

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

September 8, 2025

Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, September 8, 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)
Bethany Basile, *Treasurer* (27)
Leslie Ellis (29)
Kate Fabian (28)
Mayla Hsu (26)
Laura Jaeger (26)
Margaret Mahoney (26)
Marianne Merola (27)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

ABSENT

Adam Decker (28)
Barry Feinberg (28)

GUESTS

Maria Slippen, Village of Croton on Hudson trustee liaison

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES (2)

A motion was made by Kate Fabian to approve minutes of the June 2025 Board Meeting held on June 9, 2025, which were distributed in advance. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Justin Johnson to approve minutes of the June 26, 2025 Ad Hoc Board Meeting with Changing Our World which were distributed in advance. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF JULY 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES (2)

A motion was made by Marianne Merola to approve minutes of the July 14, 2025 Quattro Board Meeting which were distributed in advance. Margaret Mahoney seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with two abstentions: Laura Jaeger and Kate Fabian, as they were not present at the Quattro Board meeting.

A motion was made by Kate Fabian to approve minutes of the Ad Hoc July 2025 Board Meeting held on July 28, 2025, which were distributed in advance. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The board will approve the August Board Working Session minutes at the October Board meeting.

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

There was a 30% increase in digital checkouts compared to last summer. This is a continued trend not only over the summer, but as time passes.

There was also a large jump in visitors compared to last summer, particularly without having a larger amount of events. It is possible we may have had more patrons this summer given Ossining's library A/C was not functioning fully.

Due to the lack of availability of people who host our childrens' programming events, we did have fewer childrens' programs this summer.

Staff reviews/summaries completed

These were completed at the beginning of July, so all staff raises were added in at the beginning of the fiscal year. All staff members received details about their salary and PTO summary, and feedback/reviews by their department head.

Summer Reading Participation

Stats are incoming. This will be reviewed at the October board meeting.

Migration to Quickbooks online

We are paying WSL up to \$1k per year for one outdated computer hosting quickbooks. We would like to migrate this to an online Quickbooks account. This will save money, and also allow Bethany Basile, our board Treasurer, to access reports anytime she likes. We still intend to keep our bookkeeper. TJ and Eric will help migrate us.

Two-Factor Authentication in place for email admins

There are multiple admins on the library's googlesuite account. We ordered FOBs for the authentication for the admins, as library employees are not required to work from their mobile phones.

Confirmation of West-Ex Lease Transfer

Jesse has been discussing the lease of the Croton Commons board with Bryan Healy, village manager. The village would like to take over the lease of the board. A letter from the Library board will need to be sent to West-Ex, which will then transfer the lease to the Village. Jesse has pre-written this letter; Susan will be signing on behalf of the board.

Upcoming Riverview Jazz performance

The performance on September 28th will be given in honor of Jesse Beller, as he is approaching his 100th Birthday.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for June 2025 and July 2025 were presented at the Finance Committee meeting. All statements going forward are being saved in the Finance Shared drive. Please view these in advance. Bethany Basile has offered to do a training session for the board so they are more comfortable reviewing these materials on their own.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Bethany Basile to approve the June 2025 Monthly Check Register. Susan Ranis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with two abstentions: Laura Jaeger and Margaret Mahoney.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JULY MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Bethany Basile to approve the June 2025 Monthly Check Register. Susan Ranis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with two abstentions: Laura Jaeger and Margaret Mahoney.

FY 2024-25 wrap up

Our Budget came in with a \$15k deficit. \$6k is believed to be credited in fy25 for workers comp before the close of the audit (flagged for review). The water basin expense added \$3,000 to the deficit in unexpected expenses but the primary increase came from fringe benefit expenses (health insurance primarily) and utilities; both remain unresolved ongoing financial challenges discussed at length during the budget process last spring.

We are close to net-zero for the first time in our primary operating account - a short-term cash flow issue. We are going to transfer/borrow \$100k into our account from our fundraising account until we receive tax money income in the beginning of October, after which we will transfer this money back into the fundraising account.

Our goal is that the board will review an audit in November. If possible, we will try to get materials to the board in October. The finance committee has a working timeline for this process.

Please note that going forward, financial statements will be reviewed a month-behind at each meeting, to give the committee members more than one day to review the materials. This is a change from the past ways we have reviewed and presented the statements.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

The Fundraising Committee is busy finalizing our draft of the 2025 Annual Appeal letter. Gwen Glazer provided details on some of the Library's highlights from the past year to guide our writing process. We have sent this version to *Changing Our World* for review. The board is welcome to view the draft to become familiar with the letter that will be mailed out in early November. A few board members would like to review it before we send it to Foley printers.

This year we plan to send pre-appeal postcards to any donors who have a strong history of more substantial donations. We will also likely increase our appeal mailing list to include additional zip codes (10521 and 10548) which cover not only parts of Croton-on-Hudson, but also include areas in Crugers and Montrose. The committee has asked Jesse to please give The HedHud library director a heads-up.

Fall Book and Bake Sale

Please save the dates for our Fall Book & Bake Sale, which will be happening earlier than usual this year. We will be setting up the Ottinger Room on Friday, November 7th from 8a-3p, and then running the sale from 8a-3p on Saturday, November 8th and 10a-3p on Sunday, November 9th.

Jesse will be applying for a new credit card connected to the Fundraising Committee account, which can be used for purchases-related to library fundraising.

Long-Range Planning Committee

Given Adam Decker will be co-chairing the newly-added monthly Board Working Sessions, he will be stepping down from the chair position of the Long-Range Planning Committee. Margaret Mahoney will be stepping up as the chair of the Long-Range Planning Committee.

The next Long-Range Planning Committee focus will be on the Finance Policy.

Arts Committee

July - August Artist: Elizabeth Castaldo –*born of Chaos*, silkscreen prints & collages. Ms. Castaldo had an opening and a closing reception, both on Thursday evenings.

Sept-Oct Artist: Teri Siegel Watercolors *Scenes from life along the Hudson River*. Ms. Siegel has decided to not have a reception.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

Safety Committee

The committee did not meet this month. The Safety Committee will restart in January 2026 to help discuss Patron Safety, including the library's Emergency Action Plan and Staff safety training. Bethany Basile mentioned we could look for grants for safety-related training and updates.

New Trustee Selection and Training

The Committee will be chaired by Marianne Merola, and will begin meeting again this fall. They will aim to have the selection and training materials updated by January 2026.

Ad Hoc Committee: Google Suite Organization

Several drives have been cleaned up with focus on "Board Administration", "New Trustee Selection and Onboarding", and "Policies and Reference Materials".

The Drives "Committee: Renovation Advisory" and "Library Renovation" will be consolidated (work in progress).

The Master calendar is a work in progress. Kate Fabian will be reaching out to various committee chairs for further details for this board Master calendar. It will be a helpful guide for all committee chairs to keep their annual tasks on time and presented at the appropriate board meetings. At the October Board meeting, Kate will provide a training session to the board so everyone understands how the Master Calendar works.

It was suggested that Jesse include a line on each future board meeting agenda for the board to review the Board Master Calendar.

NEW BUSINESS

***Changing Our World* pause**

Cassandra mentioned we cannot go out to our major donors without a final design. We have agreed to pause our contract with *Changing our World* for 1-month, to start back up on October 15 (pausing September 15-October 15). The board will need to take steps to review additional possible funding if we want to try to move forward with the fuller more costly design.

Jesse is meeting with BMRA (the architects) tomorrow, September 9th, 2025 to review an updated design. Jesse will create a PDF for the board's review, including initial cost estimates. This will be sent out by mid-week this week, and the board should report back to Jesse by September 16, 2025.

Jesse will be reaching out to local library directors regarding budgeting, bonds, and changes to the tax cap. The Chairs of the Working Group will follow up with directors that have relevant information and/or are open to meeting.

The director of Hen Hud, Jill Davis, is willing to meet with members of the board to discuss how they financed their renovations.

Col/Whistleblower - Trustee attestations (please sign)

Jesse is going to make these a form-filled PDF and email this out to the board tomorrow, September 9, 2025.

Update Terms and Positions in Croton Trustee List

All board members have been asked to review and update their information in the Trustee list. This list is a document which keeps details on all current and past Board members.

Board meeting location

The board requested that future Board meetings happen in the Creative Space instead of the Ottinger Room. Jesse will adjust the meeting location when possible. The Croton Free Library website will be updated accordingly.

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. In progress.
3. Jesse will reach out to lawyers Casey Wayman from Whiteman Osterman & Hanna. Not yet done.
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. In progress.
5. Laura Jaeger has requested that committee meetings created as a series be placed on the board calendar so the series has an end-date. In progress.

***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 Leslie Ellis and seconded by Laura Jaeger to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at **9:10pm**.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary