

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

January 13, 2025

Minutes of the January 2025 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, January 13, 2025 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 7:31pm.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the [minutes of the December 2024 Board Meeting](#) held on December 9, 2024 having been distributed in advance of the meeting and their reading having been dispensed with, were unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

We saw a significant increase in programs and attendance, but there was a decrease in the number of overall visitors, as well as a decrease in reference transactions.

Potential Polling Location (exploratory)

Potential Polling Location (exploratory) The library has been asked to potentially be a polling location, a more complicated process than expected. The board feels comfortable with Jesse making the executive decision on behalf of the library regarding whether the library will become a polling location.

New Memory Care section

A new demographic of patrons has developed - those people in our population with memory decline. Publishers are starting to gear some books more towards these readers. A new book section has been created in the library with these books in mind.

There will be a purple sticker placed on books designated for this new memory care section. This section is located at the end of the large-print book section.

Croton Reads Author Announcement

The Croton Reads author this year will be Kirsten Bakis . Her second novel, King Nyx was published last year, and is our book selection for Croton Reads 2025. Gwen is working with Kirsten on this event. It will be a one-day event later this spring; likely in March.

2024 Reference Stat Summary

Megan Fenton (Head of Reference Services) has compiled reference statistics data from January 2022 up until now. There are different trends across departments. The most noticeable adjustment is that the reference staff has increased its task load away from the desk. A lot of assistance provided is assistance with technology. (Please note that the library does not have the staff to provide 1:1 tech assistance with patrons.)

End-date of WLS app

There has been a noticeable lag time between the end date of the old WLS app and the integration of the updated app. The old app still works for your digital library card, and the new app is up and running on Android devices. Hopefully by next month the issues with the new app will be addressed and all patrons will have success using this updated app once Apple gives it the greenlight .

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for December was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. All expenses noted on the register were in-line with expectations.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Barry Feinberg to approve the December 2024 Monthly Check Register. Susan Ranis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Performance and other updates

We are halfway through our fiscal year. Our income is at approximately 52% and our expenses are at approximately 56%. Overall, we are on budget.

Outliers include our adult and young adult programming spending, which are coming in less than expected. Part of this discrepancy is due to the sometimes lengthy time that bills are received and paid after events.

On a positive note, we have a net income from our fundraising of over \$11k.

Leslie Ellis asked if our fundraising expenses are clearly marked in regards to expenses related to our fundraising efforts, versus the spending of our fundraising money on programs. Jesse and Barry explained that one of our monthly financial spreadsheets shows fundraising expenses broken down by income and expenditure category. Expenses related to fundraising may show as supplies, or to programs funded with fundraising income such as “museum passes” or other chosen designations.

Bethany Basile suggested that we include a year-to-date model so we can compare year-to-year performance. Barry Feinberg advised that the library board decided to use a percentage based system given that in the past board members were not able to quickly assess the current financial performance against budget.

Barry Feinberg noted that there has been a line item error on our financial documents, which shows additional income of more than \$80K. Our accountant explained that this is a posting error and is related to the performance of our investments and should not appear in our operating budget. The erroneous entries will be removed from the P&L spreadsheets. Corrected copies will be available at the February board meeting.

The library’s tax return has been completed.

Audit Approval

There are two errors in the draft audit received. The cover letter is addressed to the “Board of Directors” instead of the “Board of Trustees”. Our accountant/auditor’s signature needs to be added to the cover letter. The changes will need to be made before the document is final.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2024 AUDIT

A motion was made by Barry Feinberg to approve the audit, as to be amended, ending Fiscal Year June 30, 2024. Adam Decker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Renovation Advisory Committee (RAC) Report

Initial Renovation Budget and Process

It has been noted that we should update our accountant once we figure out our initial budget, so money can be taken out of our investments ahead of time.

Fundraiser Application Update

The committee met on January 7th. They reviewed 13 applications for our request for proposal for a fundraiser. The quality of applicants was high, and the top five candidates were chosen based on the rubric created by Kate Fabian. The committee also took into consideration the location of the candidates, and the anticipated cost. All candidates priced in under our maximum budget for this role.

There will be two rounds of interviews, the first of which will happen within the next four weeks. The first round will be with committee members via zoom, after which candidates will update their proposals. Susan Ranis and Jesse Bourdon will lead the second interview.

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

As of today, the annual appeal has brought in \$22,755. Last year's appeal made \$22,722.99. The "final" date of the appeal is Jan 31, 2025.

Matching Donation Update

Over the past month Mayla Hsu realized that matching donations for our capital campaigns were not indicated on our full donations spreadsheets over the past few years. Jesse was in touch with *Benevity* (a matching program organization) and they apologized for not having communicated donations with us. Jesse now has been updated with several donations made in this past year for the library, and we will be updating our spreadsheets (this year and past years') to include this money into our records for the appeal. (Previously the money would be filtered into our Operating account and we were not sure of its origin.)

Museum Request – Magazzino Italian Art in Cold Spring

The fundraising committee would like to proceed with the purchase of an annual pass to the Magazzino Italian Art museum for use by library patrons. This pass is valid for up to 6 people (in one group) per day. It is valid for a full year, and can be used an unlimited amount of times within that year. The cost would be \$250.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF AN ANNUAL PASS TO THE MAGAZZINO ITALIAN ART MUSEUM

A motion was made by Laura Jaeger to approve spending \$250 of Fundraising money to purchase the library an annual pass to the Magazzino Italian Art Museum. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Given the approval of this purchase, Jesse Bourdon will allot \$250 from our Fundraising account and purchase this museum pass for the library.

Book & Bake Sale

We are on track for two Book & Bake Sales for 2025. Our dates for these sales will be May 17-18, 2025, and then (most likely) November 8-9, 2025. The dates for the Fall sale are earlier than usual, and we hope that placing the sale further from Thanksgiving will make it easier for more people to attend.

We are running out of lawn signs for the Book & Bake Sale, and will plan to place an order for 15 additional signs, which will cost approximately \$270.

Long-Range Planning Committee

Bylaws Update

The committee will aim to confirm changes to the Bylaws at next month's board meeting. Adam Decker will email out this finalized document to the board for review.

Finance Policy

The next policy the committee aims to finalize is our Finance Policy, which we would like to have in place prior to any renovation next steps. Marianne Merola and Barry Feinberg created a first draft of this document which the committee will review at the next committee meeting.

The next meeting will be rescheduled from Monday, January 20th given the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

Arts Committee

The current artist on display is James Maciel. There will be no artist's reception, as per the artist's request. This display will be up through the end of February.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Lighting Update

At the end of December, Jesse met with a new lighting consultant regarding the current lighting issue in the Ottinger Room. This consultant recommended an electrician from PRM, who is actually already the library's electrician. The consultant and electrician will be in touch to discuss recommendations for the Ottinger Room. We are waiting for their full report.

Jesse also met with a different lighting contractor who has already given a price for the hardware we need.

The Buildings and Ground Committee will not meet later this week, given Jesse is taking care of the Ottinger room lighting project.

Safety Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

Jesse has updated the Board that our new defibrillator has arrived and is now installed at the library. It is located in a very visible location, and is accessible for all. (The door for the unit is not locked, but is outfitted with an alarm so staff is aware the unit has been taken.) Jesse is looking into creating official signage in the library for this defibrillator.

Barry Feinberg asked if we have panic buttons installed at the library. We have three hardwired behind desks and then two mobile panic buttons. These are silent alarms. We may be due for an upgrade to this system, and also staff training.

OLD BUSINESS**Review of action items from last meeting**

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

1. Leslie Ellis has offered to research the cost of having a lawyer on retainer for the library, and will present it at the February board meeting.
2. Adam will email the final 2025 Long-Range Plan document to Jesse Bourdon for uploading as a PDF to the Croton Free Library website.
 - a. Laura will then add this to the appropriate location in the share drive.
3. The Long-Range Planning Committee will amend our Bylaws to remove the requirement to vote from the library membership and trustee eligibility list, AND also add a statement regarding Croton Free Library Board committees sizing around the open meetings law (including stating the clarified rules within the Bylaws to 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.
 - a. This adjustment will be finalized by the Long-Range Planning Committee for updated Bylaws approval at the February board meeting,

NEW BUSINESS**Carnegie Corporation of NY Grants**

Mayla Hsu suggested the library apply for a grant of up to \$500,000 available to public libraries providing English language and college readiness programs.

Jesse filled out a survey of eligibility for which the deadline was this past Friday, January 10, 2025. We will be notified this week if we will be invited to apply for the next stage of competition.

***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 Laura Jaeger and seconded by Leslie Ellis to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the Meeting was adjourned at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary