

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

December 8, 2025

Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, December 8, 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)
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

ABSENT

Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (28)

GUESTS

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:32pm.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to approve minutes of the November 10, 2025 Board Meeting, which were distributed in advance. Kate Fabian seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER LIBRARY BOARD WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Marianne Merola to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2025 Board Work Session, which were distributed in advance. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved with the following abstentions: Kate Fabian, Bethany Basile, and Leslie Ellis.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

This is the first month we have gotten up and running without access to Baker and Taylor for our book purchases. Overall this caused a dip in transactions.

Some of our main programmers have also been out on vacation, and those vacations including this month's holiday show a dip in the attendance for programs as well.

Kanopy sunsetting

Due to funding hits to the Westchester Library System, a decision was made to stop access to the Kanopy program by June 30, 2026. The platform fees were too high to continue being part of offerings as part of our digital package with WLS. If specific libraries would like to buy into using Kanopy, they may pay for it directly, but the cost is very high. For reference, the NYPL has also gotten rid of using Kanopy.

We are purchasing 100 tickets to *The Librarian* movie which will provide individual digital access to patrons who sign-up.

B&T/Ingram update

We have started working with Ingram. (This is due to the fact Baker & Taylor has gone out of business). The library received our new releases in advance for the first time in years. These initial results bode well for this new relationship.

WLS app update

We are on track to go live in February 2026. We hope to have the owning rights to this app (instead of Apple). Ideally once the app updates it will require a simple update, not downloading a completely new app.

Levenberg/Harckham Grant Status

Jesse is working on two active grants:

Representative Dana Levenberg - \$100k to go to the roof replacement. Franzoso is part of this application process; we are waiting for an estimate to provide for the grant process. We are making sure Dana is aware that we will need to replace our roof regardless of any upcoming construction project.

Senator Harkham - \$60k towards new parking lot pole lighting.

Art lighting project update

Our electrician has been in touch with the distributor. We do not have a date for install yet. Install will take 3 days; we will likely need to adjust programs in the Ottinger room to accommodate this installation. We are hoping this happens end-of-December, early-January.

ProjectMover winter break

E-bikes will be on hold during the winter, given the danger of riding bikes in the winter weather. Bikes will be removed until approximately April. Out of all the river towns, Croton has been the most successful town for this program.

Holiday party update

Jesse polled the staff regarding their interest in a holiday party vs. using the funds allotted for other things (a gift card or a cardigan). Not one staff member chose to use the allotted funds for a holiday party; interest was divided between a gift card or a branded cardigan. The funds will be divided into approximately \$40 per member.

MOTION TO APPROVE CHANGING THE ALLOTMENT OF \$1,000 FROM THE FUNDRAISING ACCOUNT TO UP TO \$1,200. IN LIEU OF A HOLIDAY PARTY, A GIFT FOR STAFF MEMBERS WILL BE CHOSEN AT THE DISCRETION OF THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR.

A motion was made by Bethany Basile to approve adjusting the allotment of \$1,000 from the fundraising account to up to \$1,200. The funds may be used for a gift at the discretion of the library director. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion was held around the idea of having an online shop with library swag. We believe this might be enjoyed by our community, and might be a successful ongoing method of fundraising and marketing.

TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Overall expenses were at 39.6% of budget, in line with this point in the year.

We have spent \$21K more in expenses from this time last year (catching up from September's \$65K which was largely due to pre-/one-time payments).

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for October 2025 was presented at the Finance Committee meeting. The check register remains consecutive with no large checks over \$10K this month.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

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

990 Update

The annual audit was finalized this past month, and the 990 form was successfully filed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

The final cost of printing and sending our annual appeal this year was \$6,090.74.

As of December 2nd our annual appeal has raised \$11,825. Last year by December 8th we had raised \$14,553. The fundraising committee will continue to write handwritten thank you letters to all donors who give \$100 or more.

Long-Range Planning Committee

A 2026 Long Range Plan DRAFT was sent out to the Board a few days before our board meeting. The committee has made some major revisions to the document to focus less on day-to-day operations, but instead focus on a bigger scope for a multi-year plan.

Goals were turned into guiding principles. The renovation plan has been highlighted as a major goal over the coming years.

This draft includes suggestions that impact all of our different committees and our various goals.

The next Long Range Planning committee will be meeting next Monday, 12/15 if anyone would like to join so we can work together to continue updating this Long Range Plan document. Our goal is to vote on this document at our next board meeting, January 12, 2026.

The initial reactions from the board were extremely positive. Any comments on the document can be made as comments (not changes, please).

Arts Committee

Margaret Mahoney has been in touch with Jesse Bourdon regarding the upcoming lighting adjustment to the Ottinger room, and how it might affect the art displays for the coming year.

A note was made that we may need to pause scheduling artists after Spring 2027, depending on the construction schedule and process. At this time it might be prudent to only book out until the end of 2026. Any inquiring artists may be told that some library maintenance might make the availability of the Ottinger Room uncertain, and we don't want it to jeopardize any plans we make with artists during that time.

A note was made to check on upcoming Book & Bake sale feasibility after November 2026's sale.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

Safety Committee

The committee did not meet this month.

The board brought up the fact an altercation occurred at the Library around the Croton Caring Food truck, and this was reported in a recent Croton Blotter. No further comments were made.

New Trustee Selection and Training

The Self Assurance Form for verifying attendance for annual continuing education requirements has been updated in the drive.

The required sexual harassment training does not count towards the 2-hour minimum. This attestation is saved in a different part on the google drive.

Marianne has emailed the board upcoming Library meetings for further training opportunities in early 2026.

The committee has asked that any trustees whose term is expiring should thoughtfully consider whether and why they would like to apply for another 5 year term. This email should be sent to the Board president by December 15th of their last year. This letter will be shared with the entire board. This keeps this process transparent and is good for record keeping. Article 6 section 3 of our bylaws supports this decision. At the January board meeting, we will have a vote regarding the additional term for current trustees.

A discussion was had regarding terms limits, term length, and also the rotation of officer positions.

Here is the currently proposed timeline for the candidate application process:

- In December: statements from current board members whose terms are expiring
- Mid-January - open applications if there are open seats on the board to fill
- February Board meeting - potential candidates should sit in
- Mid-February - close application process
- March - candidate interviews
- Late April - first training for new board members
- Annual Meeting - New Board members are presented
- May Board meeting - first board meeting for new board members

All of this information is being saved into the committee's shared drive. There are several documents that are in process that are also located in the Policies and Reference Materials Share drive.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Board Master Calendar items for December

- Communicate additions to the monthly newsletter to the library director or director of user engagement
- Publication of Newsletter
- Publish long range plan
- Announce whether new board members will be needed
- Complete / Submit and Confirm yearly education requirement

Review of missing forms

- Whistleblower/Conflict of Interest
- Training Attestations
- Sexual harassment missing

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 and Adam will work together regarding finding a pro-bono partnership with lawyers regarding our current legal needs. *In Process*
2. 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.
3. The Finance Committee will be communicating with Margaret regarding the Long Range Committee future policy around stock gifts. *In Process*
4. Once the finance committee accesses the online financials in their new format, they will open up training with the board with those who desire it. *In Process - target January*.
5. Justin Johnson will reach out to the safety committee via email to set up a date for a January meeting.

***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 Leslie Ellis to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary