



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2026

In Attendance

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

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

Teen Reps: Julia Scibienski

Others: William Mauro (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 on Jan. 6, 2026. 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.

- Dec. 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- Dec. 30, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes
- Jan. 5, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes
- Final December Bills
- Preliminary January Bills
- Resolution 2025-33: Cancellation of Unexpended 2025 Appropriation Balances
- Resolution 2025-34: Library Operating Budget Amendment for Budget Year 2025
- Resolution 2025-35: Acceptance of Designated Gifts and Grants - 4th Quarter 2025
- Resolution 2026-02: Vendor Contracts Over \$53K
- Resolution 2026-03: Cash Management Plan
- Resolution 2026-04: Authorize Certain State Contract Vendors
- Resolution 2026-05: Designated Bank Account Signatures
- Resolution 2026-06: Open Public Meetings Act
- Resolution 2026-07: Official Newspapers
- Resolution 2026-08: Library Attorneys
- Resolution 2026-09: Approval for Re-Allocation of General Fund Balance to Community Fund

Board Materials: There was no discussion on the Monthly Director's Report, Monthly Statistics or the Budget vs Actual - 4th Quarter, 2025. There were no Quotes for Products and Services.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

President's Report: Mr. Van Buren gave his report and provided the committee assignments for 2026:

- Liaison to Friends and Foundation: Holley Barreto
- Finance Committee: Jeffrey Liao (chair), Keisha Smith-Carrington, Sebnem Tuzun
- Policy Committee: Robert Ginsberg, Stephanie Oster (chair), Priya Peyman
- Personnel Committee: Robert Ginsberg (chair), Keisha Smith-Carrington

Mr. Van Buren recommended the board vote to rename the adhoc Strategic Oversight Committee to the Executive Committee which will consist of the officers of the board (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary). Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve the renaming of the Strategic Oversight Committee to the Executive Committee; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. There was discussion on the responsibilities of this committee whose purpose will be to coordinate and set priorities for board business and to support the efficient management of the library within the policies and authority established by the Board. The Executive Committee will facilitate effective governance by preparing recommendations, providing oversight as delegated and ensuring that the library's mission, legal obligations and strategic goals are consistently advanced. The motion passed unanimously.

Friends and Foundation Report: Ms. Barreto noted that Sohini Rath is president for 2026. She noted that there are no updates on additional board members for the board of trustees approval at this time. Ms. Barreto noted that the Friends and Foundation are continuing to work on their 2026 event calendar.

Teen Representative: Julia Scibienski introduced herself and noted she has been on the Teen Advisory Board for three years. She noted that TAB's recent activities included: Teen Book Tuesday for which TAB members create a short video (posted every Tuesday as an Instagram story) highlighting a YA book; a TAB bulletin board, decorating the teen center for winter and discussion of potential programs to be held in the Spark Lab. Ms. Scibienski noted TAB's upcoming events are: a capella night on Feb. 6 in collaboration with the Municipality of Princeton Student Board; K-Pop Dance Party on March 1 (tentative date) with collaborations by Princeton University (KoKo Pops) and Princeton High School (Bibimbops) K-Pop Dance clubs; Open Mic Night in March; Keeping TABs podcast featuring interviews with authors Anica Mrose Rissi and Emily XR Pan about their book releases. She noted that I Read This Book will be on April 21.

Finance Committee Report: Mr. Liao noted the Finance Committee met on Tuesday. He noted that the library did not have to use any fund balance in 2025; the total health insurance cost turned out to be lower than expected; there was some staff turnover/delayed hiring. Mr. Liao noted there was an aggregate surplus of \$113K, but after netting appropriation reserves of \$28K, the library was able to add \$85K to its fund balance. He noted that in 2026, the Friends and Foundation Fund (a PPL fund that holds contributions from the Friends and Foundation among other things) will be renamed the "Community Fund." The account remains the same, only the name is changing. The excess annual appeal funds will be put in the Community Fund. For bookkeeping purposes, this fund will hold all donations from all sources.

Mr. Liao noted that over the last 10 years, annual appeals have generated \$547K above target. Mr. Chong noted that the fund balance for the General Fund is approximately \$750K, most of which was generated by the annual appeals of prior years; that amount is an aggregate to the \$547K which should be in the Community Fund. For now, \$300K will be moved from the General Fund to the Community Fund, leaving some money in the General Fund to cover this year's expenses. He noted that later in the year, the committee may consider transferring the remaining \$67K to the Community Fund.

Mr. Liao noted that the library received the first quarter allocation for 2026 from the municipality.

Fundraising Report: Ms. Barreto noted that the library maintained the success of last year and annual giving raised just over \$400K. Ms. Keesling will be scheduling fundraising training with trustees in February which will include an update on progress, more comprehensive results from 2025 and a look ahead to 2026 goals. Mr. Ginsberg asked whether the library increased the number of younger donors, which had been one of the goals; Ms. Podolsky noted that data has not been analyzed yet.

Director's Report: Ms. Podolsky referred the board to the BoardBUZZ on the trustees' website. She noted that 10 Story Collecting Kits will be added to the Library of Things. Ms. Podolsky invited the trustees to the grand opening of the Myra and Van Williams Spark Lab on Sunday, Feb. 1 with the ribbon-cutting at 12:15 p.m., guided tours of the space, a variety of interactive demonstrations and craft stations, and take-and-make activities. The day's celebrations culminate in a celebration of STEAM as the library hosts "IMAP: To the Edge of the Sun - A Heliophysics Discovery Day" where kids will enjoy activities, demos and hands-on displays while meeting the scientists and engineers involved in the IMAP mission.

Ms. Podolsky thanked the Facilities staff for all they do to get the library ready to open each day, for their responsiveness when an alarm goes off and for clearing the sidewalks during inclement weather.

Unfinished Business: There was no unfinished business.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Ethics Statement: Mr. Van Buren asked the trustees to each sign an Ethics Statement at the end of the meeting.

Policy and Procedures Manual Revision - Fee Schedule: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve the Fee Schedule; Mr. Van Buren seconded the motion. Ms. Podolsky noted that in alignment with the statement made regarding the reduction of library hours and the amended budget approved by the board, the library eliminated the Kanopy streaming service. She noted that to offset the removal of this service, and as part of the library's goal to provide more equitable service and eliminate barriers to access, the rental fees for DVDs and games will be eliminated, effective Feb. 1. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Comment: Ms. Smith-Carrington noted that in attending the board meeting she was missing the Journaling Club, a library program she normally attends. She noted that feedback from the participants was well received and the program schedule increased from once to twice per month.

Proposed Agenda Items: Mr. Ginsberg suggested that the board receive a report on the change in library attendance since the hours were reduced compared to the same period last year, by month, quarter or other. He suggested waiting until the May or June board meeting so there is enough comparable data.

Adjournment/Meeting Schedule: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Smith-Carrington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2026.