

Portland Library Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
Van Beynum Room  
April 17, 2025

Board Members Present: Olenka Castelli, Don Eiler, Myra Finkelstein, Betsy Graziano, Melissa Kelley, Jade Richardson, Laurel Steinhauser

Absent:

Others Present: Jennifer Billingsley (Library Director)

Laurel Steinhauser called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

### **1. Public & Staff Comment**

Betsy read a letter that appeared in the 4/11 edition of the *Rivereast* regarding Library Week and the closure of the federal agency Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), from the Director of the Richmond Memorial Library.

### **2. Additions and Approval of the Agenda**

A motion was made by Betsy Graziano, seconded by Don Eiler, to approve the agenda, all were in favor, motion carried.

### **3. Review Minutes:**

#### **a. Action on the Minutes of the March 20, 2025 Meeting**

Myra Finkelstein made a motion to approve the March 20, 2025 meeting minutes, seconded by Melissa Kelley, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

### **5. Corresponding Secretary's Report**

Betsy reported that she received a donation from Laura Sutkowski in memory of her mother Helen Sutkowski. She sent a thank you note for it. She has a gold leaf ready to be brought to Mr. Trophy but may wait to see if she gets something else.

### **6. Old Business**

- a. Quarry Celebration Day Invitation (5/31/25) – no update**
- b. Proposal to Move BOS Meetings Back to Mary Flood Room – no update**
- c. FY26 Budget Update**

Jenn was pleased to report that the part-time person is still included in the budget. They had made it clear that this is a restoration of hours since we are short compared to 2005. In their budget presentation, they shared examples of what the library staff is doing. Our services are much more robust compared to other

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libraries. The copier is in the long-range capital budget. Jenn talked about the roof condition and what might be needed in future long-range capital requests.

**d. New Policy – Library of Things**

Jenn asked that this policy not be approved yet because updates to the Loan policy will need to go through the BOS and be approved before a vote to approve this one. Per Sharon's concern, the staff is working on the reminder system so that when an item is overdue a notice will go out before replacement charges are made. No changes or edits have been made to this copy.

**e. Donation in Memory of Shaun Manning**

Jenn suggested we make the donation to the Fire Department. If anyone has any more donations, please get them in to Jenn soon.

**6. New Business**

**a. Update on IMLS State Library Funding**

Jenn explained that this will affect our Library. The State will have to decide what costs they can absorb. Jenn doesn't know yet how this will affect us. One way is the retrieval of our items from other libraries. The Service Center that serves libraries has to exist but it isn't statutorily stated how it is staffed or manned. Laurel referred to Jenn's report and said it remains unknown as to the "how."

**b. Req to Approve \$650 from BorrowIT Grant (Memorial Fund) for Youth Event**

Don Eiler made a motion to approve \$650 from BorrowIT Grant (Memorial Fund) for Youth Event, seconded by Betsy Graziano, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried. Jenn reminded the board that they only come to the Board for a vote if an expense will be over \$500 and shared that the library is trying to shift funding around to absorb the blow from not getting the IMLS grant funds through the State Library, and being uncertain about the status of future BorrowIT funds. Jenn shared some of the things BorrowIT has paid for in the past such as the window art, Hoopla, and the promotion with the Fair. Hoopla is no longer getting paid out of the BorrowIt funds as of FY25.

**7. Friends of the Portland Library**

- FPL officers will review the Friends' By-Laws to ensure they reflect current practice. Last review was 2021.
- Friends will have a table at the Brownstone Quarry Day with info about membership, activities and museum passes. FPL will also offer books for children and have lawn games set up.

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- FPL is co-sponsoring with the Portland River Garden Club the dedication of the Phyllis Greene memorial tree planted last fall. Event will be May 17 at 1pm at the library.
- FPL will be celebrating our library staff the week of June 2 - 7 with lunch and daily treats.
- FPL members are considering having a display in the Portland Fair community tent - Thank you to Melissa for the invitation!. Also considering placing an ad in the Fair Book.
- Next meeting is May 5; Annual meeting with election of officers is June 2
- Liberty Bank included FPL as a candidate for 1825 its 200 anniversary, award \$1825.00 to a Portland organization.

## **8. Chair's Report**

Laurel shared that the chair of the library is invited to attend the Friends meetings and to be part of their conversations. If any member wants to be a liaison to the Friends, let Laurel know. Myra suggested that the liaison responsibility could be shared. Jade is interested in becoming a member. Fifteen dollars (\$15) is required to become a member. Members vote to elect the officers of the executive board at the annual; meeting but do not vote at the regular monthly meetings.

Laurel revisited the IMLS funding and the loss of the State Library and how it will affect us. To be supportive and as advocates, she had drafted a letter to be sent to our State reps asking them to advocate on our behalf. The letter was circulated for member signatures and Laurel will send it off to them.

## **9. Director's Report**

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

Jenn shared that Karen Condon will be joining the library staff part-time. The posting for her position has been done and she will transition to the library.

The building staff re-did the staff kitchen and even put down a new floor. It looks beautiful. They may be able to put shelving in that can be easily reached. They waxed the Mary Flood room kitchen; it is sparkling clean and fresh.

The community scavenger hunt went very well. Only two or three of the nesting balls are left out of 38 donated by the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. Courtney did a beautiful job organizing and wrote the poem of clues.

They are giving away 78 white pine trees for free as a part of the Neighborhood Forest program.

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There is a new Pea seedling on the front desk.

**10. Other Discussion:**

Sharon Hoy gave an update on the recently commissioned 250 Anniversary Committee. They are just starting to identify opportunities for this celebration.

**11. Adjournment**

Melissa Kelley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Myra Finkelstein, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Sharon Hoy**

Sharon R. Hoy  
Recording Clerk