



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Feb. 19, 2025

In Attendance

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

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

Teen Reps: B Ireland

Others: Courtney Lederer (Friends & Foundation), Garrett Ruley (member of the public)

At 6:02 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 earlier this year. 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.

Approval of Consent Agenda – Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve the Consent Agenda; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Jan. 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- Final January Bills
- Preliminary February Bills

Board Materials - There was no discussion on the February Director's Report.

Public Comment - There was no public comment.

President's Report - Mr. Van Buren announced the following standing committees:

- Policy: Mr. Ginsberg (chair), Mr. Choudhury, Ms. Oster.
- Finance: Mr. Liao (chair), Mr. Ginsberg, Ms. Oster.
- Personnel: Ms. Tuzun (chair), Ms. Smith-Carrington. This committee will be added to the Bylaws, but will operate as an ad hoc committee until the Bylaws are revised. The personnel committee will focus on board nominations, the executive director evaluation and any escalation of any HR matters from the executive director.

He noted the Strategic Oversight Committee will focus on providing the board with an ongoing and comprehensive view of library programs and services and F&F fundraising activities and their alignment with the library's strategic plan and funding needs. Members will include Holley Barreto (chair), Mr. Liao, Ms. Tuzun. Ms. Barreto will also be the board liaison to the Friends and Foundation.

Friends and Foundation - Ms. Lederer noted the Friends and Foundation had their first meeting in January which included five new Friends and Foundation members. They recently held an event at Richardson Auditorium, featuring Brooke Shields; 860 people attended. They continue to work on corporate sponsorships. Ms. Lederer noted two upcoming events and encouraged the trustees to attend:

- April 7, 3 p.m. at the Nassau Club with Jennifer Weiner
- April 25, noon at Ms. Lederer's home with Elinor Lippman

Teen Representative - B Ireland noted that the Teen Advisory Board had the following recent activities:

- A member-led presentation on healthy relationships for teens, including resources and information to recognize dating violence and abuse. The presentation was followed by a "red flag" trivia game and activity at which attendees wrote a fact/take-away from the presentations on paper red flags that are now on display in the Teen Center.
- Book Flood was held on Feb. 18 with a book exchange of a wrapped book with the first line of the book written on the front. The teens enjoyed hot chocolate and snacks in the Teen Center.
- A new episode of the TAB podcast was released on Feb. 14, titled "Love at First Write: Romance's Place in the Book Industry." There are posters advertising the podcast displayed in the Teen Center.

B Ireland noted two upcoming events: Food Insecurity on March 4 at which a TAB member will lead a presentation about food insecurity followed by a related activity, and I Read This Book on April 1 in the Community Room.

On social media, three Teen Book Tuesday videos on Instagram and TikTok received a combined total of 1175 views; What's New Wednesday, is a new weekly Instagram series of TAB-created New Book Spotlight posts that highlight new items in the Teen collection, and there was a Take & Make tutorial video for DIY pipe cleaner roses received 882 views.

B Ireland noted that TAB will be collaborating with the Municipal Teen Board for two events: Open Mic Night on April 25 and Teens Make a Stand on June 16, both in the Community Room.

Finance Committee - Mr. Liao noted that the committee met to strategize for Ms. Podolsky and Mr. Chong's upcoming meeting with the municipality.

Fundraising Report - Ms. Podolsky read the fundraising report submitted by Ms. Keesling: The current focus is infrastructure building for fundraising programs. We are in the process of completing a one-year evaluation to assess the progress made and identifying priorities going forward. The plan outlines a strategic vision for our fundraising operation and helps set priorities for year two. A major priority is working on our fundraising marketing and communications strategy; the development office and the Friends and Foundation are working with a fundraising marketing consultant to refine our messaging. There will be a series of focus groups that will include library and Friends and Foundation leadership, long time donors, staff and legacy society members. There will be a short survey in upcoming newsletters that will collect feedback from all library users. The timeline for major gifts push for the endowment is being evaluated and how to embark upon that while still maintaining the strength of our annual appeal. The goal is to maintain our growth and prepare for the major gifts push ahead.

An anonymous donor gave a \$25,000 gift for the endowment which is restricted for children's material.

Director's Report - Ms. Podolsky noted:

- She attended the Secret Life of Books podcast recording at the library with Jodi Piccoult and host Sophie Gee; she thanked IT for their support.
- As the chair of the administration team for Experience Princeton, she attended the launch event for Experience Princeton Restaurant Week which will be held March 1-7. The organization fosters relationships with key business leaders and small business owners; PPL continues to look for ways to partner with these leaders and small businesses. Ms. Podolsky provided an overview of Experience Princeton.
- The STEAM Studio renovation was discussed with its donors; a request for bids package is being prepared. Once the project is complete, the room will be named for its lead donors and known as the Myra and Van Williams Spark Lab. A grand opening is expected in early September.
- The library applied for the Community Connector IMLS Grant which addresses barriers the Hispanic community in Princeton faces in accessing library services. The nearly \$100,000 grant is for hiring a community liaison and for community engagement activities that will bridge the gap and strengthen the relationships within the Hispanic community; there are six phases to the project from recruiting to developing a community action plan that will enhance library services for the Hispanic population. The final deadline is March 10.
- She and Mr. Chong met with the municipality (Mayor Freda, Bernie HvozdoVIC, Sandra Webb and David Cohen) to discuss the library's operating and capital budget requests for 2025.

Resolution 2025-05 - Ms. Oster motioned to approve Resolution 2025-05: Authorizing Expenditures in Excess of \$44,000 with Certain Vendors. Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. Mr. Chong noted that the list of vendors was revised from the original resolution presented in January. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence - There was no correspondence.

New Business - There was no new business.

Board Comments

- Mr. Ginsberg noted the schools' walk and wheels days on Wednesdays beginning March 5; he noted that Sustainable Princeton can loan the library bicycle racks if necessary.
- Ms. Tuzun complimented the social media team on sharing the library's metrics. She asked if it was possible to share the metrics on the library's digital signage.
- Ms. Oster noted that she attended the annual Douglass Day event at the library - a transcribe-a-thon in honor of Frederick Douglass's elective birthday. She commended Kim Dorman and Cliff Robinson on the event; they worked with the Digital Scholarship Services at Princeton University Library. She also commended Becky Bowers and Brandon Eaton for IT support. She noted it was a great partnership between the library, the University Library and the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum.
- Mr. Choudhury said he recently learned about PPL Bookmatch where librarians create a selection of suggestions tailored to your interests.

Proposed Agenda Items - There were no proposed agenda items.

Meeting Schedule/Adjournment – Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Liao seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2025.