



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Jan. 22, 2025

In Attendance

Trustees: Holley Barreto, Kushanava Choudhury, Mayor Mark Freda, Robert Ginsberg, Jeffrey Liao, Stephanie Oster, Keisha Smith-Carrington, Sebnem Tuzun, Chris Van Buren

Library Staff: Erica Bess, Laura Bishop, Becky Bowers, William Chong, JiHae Ju, Jennifer Podolsky, Karen Rackley, Sonja Vloeberghs

Teen Reps: Tessa Silver

At 6:01 p.m. Mr. Van Buren called the meeting to order and announced that pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was provided as part of the annual schedule of meetings to the municipal clerk, Princeton Packet, Town Topics and Trenton Times on Jan. 3, 2025. The notice was posted in the library, on the library's and municipality's websites and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the library's Administration Office.

All trustees introduced themselves, as requested by Mr. Van Buren, providing their name, position, length they've served on the board and what brought them to serve.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, minus Resolution 2024-34 as requested by Ms. Barreto and 2025-05 as requested by Mr. Chong. Ms. Oster seconded the motion. Resolutions 2024-34 and 2025-05 were removed from the consent agenda. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Nov. 29, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Dec. 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Final December 2024 Bills
- Preliminary January 2025 Bills
- Resolution 2024-31: Cancellation of Unexpended 2024 Appropriation Balances
- Resolution 2024-32: Library Operating Budget Amendment for the Budget Year 2024
- Resolution 2024-33: Acceptance of Designated Gifts and Grants, 4th Qtr, 2024
- ~~Resolution 2024-34: Grant Fund 2024 Operating Budget Amendment~~
- Resolution 2025-01: Temporary Operating Budget
- Resolution 2025-02: COLA Adjustment 2025
- Resolution 2025-03: Cash Management Plan
- Resolution 2025-04: Designated Bank Account Signatures
- ~~Resolution 2025-05: Authorizing Expenditures in Excess of \$44,000 with Certain Vendors~~
- Resolution 2025-06: Authorizing the Qualified Purchasing Agent to Award Contracts Between \$17,500.00 and the Bid Threshold of \$44,000.00
- Resolution 2025-07: Library Attorneys
- Resolution 2025-08: Open Public Meetings Act
- Resolution 2025-09: Official Newspapers

Mr. Chong noted that **Resolution 2025-05: Authorizing Expenditures in Excess of \$44,000 with Certain Vendors** needs to be revised and presented for a vote in February.

Resolution 2024-34: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve Resolution 2024-34: Grant Fund 2024 Operating Budget Amendment; Ms. Smith-Carrington seconded the motion. Ms. Barreto asked why Church & Dwight was not awarding the PEFF grant to the library this year. Ms. Podolsky noted, after conferring with Ms. Keesling, that most likely the employee at Church & Dwight who applied for this grant on behalf of the library no longer works for them. Ms. Podolsky will ask Ms. Keesling to look into the possibility of receiving that grant from Church & Dwight. The motion passed unanimously.

Board materials: There was no discussion on the board materials included in the packet: Monthly Director's Report, Statistics - 3Q 2024, 4Q 2024, Yearly 2024, Budget vs Actual - 4Q 2024

Public comment: None.

President's report: Mr. Van Buren welcomed the trustees and congratulated the Friends and Foundation on a successful event at Richardson Auditorium that featured Brooke Shields.

Mr. Van Buren noted that over the next year he will focus on:

- Financial Health - how are we thinking about our finances, what are we doing with them, etc.
- Community and Partnerships - through community and partnerships with local organizations, how do we deliver what the community is looking for in terms of service and what a library provides.
- Communications - talking to our audience and stakeholders, donors, town council, staff, patrons, children - communicating to all the library's mission, vision and values.

Committee assignments: Mr. Van Buren identified three committees for 2025: finance, policy and personnel. He noted that the current bylaws will be revised to reflect these committees. He noted there will also be an ad hoc strategic planning committee.

Friends and Foundation: No report.

Teen Representative: Tessa Silver introduced themselves and noted that the Teen Advisory Board hosted a successful a cappella night at the library at which seven groups from Princeton High School, Princeton Day School and The Stuart School performed. Tessa noted that next month there will be a book swap for teens on Feb. 18 and on social media, there are four Instagram videos with over 2,000 total views and 45 total likes, advertising different programs they've worked on, as well as Teen Book Tuesday which highlights YA books. Tessa noted TAB has teen library accounts for Instagram, Spotify and TikTok.

Treasurer's report: Mr. Liao noted that the committee did not meet in January. He noted that the budget vs actual for the end of 2024 shows that revenues were above and expenses below expectation, with a significant amount put in fund balance. He noted the Annual Appeal was significantly above the target amount. He noted that the library ended 2024 in good financial shape.

Mr. Chong noted there was a \$25,000 increase in the public fund; we propose keeping it in the fund balance so that we have a target fund balance of \$150,000 which is about an average payroll period.

Development report: Ms. Podolsky shared the Development Office report.

- Annual Appeal
 - Raised \$404,738, an increase of \$108,732, up 37% from 2023.
 - Number of individuals supporting the annual appeal rose to 719, a 34% increase.
 - Retention rate (those who gave in 2023 and 2024) went up 61%.
 - 349% increase in new and recaptured donors (have not given in the previous 5 years).
- \$651,000 in restricted gifts including \$450,000 for the new steam studio.
- Ms. Elwin has been working with colleagues on a grant application entitled, Community Connector - Library Liaison for Princeton's Hispanic Population for the National Leadership Grants for Libraries program. If successful this grant will provide \$100,000 in funding; the library's proposal has been selected to advance to the second phase.

Director's report: Ms. Podolsky mentioned the busy start of the year, noting the Brooke Shields event and thanking the trustees, staff and university for working together to present a successful event in a short amount of time. She mentioned the need to create partnerships with the municipality and other organizations in town that focus on how to better serve the community and provide support for those with social services issues. She also mentioned the need for staff to be prepared and educated should immigration enforcement issues arise. Ms. Podolsky noted the Jan. 12 Bad Kitty Birthday Bash, another successful event and an example of staff willing to support the library as facilities staff member, Darren Alizio, wore the Bad Kitty costume for the event.

Unfinished business: None.

Ethics statement: Mr. Van Buren asked that trustees sign the trustee's ethics statement immediately following the meeting.

Correspondence: None.

Resolution 2025-10: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve Resolution 2025-10: Salto Access Control Proprietary System; Mr. Liao seconded the motion. Ms. Podolsky noted the approval of this resolution ensures the library can continue to use the proprietary (key card) system already in place for the STEAM Studio project and allows the proprietary system to be included in the upcoming RFB for this project. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed the **library partnerships with the Princeton Public Schools** and the **delivery of library services to the community**. Ms. Smith-Carrington noted that there is a rich relationship between the library and the schools. She noted that PPS have well-resourced classroom libraries and school libraries and the Princeton Public Library adds to those resources. Through the reading app Sora, students are able to see and gain access to the resources available in the schools' collection as well as in the library's collection. The trustees agreed to continue discussing how to increase their impact on the community and to continue growing the library/schools relationship.

Board comment: None

Proposed agenda items: None. Mr. Van Buren proposed that in the future, all proposed agenda items are defined in the form of a motion for the sake of clarity.

Closed session: At 7:08 p.m. Mr. Ginsberg motioned to enter into closed session to discuss the executive director's evaluation. Ms. Oster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board met in closed session to discuss the executive director's evaluation. No action was taken as a result of the closed session meeting.

Open session: At 8:52 p.m., Ms. Smith-Carrington motioned to exit the closed session and return to open session; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment: At 8:53 p.m., Ms. Smith-Carrington motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Feb. 19, 2025 at 6 p.m. in the Newsroom of the library.