

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday May 11, 2026

PRESENT: Jill Adams
Caroline Brancatella
Laura DiBetta
Mark Kissinger
Gail Sacco
Michelle Walsh
Sharon Whiting, library treasurer

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, public information specialist

EXCUSED: Sarah Patterson

GUESTS: Phil Berardi, assistant director/head of operations
Chris McGinty, assistant director/Public Services
Jen Crawford, confidential secretary
Chris O'Brien
Claire Crawford
Mary Service
Bruce Phillips

S. Whiting presented the library's proposed 2026-27 spending plan. She said a small portion of reserves has been allocated to the budget to keep the levy within the state-mandated tax cap. M. Walsh noted that healthcare cost increases are significant and much higher than expected. C. Brancatella said previous board conversations about the budget are available to watch on the library's YouTube channel.

President C. Brancatella called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

There were no public comments at this time.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by J. Adams, the board unanimously approved the minutes from the Monday April 13 regular board meeting.

On a MOTION by G. Sacco with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board approved the minutes the Wednesday April 29 Long Range Planning Committee meeting. M. Walsh abstained.

H-Fund resolution

C. Brancatella said she was moving this topic up from new business so that all present board members would have the opportunity to vote. S. Whiting said the purpose of the resolution is to have

board approval for the movement of funds from the general operating fund to one designated for capital projects. She said the board approved a transfer of \$150,000 a few months ago for the boiler project. She said the transfer of \$52,000 is to cover the rest of the expenses that are due. C. Brancatella noted that these are anticipated expenses, and the boiler project has till come in well under budget.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by G. Sacco, the board unanimously approved the transfer of \$52,000 from the general fund to the capital reserve fund to cover costs associated with the boiler project.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

S. Whiting presented her report.

- C. Brancatella reminded the public that the library's fiscal year runs from July to June.
- G. Sacco asked why the library needed to wait for the state budget to pass before receiving the final portion of tax revenue funds. G. Kirkpatrick said that the amount represents taxes that remain unpaid by property holders and that the state budget must pass before they can "make whole" the entities waiting for that revenue.
- J. Adams asked about the increase in photocopier revenue and whether that was related to the new service that allows people to print from home to the library. S. Whiting said those trends are hard to project. G. Kirkpatrick said the year-end stats on computer use might provide a little more information.

On a MOTION by J. Adams with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 30 April 2026 (Checks disbursed in April 2026 based on pre-approval \$65,119.35; Checks disbursed in April 2026 relating to payroll \$220,803.55; Checks being submitted for approval \$105,644.28; Checks being submitted for approval – Capital Project Fund \$72,699.81; Total: \$464,266.99).

PERSONNEL REPORT

There were no personnel actions requested. G. Kirkpatrick said there appeared to be a small typo in a previously approved position.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The board noted the director's report.

- Progress club volunteers will be planting red, white and blue annuals in keeping with the America 250 theme.
- G. Kirkpatrick shared usage statistics for the library's expanded digital newspaper holdings. He noted that we are seeing good use year over year. Of the Newsbank holdings, the Times Union is the most used, but the service also allows access to the Daily Gazette and other New York newspapers.
- G. Sacco noted all of the wonderful comments patrons wrote on a recent Library Week display. She said they should be used as part of the library's marketing.
- J. Adams and M. Walsh thanked the librarians who attended the PLA conference for their write-ups.
- L. DiBetta and G. Sacco said it would be nice to try to create a "bridge" for teens from the Delmar Marketplace to the library through advertising or other efforts.

UHLS REPORT

There was no UHLS update at this time.

FRIENDS REPORT

J. Adams said the Friends have been discussing what their storage space needs might be. She reminded everyone that the book sale would take place this weekend. She said the branded mug idea has been tabled for now.

C. Brancatella said the building committee will continue the storage discussion and said a construction manager might be able to provide additional insight.

NEW BUSINESS

Friends book sale fundraiser

C. Brancatella noted that people can make donations to the sale on Thursday.

Other new business

There was no other new business discussed.

OLD BUSINESS

Boiler project update

G. Kirkpatrick said the project is very close to being done. After a replacement part was installed, the boiler has been tested and is running. He noted that the boiler helps control the humidity in the main part of the library. J. Adams asked if it was more efficient. G. Kirkpatrick said that it is, but that is likely to not result in any cost savings with current energy prices. C. Brancatella said the board did a good job ushering the boiler project through once it was identified as the top building need.

59 Borthwick project update

G. Kirkpatrick said he expects to have a demolition design to the board in time for a vote at the June meeting. He said they are still talking about preserving utilities and what that entails, along with potential placement of a storage shed. C. Brancatella said the building committee would be further discussing those topics at the next meeting.

Long Range Plan Committee report

M. Kissinger said the committee discussed the approach they wanted to take with the document. He said the goal is to have something for the full board to review by the September or October meeting. He urged fellow board members to share their preliminary comments with the committee by June 1.

Other old business

There was no other old business discussed.

FUTURE BUSINESS

G. Sacco asked if there was something she could share with others about the library's programming for the 250th anniversary of the United States.

M. Kissinger said the county has a lot of resources that could be useful for planning themed events. G. Kirkpatrick noted that the Friends are running a bus trip up to Fort Ticonderoga later in the summer as a special event.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by J. Adams with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:52pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
C. Brancatella, board president