

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

February 10, 2025

Minutes of the February 2025 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, February 10, 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

Guests:

Karen Zevin, WLS board member
Maria Slippen, Village trustee

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the [minutes of the January 2025 Board Meeting](#) held on January 13, 2025 having been distributed in advance of the meeting and their reading having been dispensed with, were unanimously approved.

WLS Board Trustee – Karen Zevin

For over eight years, Karen Zevin has been a Westchester Library Systems (WLS) Board member, and our liaison with the WLS. Karen works closely with Jesse Bourdon (Croton Free Library), Yvonne Cech (John C. Hart Memorial Library), and Jill Davis (Hendrick Hudson Free Library) to keep communication channels open between WLS and the Croton Free Library.

Karen attended the board meeting this evening to provide an update to our board about what WLS does for our library, and some topics that are being focused on at the moment:

WLS coordinates the sharing of books within the system, they work on the bar coding, and also foster agreements with other material lending resources such as Libby and Hoopla. They also provide other services to libraries, including tech support. In addition, bulk pricing negotiated by WLS results in cost savings for our libraries for some products, and WLS advocates for funding for libraries with NY state. The goal of WLS is to support all the people in Westchester County.

WLS Board meetings are on the last Tuesday of the month, and the website has meeting minutes and other presentation materials available to the public to review.

Village Trustee - Maria Slippen

Maria joined the board meeting as the Village Trustee liaison.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT**Collection Statistics and Patron Services**

There were no outstanding statistics for the month of January. Our visitor count showed an overall increase in traffic in the month of January compared to past years.

Digital checkouts continue to rise.

A point was made by Justin (and confirmed by Karen Zevin and Jesse Bourdon) that patrons checking out digital items to show they are being used may not help the library. We pay for this general access, and patrons have a limited number of checkouts. This increased digital usage (for the purpose of driving up numbers) will drive up the cost for our libraries, as our payments for this digital access will increase.

Parking Enforcement

High school students using our library's parking lot for parking has been an issue at the Croton Free Library since Spring of 2024. There are multiple complaints per day by library patrons regarding the lack of parking in our lot. This lack of parking close to the entrance particularly impacts the elderly and disabled.

Parking on adjacent Cleveland Avenue and Peter Beet Lane (which are not library parking spaces) has also been full due to student parking during school hours.

Jesse communicated with the village regarding this issue. We will be implementing a parking limit within the library lot, with no parking between 9:30pm - 9:30am without special permission. The village will issue tickets within the restricted time period to those people parking whose license plates are not among those permitted to park. Ticketing will be enforced beginning in 30 days (approximately March 2025).

Butler Rowland Mays Architects, LLP (“BRMA”) (Updated proposal coming from Paul)

Susan Ranis and Jesse Bourdon updated Paul Mays with our current status and timeline for the project. Paul will create an “a la carte” next round drawing option for us, which can be used as a more detailed drawing for our next steps. This can be done for us in the interim time before the actual budget for the project is determined. In our contract with BRMA, CFL should make sure we own the materials that Paul creates for this next step of the project.

NEW WLS Mobile App (now available)

This new Westchester Library System app went live in January. Due to hiccups with the migration to a new app, we realized more people use the app than previously believed. The app will start focusing on integration with other related library apps. We are hoping that push notifications will be included in the app in the near future.

Annual Museum Pass Proposal (discussion)

Jesse Bourdon and Megan Fenton (head of reference services) have been in discussion around the process of requesting annual museum passes. An annual proposal to the board around our list of passes is proposed. Passes will be organized around the library staff’s suggestions, in-line with the budget timing. This would happen with one request for all passes, one time a year.

Annual Report (next meeting)

The first draft of this report is due next Tuesday. Jesse will plan to have questions around the report and possible approval of the report on the agenda for our March board meeting.

2025-26 Budget Draft (next meeting)

Jesse aims to include this discussion at either the March or April board meeting.

Dana Levenberg’s office has brought a funding opportunity to our attention - the Assembly of Libraries Committee is requesting funding opportunities. Jesse submitted a last minute proposal for our library for this funding.

Bethany Basile noted that the end of January is a time that committees/government agencies may be under a timeline to use all of their funding, which will not be refreshed for the following year if unused. It could be an opportunity for last minute grants/funding.

TREASURER’S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for January was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. Two checks on the register were questioned by the committee:

- The first vendor’s item was mistakenly placed on this month’s register; it has been paid and placed on the right check register document.
- One check on the register was missed from the checkbook, and this check number is therefore out of order.

All other expenses and line-items 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 January 2025 Monthly Check Register taking into account the two adjustments mentioned above. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Performance and other updates

We are 58% through the fiscal year. Performance is aligned with expectations at this point through the fiscal year.

Our income was increased through money raised by our fundraising process, as well as some incoming grant money. Our net income is around \$17,000 from fundraising.

Our spending allocated for each category will equal out over the flow of the full fiscal year; some expenses are front-loaded over the year but the overall cost is not expected to exceed our expectations.

Audit Approval

There were two errors in the draft audit received last month. The cover letter was addressed to the “Board of Directors” instead of the “Board of Trustees”. Our accountant/auditor’s signature also needed to be added to the cover letter. These corrections have now been made, and this audit will be included on our Board share drive, as well as the Croton Free Library website.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Renovation Committee

Capital Campaign Fundraiser Candidate Interviews

The first round of interviews for a fundraiser is complete. Two very good candidates have been selected for the next round of interviews. Both candidates are comparably priced, have local contacts, and are experienced in raising our estimated funds. Board training in the fundraising process will be part of their scope of work. The notes from the committee’s interview process are on the shared drive for board review. Jesse and Susan will be receiving the notes from the committee, and will continue the second round of interviews.

For state and local government funding, Paul Mays has also offered his guidance. In addition, Karen noted that Patricia Brigham Raja is a development officer at WLS who has obtained grants, and Maria Slippen offered village resources to assist as well.

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

By the official “end date” of the appeal, January 31, 2025, the annual appeal raised \$27,545.12 for the library. This is the most we have ever raised. The average donation was \$110, with 117 donors giving \$100 or more. 29 donors gave \$250 or more. Approximately \$4,000 of this money was given by matching grants from various employers/companies.

Long-Range Planning Committee

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY BYLAWS DATED FEBRUARY 10, 2025

A motion was made by Adam Decker to approve the Updated Bylaws dated February 10, 2025. Mayla Hsu seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adam will email the finalized bylaws to Jesse for uploading to the library website.

The Long-Range Planning Committee will need to choose a different date for their February meeting, given it falls on a holiday this month.

Arts Committee

The current exhibit, *Barns* by James Maciel, will come down on March 1st. The new exhibit, *Before After Between* collage portraits by Kendra Shedenhelm, will be hung the same day, March 1st. There are no plans for a reception.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

Lawyer for the Library

This past month, Leslie was in touch with Susan and Jesse to ask what the library might like to see in a lawyer who would be on retainer. Leslie Ellis looked at the lawyers Paul Mays suggested for construction law to investigate what other areas of law they cover.

Two multidisciplinary law firms based on Albany were suggested: [Sholes, Miller, Rodriguez & Brown](#) and [Whiteman Osterman & Hanna](#). If we would like to move forward, Leslie suggested we hold interviews with both firms.

The board has asked Leslie to reach out to both agencies to inquire about the cost of having a lawyer on retainer vs. hiring a lawyer for the specific renovation project. There may be a standard price per hour for work.

It was also suggested to ask other local libraries if they have a lawyer on retainer, and if so, what their fees have been. Jesse will reach out to some other library directors to ask who they work with.

Safety Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

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

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

1. Long Range Planning will next finalize the 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.

NEW BUSINESS**Skeleton Calendar - 12-month overview**

Marianne Merola and Susan Ranis worked to create a calendar that includes all repeating/expected tasks and events across the board and various committees. Susan will upload this document into the Board Administration share drive. Committee leaders should review and add any additional committee-related items as they see fit.

Historical Information Preservation Discussion

A significant amount of historical information is held within our old Association Manual. Marianne and Margaret have been working together to parse out relevant historical information from this document, and save it in the appropriate places.

They would like to meet with the Google drive team (Kate/Laura) to see where these documents should be saved on our google drive. They would also like to work with Jesse and Susan to see where these historical documents should be placed on the Croton Free Library website.

***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.*

Maria Slippen asked if school board members ever join the library board meetings. She thinks it would be very helpful if school board members opted to participate on occasion.

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 9:34pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary