

# Board Meeting Minutes

## Croton Free Library

April 7, 2025

Minutes of the April 2025 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, April 7, 2025 at The Croton Free Library, Ottinger Room, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

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### **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)  
Margaret Mahoney (26)  
Marianne Merola (27)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

Guests: Cassandra Thayer, Changing Our World, and Maria Slippen, Village of Croton on Hudson trustee liaison

### **ABSENT**

Laura Jaeger (26)

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm.

### **APPROVAL OF MARCH 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to approve [minutes of the March 2025 Board Meeting](#) held on March 10, 2025, which were distributed in advance. Kate Fabian seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with two abstentions: Marianne Merola and Mayla Hsu.

### **NEW BUSINESS, part 1.**

Cassandra Thayer from Changing Our World (CW) was introduced to the Board, and gave an overview of CW's work and strategy for their first three months, which will be focused on planning. The main scope of work in this stage is identifying community members of high affinity and capacity for contributing to the library's capital campaign, and developing the case for support. This effort will not conflict with the annual appeal, which we typically do in the fall.

Given currently uncertain economic conditions, questions about proceeding are natural. However, community support to local philanthropies often remains strong in times of challenge, and we have an opportunity to communicate how meaningful it is to the library.

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### **TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Expenses are slightly over budget in several items, but are expected to be aligned with budget by the end of the year. The monthly check register for March was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. All other expenses and line items noted on the register were in accordance with expectations.

### **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER**

*A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to approve the March 2025 Monthly Check Register. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Marianne Merola noted that in one past month's P&Ls investment income was itemized on the P&L. The treasurer noted that our accountant incorrectly posted the growth of investments YTD and subsequently removed these figures from that P&L and any subsequent ones. In the current and past P&Ls, investment lines are place holders for any subsequent money that may be drawn from these accounts into the operating budget as needed and not a place to report growth in income.

In a related discussion it was pointed out that comparison of growth in investment income is reported in our audit. As well, comparison with previous years may not be comparable because they may be calculated differently. The Finance Committee will work on a process to make this more clearly tracked and will adjust the reporting. Questions should be prepared in advance for the next Finance Committee meeting.

**Budget Approval - Jesse Bourdon has drafted next year's budget. Amendments will be made and an approval vote will be held at the next Board meeting.**

The draft proposes hiring a full time reference librarian. There are also proposed cuts in collections in this draft. Jesse proposes reducing collections by \$500 per month, which will be mostly reducing buying second copies. For allocations of salaries, the Finance Committee would like further examination. Disclosure of the renovation will be added to the draft budget as further specific financial details become known.

Jesse's draft requests \$23K from the fundraising budget. However, the Finance Committee suggests increasing this to \$30K. Historically, fundraising contributed ~\$30K per year, for multiple years. However, in 2021, fundraising contributions to operations significantly decreased, and every year since then has been less than \$30K. An increase to \$30K would be consistent with previous fundraising levels and would be needed to help offset the cost of a full time reference position. The descriptions of fund allocations to museum passes, special events, Croton Reads etc. should be aligned. As budget discussions are complex, adequate time should be allocated for them.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Bike Share Location**

Jesse Bourdon met with Len Simon, Deputy Mayor, to discuss the library as a possible bike share location, which includes a locking and charging station. He also met with the village department of public works (DPW) and police to discuss appropriate parking space use. They identified an optimal location, which will be a concrete pad connected to a sidewalk. The library is not expected to pay any installation fee, and will not receive any monies for hosting a bike share location. Jesse does not anticipate large amounts of traffic due to having bicycles parked. Whether there are liability issues beyond existing liability considerations is uncertain. This will be further discussed by the Buildings and Grounds committee.

Maria Slippen shared that DPW would do the construction of the bike share station. Community outreach will be needed to inform the public about bike safety and pedestrian traffic. The Village Board and Bicycle and Pedestrian committee will be involved in such discussions.

### **Information Kiosk Repairs**

The kiosk located at Croton Commons badly needs repair and it is the library that is responsible for its maintenance. Jesse is open to ideas about local artists who might be interested in repair or beautification. This will be further discussed by the Buildings and Grounds committee. Maria Slippen suggested the village Arts and Humanities advisory committee as a possible resource.

### **Summerfest - Sunday, June 1. interest and availability**

Jesse Bourdon is unavailable to work at the library booth and there are no volunteers at this time. It may be useful to ask Changing our World how this could be integrated into its planning and activities.

### **Joint board meeting with Henrick Hudson and Shrub Oak libraries**

Jesse Bourdon proposes July 14, 2025. Karen Zevin could be invited as she is Westchester Library System liaison for all three libraries.

### **Collection Statistics and Patron Services**

Collections surged and overall circulation numbers increased. Some digital services have also increased (e.g. Overdrive, Hoopla).

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Fundraising Committee**

The Fundraising Committee met on March 26 2025 to prepare for our Spring Book & Bake sale, which will take place the weekend of May 17-18. We have reached out to some of our most reliable volunteers, to give them a heads-up of our event timing. Set-up will take place on Friday, May 16th from 8a-4p.

In particular, we would like to ask for help drumming up baked good donations. Many previous contributors have since retired/moved from Croton, and donated baked goods have diminished over the last few sales. All board members are asked to solicit baking donations among friends and neighbors. Other ways to remind people to contribute to the bake sale could be to place reminders in the spice of the month giveaway, and offer CFL branded measuring spoons to baking donors. We can also remind bakers via the newsletter. The sign-up genius link for baked goods and sale volunteers became live today.

The Fundraising Committee decided to write an article highlighting Art Almeida's incredible volunteering, in particular his decades of contributing to the success of our book & bake sale. Mayla Hsu interviewed Art, with contributing material from Jesse Bourdon and Mary Donnery. Our committee will reach out to local Westchester publications in hopes they include our article in their next publication (ahead of the sale).

New lawn signs announcing the sale have arrived, so anyone who needs one can take one.

### **Long-Range Planning Committee**

The committee will meet April 21.

### **Arts Committee**

We recently received some new applications and are reviewing them. Preparations are underway to host an exhibition of the Croton-Harmon High School Advanced Placement art students' work for the month of June, 2025. This installation will be a little trickier than most since the students' work is not framed, but committee chair Margaret Mahoney is determined to find solutions and ensure that the students' hard work receives the exposure to the greater community that it deserves.

### **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

The committee did not meet this month.

### **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 March's board meeting. Remaining Comments on action items include:

1. Jesse will reach out to some local library directors to ask if they have a lawyer on retainer, and if so, what their fees have been. *In progress*
2. Committee leaders should review the Master Calendar for Library Board document and add any additional committee-related items as they see fit. *In progress*

3. The board discussed the option of showing art from past annual appeals during the few weeks in May when we will be without an exhibit. (This is the timing when we will have the Spring Book & Bake Sale). *We do not have the artwork from past annual appeals, as most artwork was returned to the artists.*
4. Jesse Bourdon will provide an update to the board once we have a proposal for new lighting for the Ottinger room. *Awaiting pricing from the electrician.*
5. Leslie will advise Casey Wayman from Whiteman Osterman & Hanna to connect with Jesse Bourdon. We would also like to have an hourly-rate estimate from the firm. *Leslie gave Jesse's contact info to the legal firm; they have not contacted Jesse yet. Leslie will give the lawyer's contact info to Jesse, who will reach out them.*
6. We are also asking all board members that have historical documents on their personal computers to upload these into our google drive (and then remove them from personal computers). Kate will send out the link to this folder: "Individual Trustee Materials". Each Board member has their own folder. Please upload these documents, renaming them for clarity purposes. Kate Fabian will help board members with this process, which we know will be a lengthy endeavor. *In progress*

## **NEW BUSINESS, part 2**

April 24, 2025 Annual Meeting reminder. All committee chair heads will give a speech to summarize past year's activities and accomplishments. Please submit written notes in advance or after, to facilitate writing of meeting minutes.

Bethany Basile has agreed to become board treasurer.

### **\*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 Susan Ranis and seconded by Kate Fabian to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at **9:03 pm**.

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*Respectfully submitted by Mayla Hsu,  
Filling in as secretary in Laura Jaeger's absence*