

Board Meeting Minutes

Croton Free Library

October 7, 2024

Minutes of the October 2024 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, October 7, 2024 at The Croton Free Library, Ottinger Room, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

PRESENT

Library Board of Trustees:

Susan Ranis, *President* (29)
Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (28)
Barry Feinberg, *Treasurer* (28)
Bethany Basile (27)
Adam Decker (28)
Leslie Ellis (29)
Kate Fabian (28)
Mayla Hsu (26)
Marianne Merola (27)
Laura Jaeger (26)
Margaret Mahoney (26)

Library Director: Jesse Bourdon

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:33pm.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the [minutes of the September 2024 Board Meeting](#) held on September 9, 2024 having been distributed in advance of the meeting and their reading having been dispensed with, were unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Collection Statistics and Patron Services

Reference transactions were less this past month compared to last year, but visitor count was higher. Otherwise the monthly statistics were in-line with expectations.

In September we issued a lot of new library cards; this was hand-in-hand with library tours we held with the Croton-Harmon School District 5th graders.

Audit Status

A draft of the audit was received by library Director Jesse Bourdon this morning (October 7, 2024). Jesse will do reconciliations with restricted funds from our investments. Our accountant will input that data into the final audit draft; we anticipate the full draft ready by the end of next week. The finance committee will review the audit, with the [goal of discussing the audit at the November board meeting](#).

5th Grade Student Tours

These tours were completed today (October 7, 2024). The students had a great time.

Student Parking in Library Lot

As of March 2023, we started seeing a rise of Croton-Harmon high school students parking in the library lot. This parking has continued to be an issue this year; the first half of the Library's operating hours on weekdays have minimal parking available for patrons. Library Director Jesse Bourdon has spoken with the Croton-Harmon high school principal.

The Library has no control over parking on Peter Beet Lane and Cleveland Drive. But to alleviate the issue of parking in the library lot, Jesse has sent a letter to village manager Brian Healy asking to include the Library parking lot as part of the village ticketing parking areas, as well as placing village parking limitations on Cleveland Drive in front of the Library.

In the interim, Jesse has requested changing the director's parking space to a spot dedicated for new and expecting mothers.

Zoning Application – Blue Bins

The Library now needs zoning approval to have the Bay State Books blue bins in the parking lot. Library Director Jesse Bourdon will send in an application, and will need to plead our case at an upcoming zoning board meeting.

Staff Changes

New Reference Staff - Diana Wendell

MOTION TO APPROVE DIANA WENDEL AS A SUBSTITUTE REFERENCE LIBRARIAN

A motion was made by Justin Johnson that Diana Wendell be hired as a part-time reference librarian. Bethany Basile seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Check Register Approval

The monthly check register for September was presented. Our payments for vendors and suppliers came in as expected this past month.

[Jesse will look into one outstanding item to figure out how one \\$34.50 bill was paid.](#)

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER

A motion was made by Barry Feinberg to approve the September 2024 Monthly Check Register. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Performance

We are currently one quarter through the fiscal year. As of the end of September we are at 27.3% of expenditures, so on target with expectations for library spending.

We have very little income to report yet, as we are waiting to receive our tax money for this fall.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Renovation Advisory Committee (RAC) Report

A zoom meeting was held this past month to review the process of the committee up to this point. Jesse also met with Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg and village manager Brian Healy to introduce our intended construction project.

Fundraiser RFP

The Renovation Advisory Committee (RAC) emailed the full board a Capital Campaign Fundraiser RFP (request for proposal) to review prior to the October Board meeting. **The RAC will finalize this RFP taking into account the board's feedback and will email the board the updated document for final approval. After which, the RAC will issue this [Request for Proposal](#), on or before November 1, 2024.**

The first step for sharing the finalized RFP will be undertaken by the RAC by contacting known fundraisers suggested/connected by our architect to gauge their interest.

Our current internal proposed timeline for this process is as follows:

- Friday, Nov 1, 2024
 - RFP issued
- Friday, Dec 6, 2024
 - Proposals due by close of business
- Monday, Dec 9, 2024 (CFL board meeting)
 - Discuss proposals received, selection committee formally begins review.
- Dec 10, 2024 - Jan 12, 2025
 - Selection committee expected to meet at least once to draft evaluation rubric, discuss and rank order proposals.
- Monday, Jan 13, 2025 (CFL board meeting)
 - Presentation of top candidates identified for interview. Selection committee prepares to interview candidates and drafts contract, with legal consultation, for eventual hire.
- Jan 14 - Feb 7, 2025
 - Selection committee interviews candidates, reviews and ranks candidates
- Feb 10, 2025 (CFL board meeting)
 - Board reviews and approves recommended hire
- Feb 11, 2025

- Consultant informed of selection
- Feb 21, 2025
 - Signed contract due
- Feb 28, 2025
 - Scope of work begins

It was suggested that a separate email be created to receive submissions that will automatically forward to the selection committee. We may also be able to update the Library website to have its own page dedicated to the RFP process, including updated answers to incoming questions by candidates.

At the board meeting Adam Decker expressed a concern regarding the board continuing to operate as a board, and leaving executive authority in the hands of the Director. Particularly as it applies to searching for and hiring consultants. At the conclusion of the conversation it was decided that in this circumstance, the majority of the board feels comfortable moving forward as we did when we hired the project architect; the board will assist however we can and will present our suggestions to Library Director Jesse Bourdon, so Jesse can finalize the hiring decision. Approval will be made by the board regarding funding for said consultant.

Selection Committee

A selection committee was formed to handle the process of interviewing and hiring a Capital Campaign Fundraiser.

The committee will be composed of the following people: Bethany Basile (chair), Jesse Bourdon, Kate Fabian, Mayla Hsu, and Justin Johnson. **The RAC will ask Melanie Dodson (a community volunteer already on the RAC committee) to participate on this Ad Hoc Committee; if she agrees, Justin will remove himself from the committee.**

Laura will create a new folder within the Library Renovation share drive called *Working Committee: Capital Campaign Fundraiser Consultant*. It is in this folder that all documents relating to this consultant (including the hiring process and documents created by said consultant) should be kept.

Separately, a request was made that board secretary Laura Jaeger add the names of the RAC volunteers (non-board members) to the Board Committee document in our Board Administration Shared drive.

Finance Committee

Audit Status

See details in the Director's reporting section from earlier in the meeting.

Fundraising Committee

Annual Appeal

Emily Bicht has submitted her art piece *The Cedars* for the annual appeal. We are working with Foley printers to mock up the letter and will have it **mailed out mid-November**.

We are considering creating a postcard option of the appeal as well, to hand out at the Book & Bake Sale and possibly use as follow-up communications in the early new year.

The Fundraising committee has decided that we will **hand write thank yous to all donors who give over \$100 to the appeal**. This task has most recently been handled by Jesse and we all felt it would be more appropriate for our committee to undertake this. We will use note cards previously printed with past donated appeal artwork.

Book & Bake Sale

The library has continued to collect materials for the upcoming November Book & Bake Sale this past month. We will aim to **have publicity and volunteer sign-up links ready before the end of October**. The sale will take place the weekend of November 16-17, 2024, with set-up occurring Friday, November 15, 2024.

Long-Range Planning Committee

By-Law Discussion - Vote

Updated Bylaws were emailed to the board two weeks prior to our board meeting for review, with the goal of approving said bylaws at the board meeting.

Final changes based on board suggestions were adapted into the Bylaws at the meeting, and the board held a motion to approve these updated Bylaws.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED BYLAWS DATED OCTOBER 7, 2024

A motion was made by Adam Decker to approve the updated bylaws dated October 7th, 2024. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adam Decker will finalize the Bylaws and email them to Jesse to upload them to the Library website. Laura Jaeger will make sure the google drive is updated accordingly with the new finalized bylaws.

Arts Committee

An art committee meeting was held last week, at which was discussed the schedule going forward for 2025. Art applications were reviewed by the group and decisions were made on whom to invite to exhibit in the Ottinger Room at the Croton Free Library.

Margaret Mahoney has invited all board members that have connections with local artists to connect with these artists in case they have interest in showing at the Library.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

There was no committee meeting this past month.

Safety Committee

There was no committee meeting this past month.

OLD BUSINESS

***Review of action items from last meeting**

Jesse will include this line-item on our board meeting agendas going forward, as a helpful step to make sure the group is on track, and we address any items together that may need additional assistance to check them off our list.

The board reviewed the full list of action items from September's board meeting. The notes that remain for next month include:

- 1) *The fundraising committee will plan to highlight our relationships with community groups that meet at the library via social media posts around the Appeal.*

NEW BUSINESS

Bylaws Discussion - Citizenship

Mayla Hsu asked a question about the library membership and trustee eligibility requiring American citizenship. *We will include this discussion at next month's meeting.*

NYT Renewal

As of January 2023, the Library has been purchasing online codes for patron use of the *New York Times*. We pay per code, with each code providing access 5,000 times.

Our usage has jumped incredibly - we used 78 code redemptions in January 2023, and last month (September 2024) we used 1,400. We cannot limit the dissemination of these codes or keep the codes for use only in the library. At the current rate of usage, going forward this access to the *New York Times* will cost us \$3,000 every 2 months.

Library director Jesse Bourdon has made a recommendation that we not renew our *New York Times* online code subscription, as the costs are unsustainable. Our current subscription will run out approximately mid-November 2024. The board agreed to not renew for the time being unless the NYT adjusts its security protocol around the dissemination of access codes.

MOTION TO NOT RENEW THE LIBRARY'S ONLINE CODE-BASED NEW YORK TIMES SUBSCRIPTION

A motion was made by Susan Ranis to not renew the Library's online code-based subscription to the New York Times. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Annual Meeting Date

We will add this to the November board meeting agenda.

Request for Motion Vote Tallying

A request was made by Leslie Ellis that for all future votes of the board, we make sure to note every vote in favor, opposed, and abstained so the full voting count has been taken into account.

Library Trustee Handbook Club meetings

Marianne Merola made note that the MidHudson Library System has continued their Handbook Club meetings this year. Nobody on the board has received updated emails regarding the schedule of these meetings. See the [Handbook Club website](#) for the upcoming schedule of meetings, which will satisfy the library trustee training requirements.

***PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Members of the public may address the Board of Trustees only during the Public Comment portion of the board meeting and must identify themselves by name when they begin to speak. Comments are limited to no more than three minutes per person. The number of public comments per board meeting may be limited due to time constraints.*

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Laura Jaeger and seconded by Barry Feinberg to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the Meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm..

Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary