



## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BROOKLINE

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### Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees, Public Library of Brookline

A hybrid meeting of the Trustees of the Public Library was convened on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 6:16pm.

Present: Livingston, Burstein, Bloomenthal, Chanyasulkit, Goleman, Hung, Lohe, Margolis, Silver, Vanderkay, Vogt, Zelkha

Absent: none

Also present: Workplace consultants, A.R. Gay and L. Della Porta; Interim Library Director, D. Savin; Interim Assistant Director, R. Brennan; Executive Assistant to the Library Director, C. Artavia; AFSCME Union Rep., S. O'Donnell; Head of Reference, J. Steytler; two Friends of the Library.

Motion to convene by Livingston; Goleman seconds. All present vote yea, 6:16pm.

#### I. Comments from the Chair

- A. Livingston states: "The Trustees thank Danielle and Ryan's efforts to not only help keep the library running, but to work with Amy Rebecca Gay and Loraine Della Porta on a climate assessment of the Library with our staff. This has been a 3-month process that involved meetings and surveys, the results of which we will be hearing tonight." Livingston thanks the workplace consultants for their respectful treatment of the library staff.

#### II. Comments from the Public (2-minute limit per person)

- A. None.

#### III. Secretary's Report



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- A. Minutes: Livingston makes a motion to approve the July 2025 minutes; Zelka seconds. Vote:
1. Yeas – Bloomenthal, Chanyasulkit, Goleman, Livingston, Lohe, Silver, Zelkha.
  2. Nays – none.
  3. Abstained – Burstein, Hung, Margolis, Vanderkay, Vogt.
  4. The Board votes unanimously to approve the minutes.
- B. Goleman encourages the Board to please sign up for Brookline Day: Sunday, September 14, 2025 from 11am - 3pm.
- IV. Presentation from the workplace consultant
- A. Savin introduces the workplace consultants.
  - B. A.R. Gay and L. Della Porta present: Climate Assessment at the Public Library of Brookline.
  - C. Savin presents: The Path Forward – Short-Term
  - D. The workplace consultants pick up the presentation again to conclude with: The Path Forward – Long-Term.
    1. Questions and discussion:
      - a) The consultants, A.R. Gay and L. Della Porta, discuss how they view the role of the Trustees in the overall process. Points are raised about processes and staffing issues, decision-making, and the importance of clear communication.



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- b) Chanyasulkit shares that she has attended the 2025 ALA conference in Philadelphia, and says that what PLB is experiencing is not different from what a lot of other libraries are experiencing with their library trustees.
- c) Burstein asks the consultants to expand on the staff asking to get to know the Board more.
- d) Clarification is requested regarding the term “limited resources” used in the presentation. The consultants explain that they mean human resources, not financial or material resources.
- e) A question is raised about survey technology. The consultants describe the anonymity features of the survey.
- f) A question is asked about whether the survey captured demographic data. The consultants reply that contract negotiations included the provision of a safe space. Because the survey information would be public, they took care that staff could not be identified directly or through demographic inference.
- g) Lohe stresses that the staff and Board need to get to know each other better and offers some examples of how this might be done.
- h) A question is raised about the survey data that was not shared in the presentation. The consultants explain that per their work agreement, the rest of the information would remain confidential.



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- i) Goleman thanks the consultants for providing an integrated understanding of staff, administration, and trustee dynamics at the Library, stating that what we do with the study will be the true test of its value.

### V. Comments from Interim Director

- A. Savin states they will not be giving their full director's report this month but that they will present a double report next month.
- B. Savin thanks the Board for supporting the workplace consultation and the staff for participating. Savin states they are excited to work on the short-term goals as outlined in the report.
  - 1. In response to a question about the unshared parts of the survey, Livingston states that the survey offers a great amount of knowledge despite those portions that might reveal identity not being shared.
  - 2. Hung explains that more staff probably responded because the survey was anonymous; there was a 60-70% response rate, as opposed to most staff surveys (in general) which produce a 10-20% response rate at best.
- C. Livingston states that she is optimistic that the staff and Board are motivated to work together, move forward, and improve.
- D. Savin suggests the Board look at how the Town Select Board sets their goals in a special meeting/retreat, annually.



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1. Livingston will look into the SB approach, and will also consider delegating to one or more Board committees how to follow-up on the consultants' recommendations.

### VI. New Business

- A. Livingston introduces her plans to ask for a motion to approve the Proposal for Executive Recruitment Services by consultants June Garcia and Sari Feldman. The proposal was distributed before the meeting for Board review. Goleman distributes summaries of reference calls.
- B. Livingston opens the room for questions. Livingston states that a cornerstone of the proposal is that staff will have an opportunity to meet with the consultants at the beginning of the process and finalists at the end. The new library director will be someone who is well-aware of recent Library history, including staff concerns, and eager to move the Library forward.
- C. Margolis makes a motion to approve the proposal; Burstein seconds.
  1. Burstein comments that this proposal is exactly what we need and thanks everyone for their work. Burstein believes that this proposal will help us find the next director of the library.
  2. A question about the proposal's timeline is raised: how flexible is it? Livingston answers that special meetings will be called and a screening committee will be appointed.



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- a) Savin and Brennan have chosen three Zoom opportunities for the consultants to connect with the staff.
- b) Livingston will appoint the screening committee sometime in the next three weeks.
- c) Goleman explains that the proposal's timeline is flexible, but it will take steady, concentrated work to meet the goal of naming a director by December.

- 3. Role call vote: Motion to hire the consultant. Motion passes unanimously (and enthusiastically).

### VII. Remarks for the Good of the Order

- A. None.

Zelkha makes a motion to adjourn; Bloomenthal seconds. The Board votes unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Cary Artavia, EA to the Library Director

Attested

Judith Goleman, Secretary

If you plan to make a motion or amend the minutes, please give a written copy to the Trustee Secretary.



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Please contact Library Administration ([brkadmin@minlib.net](mailto:brkadmin@minlib.net) / 617-730-2360) with questions about this meeting.