

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

November 10, 2025

Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, November 10, 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)
Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (28)
Bethany Basile, *Treasurer* (27)
Adam Decker (28)
Leslie Ellis (29)
Kate Fabian (28)
Barry Feinberg (28)
Mayla Hsu (26)
Laura Jaeger (26)
Margaret Mahoney (26)
Marianne Merola (27)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

GUESTS

Maria Slippen, *village board of Trustees*

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER LIBRARY BOARD WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Barry Feinberg to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2025 Board Work Session, which were distributed in advance. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with the following abstentions: Susan Ranis and Marianne Merola.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Susan Ranis to approve minutes of the October 20, 2025 Board Meeting, which were distributed in advance. Kate Fabian seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with the following abstentions: Justin Johnson and Leslie Ellis.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

We had the most recorded monthly visitors to the library in October 2025. There were several special events for the month; it was a very busy time. This was a 33% increase in attendance over last October.

Our reference transactions were slightly down, but it is possible we missed two days of tracking children's transactions.

Even without counting Hoopla, we were 5% up for digital transactions.

Annual Fire Inspection Passed

The village held our annual fire inspection. The inspection now costs \$100. We passed the inspection without issue.

Insurance Adjustments

Jesse worked with our insurance company; we got \$100 back given we are no longer in charge of the kiosk at Croton Commons.

Quick Books Online Migration Complete

All our financial accounts have been migrated online. Going forward our board treasurer will have access to these accounts.

New Circulation Staff Members

Coverage at our circulation desk has been one of the most difficult to fill. We opted to hire two candidates to cover the desk. One person (Stephanie Chen) will work nights at the desk, and the other hire (Jillian Leon) will work a Saturday shift every few weeks, and will be a sub as needed to cover the desk.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE HIRING OF STEPHANIE CHEN and JILLIAN LEON

A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to approve the hiring of both Stephanie Chen and Jillian Leon as new circulation staff members for the Croton Free Library. Marianne Merola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reference Staff

Matthew Mendelsohn gave his two weeks' notice recently. Existing library staff will pick up these hours.

Community Pantry

Gwen Glazer has taken the lead to create a food pantry available at the library. Gwen worked with the Croton Caring Committee, Croton Food Pantry, and SEPTA (the Croton Harmon school district) to create this pantry. We are taking donations of nonperishable foods, personal care items, and pet food. Anyone may take whatever is needed, no questions asked. There is no end-date to this initiative at this time. Many other nonprofit organizations in town are helping to support this project. More details can be found on the library's website.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Please review the statements in the Finance Share  Drive in advance of the board meeting.

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for September 2025 was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. Our overall expenses were at 30%, which is relatively in-line with expectations.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by the Finance Committee to approve the September 2025 Monthly Check Register. The motion passed unanimously.

Audit Vote

After much committee review, the finance committee shared an updated document with the board in advance of the board meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT / AUDIT

A motion was made by the Finance Committee to approve the audit ending Fiscal Year June 30, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Stock Gifts

The Finance Committee will be communicating with Margaret regarding the Long Range Committee future policy around stock gifts.

Optional Board training re: reviewing financial documents

Once the finance committee accesses the online financials in their new format, they will open up training with the board for those who desire it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

The annual appeal should be arriving in your mailboxes this week. Please keep an eye out for them.

Fall Book and Bake Sale

We had a wonderful turnout for the Fall Book & Bake sale this weekend. We were able to raise \$10,570.30, which was a wonderful feat. Thanks to all who aided in making this event such a success.

As a side-note related to our sale: our current method of storing books has been to reuse large sturdy cardboard boxes from Baker and Taylor. Given Baker and Taylor is now out of business, we will need to replace any broken boxes by purchasing new ones.

MOTION TO APPROVE USING FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT TO PURCHASE STORAGE BOXES FOR BOOK & BAKE SALE

A motion was made by Laura Jaeger to approve Jesse using funds of up to \$1,000 from our fundraising account to purchase any additional storage boxes needed at the conclusion of all future Book & Bake sales, to support the collection of materials leading to the next sale. Justin Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Card for Art Almeida

We will present Art with a thank you card and a gift card this week in recognition of his contributions to our book and bake sale.

Long-Range Planning Committee

Financial Policies & Controls policy

After much committee review, the Long-Range Planning committee shared an updated policy with the board in advance of the board meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL POLICIES AND CONTROLS POLICY

A motion was made by the Long Range Planning Committee to approve the Financial Policies and Controls Policy dated November 10, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

Gifts, Donations and Naming Policy

This policy is temporarily on hold.

Long-Range plan for 2026

The Long Range Planning Committee will be meeting in person next week, Monday, November 17, at 7 pm, in the Creative Space at the Library. This meeting will be devoted to discussing the 2026 Long Range Plan. Margaret has created a draft that is significantly different from previous years' Long Range Plans, so there will be a lot to discuss. Hopefully there will be a draft for full Board review by the December Board meeting.

Arts Committee

Nov-Dec Artist: Lauren Davis, the artist who created the annual appeal image, hung her paintings on November 1. Her reception will take place this Sunday, November 16, 2 - 4 pm.

The schedule for 2026 artwork is filling up.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Jesse has been working on the replacement art lights for the Ottinger room. The past estimates were much more expensive than we had hoped. Pointsource was suggested as a light provider by Paul Mays. A new quote for the work has come in around \$4,500 for material, and \$5,000-6,000 for the labor.

MOTION TO APPROVE JESSE TO SPEND UP TO \$12,000 FROM OUR OPERATING ACCOUNT FOR THE UPGRADE OF THE OTTINGER ROOM ART LIGHTS

A motion was made by Justin Johnson to approve Jesse using funds of up to \$12,000 from our operating account to move forward with the upgrade of the Ottinger Room art lights.

Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Safety Committee

The committee did not meet this month. Justin Johnson will reach out to the committee via email to set up a date for a January meeting.

New Trustee Selection and Training

The Committee is going to meet in-person this coming Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 7:30pm. Board members with an end of term in 2026 should speak with New Trustee Selection and Training Chair, Marianne, prior to the December meeting to discuss their plans.

A reminder that all board members owe at least two hours of trustee training by the end of the year. Forms must be submitted online and saved in our board drive for Susan's review. All board members are also required to take a NYS Sexual Harassment training course. Jesse will be sending the library staff an email ; he will include those details in an email to the board.

Ad-Hoc Committee: Google Suite Organization

Drive clean-up continues:

- Draft board minutes that were not in folders have been moved to respective folders
- Draft minutes that require board vote will be stored in the folder for the Board meeting at which they will be voted on, so that all board materials for that meeting are in one folder. Example: October's draft board minutes will be stored in the Board Meeting Materials folder for the November board meeting. Once voted on, an approved PDF version will be stored in the Meeting Minutes folder.

A new folder within the Library Renovation Drive / Committees folder was created and labeled as "Working Sessions". All materials and minutes from those sessions will be stored in that folder. Working Session materials that have been stored in the Renovation Drive / Committees / Renovation Budget and Financing will be moved to the Work Sessions folder and renamed using a standard naming convention to provide better guidance on content. A shortcut will be provided in the Board Meeting Materials folder for the meeting at which they will be voted on. This will ensure that all board materials for that meeting are in one folder.

OLD BUSINESS

The Board Master Calendar items for November were reviewed.

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. Our next needs for legal assistance will be related to a bond. Jesse and Adam will work together regarding the pro-bono partnership.
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. 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.
4. 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.
5. Bethany Basile mentioned we could look for grants for safety-related training and updates. Update to be provided to Bethany from the safety committee.
6. All board members have been asked to review and update their information in the Croton Trustee List.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. We will aim to present the Long-Range plan for 2026 at our December board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Board Pledge Forms

All board members are asked to send their capital campaign pledge forms to Susan by Thursday, November 20, 2025. It is very important that the board participate 100%.

We are not announcing a dollar amount - only that all board members have pledged (are on board with the project).

Working Committee meetings going forward

It was discussed that we should continue the working committee meetings on the 3rd Thursday of the month through May 2026. Meetings may be removed from the calendar if they are not needed any particular month. Laura Jaeger will update the series in the board calendar.

Meetings with placement agents / Next Working Session

Adam and Jesse spoke with agents regarding the likelihood of the library receiving bond money for our upcoming library capital project. The agents will receive a percentage of whatever loan deal we receive. They suggested that time-wise we are in good shape for this project.

More details will be provided at our next working session on Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 7:30p at the Library in the Creative Space. The topic will be public outreach.

***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 Leslie Ellis to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary