

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2025

In attendance

Trustees: Holley Barreto, Robert Ginsberg, Mayor Mark Freda, Jeffrey Liao, Stephanie Oster, Sebnem Tuzun, Chris Van Buren

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

Other: Member of the public

At 6:04 pm 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.

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.

- March 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- April 11, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
- Final March Bills
- Preliminary April Bills
- Resolution 2025-15: Acceptance of Designated Gifts and Grants, 1st Qtr, 2025

Board Materials – There was no discussion on the included materials: Monthly Director's Report, Monthly Statistics, Quotes for Products and Services – 1st Qtr, 2025

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

President's Report – Mr. Van Buren noted that it was an eventful celebration of National Library Week and National Workers' Day and thanked the staff of the library for their outstanding service. He reported he was pleased to accept the proclamation honoring the library from the council to kick off National Library Week, as well as to participate in the Great Gatsby filibuster. He also extended thanks to the council for approving this year's library budget recently. Mr. Van Buren reminded all trustees to complete their financial disclosure filings by April 30; an email was sent by Ms. Podolsky with the needed information on April 8.

Friends and Foundation Report – Ms. Barreto, as the liaison to the Friends and Foundation, reported the most recent Friends and Foundation meeting was held on March 25. It was noted at that meeting that there had been a recent increase of approximately 25 – 30 % in sales at the used bookstore, perhaps attributable to new decorations and signage visible from outside the library. Ms. Barreto reported that a Friends and Foundation event featuring Jennifer Weiner was held at the beginning at National Library Week with remarks also made by Ms. Podolsky at the event. Upcoming events include a April 25th lunch with novelist Elinor Lipman, a May 7 evening event with Dalton Conley on his new book “The Social Genome,” and a May 15 dinner with sports journalist Jane McManus and Princeton University women’s basketball coach Clara Barube.

Teen Representative’s Report – There was no report.

Finance Committee Report – Mr. Liao reported that the committee met yesterday and discussed the budget versus actual summary, and that there were no concerns. The committee also discussed the overall budget; Mr. Liao referred to Ms. Podolsky for comment.

Personnel Committee Report – There was no report.

Policy Committee Report – There was no report.

Strategic Oversight Committee Report – Ms. Barreto reported that the committee met and reviewed possible inclusion criteria for strategic accomplishments to be highlighted in the monthly Director Strategic Activities Talking Points. Senior staff have selected topline goals aligned with the strategic plan to focus their work on for 2025, which Ms. Podolsky will share at a later date. The committee also reviewed the initial draft of a staff succession plan; that finalized plan to be discussed by relevant Board committees. That committee also reviewed administrative planning that’s in progress regarding staff resources; further details will also be discussed with relevant committees.

Ms. Barreto also shared a fundraising report provided by Development Director Kaylie Keeling: “We are nearing the end of our Fill the Stack spring challenge to raise \$50,000 for the annual appeal. If any trustees would like to make a gift, please do! We would love to have 100% trustee participation in the annual appeal this year. We received 66 book dedications for National Library Workers Day and raised over \$3,500 for collections. Thank you to the trustees who participated in this effort. There was a ton of positive feedback from donors and staff alike.” Ms. Barreto noted that signage in the library indicates the spring challenge has raised between \$30,000 and \$35,000 thus far. She also noted that with a recent staff departure, Ms. Keeling is currently the only full-time Development staff member with an additional part-time staff member providing mainly clerical support.

Director’s Report – Ms. Podolsky thanked the Trustees for the notes to staff and book dedications for National Library Workers’ Day, both of which were a great complement to the lunch and treats provided by the library to celebrate staff. Other events of note this month:

- Zoom Squirrel promoted the library throughout town on outreach day.
- Storytime with Jeff has been a lively and fun addition to children's programming.
- The library partnered with Princeton Theological Seminary for the annual Martin Luther King Jr. lecture featuring Brandon Terry in conversation with Eddie Glaude.
- The Princeton Environmental Film Festival was led by Kim Dorman with the assistance of many library staff members.
- Jen Appell from Youth Services, along with the Teen Advisory Board, hosted the I Read This Book event.

Ms Podolsky noted that there is a new section of the Board website for Executive Director Reports. This month it includes a copy of the Executive Director Report, the Strategic Accomplishments for the first quarter of 2025, and BoardBUZZ. Ms. Podolsky's list of upcoming events will be added within the next few days. Two items of note from BoardBUZZ:

- New self-checkout machines with updated, more efficient, and more accessible features have replaced the existing machines.
- The Spark Lab project has been kicked off. Anticipated opening is in the fall.

Unfinished Business – There was no unfinished business.

Correspondence - There was no correspondence.

Resolution 2025-16: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve Resolution 2025-16: Operating Budget Approval. Ms. Oster seconded the motion. Mr. Van Buren noted that the preliminary 2025 operating budget was put together last fall, and was approved recently by the council in concert with all council budgets. The Board can now provide approval to the amended numbers for the budget as laid out in the resolution. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Comment – There was no board comment.

Proposed Agenda Items – There were no proposed agenda items.

Adjournment – Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 pm.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2025.