

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

June 9, 2025

Minutes of the June 2025 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, June 9, 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)
Barry Feinberg, Treasurer (28)
Bethany Basile (27)
Adam Decker (28)
Leslie Ellis (29)
Kate Fabian (28)
Mayla Hsu (26)
Laura Jaeger (26)
Margaret Mahoney (26)
Marianne Merola (27)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

ABSENT

Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (28)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:33pm.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Kate Fabian to approve minutes of the May 2025 Board Meeting held on May 12, 2025, which were distributed in advance. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with one abstention: Barry Feinberg.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

There was a drop in children's event attendance this past month. A lot of the programs did not happen as Flor Bromley and Lauren Dorien had other commitments.

Tax return has been accepted; tax year 2023-24 is now closed.

Our accountant Erik provided reasoning why it seems we are behind on our reporting:

"Since the Library is a fiscal year end of June 30, the tax "year" is the year in which 12/31 falls. So in the fiscal year 07.01.23-06.30.24, 12/31/23 is in that period, therefore this was the 2023 return".

Library of Things is live.

Already more than half of the "things" have been checked out. Gwen Glazer is working on announcements for this new program, particularly highlighting the grant from Dana Levenberg which helped make this happen.

We will be working on a lot more "hands-on" programming at the library, relating to the items that we have on loan in the "library of things".

Kiosk EOL (~2026)

In Croton Commons there is a kiosk near the ATM that is the library's property. We pay insurance for this 3'x3' square. This agreement was made in the mid 1990s with the town and the school. Our lease for this space is due every few years with the local landlord. (We are charged almost nothing or nothing.)

We do not believe it is important to the library to rebuild a kiosk here, but the current kiosk is falling apart. The Library does not intend to renew the kiosk going forward (renewal is due 2026). Jesse will meet with Bryan Healy, the village manager, to discuss the future of the kiosk.

Headcount for July 14 multi-board meeting.

Jesse needs to provide a headcount to the hosts. This will be a meeting of up to four different local library boards. The meeting will take place in Yorktown.

Update on Shared Mobility Contract (Bike Share Program).

Thank you to those board members who joined the meeting. Len Simon created a document for review, which is being reviewed by the library's insurance representative. Jesse has returned the document back to the village for final review.

Update from Changing Our World

Notes from Cassandra's first phase of work for us ("fact finding") regarding the possible fundraising for our renovation project are as follows:

- The planning study is going well. Since we last met, we've developed the case used for interviews which are currently underway and almost complete.
- Interviews are going well. Interviewees are generally positive about the case; all believed that the library is an essential community resource and that the revitalization effort is essential.
- Within the next two weeks, Changing Our World will deliver a report to Library leadership, including their findings and recommendations for moving forward.

The Case for Support document that Cassandra from Changing our World is using was shared with the board. The Case for Support was created from a questionnaire and input from the Library Director, Jesse Bourdon and the Board President, Susan Ranis.

When we receive the full write-up from Cassandra, we will vote on the next steps with *Changing Our World*.

Thursday, June 26, 2025 be the date of the board meeting to review the Changing Our World report. Jesse will locate a space in the library for us to meet that evening, starting at 7:30pm.

Laura suggested that all board members with questions for Cassandra, send those questions to Susan and Jesse by next Monday, June 16. That way these questions can be answered within Cassandra's report.

FT Head of Reference Position Update

Megan Fenton has accepted the full-time position of head of reference, which will take effect August 4, 2025.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The monthly check register for May was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. Everything was in line with expectations. Baker & Taylor had not billed us for several months, so we have more payments to Baker & Taylor to account for the backlog of invoices.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Barry Feinberg to approve the May 2025 Monthly Check Register. Adam Decker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Income

We are not expecting any significant incoming money for the rest of the fiscal year.

Expenses

We are about \$63k over our normal expenses. The majority of these costs are related to technology, staff retirement benefits and insurance, and operations/maintenance.

If needed, we will be able to apply any investment money to cover the shortfall.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fundraising Committee

Our Spring Book & Bake Sale was a success, raising a little over \$9k. We had a lot of patrons at the sale, and of particular note was the response from local bakers. Out of the total, \$1k was from the bake sale table alone, the largest amount ever.

Thank you everyone that volunteered and/or spoke with your neighbors and friends to participate or attend the event.

Long-Range Planning Committee

We will be sending our latest version of the finance policies to the finance committee for review. We will not be having a Long-Range planning meeting in June.

Quarterly LRP/Blue Sky Meetings

Adam Decker suggested possibly using quarterly Long-Range Planning meetings as Blue Sky meetings, or meetings where we invite staff and/or the public. We would like to use our board meetings to discuss bigger picture items.

It was suggested that these meetings ("Board Working Meeting" or something similarly named) take place at the same date of the week and time as our board meetings (just a different week) to allow for maximum participation by the board as desired. We could begin with three extra meetings - one in the fall, winter, and spring.

Art Committee

Art created by members of the class of 2026 enrolled in the Croton-Harmon High School Advanced Placement Art & Design class is currently on exhibit in the Ottinger Room. The exhibit will be up until June 24, 2025. We are very pleased to be displaying the artwork of younger members of our community, however, this was a large undertaking involving Margaret Mahoney, Jesse Bourdon, CHHS art teacher, Jodi Burger, and custodians from the high school. At the urging of the Board, the Art Committee will investigate the possibility of making this an annual event, perhaps including art from the elementary and middle school students and report on that at the next Board meeting.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Bikeshare Program

The Buildings and Grounds Committee met on Thursday, May 15th, 2025 to discuss the Bike Share Program. Jesse provided an update (see above in the director's report).

Ottinger Room Lighting

We have been given direction to reach out to a specific distributor in New York City to source the art lights for the Ottinger Room. This project is looking to estimate around \$8k for the combined labor and materials. (We may earmark government funds from Senator Pete Harckham for this lighting project.)

Library facade powerwashing

The library will be power washed next week; the last time we had the library powerwashed was several years ago.

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 previous board meetings. 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; Jesse has created a questionnaire.*
2. Committee leaders should review the Master Calendar for Library Board document and add any additional committee-related items as they see fit.
3. Jesse will reach out to lawyers Casey Wayman from Whiteman Osterman & Hanna.
4. We are asking all board members that have final 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. Email Kate when you have uploaded documents. Kate Fabian will help board members with this process, which we know will be a lengthy endeavor.
5. The Finance Committee will work on a process to make comparison of growth in investment outcome more clearly tracked and will adjust the reporting. Questions should be prepared in advance for the next Finance Committee meeting.
6. Marianne Merola suggested that the Trustee Training Committee begin to meet again to prepare for January, 2025. Susan, Adam, Marianne, and Mayla are the current committee members. Marianne will reach out to all current committee members.

NEW BUSINESS

New Committee Assignments

Margaret Mahoney suggested that anyone interested in being the next chair of the Art Committee join the committee this next year.

Laura Jaeger would like to leave the Long Range Planning Committee, and join the New Trustee Training Subcommittee.

It was suggested by Margaret Mahoney that each year we should be having trustee interviews, and that any board members whose terms are up should be part of the interview process if they would like to re-up as board members. We would like to discuss this topic at the first of the quarterly Long Range Planning/Blue Sky meetings in Fall 2025.

After discussion at the board meeting, updated 2025-2026 Committee Assignments have been drafted and are in the board drive.

Confirm remaining 2025 board meeting dates (currently 9/8, 10/20, 11/10, 12/8) Laura Jaeger will update the board calendar with these board meeting dates.

Laura Jaeger has requested that committee meetings created as a series be placed on the board calendar so the series has an end-date. Without an end date to the series, meetings remain in the calendar over the summer and without taking into consideration meeting times that will need to be changed. (Basically, the calendar is not accurate).

Written Committee Reports (streamlined meetings)

If there are committee reports that can be noted for the board without discussion, those reports can be emailed to the board secretary to add to the board meeting minutes for advanced review. This should save some time during our board meetings for larger-scale brainstorming and discussion.

By one-week prior to the board meeting, Jesse sends out a template of the board agenda, which can also be a reminder to the board to submit any materials in advance for the meeting minutes. We will test this process for the next meeting and see how it works for us.

Study pods (like Pillar/Framery)

This is an idea as a back-up in case space for studying could not be allotted in a future renovation.

Gift Certificate for Art

MOTION TO APPROVE A GIFT CARD FOR ART ALMEIDA FOR THE MAY BOOK & BAKE SALE

A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to approve the purchase of a gift card for Art, up to the value of \$150, to thank him for his efforts towards the May 2025 Book & Bake Sale. Barry Feinberg seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The fundraising committee will follow up to purchase the gift card for Art, which Jesse will hand to Art.

***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.

Executive session

A motion was made to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing Library Director Evaluation. The board will enter executive session after the regular board meeting adjourns.

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 9:24pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary