

Portland Library Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Van Beynum Room
February 20, 2025

Board Members Present: Olenka Castelli, Don Eiler, Myra Finkelstein, Betsy Graziano, Melissa Kelley, Laurel Steinhauser (Chair)

Absent: Jade Richardson,

Others Present: Jennifer Billingsley (Library Director), Monica Jensen (President, Friends of the Portland Library), Ralph Zampano

Laurel Steinhauser called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Public & Staff Comment

No public comment.

2. Additions and Approval of the Agenda

Addition: Laurel Steinhauser requested to add to the agenda under 6. B “New Business” - “Funding for CPR training for staff from State ‘BorrowIT’ Grant funds

A motion was made by Don Eiler, seconded by Melissa Kelley, to approve the agenda as amended, all were in favor, motion carried.

3. Review Minutes:

a. Action on the Minutes of the January 16, 2025 Meeting

Myra Finkelstein made a motion to approve the January 16, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Betsy Graziano, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

4. Corresponding Secretary’s Report

Nothing to report

5. Old Business

a. Donation in Memory of Shaun Manning

Timing for donations was extended and tabled for March meeting

b. America 250 Committee invitation

Portland Library Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Van Beynum Room
February 20, 2025

The committee is not yet full, but Mary Maki from the Friends of the Library has expressed an interest in joining when it does. Laurel Steinhauser will draft a letter to the First Selectman endorsing her.

c. Quarry Celebration Day Invitation (5/31/25)

Monica Jensen reported that Friends Board members will staff a table at the Brownstone Quorum Day, May 31 and will look forward to having Friends Executive Board members join them. An RSVP was sent to Tom Bransfield, the event coordinator. They plan to work with Jenn Renk to purchase an array of children's books to give away as well as the library's giant lawn games and information about Friends activities and membership. Billingsley confirmed that the time is from 10 AM to 4 PM. Monica confirmed that FPL is not able to commit to their rain date. Members of the Library Board will volunteer for the event alongside the Friends. This item will remain in Old Business for future updates.

6. New Business

a. Proposal to move BOS meetings back to Mary Flood room

And Director Billingsley shared that the tentative plan would be to move Board of Selectmen meetings back to the Mary Flood room in Fall 2025. Would provide easy access, more seating, better acoustics. Will also require work on the town side to upgrade the technology for hybrid meetings. More people in the library would bring more attention to our physical plant. Impact: in March budget meetings would perhaps interfere with regular library programming - possible remedy would be to change evenings when programs are scheduled. Also possible interference with book sale setup in future years.

b. Funding from State "BorrowIT" Grant funds for CPR training for staff

Director Billingsley shared that Public Service Library staff have requested and now have the opportunity to receive CPR certification training this spring (which would include an overview of our new AED device) from town EMS educator, Lt. Thomas Sienkiewicz. This would cost \$60 per attendee and 9 of our staff are interested in attending so the cost would be up to \$540 total and using state grant funds from the BorrowIT distribution, which must be spent by the end of this FY, would allow the library to send more of our librarians to the state library conference.

Betsy Graziano made a motion to approve the use of up to \$540 from State BorrowIT grant funds for CPR training, seconded by Don Eiler, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

Portland Library Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Van Beynum Room
February 20, 2025

7. Friends of the Portland Library

Monica Jenson provided the following report:

After thoughtful discussion, the Friends board prioritized engaging our community engagement and increasing membership.

Wording for the plaque for the Phylis Greene memorial red-bud tree was finalized and will be shared with the garden club members who are co-sponsoring the memorial, with a possible installation reception date of this spring.

8. Chair's Report

Laurel Steinhauser reported that Melissa Kelley is organizing the craft tent at the Portland Fair for the third year in a row. Melissa shared that community organizations are invited to set up a table to share information, including the library. Jenn Billingsley and Jenn Renk will work with Melissa to determine what the library has capacity for.

9. Director's Report

In addition to Jenn's report, the following was covered:

- Dates in March for Town budget deliberations: 3/12 is the library, but there is no space for public comment that day. Laurel Steinhauser will follow up with the First Selectman to ask if Billingsley will be presenting the library request, like the schools do and encouraged Library board members to attend.
- Michele G's updated Museum pass brochure was shared with attendees.
- Voices of Portland Panel, funded by CT Humanities is this Saturday 2/22 at 1pm
- We may need to hold off on updating Policies to focus on identifying projects for state grant funds: BorrowIT and State Aid to Libraries
- There was a question from Myra Finkelstein about the number of library accounts in Portland. Billingsley shared that on 2/1 the count was 3,347 accounts. Over the month of January staff signed up 41 "new" patrons and they will clarify if the "new" number includes account renewals. The library needs to order new cards, anticipating new residents from Brainerd Place units, also considering designing new cards for the America 250 celebration.

10. Other Discussion:

No other discussion.

Portland Library Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Van Beynum Room
February 20, 2025

11. Adjournment: 8:00pm

Melissa Kelley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Myra Finkelstein, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Graziano,

Corresponding Secretary,

Portland Library Board of Directors