

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

November 4, 2024

Minutes of the November 2024 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, November 4, 2024 at The Croton Free Library, Ottinger Room, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

PRESENT

Library Board of Trustees:

Susan Ranis, *President* (29)
Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (28)
Barry Feinberg, *Treasurer* (28)
Bethany Basile (27)
Adam Decker (28)
Leslie Ellis (29)
Kate Fabian (28)
Mayla Hsu (26)
Marianne Merola (27)
Laura Jaeger (26)
Margaret Mahoney (26)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at **7:30p.**

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2024 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the [minutes of the October 2024 Board Meeting](#) held on October 7, 2024 having been distributed in advance of the meeting and their reading having been dispensed with, were unanimously approved. Mayla and Leslie.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

Please note given the early timing of the November board meeting, some stats have not yet been reported for last month.

As per a year ago, programming has been very successful. Withdrawal number adjustments reflect the twice yearly magazine purge (250-300 magazines).

Digital checkouts are trending up; please note that on this report we only have record of two of the three digital checkout platforms.

The stats for new library cards look down compared to last year because the students' new library cards were issued in October 2024 (vs. November for 2023).

Kindergarten Student Tours

Based on the success of hosting middle schoolers in the fall, we decided to host the kindergarteners earlier in the school year this year (fall vs. spring). The tours were a resounding success.

Student Parking in Library Lot (Update)

Jesse is working on the new signage with the village, prohibiting parking at the library between 9:30pm - 9:30am. Staff license plates have been noted in our system; so they will be able to park onsite at any time without issue.

Zoning Application – Bins (Update)

A complaint was registered by library neighbors that the blue color of our book collection bins in the parking lot is a distraction. Therefore, the library will be at the municipal building tomorrow evening (November 5, 2024) to confirm possible painting of the Bins so we are able to continue having book collection bins in the library parking lot.

New Lighting in Ottinger Room

This past month an electrician was brought in to address an art light in the Ottinger room that was no longer working. This exact light fixture is no longer available. In the interim we have replaced the light fixture with a fixture already in the room where light is not as needed.

We have had these lights in the Ottinger room for approximately 10 years; we may need to address replacing all these same art lights in the near future.

Announcement of vacant position – Circulation Clerk

A job opening has been announced for a new circulation clerk.

Due to personal reasons, our current clerk Margaret Scandurra has been unable to maintain her schedule at the library, and is now on our list as a sub.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for October was presented. The check register shows \$425k from Chase - let these minutes show that this is a transfer of tax revenue money from the Chase account into our interest-bearing Vanguard account.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Barry Feinberg to approve the October 2024 Monthly Check Register. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Performance

We received the first part of our tax revenue month for the year, which is safely in our account. Our expenses are around 40%, and we should be closer to 33% at this point in the fiscal year. This extra expense is not of concern at this time.

Jesse will reissue the financial report for the first third of the fiscal year at the next meeting. We will review this at the December board meeting.

Audit Approval

There are a few questions we must send off to our accountant for clarification before voting on the audit. If anyone has any further questions, please let Susan and Barry know within the week.

We will aim to approve this audit at the December meeting.

REVIEW BOARD COMMITTEES - Open Discussion

Size of committees related to the open meeting law

The trustee handbook webinar reported that library board committees that consist of a number of participants larger than a quorum must follow open meeting law and must be public meetings. These meetings must therefore be announced to the public two weeks prior to the meeting.

Quorum size is in regards the count of board members present - if an ex-officio member or non-voting member is present, they are still counted. A quorum count does *not* include any community volunteers that may be participating in a committee meeting - only board members.

The board agreed that all committees should be kept under a quorum size. A quorum of our Croton Free Library Board at this time is 6 people.

The Finance committee and Long Range Planning committee chairs will connect with their committees to determine how to adjust their committee participants accordingly, as both committees are currently larger than a quorum.

For meetings that are best shared with a larger group of the board; a recording can be made and watched by additional board members at a later date.

Something additional to note is that board meetings held in the Ottinger Room at the library by nature are open meetings.

The Long-Range Planning Committee will amend our Bylaws to outline the Open Meeting laws as they apply to committee sizes reaching a quorum. Clarifying these rules within the Bylaws will save us time in the future in regards to clearly referencing this committee sizing rule as well as the rules around locations of committee meetings that may require open meeting law.

Function of committees

The board committees are putting a lot of effort in their smaller meetings, and a good amount of the work done can be found by all on our shared drives. A goal was discussed that the board trust the work done in and by committees, so that not all projects need to be rehashed at the larger monthly board meeting.

All board members should feel comfortable to ask questions about any committee activities.

Flexibility within committees

Committees are not set firmly; they may have members that hop on and off depending on what the current needs of said committees are. All board members should be flexible to assist committees if their areas of expertise are in demand.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Renovation Advisory Committee (RAC) Report

This committee has not met in the past month. . The timeline created by the RAC is accessible in the shared drive for all board members, and informs upcoming tasks..

The board has asked the RAC committee to assist further with current projects, as follows:

Initial Renovation Budget and Process

We need to determine the appropriate seed-money for our initial needs, which includes money for a fundraiser and lawyer, as well as upfront permitting and application fees, insurance, and supplies. The board will need to determine the seed-money allotment; we are asking the RAC (in collaboration with Paul Mays) for their recommendation to the board for this initial monetary allotment, including a timeline of the expected initial funding needed.

RAC will also confirm if there are any deliverables left with Paul Mays (a final conceptual design) under our current contract. We will then need to determine the timing and amount of the next payment to Paul Mays to continue to the next phase of the project.

We have a goal of discussing the timeline for this expected monetary allotment at our January board meeting.

Jesse noted that the library capital account currently has \$78k; this money is leftover from past capital campaigns. The money kept in our capital account is only allotted to construction projects at the library.

MOTION FOR SPENDING MONIES EQUAL OR LESSER TO \$2,500 FROM THE LIBRARY CAPITAL ACCOUNT WITHOUT FULL BOARD APPROVAL IN THE MOMENT

A motion was made by Kate Fabian that the board approve up to \$2,500 to be spent from the Chase Capital Account for incidentals for the renovation project, without needing approval in the moment by the full board, only approval by the Board President. All checks will be cut by Jesse Bourdon, and signed by the Board President or Vice-President, and will be listed in the monthly check register to be reviewed by the Finance committee and approved by the full board at the following monthly board meeting.

Justin Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

The annual appeal is set to be mailed out next week. Please be on the lookout.

In addition we will be distributing appeal postcards at the cashier station at the Book & Bake Sale.

Book & Bake Sale

We have had a great response from volunteers on the sign-up genius website so far. Students signed up promptly; we believe this is largely due to Gwen Glazer's attendance at the High School community service fair, at which she listed a library community service option "Helping with special events like the Book & Bake Sale". 19 students responded "yes". Gwen emailed them the Sign-up Genius link directly.

We only have one day to prep the sale this time, so any board members available on Friday, November 15 between the hours of 9a-5p would be greatly appreciated. We will mainly need help unboxing books and sorting and organizing them.

Please put up your lawn signs on Sunday evening, November 10th, or early Monday morning, November 11th.

Staff Holiday Party

As was done last year, the Fundraising Committee would like to request allocating \$1,000 from the Fundraising account to be used for a Holiday party for library staff. We would also like to request using \$150 for a gift certificate for Art Almeida.

MOTION TO APPROVE USING \$1,000 FROM THE FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT FOR A STAFF HOLIDAY PARTY and \$150 FROM THE FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT FOR A GIFT FOR ART ALMEIDA

A motion was made by Laura Jaeger that \$1,000 from the fundraising account be allotted for the arrangement of a holiday party for the Croton Free Library staff, and \$150 from the fundraising account be allotted for a gift card for Art Almeida. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jesse will coordinate with the staff for the holiday party. Laura will coordinate a card for Art to be signed by the board at the December board meeting,

Long-Range Planning Committee

Policy Updates

At this past month's Long-Range Planning meeting, quorum count and open meeting plan for committees was discussed. Library membership and trustee eligibility requiring American citizenship was also discussed.

See more details within this agenda in the appropriate headers.

LRP Status

Adam Decker will amend the Long-Range Plan document taking into consideration comments provided on the document by committee members. The next meeting is November 18th, after which the LRP will submit the document for board review and possible approval at the December board meeting.

Arts Committee

Nov-Dec Artist

The artist for these two months is Emily Bicht. The initial installment has been completed; a few more works will be installed this Wednesday, November 6.

A *Friends of History* talk about kit homes (the subject of the art exhibit) will be held at the library on Thursday November 14, 2024. The artists' reception will be held from 2-4p on Saturday November 23, 2024.

The art committee connected with the Croton Harmon high school art teacher, and the high school AP art students will have an exhibit in the Ottinger Room from end of May 2025 through June 2025. We are delighted to be able to exhibit art by our local high school students.

Margaret is working to put in place a process for connecting the annual appeal artist to have their show in the library at the same time of the appeal (November/December). We will fine tune the process so the art exhibit during this time more relates to the mission of the library.

A suggestion was made that we keep the larger prints of our annual appeal art, and during the appeal display the entire collection (not just the art from the current appeal).

Buildings and Grounds Committee

At the next meeting the committee will discuss lighting needs in the Ottinger Room, as well as any needs relating to assisting the RAC committee.

Safety Committee

There was no committee meeting this past month.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of action items from last meeting

The board reviewed the full list of action items from October's board meeting. Comments on action items include:

- 1) ACTION ITEM: Jesse will look into one outstanding item from the September monthly check register to figure out how one \$34.50 bill was paid.
 - a) This bill was a direct payment to Amazon for a supply invoice.
- 2) ACTION ITEM: The RAC will ask Melanie Dodson (a community volunteer already on the RAC committee) to participate on Selection Committee; if she agrees, Justin will remove himself from the committee.
 - a) This was done, but Melanie has not replied to our email.

Bylaws Discussion - Citizenship

As per the State of NY, non-citizens may be voting members of nonprofit boards.

The only requirement to get a Croton Free Library card is living or working in the Croton-Harmon School District area. We suggest removing the requirement to vote from the library membership and trustee eligibility list.

This adjustment will be finalized by the Long-Range Planning Committee for updated Bylaws approval at the December board meeting,

New York Times Renewal

Jesse reported back to the New York Times that we would not be renewing our online membership. They counter offered an “in house only” usage permission for \$2,000 per year. The users would need to be logged in on computers at the library or logged in using the library’s wifi. Approximately 60-75 uses a month (2/day) have been noted onsite, with people reading on average one or two articles. (A large majority of our New York Times users were not onsite.)

We have approximately 2 weeks in which to renew / adjust this renewal accordingly. Jesse does not feel that this in-house-only renewal is worth the cost for the library. We would like to earmark these funds for a different/better product for our patrons. Regardless of our decision for online access to the New York Times, the library will still continue to subscribe to a hardcopy of the New York Times.

MOTION TO DISCONTINUE IN-HOUSE NEW YORK TIMES ACCESS

A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to discontinue the Library’s in-house access subscription to the New York Times. This motion was seconded by Justin Johnson. The board motion results included:

- Approved (7): Leslie Ellis, Justin Johnson, Laura Jaeger, Kate Fabian, Marianne Merola, Adam Decker, Susan Ranis
- Opposed (3): Beth Basile, Margaret Mahoney, Barry Feinberg
- Abstained (1): Mayla Hsu

The motion carried.

Annual Meeting Date

The board confirmed the date of Thursday, April 24th as our annual meeting for 2025. A start time will need to be confirmed; in past years it began at 7pm. Once confirmed, this Annual meeting will be placed on the Board Google Drive Calendar by Laura Jaeger.

NEW BUSINESS

Reminder for Board Training

A reminder was made that all board members must complete 2 hours of training per year as part of requirements of being a library board member. Any classes or training that applies to actions undertaken by board members would apply. Our internal google training class will count towards hours this year.

A request was made that annual training requirements be sent to all board members, including a form that can be used for education completion record keeping purposes. It was also requested that a list of applicable classes and sources of classes/training be saved in the share drive. Marianne Merola will email the board these details.

***PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Members of the public may address the Board of Trustees only during the Public Comment portion of the board meeting and must identify themselves by name when they begin to speak. Comments are limited to no more than three minutes per person. The number of public comments per board meeting may be limited due to time constraints.*

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Justin Johnson and seconded by Adam Decker to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the Meeting was adjourned at 9:31pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary