

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY (BOARD ROOM)
Monday June 8, 2026

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

Geoffrey Kirkpatrick, director
Kristen Roberts, public information specialist

EXCUSED: Gail Sacco

GUESTS: Phil Berardi, assistant director/head of operations
Chris McGinty, assistant director/Public Services
Tanya Choppy, accounts clerk
Jen Crawford, confidential secretary
Robert McDonnell
Mary Service
Claire Crawford
Tessy Nedy

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

PUBLIC PARTICPATION

One member of the public spoke. A recording of the meeting is available on YouTube.

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 May 11 regular board meeting.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by J. Adams, the board approved the minutes the Tuesday May 12 Building Committee meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer's update

S. Whiting presented her report.

- C. Brancatella noted that since the passage of the state budget, all real property taxes have been received by the library.
- M. Walsh asked about the process of reinvesting in another treasury bill once the current one comes due. S. Whiting said she will have a couple of days to investigate the rates, which are currently at the 3.66% level before reinvesting. She said she likes to have some variety in the

investments and noted that the Metropolitan investment account allows the library additional flexibility. She added that the invested funds are diminishing slightly as it is spent on building projects.

- M. Kissinger noted that the health insurance budget line is already at 100% and there is still another month in the fiscal year. T. Choppy said that line will be about \$48,000 over because of increasing costs.
- C. Brancatella said that as the library moves into a new fiscal year, the board is encouraged to keep a close eye on the bill schedule.

On a MOTION by L. DiBetta with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously approved the Financial Statement dated 31 May 2026 (Checks disbursed in May 2026 based on pre-approval \$59,293.10; Checks disbursed in May 2026 relating to payroll \$336,568.23; Checks being submitted for approval \$85,780.78; Checks being submitted for approval – Capital Project Fund \$7,959.57; Total: \$489,601.68).

PERSONNEL REPORT

On a MOTION by L. DiBetta with a SECOND by M. Kissinger the board unanimously voted to approve the following positions:

- Library page, part-time, permanent, 10.1 hours/week, \$16.00/hour or per contract

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The board noted the director's report.

- G. Kirkpatrick said the tech services staff has done amazing work processing new items and getting them out on the floor in a timely manner. Since Baker and Taylor is no longer in business, some of the work that had been done there is now done in-house. M. Walsh asked if library staff would be doing that extra work here on out. G. Kirkpatrick said that the library's new book vendor is looking to eventually provide that service but is still in the process of bringing its own staffing up to speed.
- The library will be replacing the security cameras around the building. The new vendor has worked with school districts and has extensive video privacy experience.
- Study spaces are being heavily used by the high schoolers during the season of AP exams and finals. During May and June many of the public rooms at the library are booked out for study hall and not as available to the public.
- The changes to the children's space have received very positive feedback from the public. There are more changes to come with some additional furniture funded by the Friends.
- Regular story times are wrapping up and will be suspended over summer so the librarians can focus on summer reading. There has been some feedback about a desire for summer story times, and staffers are looking at how that might be accommodated in the future.
- M. Walsh said she volunteered at the recent Friends book sale and said there was great energy and it was a lot of fun.
- G. Kirkpatrick said the door count last month was robust, even as circulation dipped slightly. He said those two stats used to go hand in hand, but in recent months they are no longer tied together.
- In response to a question from M. Kissinger, G. Kirkpatrick said staff are looking into a way to most accurately represent e-periodical borrows in the statistics report.

UHLS REPORT

M. Kissinger said the most recent meeting focused on picking the winners of the annual UHLS awards. He noted that the celebration dinner would be held on Wednesday at Love Albany.

FRIENDS REPORT

J. Adams said noted that the Friends had a very successful book sale in May.

NEW BUSINESS

59 Borthwick project

The Building Committee met twice in the past month to discuss plans to manage the demolition of the structure. Main points of discussion have been asbestos abatement, as well as water, gas and electric retention possibilities. The next step will be to put the project out to bid, so that a bid could be awarded as early as the July 13 board meeting.

G. Kirkpatrick said that the board had previously been leaning toward engaging a construction manager for the project, but because the project is relatively small in scale, it might be difficult to find a cost-effective option. There have been early estimates for the final cost of the demolition, but once a bid is awarded, the library will have something closer to a final estimate.

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by S. Patterson, the board unanimously voted to authorize the library to advertise for bids for the demolition of 59 Borthwick. Ave.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously voted to authorize the transfer of \$30,000 from the general fund to the capital projects (H) fund to cover costs associated with the 59 Borthwick project.

Trustee email

G. Kirkpatrick said that the library makes available emails for trustees, if interested. He noted that if any trustee would like to have a library email, they will have to set up two-factor authentication and receive cyber security training. Board members did not express interest in those individual emails, and G. Kirkpatrick said the library would deactivate old accounts in the coming days.

Nominating committee

The nominating committee would be meeting virtually in the coming weeks and have a slate of officers to present for a July vote.

Social media policy

C. Brancatella noted that the policies presented were in a draft stage. This would be a first read, and there would not be a vote at this meeting. She said the hope is that trustees would review the draft and provide input prior to the next meeting.

S. Patterson said the draft represents efforts to tighten up language, but did not include any substantive change. M. Kissinger suggested using the phrase “designated staff” as the ones who would review content on the site.

L. DiBetta suggested changing the phrase “post” to “comment” when referring to how the public engages with the library’s social media.

Recording policy

S. Patterson said that C. McGinty has shared some of her research of other library policies and a lot of the changes in the draft were based on that information. She said she liked how the term

“recording” simplifies the language. C. Brancatella said the bulk of the policy is aimed at public use, but that there is a section regarding staff recordings. G. Kirkpatrick said the policy is a reminder that library is considered public property so there is no more expectation of privacy than any other public space. He noted that staff still try to work with people who may be uncomfortable. C. Brancatella said the library cannot stop someone from recording in the library unless the manner violates the patron conduct policy. She said the purpose of the policy is to let people know that this is allowed, but also set some parameters. L. DiBetta asked if the best practice might be to require a model consent form for minors. G. Kirkpatrick said he would check with the attorney for guidance.

C. Brancatella asked how the library would enforce a violation of the noncommercial use provision and what that would mean for “influencers.” J. Adams suggested that the very beginning of the policy should state that the library is a public space and there should be no expectation of privacy. C. Brancatella asked the policy committee to incorporate comments from the discussion and recirculate a draft in a week or so to let other people weigh in.

Other new business

There was no other new business discussed.

OLD BUSINESS

Boiler project update

G. Kirkpatrick said the boiler project is very close to be closed out, with just some minor things to tie up.

Long Range Plan Committee report

M. Kissinger said he was waiting for everyone’s feedback and will get a meeting on the calendar before the next board meeting.

Other old business

C. Brancatella said the board will be welcoming a new trustee at the July meeting. She thanked the community for their engagement with the write-in voting process. She noted that M. Walsh will be stepping down at the end of the month after 7 years of service and said her voice and attention to detail was greatly appreciated, as was her willingness to speak up even when she was in the minority.

On a MOTION by M. Kissinger with a SECOND by C. Brancatella, the board unanimously voted to accept a resolution of recognition honoring M. Walsh for her service on the Bethlehem Public Library Board of Trustees.

FUTURE BUSINESS

There was no future business at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a MOTION by J. Adams with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously voted to enter into executive session at 7:14pm regarding the employment history of a particular individual.

On a MOTION by J. Adams with a SECOND by L. DiBetta, the board unanimously voted to leave executive session at 7:48pm.

On a MOTION by S. Patterson with a SECOND by M. Walsh, the board unanimously voted to accept the 2026-27 M/C salary schedule, copies of which are available on request.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One member of the public spoke. A recording of the meeting is available on YouTube..

ADJOURNMENT

On a MOTION by M. Walsh with a SECOND by J. Adams, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:52pm.

Prepared by
Kristen Roberts, recording secretary

Cosigned by
C. Brancatella, board president