



Board of Library Trustees

May 27, 2025 at 7:30 PM

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:28pm by Chair Cathryn Mercier. Present were: Trustees Peter T. Bowman, Chris Cinella, Carol B. Hoffman, Nancy F. Kukura, Cathryn M. Mercier, Director Linda C.W. Gardener and Assistant Director Diane Wall. Absent was Mark Robinson.

City warrants and trustee invoices were approved for payment. The minutes from the March 11, 2025 meeting were approved. There was no correspondence.

Director's Report:

Budget – FY25 budget will be wrapping up at the end of next month, and we are on target to fully expend the budget. At the City Council FY2026 budgetary departmental hearing the Council voted to recommend the library budget for passage. As part of the budgeting process the City offered a voluntary separation incentive to avoid involuntary layoffs. One of our senior library assistants, Renee Cogan, accepted the incentive. The reduced budget includes funds for additional part time staff to cover some of Renee's most critical shifts. It is still going to be very tight, and the Library will be closed on Sundays through the year.

Trustee Business – Trust fund spending to date is \$74,361.6, with \$15,000 remaining in the Cambridge checking account. \$200k check to City will need to be accepted by the City Council, so at this point would likely be September. I will be in touch if they request it prior to then.

Building Report – We are in the new building! The punch list is being worked on and coming along. The General Contractor is using the Discovery Room as office/base camp. There is still work to be done to make the building fully functional, but we are open, we are checking out books, and we have started to do programs.



Staff Development – Staff are learning the new space, figuring out workflows. Not all furniture is here, making some of the unpacking and figuring out of things challenging. The pace is beginning to normalize; it was extremely busy initially, with staff registering 350 new library patrons in the first two weeks open.

Programs – The Staff has made a remarkable adjustment to the new building. Successful book groups and story times have begun in the beautiful program rooms, including an in person author event just one week after opening. Staff are also participating in various outreach events in the City, including an 8th grade civics event, the City's 175th birthday celebration, and opening day at the Farmer's Market. The Melrose Pride committee has invited the library to have a popup library at the Melrose Pride Celebration and Beer Garden at The Beebe Estate on Sunday, June 8th from 1-6pm. Summer reading planning for all ages has begun, the theme for this year is Level Up at Your Library.

Friends – The Friends opted not to have a Spring book sale due to a lack of books after the move. They have offered to sponsor the library's copier, and leasing options are being investigated. Patrons would pay via a coin box, as before. Chris Cinella made a motion to accept the Friends' offer, seconded by Carol Hoffman. The motion passed unanimously.

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Policy Review – There were two revised policies presented for review, the Meeting Room Policy, and the Unattended Adult Policy. After discussion and a request for language clarification from the Trustees, Peter Bowman moved to approve the Meeting Room Policy as revised. Nancy Kukura seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Unaccompanied Adult Policy was also reviewed and discussed. The Trustees opted to reserve the Teen Room exclusively for Teen purposes. Peter Bowman



moved to approve the policy as revised; Chris Cinella seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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Bank Updates – The Eastern and Cambridge Savings banks need to be updated with current Trustees and signers.

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Other business – The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 9.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gardener, Director, for Mark Robinson, Clerk

Approved September 9, 2025