BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
July 15, 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:	Laura Bishop, William Chong, Shannon Hurley, Jennifer Podolsky, Sonja Vloeberghs
Others:	Antonio Merolli

At 6:01 p.m. Mr. Van Buren called the meeting to order and announced that notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and State regulations governing public meetings, including the time, date and location. In addition, the agenda was posted electronically and made available to the public on the library's website in advance of the meeting.

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.

- June 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- Final June Bills
- Preliminary July Bills
- Resolution 2026-18: Gifts and Grants - 1Q and 2Q 2026

Board Materials: There was no discussion on the Monthly Director's Report, Monthly Statistics or Budget vs Actual - 2Q 2026.

Public Comment: Mr. Van Buren noted rules for public comments. Antonio Merolli, Princeton resident, requested a clear indication on who approves and supervises the budget, and who decided on reduction in hours. He said that it seems the procedure is not according to the law, that there appears to be a gap in the law, and that no one is in charge. Mr. Merolli said that as a Republican candidate for council, he has received many emails regarding his position on the cuts the library made.

President's Report: Mr. Van Buren's report included the importance of reading in self-development and details on books he has currently read and plans to read.

Executive Committee Report: Mr. Van Buren reported that the committee met to review the board of trustees meeting agenda and discuss preparations for 2027 budget planning.

Finance Committee Report: Mr. Liao deferred to Mr. Van Buren who reported that the committee met and reviewed the current budget year to date, including the award of contract for the Newsroom and Technology Center Audiovisual Upgrades and Integration. He also reported that the committee began discussions on 2027 budget planning. Mr. Chong stated that the library should have spent about 50% of its budget this year as it is July and halfway through the year; spending is in line at 51% of budget. He noted that revenue is at 72% due to the receipt of the Q3 allocation from the municipality, the library is in a good cash flow position and fund balance is in line. Ms. Smith-Carrington asked for clarification on revenue numbers.

Personnel Committee Report: Ms. Tuzun noted the committee met and will discuss what was said in the upcoming closed session.

Policy Committee Report: Ms. Oster noted the committee did not meet, but expects to meet in August or September to discuss room rental fees.

Fundraising Report: Ms. Barreto reported annual giving continues to trend slightly ahead of last year's giving and planning is underway for the year end campaign. She noted that a fundraiser was held for the library last week by middle school library patrons who play chess regularly at the library; the fundraiser was highlighted in a recent TAPInto Princeton article. Ms. Barreto reported that tickets for the Friends and Foundation Beyond Words event in October should be available later this summer. She also noted that a mid-year slate of proposed board members for the Friends and Foundation is on this meeting's agenda for trustee approval; these proposed members were unanimously approved by the Friends and Foundation to come before the trustees.

Director's Report: Ms. Podolsky encouraged the Trustees to read the Director's Report and BoardBUZZ. She noted that as a result of the elimination of 1351 library cards within specific non-resident categories, 4% of those (55 people) purchased library cards for a total of $6000. She noted that the majority of the cards that were eliminated are expiring today and an increase in the number of library cards purchased is expected. Ms. Podolsky shared the results of the feedback received via email by Shannon Hurley, Marketing and Communications director: more than 30 responses received; 73% neutral in tone and seeking clarification on eligibility criteria, specifically from those who have a Princeton name in mailing address (Ms. Hurley offered assistance in directing patrons to local resources); 5% positive in tone; 22% negative in tone and asking clarification on whether there was an agreement with the university (Ms. Hurley provided information to these emailers on funding - specifically that Princeton taxpayer money funds the majority of the budget). Mr. Ginsberg asked for details on which institutions those impacted are affiliated with. Ms. Podolsky noted that the cards eliminated were from Princeton University (1238), Institute for Advanced Study (30), business owners (55), and Princeton Theological Seminary (28). She thanked the staff for their handling of this policy change. Mr. Liao asked if the library can survey those who purchased a library card to understand their motivation so we can market cards better in future; Ms. Podolsky remarked that it was possible.

Ms. Podolsky presented an initial six-month check in on statistics, noting the library has been open 11% fewer hours since January. She reported that per open hour (which is the most important measurement), the library is busier than it was a year ago; it does not appear that patrons reduced usage in response to reduced hours. She noted that an hour by hour analysis can be discussed at a later date. An initial day by day analysis shows that library usage increased on Thursdays; a possible explanation for this is higher farmers' market attendance on Thursdays driving library usage. Other days of the week showed varying decreases in daily usage from 1% to 13%. Mr. Ginsberg commented that it looks like the library is still servicing people as well as before.

Mr. Van Buren asked whether the statistics for program attendance represent in-person programs only. Ms. Podolsky will investigate. Mr. Freda asked for clarification on how much flexibility we actually have on hour closure. Mr. Ginsberg requested further information on day/hour usage to see if it is possible to adjust hours to reflect usage patterns more effectively. He also asked if the library can analyze data to see if there is greater benefit from closure of one day entirely rather than cutting hours across the week.

Ms. Podolsky agreed that total closure of one day does produce most cost savings. Mr. Liao thanked Ms. Podolsky for the data as it confirms their assumptions. He acknowledged that continued adjustment of hours will not lead to disastrous reduction in services to the community. Ms. Podolsky noted that 23,000 visitors come to town over the weekend and that the library serves a visitor center function for them, including the possible use of Wi-Fi. Ms. Smith-Carrington asked whether the library could have marketing create signage to encourage signing up for or purchasing a library card.

Unfinished Business: Mayor Freda remarked that due to the cost of health benefits, the town is actively considering leaving the state health plan. He suggested that the library provide information to their insurance broker to see if joining the municipality's new health plan was possible.

Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

Resolution 2026-19: Newsroom / Tech Center Award of Contract: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve Resolution 2026-19; Ms. Smith-Carrington seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Friends and Foundation New Board Members: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve the four new board members presented in the meeting packet; Ms. Smith-Carrington seconded the motion. Mayor Freda asked if the trustees could receive information that the new Friends and Foundation members receive regarding the purpose of the Friends and Foundation. Mr. Van Buren stated that it was possible. Mayor Freda also asked for clarification in the future on trustee approval of Friends and Foundation board members, as approval implies the Friends and Foundation is subordinate to the board of trustees. Mr. Van Buren agreed that this information will be distributed to trustees or be added to agenda in the future. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Comment: Mr. Ginsberg remarked that there was a lovely mural on the third floor that was completed by the son of a YS staff member.

Ms. Smith-Carrington asked whether the trustees could have access to The Index (the staff's internal website) noting it would be a helpful tool in recognizing staff, specifically when looking for a name, a role or someone's photo. Ms. Smith-Carrington announced that she is now supervising all school librarians within Princeton Public Schools. She said that she is looking forward to working with the school librarians and further developing partnerships between Princeton Public School librarians and the library.

Proposed Agenda Items: There were no proposed agenda items.

Resolution 2026-20: Closed Session: At 6:53 p.m., Mr. Ginsberg motioned to approve Resolution 2026-20; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: At 6:55 p.m., the board met in closed session to discuss personnel matters. At 7:35 p.m., Mr. Freda motioned to move from executive session to open session. Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. There was no action taken as a result of the executive session.

Adjournment: Mr. Ginsberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Tuzun seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for August 19, 2026.