Approved

CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 8, 2025 - 4 p.m.
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP)
CLP-Main/Zoom

Present:
Carolyn Hess Abraham (remote)
Elizabeth Baran (remote)
Molly Brean (remote)
Marc Brown
Anne Chen
Nickolas Certo
Kenyokee Crowell (remote)
Mike Embrescia (remote)
Amy Ericson (remote)
Trisha Gadson
Paul Klein
Frank Lucchino
Andrew McEvoy (remote)
Lafe Metz (remote)
Laura Miller
Alice Mitinger
Deborah Moss
Carol Robinson
Cary Reed
John Rhoades (remote)
Erika Strassburger
Lou Testoni
LaShawnda Thomas
Barbara Warwick (remote)
Betsy Watkins
Allegra Wiles
Damon Young (remote)
Greg Zovko

Absent:
Jay Costa
Patrick Dowd
Deb Gross
Bethany Hallam
James Hill
Kathy Hillen
Sue Kirsch
Daniel Lavelle
Jake Pawlak
Jamie Piotrowski
Pat Siger

Community Committee Members Present:
John Dolan
Eliezer Kanal (remote)
Betsy Magley (remote)

Present by Invitation:
Linda Barsevich
Molly Bennett
Hannah Brizzi
Anita Greene-Jones
Marta Honores
Maggie Iddings (remote)
Anne Lee
Andrew Medlar
Mary Monaghan
Caitie Morphew
Lauren O'Keeffe
Deborah Rogers
Jennifer Styran
Paul Vanderwiel
Karlyn Voss

Approved

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Mr. Brown welcomed the Board of Trustees and called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of the October 6, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes from the October 6, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

III. Chair Update and Discussion

Mr. Brown noted important updates and reviewed what would be covered at the day's meeting. The Board received the consent agenda materials for the Trusteeship, Development, External Relations, and Facilities Committees in the meeting book prior to the meeting. The Committee on Trusteeship noted two new county executive appointed Board members. Orientations will be held in 2026 for new Board members. The Board Demographics and Skills survey will be distributed in the first half of 2026, and the Biennial survey will be distributed in late 2026. The Development Committee is focused on 100% participation from Board members. The Board was updated on the 2026 fundraising department work plan, including month-to-month activities and strategic goals. The Board's endowment match pool is winding down, and the next steps will be determined by the committee and the CLP Development team. The External Relations Committee reported the 4% increase approved by RAD's budget. The State budget approved a 7% increase for public libraries, along with a 17% increase for LAMP. The Annual Public Meeting will be held in April. Board members were encouraged to attend upcoming events listed in the consent agenda. The Facilities Committee reported that the stacks facade and windows project has been completed ahead of schedule and under budget. The Main Comprehensive Plan is being socialized with various internal audiences. The Youth Corridor is the main focus. The Homewood Capital project is in the feasibility and design phase, and more information is to come in 2026. On a motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the consent agenda items. The CLP online merch store is live, and items are available for purchase. Board members were encouraged to continue to build on the development workshop held after the October Board meeting. The Board thanked outgoing public trustees who are terming off at the end of 2025.

IV. President & Director's Updates and Discussion

Mr. Medlar shared the President & Director's report. At the meeting, Board members were able to sign up for the adult winter reading program. Contract negotiations continue for USW. Their existing contract was set to expire on Nov. 21st. Due to continuing negotiation, the existing contract has been extended to the end of 2025. Mr. Medlar noted the increase in state funding to LAMP. Mr. Medlar updated the Board on CLP's early literacy work. Mr. Medlar noted calls to action based on the work, including getting a library card, having books at your home, being a reading role model, and reading together every day. These actions have been rolled out in many ways, including the winter program guide, working with community partners, and virtual panels held throughout the fall. CLP's AI early literacy tool, Amira, continues to be evolved based on what was learned through the pilot. The tool was designed for a school audience, so CLP is working with Amira to reshape it for a public library environment. CLP has begun its CardFest expansion into non-PPS schools. Evening story times continue to be a popular program at the Library. It was noted that the state budget included increased funding for early literacy work statewide. The Board reviewed the Stats Sheet provided in the Board materials. Cumulative numbers for 2025 will be available at the March 2026 meeting. CLP is about halfway through its five-year Strategic Plan. At this time, CLP has fully accomplished a third of the goals outlined in the plan. This year, CLP finished fourth in the leaderboard for Give Big Pittsburgh, with almost $44K raised in one day. CLP had the fourth highest number of donors. Anita Greene-Jones, Director of Shared Services and County Library Services, presented the Mission Moment. The presentation was focused on Cooperative Allegheny Libraries Support (CALS). The presentation included background on CALS, the current CALS programs, and the website management project. Ms. Greene-Jones reviewed the current programs offered by CALS, including collection support, e-resources and e-services management, fund development, professional development, materials movement and more. The website management project created an infrastructure to provide some consistency among library websites. The project was supported by a Hillman Foundation grant, and a partnership with Wall-To-Wall Studios. Wall-To-Wall Studios provided recommendations on user experience, accessibility, and ease of use. Ms. Greene-Jones reviewed the achievements of the current multisite, which allows libraries to retain their individual URLs and branding, multi-language settings, and have an identical user experience across all websites. There are ten libraries participating in the website project with three more planning to participate in 2026. CLP will assess how to continue in 2026, analyzing staff capacity, and how best to mobilize shared content. CLP is working with a consultant to do a full business plan of CALS and strategize its sustainability for the future.

V. Finance Committee

Mr. Zovko shared an update from the Finance Committee. Mr. Zovko reviewed the projections for 2025 with a variance of -$322K. $278K of this variance is driven by the unrealized salary turnover assumption. The Board reviewed the 2026 proposed budget. Mr. Zovko highlighted key revenue sources, including increases from RAD and the state budget, and an increased endowment draw percentage. Ms. Barsevich highlighted key expenses, including an increase in salary & benefits, and decreases in materials, occupancy, and professional services and IT costs. The operating budget is balanced with the exception of a CALS deficit of $179K which will be covered by fund balance. There being no further discussion, on a motion duly made and seconded, the Board agreed to approve the 2026 budget. Mr. Medlar updated the Board on the Financial Transformation Plan (FTP). Five-year projections show an increasing gap between expenses and revenue. It is a structural issue that needs to be solved with structural solutions. FTP goals included future financial sustainability and growth, solving deficits for five-year projections and beyond, articulating how strong financial stability positions CLP for future success, and building enthusiasm and support for solutions with well-planned communications. Mr. Medlar noted accomplishments to date, including initiating workstreams, approving the balanced 2026 budget, reducing size of future deficits through 2031 forecast, investigating possible Library Tax millage increase for 2026, conducting a successful Give Big Pittsburgh Day campaign, rolling out the new online merchandise store, and developing background information and talking points. The Board reviewed the various workstreams that are part of the FTP, including communications, fundraising, government & advocacy, miscellaneous revenue, and resource allocation. CLP is about to enter phase three of the project, which ends in June 2026. Goals of phase three are to complete the FTP framework, adopt FTP implementation and communication plans, and implement initial actions. The Elected Officials Breakfast, Annual Public Meeting, and future Board and committee meetings will be key communication days.

VI. IDEA Committee

Dr. Gadson provided an update on the IDEA Committee. Thought partners from the IDEA Committee continue to meet with committee chairs on incorporating IDEA work at a governance level. Continued discussions will be set by the needs of the committee. There are three questions that the IDEA committee is asking each chair to think about. These include how do you articulate your individual plan for equity, how you will construct an equity vision for your committee, and what tools and resources you will need to incorporate equity into their committee’s work. To help serve as a resource, Dr. Rogers is working on an equity framework which will highlight the role of governance as a reference for the chairs. On November 18, 2025, CLP received recognition and an award for its outstanding contribution to Pittsburgh's 3 Star Certified Welcoming designation for its influence in supporting immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity. On November 25, The Three Rivers Business Alliance announced that CLP received the 2025 Excellence and Leadership in DEI award, with additional recognition coming on December 11, 2025.

VII. Executive Session

An Executive Session was held at 5:35 pm.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.