

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Location: Library Auditorium, 758 Main Street

Trustees (Present): Michelle Blank, Chad Edgar, Paul Gavejian, Nancy Goldstein, Larry Greenberg, Cheryl Kaiden, Mary-Rita Killelea, Janice Kochanowski, Sue Wharfe, Lisa Zwack

Trustees (Absent): Liz Alcorn, Andy Melnick, Jack Thompson

Friends of the Library: Barbara Barrett

Staff: Katy McNicol, Library Director, Kathy Oxsalida, Finance Manager, Rhea Williams, Development Coordinator

Yale SOM Fellow: Brianna Hoelting, Megan Tao (zoom)

Public: none

Janice Kochanowski called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

President's Remarks – Janice thanked Trustees for their support of the mini golf fundraiser and reminded them that the RTM will vote on approval of the Blackstone budget at 8:00 pm at the Community Center on May 13.

Additions to the Agenda – Brianna Hoelting asked to say a few words to the Trustees

Approval of New Trustees – Sue Wharfe presented Jennifer Tucker and David Levine to serve as Trustees of the Blackstone. Mary-Rita Killelea moved to approve Jennifer Tucker to fill the term of Shahida Soomro ending June, 2027. Nancy Goldstein seconded the motion. The motion carried. Larry Goldberg moved to approve David Levine to fill the term of Christy Cantu ending June, 2027. Nancy Goldstein seconded the motion. The motion carried. Jennifer addressed the Board. She is an ESL teacher at Branford High School, has 2 children in the Branford school system and is looking forward to joining the Board and finding ways to contribute. David addressed the Board. He retired recently from WB Mason, is a huge fan of libraries and the Blackstone in particular, and is looking forward to contributing in any way he can.

Approval of Minutes— The minutes were corrected to clarify a statement in the Building and Grounds report, correct the spelling of Michelle in the second instance and to correct figures in the Treasurers report. Michelle Blank moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Lisa Zwack seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director's Report – Katy McNicol reported that the mini golf fundraiser was a huge success and noted that Rhea Williams did a great job pulling everything together on her first event as Director of Development. At the monthly staff meeting the topic of vacation time came up. Katy plans to review various vacation time provision in the Town handbook and in other library handbooks as part of a project to update the Blackstone's staff handbook. Katy thanked Kathy Oxsalida for her 22 years of dedicated service as Finance Manager. The library is hosting a toiletries drive in the lobby to benefit the free shop at the Community Dining Room. The next event in the lobby will be a food drive organized by

the Friends to support the Branford Food Pantry. Three candidates have been selected as finalists to fill the part time position of Facilities Manager and reference and background checks are moving forward. The overnight cleaning service has increased their time from 1 to 2.5 hours and things are running smoothly. Katy has received 35 applications for the Finance Manager position and interviews will start soon. Katy was invited to speak at a LION's Club meeting. She talked about her background and gave a brief history of the Blackstone and how it is implementing the strategic plan. The RTM Education Committee will present the library budget to the full RTM for final approval on Tuesday, May 13. Katy has been accepted to attend the New England Library Association's Leadership Conference. The conference will be held over 4 days in Stowe, Vermont and involves intensive leadership training. Funding for the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has been resumed for this fiscal year and Katy urged Trustees to contact local legislators to advocate for continued federal library funding.

Friends of the Library – Barbara Barrett thanked the trustees who contributed to the Raise the Tent initiative and reported that the Friends have raised \$8,000 toward their \$13,000 target. The small Spring Sale was held at the warehouse and raised \$4,000. The Friends received a large donation of about 7000 history books and they will hold a special pop up sale of literature and history books at the warehouse on June 28. The Friends received confirmation that they will host their Fall Book Sale September 18-21 at Foote Park and are now starting to work through all the logistics, including internet, power, restroom facilities and extra security.

Treasurer's Report – Larry Greenberg reported that the main endowment account was up about \$7,000 to \$4,412,925 or 0.2%. The Creative in Residence account was up about \$1,000 to \$547k or 0.3% and total accounts were up about \$9,000 to \$4,960,176 or 0.2%. Larry noted that there is a 6 month treasury bill residing in the main account of approximately \$323,000 that matures at the end of May. The committee will soon decide how to reinvest these funds, which are primarily credited towards the balcony project.

Kathy Oxsalida presented the March variance report and stated that there is essentially no change from last month. The financials continue to exceed budget for utilities due to electric costs and for repairs and maintenance due to repairs and the additional cost of cleaning services.

Committee Reports—

Finance Committee— Larry reported that the committee approved up to \$12,500 for buildings and grounds to replace and repair the auditorium lights and chandelier. The committee also discussed the potential purchase of several furniture items, including a bookcase display for the main rotunda and a phone pod for the computer room, and the process of hiring a finance and facilities manager. An issue involving a costly item borrowed from the Library of Things that was not returned has been resolved by Katy and the check out procedures for Library of Things are being reevaluated. The library's investment managers will attend the next committee meeting to present their 6 month portfolio review, which will be presented to the Board at the June meeting.

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Michelle thanked Brianna Hoelting and Megan Tao for their help in drafting the committee charter. She reported that the Garden Club will use the grounds for an event on May 17 and the Community Dining Room will begin their weekly dinners on the grounds on June 17. Katy updated the status of the balcony renovation project. Four architecture firms participated in a mandatory site visit and two firms submitted bids, Silver/Petrucelli+Associates, the firm for the 2018 renovation, and Lothrop Associates. Both firms are highly qualified and have library renovation

experience. There is a difference of approximately \$12,000 between the two bids and the library will now interview both firms. The committee has prepared a first draft of an RFQ for a facilities building condition assessment. Cheryl Kaiden met with the committee to discuss collaborating with BACA to display sculptures on the grounds. The committee is drafting a proposal for the development of a pilot program for lawn sculpture displays for the Board to consider.

Development Committee – Nancy reported that the mini golf fundraiser was a huge success, an evening filled with positive energy. She thanked all the Trustees that were involved and congratulated Rhea on a job well done. Rhea reported that the event raised \$19,700 in total and \$17,305 after expenses. Tickets are now on sale for the shredding event which will be held from 9:00-12:00 on June 7. The spring appeal will be a very targeted email/mail campaign to reach those to regularly give in the spring.

Governance Committee – Sue Wharfe reported that the committee continues to work on filling two trustee positions. The committee also determined that the feasibility of voting by email was not an option due to legal constraints. Sue also discussed whether outside committee members should sign a conflict of interest form. On behalf of the nominating committee Sue introduced the slate of officers for the 2025-2026 year;

Janice Kochanowski	President
Paul Gavejian	Vice President
Lisa Zwack	Secretary
Larry Greenberg	Treasurer
Jack Thompson	Assistant Treasurer

Library Director Annual Review - Mary-Rita Killelea reported that the Library Director Evaluation, along with the Library Director Job Description, will be going out to all Trustees next week. Katy will send out her self evaluation within the next few weeks and completed evaluations need to be returned to Mary-Rita no later than May 26.

Adjournment – Brianna thanked the Board for providing a wonderful fellowship experience. Janice made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mary-Rita seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:13pm.

Next regular meeting will be held on June 4, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary-Rita Killelea
Secretary

Note: minutes are provisional until approved by the Board of Trustees.