

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

October 20, 2025

Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, October 20, 2025 at The Croton Free Library, Creative Space, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

PRESENT

Library Board of Trustees:

Susan Ranis, *President* (29)
Bethany Basile, *Treasurer* (27)
Adam Decker (28)
Kate Fabian (28)
Barry Feinberg (28)
Mayla Hsu (26)
Laura Jaeger (26)
Margaret Mahoney (26)
Marianne Merola (27)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

ABSENT

Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (28)
Leslie Ellis (29)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:33pm

APPROVAL OF LIBRARY BOARD WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES (2)

A motion was made by Kate Fabian to approve [minutes of the August 25, 2025 Board Work Session](#), which were distributed in advance. Laura Jaeger seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with the following abstention: Adam Decker.

A motion was made by Bethany Basile to approve [minutes of the September 18, 2025 Board Work Session](#), which were distributed in advance. Margaret Mahoney seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with the following abstentions: Kate Fabian, Laura Jaeger, and Mayla Hsu.

Mayla Hsu will create a meeting minutes document from the October 16th Board Work session, which will be approved at the November Board meeting.

Kate will create a shortcut for the working session meetings minutes so they can coexist in two locations: The Library Renovation share drive as well as the Board Administration share drive.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Margaret Mahoney to approve [minutes of the September 8, 2025 Board Meeting](#), which were distributed in advance. Kate Fabian seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with the following abstention: Adam Decker.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

There was a huge surge in programming attendance/visitor count. September was very busy for the vaccination clinic (133 vaccines were given by Save-Mor for both flu and Covid). We also did a Blood drive and had two large concerts.

Hoopla Licensing Reductions

WSL has said it will reduce the Hoopla and Kanopy access per user to half of what is currently allotted. For most users this will not impact their usage, as they do not exceed the newly placed maximum for monthly content. This change will begin November 1, 2025. We pay a flat fee to WSL for online content platforms, but the Overdrive collection is separate - each library pays for its own collection, which is then shared.

Tax Levy Payment (1 of 2) Received

Our tax levy of \$492,696 was transferred into our operating from the School district. We were then able to transfer \$50,000 back into our fundraising account.

Baker & Taylor closure and repercussions

Baker & Taylor was our primary vendor for books. They have been a book distributor for over 100 years. As of this past May, we started having fulfillment and communication issues, and this fall they officially closed their doors. We will need to find another vendor for book purchases. For the month of October, we had to order books from Amazon for our necessities. We have since opened an account with Ingram, which is another vendor we can work with for new titles going forward.

Summer Reading Participation

The numbers this year are below. Participant (and completion) numbers were higher than last year.

- Pre-K: <1-4yo = 42 (22 finished)
- Kids: 5-12yo = 150 (90 finished)
- Teen: 13-17yo = 21 (8 finished)
- Adult: 18yo+ = 125 (57 finished)

Fundraising Credit Card

We now have a new credit card, linked directly to the fundraising account. Any related-costs for fundraising will be placed on this credit card. We will no longer have to adjust our financials to reallocate accordingly for proper review.

Windows 11 Upgrades

We will be replacing one computer and decommissioning another, given recent updates to our computers at the library. This will save us some technology-related costs with WLS.

Kiosk Lease Transfer update

The village has taken control over the kiosk at Croton Commons. It will no longer be the responsibility of the library.

Open Position Available (PT Circ Clerk)

Jordyn Pointek gave her two weeks' notice as she is heading back to school. We have begun to take applications for this open position.

Staff Development Funding [Request](#)

Dianna Solano has requested \$259 to cover the early bird registration for the upcoming PLA conference 2026 in Minneapolis. This would be part of funding granted for Croton Free Library Staff Development. A request letter was sent to the board for review.


MOTION TO APPROVE USING FUNDRAISING CAPITAL TO COVER THE \$259 EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION COST FOR DIANNA SOLANO TO ATTEND THE PLA CONFERENCE 2026 IN MINNEAPOLIS.

A motion was made by Laura Jaeger to approve using \$259 of fundraising capital to cover the cost of early bird registration for Dianna Solano to attend the PLA Conference 2026 in Minneapolis. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board has asked Jesse to have Dianna Solano provide an estimate on further costs associated with her traveling to this event once she begins making her arrangements. She should submit a second funding request to the board for review.

Bethany Basile suggested if the Budget tax cap gets raised and we have more flexibility in the operating budget, that a line-item in our annual budget be added to support professional development requests.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

All board members were asked to review statements in the Finance Share  [Drive](#) in advance of the board meeting in order to facilitate more expedient review.

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for August 2025 was presented at the Finance Committee meeting.

- August financial report - Overall expenses were at 17.6% of the budget in line with this point in the year (16% of the year)
- The Check Register looks consistent and was recommended for approval by the finance committee

MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Bethany Basile to approve the August 2025 Monthly Check Register. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

In the coming months, Bethany will be offering a training session to help board members better understand how to read all financial statements. This session will be recorded so board members who cannot attend will be able to view it at a future time.

Audit review update

Our recent Audit was emailed to the board for review ahead of the board meeting. Bethany Basile did an overview with the board to discuss the main bullet points of the audit:

- There were no big surprises from our end of year financial statement review
- Net assets grew, ending the year at \$2.79M, up from \$2.73M in FY24.
 - Primarily because the Investments grew to \$1.72M (from \$1.53M in FY24)
- The Library's operating deficit grew from about \$25K in FY24 to \$63K in FY25, but \$64K was Changing our World expenses - categorized as Professional fees in the Fundraising Accounting
 - Contributions were at \$72K (and up from \$48K in FY24) and Grants decreased from \$23K in FY24 to \$3K in FY25
 - Programming and Admin expenses were in line with budget expectations, with biggest increases in Salaries/Benefits, Insurance, and Utilities as previously discussed
- We maintain about 15-17 months of operating expenses in our reserves
- The commentary in the contingencies section of the audit was substantially changed. The committee believed that the previous years' statement underrepresented the risks of our financial model, which was decided/requested nearly a decade ago by the Board. A new Contingencies section was drafted as an alternative to reflect present-day realities of potentially reduced public funding..
- Open questions for confirmation/adjustment include:
 - Review/approval of the contingencies section new wording
 - Confirming that "Croton Free Library, Inc." is our official business title. This should match our charter document.
 - Confirming that December 1946 is our proper incorporation date.
 - Using a consistent/proper definition of "GAAP" within the document.

After reviewing the Restricted donations list from the audit, the board requested Changing Our World communicate with these families regarding channeling some of these funds (or allotting other funds) towards our capital campaign. Jesse Bourdon will speak with Cassandra regarding this process.

All board members should email Bethany comments/feedback on the audit by October 28th. Bethany will submit those questions to our auditor, and we will aim to vote on this audit at the November board meeting. If we are not able to do this within that time period, we will put off the vote until December and delay the tax filing, asking for an extension.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

The committee has written pre-appeal notecards to past annual appeal donors with a history of repeat donations of \$150 or more. These notecards were sent in the mail today. Our note thanked them for their past generosity and asked them for renewed support for our upcoming appeal, as well as asking them to share details of our appeal with their friends and neighbors.

After Jesse's conversation with other local library directors, we decided to keep our mailing list for this year's appeal the same as last year - mailing out only to zip code 10520, including local businesses as well. We did not add any additional zip codes, even if that means certain homes in Croton will be skipped. We did not want to target people who are patrons of a different local library.

The cost for printing of this year's appeal was \$5,338. Rates have gone up considerably over a year's time; last year's rate was \$4,227.54. We are expecting the cost of postage to be somewhere around \$1,100.

Despite what seems like a high cost to print the appeal, we received \$29,204.15 in total donations for the 2024/2025 Fiscal Year, which was an all-time high. We hope our donations for 2025/2026 will continue to increase.

The annual appeal will be mailed out the second week of November. Please keep an eye out for it. Our fundraising committee will continue to handwrite thank yous to any donors who give \$100 or more.

Fall Book and Bake Sale

Our Book & Bake sale will be November 8th and 9th. We will be setting up the Ottinger room in just one day, on Friday November 7th from 8a-3:30p.

Current volunteer stats from our Sign-up Genius list were reported. To bolster our number of volunteers, Jesse Bourdon was asked to connect with Gwen Glazer to confirm that the Book & Bake Sale sign-up is placed on the library website, and that the high school has been contacted regarding the volunteer opportunity for students to work at the sale.

Board members do not need to sign-up on the Sign-up Genius, but Laura has requested board members who will be volunteering with the sale should let her know so we can plan on the assistance accordingly.

Last sale we ran out of our library canvas bags. Jesse has ordered an additional 150 bags, which were paid for with our new fundraising account credit card. The cost of these bags was a little over \$4 each. We will continue to have the \$20 "fill a library bag" sale on Sunday of the Book & Bake Sale. People can bring their own library bag and fill it for \$20, or receive a new bag for the same price.

Please take a lawn sign and place it out on your lawn (and a friend's lawn!) on Monday evening, November 3rd.

Staff Holiday Party

As was done last year, the Fundraising Committee would like to request allocating \$1,000 from the Fundraising account to be used for a Holiday party for library staff. We would also like to request using \$150 for a gift certificate for Art Almeida.

MOTION TO APPROVE USING \$1,000 FROM THE FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT FOR A STAFF HOLIDAY PARTY

A motion was made by Bethany Basile that \$1,000 from the fundraising account be allotted for the arrangement of a holiday party for the Croton Free Library staff. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION TO APPROVE USING \$150 FROM THE FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT FOR A GIFT FOR ART ALMEIDA

A motion was made by Kate Fabian that \$150 from the fundraising account be allotted for a gift card for Art Almeida. Mayla Hsu seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Long-Range Planning Committee

Margaret Mahoney emailed the board both the [Financial Policies & Controls](#) and [Gifts, Donations and Naming Policy](#) for review before the board meeting.

A discussion was had regarding both policies, and it was decided we will wait until November to vote on the Financial Policies and Controls policy. We will postpone moving forward with the Gifts, Donations, and Naming Policy until we understand how the policy can better suit our library's needs around communicating how gifts can best be made.

In light of discussions earlier in our meeting tonight, Margaret suggested that we add the new Contingencies section from the annual audit to the Financial Policies and Controls document.

All board members are welcome at the next Long Range Planning Committee meeting taking place on Monday, October 27 at 7pm if they would like to discuss the Financial Policies and Controls policy. Otherwise, board members are invited to email Margaret their comments.

Long-Range plan for 2026

This discussion is on the agenda, and we will aim to present it at our November or December board meeting.

Arts Committee

Sept-Oct Artist: Teri Siegel Watercolors *Scenes from life along the Hudson River*. Ms. Siegel will be taking her work down on October 30. Lauren Davis, the artist who created the annual appeal image, will be hanging her paintings on November 1. Her reception will take place Sunday, November 16, 2 - 4 pm.

The schedule for 2026 is filling up. Margaret would like to discuss the Annual Appeal art for 2026 (and the accompanying November - December exhibit) with the Fundraising Committee.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

Safety Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

New Trustee Selection and Training

The committee did not meet this month.

OLD BUSINESS**Review the Board Master Calendar for the coming month**

The updated Board Master calendar is in process. Kate Fabian will continue working on it.

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). Each Board member has their own folder, which is located in the following place on our share drive: Committees: Ad Hoc / Google Suite Organization / Individual Trustee Archive Material. 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.
6. The Safety Committee will restart in January 2026 to help discuss Patron Safety, including the library's Emergency Action Plan and Staff safety training.
7. Bethany Basile mentioned we could look for grants for safety-related training and updates.
8. The New Trustee Training Committee will aim to have the selection and training materials updated by January 2026.
9. All board members have been asked to review and update their information in the Croton Trustee List.

10. Several Board members still need to upload their Col and Whistleblower forms into the Board share drive. An email was sent to the board by Kate Fabian on Wednesday, September 10th at 8:19 PM with full details and instructions on how to complete these documents.

***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 Bethany Basile to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32p.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary