Bittman.

At tonight's meeting, at 6 p.m. at the Orland Park Public Library, the board will also discuss changes to library policies, including whether Internet access on adult computers should remain unfiltered. No public comment period is scheduled.

"This has been a prominent issue, so we wanted to devote extra time in a special session," Bittman said. Library staff gave the board two proposals for a new Internet policy. One would leave adult computers unfiltered, but would be accompanied by separate policy changes that will make it easier for staff to intervene if a patron's behavior is inappropriate, including viewing something that is disturbing another patron or staff, Bittman said.

"We're strengthening the language and making it easier for staff to say, 'You're bothering someone and we're taking action,'" Bittman said, adding that it also outlines consequences for various offenses, from temporary bans to legal action.