

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES
PEORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY
August 19, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Board President Ruth Bittner called the meeting of the Board of Library Trustees of Peoria Public Library to order at 5:30 pm. This Regular meeting was held in the Lower Level 2 Conference Room at the Main Library, 107 NE Monroe St., Peoria, Illinois.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Ruth Bittner, Cecilia Buckner, Margaret Cousin, Steven Marx, Roberta Parks

Board Members Absent: Scot Driscoll, Kevin Kinne, Jacob Roberts

Library Staff Present: Mary Anderson, Lakeview Branch Manager; Carolyn Conklin, Reference Assistant; Veronica De Fazio, Deputy Director; Pat England, Library Assistant; Elise Hearn, Programming Manager; Jennifer Jacobsen-Wood, Technical Services Manager; Jennifer Sevier, Reference Manager; Karla Wilkinson, Programming Librarian; and Randall Yelverton, Executive Director

A motion was made by Cecilia Buckner, seconded by Roberta Parks to allow Barbara Van Auken to attend the meeting via phone. Motion passed unanimously. Barbara Van Auken joined the meeting at 5:31 pm.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence since the last meeting was recognized. The Trustees discussed Reference Assistant Jay Johnston's letter to the Board regarding staff and public accessibility to the monthly Board of Library Trustees meetings. Included in the discussion were the need to ensure that the meeting dates, times, and minutes are current on the Library's website, the possibility of livestreaming/recording the meetings, and the time that the meetings were held. This will be discussed further when the majority of the Board is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. #2025-85: Request to Approve Minutes as listed below:
 - 1. Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting of May 1, 2025
 - 2. Minutes of the Regular Board meeting of July 15, 2025
 - 3. Minutes of the Special Board meeting of July 28, 2025

B. #2025-86: Request to Approve Expenditures as listed below:

1. Payroll for Period Ending July 19, 2025	\$150,012.54
2. Payroll for Period Ending August 2, 2025	\$149,369.10
3. Regular Expenditures for August 2025	\$301,719.99

C. #2025-87: Request of the Executive Director to Approve Personnel Actions for the period ending August 15, 2025

D. #2025-88: Request of the Executive Director to Receive and File Finance Reports for the month of July 2025

E. #2025-89: Request of the Executive Director to Receive and File Library Use Statistics for the month of July 2025

A motion was made by Margaret Cousin, seconded by Roberta Parks to approve Consent Agenda items #2025-85 through #2025-89. Motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

A. #2025-90 Adopt Revised Freedom of Information Act Policy

A motion was made by Margaret Cousin, seconded by Steven Marx to approve the Revised Freedom of Information Act Policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

B. #2025-91 Adopt Revised Wireless Internet Policy

A motion was made by Roberta Parks, seconded by Cecilia Buckner to approve the Revised Wireless Internet Policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A. Programming Report

A report from Elise Hearn was included in the Board packet.

B. Welcome, Mary Anderson!

Mary Anderson, the new Lakeview Branch Manager was introduced to the Board.

C. Summer Reading Completed

621 patrons attended the family party at the Peoria Riverfront Museum and 119 attended the adult party held at Main Library. There were 2787 participants in the Summer Reading program. This was a drop from the previous year, but higher than 2020 thru 2023. There were some challenges this year that contributed to the drop, including transitioning to a new Programming Manager right at the beginning of Summer Reading.

D. Summer Reading Planning

The Summer Reading planning committee, led by Elise Hearn, the new Programming Manager met in August to discuss the 2025 program and begin looking toward 2026. Plans for improving participation in the program included having Summer Reading planning meetings throughout the year and pursuing more in-person promotion in schools. The Library will hold all staff training in the spring to promote hand-selling the summer reading program to patrons.

E. Bike Giveaway

The Bike Giveaway at Lincoln was a big success thanks to the Friends of the Peoria Public Library and many generous donors, including BioUrja. Over 50 bikes were given away.

F. Strategic Planning Update

The Library is on pace to complete the strategic planning process before the end of the year. Before completion, Yelverton will discuss with the Management Team how to implement the various aspects of the final plan. The plan will be presented to the Board for approval, along with plans for implementation.

G. Management Training

On August 4, the Management Team participated in an all-day management training with HR Source. As part of the training, supervisory fundamentals such as learning to communicate effectively with team members who have different communication styles and differing strengths were discussed.

H. Improved Internet Service

The Library's bandwidth was upgraded in order to offer improved internet service to the patrons and prepare for the implementation of cloud-based Office software for the staff.

I. Peoria Journal Star Archive Access

The cost of full-text, searchable access to Newsbank's Peoria Journal Star has been reduced from \$385,000 to \$311,000, to be paid over five years. Yelverton is working with Margaret Cousin to secure the funds. Cousin is working on contributions from the Friends as well as reaching out to potential donors.

J. Teri Miller Retiring

Outreach Manager Teri Miller will be retiring on October 31. Miller has been with the Library 40 years.

K. Door Count and Circulation Statistics

The visitor total for July 2025 was up 0.35% from July 2024. The circulation total for the same period was up 0.01%.

STAFF COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT

Veronica De Fazio highlighted some of the events in the report.

REPORT OF THE LIBRARY BOARD LIAISON TO THE FRIENDS OF THE PEORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Friends of the Library President, Margaret Cousin, reviewed the Treasurer's reports for July. Cousin, along with Parks, praised Cynthia Smith, Lincoln Branch Manager, on the success of the annual Bike Giveaway. Cousin noted that next month's Treasurer's report will reflect the donations for the Peoria Journal Star digitization project.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Building Committee – No Report, the committee plans to meet again in the next couple of months.
- B. Executive Committee – No Report
- C. Finance Committee – Yelverton will arrange a meeting for September.
- D. Nominating/Appeals Committee – No Report
- E. Personnel/Negotiations Committee – No Report
- F. **Strategic Planning Committee**
 - 1. **Report from August 5, 2025 meeting**

Parks reviewed the staff's doubts regarding the validity of the planning process and belief that nothing will change. As a result, Parks, Marx, and Yelverton will be meeting with Fast Forward Libraries to discuss possible next steps. Progress on the Director's 2025 goals were also discussed at the meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

A. Tablets

Van Auken introduced the topic of the Trustees being issued tablets to access documents relevant to the meetings rather than having paper copies distributed to everyone. Discussion was had regarding cost of tablets and user preference. The discussion was tabled until next month when more information would be available and the majority of the Board would be in attendance.

B. Name Badges

Van Auken introduced the topic of the Board being issued name badges that would allow full access to all the Library facilities. Board members in attendance were split on this issue. The discussion was tabled until next month when the majority of the Board would be in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Margaret Cousin, seconded by Roberta Parks, to move into Executive Session at 6:28 pm for the purpose of reviewing closed session recordings and minutes (5ILCS 120/2(c)(21)). Motion carried unanimously.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

The Board returned to Regular Session at 6:33 pm.

A. #2025-93: Authorize destroying lawfully recorded audio tapes of closed meetings in accordance with the Illinois State Law Public Act 93 0523 (2.06).

1. Regular Board Meeting: Executive Session January 30, 2024

A motion was made by Roberta Parks, seconded by Steven Marx, to destroy the recording listed on the Executive Session agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA BUILDING

Discuss meeting locations and times for Board of Library Trustee meetings.

Present research on the possibility of livestreaming/recording Board of Library Trustee meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm

Roberta Parks, Secretary
Board of Library Trustees
Peoria Public Library