

Croton Free Library
Board Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2024

PRESENT:

Trustees: Susan Ranis (24), Lynn Kauderer (28), Barry Feinberg (28), Marianne Merola (27), Justin Johnson (28), Adam Decker (28), Laura Stelman Jaeger (26), Mayla Hsu (26), Margaret Mahoney (26), Jane Beller (27)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

ATTENDING VIA ZOOM: Leslie Ellis (24)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Kathleen Mamone, Chairwoman Croton Village Republican Committee; Ed Reily

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 PM

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2024 MINUTES

JANUARY 2024 MINUTES WERE VOTED ON AND APPROVED.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Collection Statistics and Patron Services

Collection statistics for the month of January 2024 were presented. The Director highlighted the trend of increasing digital checkouts (36% increase) with only a slight decrease (-1%) in physical checkouts. This month's weeding focused on magazines which represented 67% of withdrawn material. Children's attendance was down due to the temporary leave of our Children's Librarian, and teen attendance was up reflecting the popularity of our Wednesday homework help program.

- First official wireless/portable staff terminal

With the assistance of the WLS we have received and installed our first official wireless/portable staff computer terminal. This is a laptop containing all the necessary security protections which can be carried to other locations and/or moved about the Library.

- Lawn Maintenance Bids

The Director has opened bidding for our 2024 lawn maintenance contract. When making his final selection he will be taking environmental concerns into consideration, but he must also weigh these against budget limitations.

- Staff Email Migration

We have successfully completed the migration of all staff emails to use the @crotonfreelibrary.org designation.

- Tax Levy

We have received the second half of our annual Tax Levy revenue which will be electronically deposited in our Vanguard/Chase investment account.

- Village of Croton on Hudson Agreement

The Director presented a draft of a contract which formally defines the longstanding relationship between the Village of Croton on Hudson and the Library. It is the intention of the Village and Library to continue to work collaboratively for the joint benefit of the taxpayers. The Village will continue to assist the Library and provide certain services for the benefit of the Library in exchange for certain services provided by the Library. The contract has been reviewed by our lawyer and is cancellable by either party upon 30 days' notice.

THE CONTRACT WAS VOTED ON AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

- Budget and Annual Report

Completion of next year's Budget and this year's Annual Report will be a priority for the next month.

- Next Trustee Institute

The Director calls the Board's attention to the next WLS Trustee Institute presentation, "Library-Municipality Relationships" to be held on March 6 at 5:30.

- Blood Drive

Last month's Blood Drive set a record. The Director shared a message received from the organizers thanking the Library for its cooperation in making the event such a success.

- League of Women Voters meeting

Last month the Lorraine Hansberry Coalition was given permission to hold a meeting in the Library in which they invited a representative of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters to speak. A political cartoon was shown which was objectionable to some members of the community who were present at the meeting. These members contacted the League of Women

Voters, the Lorraine Hansberry Coalition, the Village of Croton and the Library Director by mail. Our board president with the Director evaluated the situation and contacted the League of Women Voters who was the sponsor for the presentation and who took sole responsibility for the erroneous content, exonerating the Library for any blame in the matter.

A representative of the League sent the following letter:

“With sincerity, I extend an apology to you and the Republican Party for unintentionally misrepresenting your fine organization. One of your colleagues spoke with me after the event, and I immediately removed the graphic from the presentation, and extended my sincere apology at that time.

As you know, the League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization that holds its nonpartisan principles in high standing. That has been our mission for over 100 years.

A small part of the January 18 Voting lecture addressed the obstacles that many voters still face in regards to their voting rights. The graphic used was not scrutinized for details, other than to display the obstacles. This is not an excuse. It was a terrible mistake, and we sincerely apologize for this. We commit to doing a better job of designing educational materials in the future, ensuring they adhere to our own DEI guidelines in the strictest manner.

The Lorraine Hansberry Coalition and the Croton Free Library were not involved in the development of this presentation, nor were they provided an advanced copy.”

TREASURER’S REPORT:

The Finance Committee continues to meet prior to the monthly Board meeting to review financial documents. Its recommendations and reports are presented to the Board as part of the Treasurer’s report.

- Check Register Approval

The Monthly Check Register for December was presented, reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Board and unanimously approved.

- Budget Performance Report

Again, we are right on target with total expenses at 59% of annual budgeted amount and 58% of the fiscal year completed.

- Croton Reads Expenditures

The Croton Reads Committee Chair presented the financial requirements necessary for presentation of their upcoming program. The total amount requested was \$2153.00. The funds will be taken from our fundraising account.

THIS AMOUNT WAS VOTED ON AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

- Audit Report

We anticipate that the Annual Audit Report will be available for approval by the Board at next month's meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Finance Committee:

See Treasurer's Report

- Croton Reads

The Chair described their timeline for publicity for the next Croton Reads program to be held on April 6. It was decided that a secondary event, which involved cooperation with students from the high school, will not be held due to current outside demands on the students' time and energy. It is possible that this kind of event can be held at a future time.

- Buildings and Grounds

The Committee is working to create a survey to be presented to the community for feedback on Library renovation. A temporary Survey Committee was established to work on the document and to determine the best way to share this document as soon as possible. Survey Committee volunteers are Justin, Margaret, Laura, Barry, and Leslie.

We will be creating another temporary Renovation Committee to consist of members of the community as well as Board members. The Renovation Committee will be tasked with, among other things, creating timelines, finding and vetting a lawyer, an insurance agent, and a clerk of the works. They will reach out to community leaders and help to begin the process of community outreach.

As the building plan hopefully moves forward, the regular Building and Grounds committee will be able to resume its traditional objectives of overseeing building and grounds maintenance.

A document is available on the Board's shared drive containing questions for Paul Mays. Please review and add any questions you might have. We are hoping to confirm a meeting with Mr. Mays and the full Board on Thursday, Feb. 29 at 7:30 to receive his report and to discuss these issues.

- Arts Committee

Our current artist is Gabriella Mirabelli whose canvases will remain up until the end of February. A flattering article appeared in a recent issue of the Gazette.

- Fundraising Committee

The final total received from our Annual Appeal was almost \$23,000. This is the highest total ever raised for an annual appeal. Due to this success, we have decided against mailing out a follow-up postcard reminder. Our next event will be the Spring Book and Bake sale, and we are

confident that the procedures for holding this event have been well refined and will run smoothly.

- Long-Range Planning

The Committee will be meeting next week to continue their work updating and revising a variety of documents including the Patron Conduct Policy, Unattended Children Policy, Recording in the Library Policy and Financial Investment Policy.

Marianne has shared a PDF of the 2017 Croton Free Library Trustee and Association Manual on the website. Since we have reorganized and no longer have a Library Association, this will clearly need to be revised, but the posted document will serve as a blueprint for creating an updated version.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

- Annual Meeting

April 25 at 7:00 PM was selected to be the next Annual Meeting of the Board

- Board Membership for 2024-2025

New Trustees will be elected at the April board meeting and presented at the Annual Meeting in April. We will have to fill one vacancy as a result of the resignation of Jane Beller, our current Croton Reads Chair. The terms of Board members Susan Ranis and Leslie Ellis are scheduled to end this year, but both have offered to stay for another term.

The Vice President shared a possible template form to be customized for our needs. This form is to be completed by trustee candidates to better inform them of Trustee responsibilities and to assist in sharing candidates' qualifications. This form can be viewed at <https://pattersonlibrary.org/files/2022/03/trustee-application-packet-03-2022.pdf>.

- Discussion of Officers

President: Susan Ranis would like to continue as President. She proposed a change in the wording of the by-law which states, "the President must attend all committees". She would like the wording to be "the President may attend all committees". She would like the wording to be "the President may attend all committees." She recommends that all trustees review the bylaws for any additional necessary proposed changes to be presented for a vote for board approval at the March board meeting.

Vice President: Marianne Merola would like to step aside as Vice President. We will need a volunteer to take on this role.

Treasurer: Barry Feinberg would like to step aside as Treasurer. We are in good shape with our financial reporting, tracking and outside checks and balances. We will be investigating whether it may be possible for a replacement to be a non-member of the Board.

- Director Review

An ad-hoc committee was formed to review and possibly revise the form used for the Director's review as a result of issues identified in last year's form. The revised form will be available for review by the entire Board and the committee will then compile and discuss the results after the review has been completed by each Board member. The members of the ad-hoc Survey Committee volunteers are Leslie, Jane, Mayla, Adam and Susan.

- Discussion of Committees

Committee Chairs: At the President's request, current chairs of each committee shared a list of their responsibilities and estimated the amount of time spent in fulfilling them in order to encourage trustees to explore different roles on the board.

Croton Reads: We may need to change our organization of the Croton Reads Committee after we have successfully held this year's event.

Committee Workloads: The President would like to discuss the possibility of lessening committee loads as the building renovation moves forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Two members of the public, Kathleen Mamone, Chairwoman Croton Village Republican Committee and Ed Reily shared their concerns regarding the Lorraine Hansberry Coalition presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 PM

Respectfully submitted by Lynn Kauderer, Secretary