



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2026

In Attendance

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

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

At 6:07 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. Oster seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Ms. Smith-Carrington was not present for the vote. The motion passed unanimously.

- March 18, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- Final March Bills
- Preliminary April Bills
- Resolution 2026-12: 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.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

President's Report: Mr. Van Buren provided a brief update on the budget discussions with the town council noting that the board's committees are brainstorming on how to increase revenue and decrease expenses. He noted that the library and board continue to have discussions with town council representatives and that library staff has been diligently responding to informational requests from the town council's finance committee. He noted that discussion of the library's budget will be added to the New Business section of the agenda.

Teen Representatives: There was no report.

Executive Committee Report: Mr. Van Buren noted that the committee met and summarized some of the discussions presented to the board by the town's finance committee.

Finance Committee Report: Mr. Liao noted that the committee met and compared budget vs actual, and also discussed the presentations from the town council to the board.

Personnel Committee Report: There was no report.

Policy Committee Report: Ms. Oster noted the committee met and discussed non-resident cardholders and rates.

Fundraising Report: Ms. Barreto presented information from the development office: The spring appeal is underway with the goal of 250 donors by the end of April, with contributions so far of 125 donors. She presented information from the Friends and Foundation: The bookstore has a new pricing strategy with the average increase of \$1.00 per book. The Beyond Words event with Colm Toibin had 180 attendees. There are three upcoming events - Ellen Burstyn in May, Book banning in the US in June, and a Hemingway event at The Graduate hotel also in June.

Director's Report: Ms. Podolsky referred the board to the April BoardBUZZ located on the board's website. She noted that on the board's website, the "In the News" category has returned and will include noteworthy library-related information. Ms. Podolosky noted several past and upcoming events from the BoardBUZZ, including events during next week's National Library Week.

Ms. Podolsky noted that Shannon Hurley began as the new director of Marketing and Communications.

Unfinished Business: There was no unfinished business.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Library Budget Discussion: Mr. Van Buren noted that this afternoon the town's finance committee sent an email to the library and the board with two recommendations offered as options regarding the library's budget. He noted that the municipal finance committee will then make recommendations to the council for their approval.

Mr. Van Buren summarized the communication from the municipal finance committee:

If the library reduces the number of staff parking permits, in use at any one time, from 50 to 40, and if all free parking is eliminated, the town would be able to fully fund the library's request of a 3% increase this year. The second recommendation is, if the library reduces the number of staff parking permits, in use at any one time, from 50 to 40, and the free parking for non-residents is eliminated, the town would be able to fund \$50,000 of the library's request. On this topic, there is no sitting council member, or anyone who was at council in the past nine years, who was aware that free parking had been extended to non residents. If neither of these options work for the library, the budget will remain unchanged, consistent with the clear guidance you received prior to your budget submission.

Mr. Van Buren noted that the recommendation to reduce the number of library staff parking permits was provided by the library. Ms. Podolsky noted there were a few extra parking permits that the library will be able to return, and after assessing the staff workload, the use of 40 parking spaces simultaneously will be suitable.

There was discussion about:

- Staff parking and the assurance that staff would be able to continue to park for free while working, in the same way as other public employees in Princeton.

- Non-resident library cards, different types of non-resident cards and the number of non-residents that get their parking validated.
- The library's strategic plan and that it supports increasing equitable access to the library and the concern that removing parking privileges creates a barrier to access and accessibility.
- Volunteers and whether they would need to pay for their own parking to complete their volunteer efforts.
- Parking ticket validation and understanding that the library does not collect personal information.
- What constitutes use of the library to be justified to have your parking validated.
- Maintaining the Free Public Library of Princeton which should provide access to all - whether they are residents or non-residents.
- The policy committee's consideration of raising revenue by modifying non-resident library card structures.
- How much does the council intend to save by removing free parking for non-residents and what would the time reduction need to be for everyone to be equivalent to that amount.

The board agreed to meet again during an emergency meeting to make a final decision.

Board Comment: There was no board comment.

Proposed Agenda Items: There were no proposed agenda items.

Adjournment: Mr. Gimsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Peyman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2026.