

Portland Library Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
Van Beynum Room  
May 15, 2025

Board Members Present: Olenka Castelli, Myra Finkelstein, Betsy Graziano, Jade Richardson,

Absent: Don Eiler, Melissa Kelley, Laurel Steinhauser

Others Present: Jennifer Billingsley (Library Director), Tim Lavoy (BOS Liaison)

Jennifer called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Betsy Graziano nominated Jade Richardson to Chair the meeting, seconded by Olenka Castelli, all were in favor, motion carried.

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

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

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

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

#### **a. Action on the Minutes of the April 17, 2025 Meeting**

Under Item 11, Adjournment, correct the spelling of “Mara” to “Myra” Finkelstein. Myra Finkelstein made a motion to approve the corrected minutes of April 17, 2025, seconded by Olenka Castelli, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

### **4. Corresponding Secretary’s Report**

Betsy Graziano reported that she wrote and hand delivered a note with the enclosed cash donation in memory of Shaun Manning from the Library Staff and members of the Library Board of Directors to the Portland Fire Department.

She also brought a blank gold leaf up to Mr. Trophy to be engraved in memory of Helen Sutkowski from daughter Laura Sutkowski.

Betsy read thank you letters from the Fire Department for the donation in memory of Shaun Manning.

### **5. New Business**

#### **a. Introduction to Library’s new BOS Liaison, Selectman Lavoy**

#### **b. Loan Policy**

Jenn reviewed the suggested changes. Betsy Graziano made a motion to approve the Portland Library Loan Policy, seconded by Myra Finkelstein, all were in favor, no abstentions, none opposed, motion carried.

## **6. Old Business**

### **a. New Policy – Library of Things**

After reviewing the policy, Olenka Castelli made a motion to accept the Policy of Library of Things, seconded by Betsy Graziano, all were in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried.

### **b. FY26 Budget Update**

The budget successfully passed. Jenn hopes to post for the open position internally in August for 10 days and then elsewhere if needed. The question was raised as to what happens to the existing copier after it is retired. Jenn will check with Tom Robinson and will report back regarding its status.

- c. Quarry Celebration Day Invitation (5/31/25). The setup time is 9 with the celebration starting at 10. Jade Richardson volunteered to help that day.

### **d. Update: IMLS and State Library Funding**

Federal funding for the remainder of this budget year was restored to the State Library. Status of summer grants is still in question. Jenn will advise of any other possible changes.

### **e. Proposal to Move BOS Meetings Back to Mary Flood Room**

Selectman Tim Lavoy shared that the main reason that the community wants the meetings to be moved further away from Main Street is because of the accident involving Shaun Manning.

Jenn shared that the logistics to move them back and be able to conduct hybrid meetings are now in the hands of the Town IT department. The earliest the move would take place would be in September.

### **f. Update: America 250 Portland CT Committee**

An account has been set up to receive donations. Mary Maki is the liaison for the library. Sharon Hoy told of some of the tentative plans.

## **7. Friends of the Portland Library**

- The Friends were thrilled to learn that the FPL was awarded the Liberty Bank 1825 Grant. The grant was awarded to community organizations in each town in which

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Liberty Bank has a branch in recognition of its 200th anniversary. The Friends will receive \$1825 from the bank. Thank you to everyone who voted for FPL!

- Jenn Renk and Michele Grejszczak presented the plans for this summer's reading program and activities for children, teens and adults. The theme is "Level Up at Your Library" with a focus on gaming including a variety of board game-based group activities and family events. The Kickoff event is June 25th with an Illusionist show at the middle school auditorium. Once again, the FPL is proud to sponsor such an exciting program!
- FPL members will be celebrating the Library Staff the week of June 2 - June 7 with a lunch, daily treats and funds for staff-selected additions to the library collection.
- On May 17 at 1pm the FPL with the Portland River Garden Club (PRGC) is conducting a tree-dedication ceremony in memory of Phyllis Greene, a long-time teacher in the Portland Middle School and a dedicated gardener. A reception in the Mary Flood Room will follow the ceremony to which all are invited. The FPL and the PRGC planted a red-bud tree last fall in the front garden of the library in Mrs. Greene's memory; a dedication plaque will be unveiled during the May 17th ceremony.
- The FPL Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, June 2 at 7pm in the Mary Flood Room. All are invited to attend. Reports of the past year's activities and the election of the executive board officers will be held.
- The next Book Donation Day is Saturday, June 14 from 10A to 12N.
- FPL will have an information table with books for children at the Brownstone event on May 31.

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

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

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

- In June, the Library Board meeting will take place on the second Thursday instead of the third one: Tuesday June 12. It will be too early to have the monthly report done. However, the printed board packets will now include the minutes of the previous meeting.
- Jenn distributed copies of the updated Library brochure for outreach in black and white.

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- The Library gave away over free 84 seedlings as a part of the Neighborhood Forest program. It was a great program and the Library hopes to do it again next year.
- Circulation numbers may look slightly lower than in April 2024, but the Library was open fewer days in 2025 than in 2024. Jenn also reminded the board members that last year each month saw an increase in circulation over 2023 and program/event attendance was higher in April 2025 than in 2024.

**10. Other Discussion:**

**11. Adjournment**

Betsy Graziano made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Olenka Castelli, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon Hoy*

Sharon R. Hoy  
Recording Clerk