

# Board Meeting Minutes

## Croton Free Library

December 9, 2024

Minutes of the December 2024 Board Meeting of the Croton Free Library, held on Monday, December 9, 2024 at The Croton Free Library, Ottinger Room, 171 Cleveland Drive, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

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### **PRESENT**

#### Library Board of Trustees:

Susan Ranis, *President* (29)  
Justin Johnson, *Vice-President* (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**

Barry Feinberg, *Treasurer* (28) - (via zoom)

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at **7:30PM**.

### **APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the [minutes of the November 2024 Board Meeting](#) held on November 4, 2024 having been distributed in advance of the meeting and their reading having been dispensed with, were unanimously approved.

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## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Collection Statistics and Patron Services**

The only oddity for the patron statistics was the patron count, which was a lot higher than usual, as we had very large crowds for the Book & Bake Sale.

Our reference transactions were lower than last year, but the way we are reporting what reference transactions are also affects this count.

We continue to have a lot of patrons attending programs at the library.

### **Audit (status)**

The most updated audit was received this afternoon, Monday, December 9, 2024. Our deadline for approving the audit is usually mid-November. We have filed a 6-month extension, so we will aim to have an audit approval at January's board meeting.

### **AED Acquired**

We used the final part of Sandy Galef's grant for first aid training. This training was completed in October. The last portion of training was acquiring a defibrillator. It will have a closed case with an alarm.

### **Museum Request – Magazzino Italian Art in Cold Spring**

One or two patrons have requested the library add access to Magazzino Italian Art for our museum passes. This would round out our offerings, which are mainly in New York City. The cost for passes would be \$250. This would go under fundraising expenditures. The Board will vote on adding these passes to our museum pass roster at the January board meeting.

### **Updated Conceptual Design from BRMA**

The final basic design has been completed by our architectural firm, Butler Rowland Mays Architects, LLC. This includes adjustments based on comments made at the last RAC meeting, addressing concerns about being able to see the back patio from within the library.

This completes the final piece of our current preliminary contract with Paul Mays from BRMA Architects.

Paul Mays is working on creating a post-Master Plan scope of services for us, which will be emailed to Jesse before the end of 2024. This scope of services will include BRMA's fee schedule for the next possible phase of our project, which would include the following:

1. Further development of the floor plans for additional detail/refinement in specific spaces
2. Budget updates
3. Graphics (renderings, info boards, narratives for brochures/PR, etc.) for fundraising and other financial development (grants, member items, etc.)
4. Meetings with the Building Committee, as well as the Executive Committee (you and Susan)
5. Coordination with your fundraising professional
6. Coordination with your legal counsel (if necessary, to address funding legal issues and options, SEQRA, Planning/Zoning submissions, etc.)
7. Public Presentation(s), when appropriate
8. Small-format presentations (key donors, political representatives, Friends, etc.), when appropriate

Before proceeding with the next phase with BRMA, we plan to hire a professional fundraiser so we have an understanding of how much money we may be able to raise for this project.

The fundraiser would undertake a feasibility study, reviewing our finances, and speaking to stakeholders about the likelihood of big donations. Since we don't have a good sense of our base of possible large-scale donations, we think this is an important first step. We wouldn't break ground until we raise at least 75% of campaign money.

### **Mary Bernal – Surgery/Recovery**

Mary Bernal who has been an employee at the library for 40 years is out on health leave until January 24, 2025. Mary is well and healthy after her surgery. We have confirmed with Mary that her job is secure for when she returns.

### **New Employees - Christina Mariani, Lucia Espadin**

#### ***MOTION TO APPROVE TWO NEW HIRES***

*A motion was made by Leslie Ellis to approve the employment of Christina Mariani as a Circulation Clerk, and the temporary employment of Lucia Espadin as a maintenance employee. Kate Fabian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **TREASURER'S AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

#### **Check Register Approval**

The monthly check register for November was presented at the Finance meeting, with the assistance of notes made by Barry in advance. All checks were in line with expectations. Chase bank will waive the standard monthly fee which was charged to us; Jesse will follow up with Chase bank to make sure the fee is removed.

#### ***MOTION TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY CHECK REGISTER***

*A motion was made by Kate Fabian to approve the November 2024 Monthly Check Register. Leslie Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Budget Performance**

We are approximately 42% through the financial year. Gains and losses came in as expected. Viewing the budget document for this month, we had activity in investments that showed up on the report that was coming through in Vanguard; it was not part of our regular activity statements.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Renovation Advisory Committee (RAC) Report**

##### **Initial Renovation Budget and Process**

The committee met to create a guesstimate in project percentages for fees as part of our renovation project.

- Architectural fees will come in at 10-15% of the project budget.
- A fundraiser will come in at 10% of the project budget.

- Permits may come in at 1% of the project budget.
- A contractor will come in at 10-15% of the project budget.

The committee stated that a lawyer may not be needed right away, other than writing up the fundraisers contract. We are hoping a pro-bono lawyer may be able to take care of the contract with our possible fundraiser. A construction lawyer and contractor lawyer will be needed further down the line.

Leslie Ellis suggested that we have a lawyer on retainer (for this project or in general). It could be important that we know what we should be asking at any point in the project (proactively instead of reactionary). Susan has asked we include this topic on another agenda, figuring out the cost of having a lawyer on retainer for the library. Leslie Ellis has offered to research this and present it at the February board meeting.

Bethany Basile suggested going forward that all boards have a lawyer that would be willing to do pro-bono work on behalf of the board. Adam Decker has offered to read general contracts for the library, and Justin Johnson also has a contact that may be able to help offer pro-bono legal services.

#### Request for Proposals - Fundraiser

We received 13 applications for our request for proposal for a fundraiser. We have not yet had the opportunity to review all the proposals. January 7th, 2025 is the next meeting of the RAC to review these proposals. We feel hopeful that we have our future fundraiser within these submissions.

There will be two rounds of interviews. The first round will be with board members, and Susan Ranis and Jesse Bourdon will lead the second interview.

The applications are within the Library Renovation\_Working Committee\_Applications folder. All board members are welcome to review the applications; please feel free to send thoughts to the RAC committee.

The RAC will share any notes and updates with the board, and will be prepared to share the interview candidate dates with the board at the January board meeting.

#### **Fundraising Committee**

##### Book & Bake Sale

Our November sale was a huge success. We had some great volunteers, the set-up went incredibly well, and the clean up was done in an hour. We had a steady flow of patrons both days, and a lot of inventory went out the door.

The total we made from the two day sale was \$8,616.62. \$8,092.31 was from book and media sales, and \$766 was from the bake sale table. (We spent 241.69 of the proceeds to cover the cost of lunch for the volunteers both days). Our Sunday sales were over \$2,000, which we believe is due to the success of our \$20 bag deal all day.

Given we were unable to collect donations for 2 months out of the 6 month collection period, this money raised was an incredible feat. All our patrons were delighted with the deals we offered, and it was wonderful to see so many folks from town stop by as part of their biannual tradition.

### Store your B&B Sale Lawn Signs

Please store your sale lawn signs until the next sale this Spring. We may need to order more lawn signs before the Spring Sale.

### Card for Art

Please sign the card for Art Almeida, which Jesse will present to him with a \$150 gift card to Sushi Samurai, to show the Board's appreciation for all Art has done for the library this last year.

### Annual Appeal

As of December 3, the annual appeal has brought in \$9,393. By the same date last year we had made \$9,893. We will continue to track donations and will provide another update at the January board meeting.

The fundraising committee has begun writing handwritten thank you letters to all donors who have given \$100+ to the appeal, and have provided their snail mail address when donating.

## **Long-Range Planning Committee**

### LRP Status

Adam sent out the Long-Range Plan to the board two weeks prior to the board meeting for review. All adjustments suggested by the board have been considered.

### ***MOTION TO APPROVE THE LONG-RANGE PLAN***

*A motion was made by Adam Decker to approve the 2025 Long-Range Plan. Laura Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Adam will email the final document to Jesse Bourdon for uploading as a PDF to the Croton Free Library website.

### By-Laws Update

Margaret Mahoney brought up a question about wording around the Library membership requirements. The board discussed removing the requirement of being a voting resident, and replacing it with a requirement of being a resident of the Croton-Harmon School District.

The Long-Range Planning Committee will take time at their next committee meeting to review the By-Laws for board approval at the January board meeting.

## **Arts Committee**

### Jan-Feb Artist

The reception for Emily Bicht happened Saturday, November 23, 2024. The art will be on display until December 31, 2024.

The new artist for January/February will be James Maciel. His art will be placed up on January 3, 2025. James has opted out of having an artist's reception.

Margaret Mahoney has reached out to Lauren Davis to ask if she would be interested in being our artist for November/December 2025, paired up with an artists show as well as artwork for our 2025 annual appeal. Lauren Davis has agreed to sign up as our artist for that time period.

## **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

### Lighting Update

Margaret Mahoney was invited to the Building and Grounds committee to discuss the lighting in the Ottinger room. (Our current lighting fixtures are failing, and exact replacements are no longer available.) Margaret's friend is a retired lighting designer, and she will be coming by the library next week to review the lighting in our Ottinger room, and provide lighting recommendations to amend our current dark spots. Jesse has also been in touch with a new lighting consultant and electrician for further recommendations. An update regarding lighting recommendations will be provided to the board at the January board meeting.

The Ottinger Room is not slated for any adjustments in future renovation projects, so lighting adjustments can be made now without consideration of building changes that might be included in the Library renovation project.

## **Safety Committee**

There was no committee meeting this past month.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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

The board reviewed the full list of action items from November's board meeting. Remaining Comments on action items include:

1. The Long-Range Planning Committee will amend our Bylaws to remove the requirement to vote from the library membership and trustee eligibility list, AND also add a statement regarding Croton Free Library Board committees sizing around the open meetings law (including stating the clarified rules within the Bylaws to save us time in the future in regards to clearly referencing this committee sizing rule as well as the rules around locations of committee meetings that may require open meeting law.
  - a. This adjustment will be finalized by the Long-Range Planning Committee for updated Bylaws approval at the January board meeting,
2. Annual training requirements were sent to all board members. All employees must include their forms within the share drive by the end of the calendar year.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Adam Decker mentioned the State Department Grant for governments working together. He would like us to keep an eye on this for next year. Grants have been quite large - this past year a village library was granted \$400k.

A suggestion by Susan Ranis was made to invite Karen Zevin to parts of future board meetings. Jesse Bourdon will reach out to Karen Zevin via email to extend the invitation on behalf of the board.

**\*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 Kate Fabian and seconded by Laura Jaeger to adjourn the meeting. This motion being unanimously approved, the Meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

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*Respectfully submitted by Laura Jaeger, secretary*