

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, February 10, 2026 at 6:15pm

Present: B. Bloomenthal; M. Burstein; K. Livingston, J. Margolis; C. Chanyasulkit, J. Goleman, K. Hung, C. Lohe, F. Silver, J. Vanderkay, M. Vogt, S. Zelkha.

All present; none absent.

Also present: Library Director, J. Mercurio; Assistant Library Director, D. Savin; Executive Assistant to the Library Director, C. Artavia; Friends of the Library member, E. Franco; Library Foundation members, C. Aquilane; and A. Newell.

- I. Motion to convene by Livingston; Goleman seconds. All present vote yea, 6:17 p.m.
- II. Comments from the Chair
 - A. The chair welcomes aboard new Library Director Jill Mercurio. Livingston says she will meet with the Director every Tuesday and if any board member should have something they would like discussed to please email her.
 - B. The chair will add a line on future agendas to allow time for the Friends or Foundation representatives to report or comment if they wish.
 - C. The Library's strategic plan is out of date. Livingston notes that in the past the Board hired a consultant to assist with the development of a strategic plan. During the process the entire community was given the opportunity to say what they wanted to see from the Library. Mercurio says she has a list of consultants who work with libraries on strategic plans.
- III. Comments from the Public - n/a
- IV. Secretary's Report:
 - A. Minutes - Goleman makes a motion to approve the January 2026 minutes; Hung seconds. The Board unanimously votes to approve the minutes.
 - B. Correspondence - n/a
 - C. Other items - The next Board of Library Trustees meeting is declared by Goleman to be Wednesday, March 18th at 6:15pm
- V. Treasurer's Report - Lohe reports that the endowment grew by more than 12.5% in 2025 and was up another \$185k in January 2026. Lohe thanks Goleman and Hung for their careful review of the halftime budget. Lohe presents the halftime budget to the board, cites upcoming expenditures, and explains that she will be meeting soon with Mercurio to discuss the FY27 budget.
- VI. Library Director's Report - Livingston asks the Board to explain the line on the bottom of the Director's report. Burstein explains that the Patriot Act (passed in 2001) does not allow for library directors to report on whether or not certain government warrants had been exercised. The ALA, concerned with patron privacy and the confidentiality of library

records, came up with a workaround shortly thereafter, so now there is a line item at the end of every PLB director's report that reads: "Freedom of Information Act Requests & Court Orders: The Public Library of Brookline has not been served with any Freedom of Information Act Requests or court orders since the last meeting." If this line is ever missing at the end of a director's report, someone can ask if it is missing, and the Library Director would be able to answer, "Yes the line is missing," without having reported on any specific government action.

A. Director's Report:

1. The Town budget process is under way; Mercurio and Savin have updated the budget materials. Mercurio answers some questions regarding the potential upcoming override and goes on to say that if the override does not pass the Library could see cuts to services amounting to around \$30k which she believes would be unfortunate but manageable. Mercurio asks the Board to save March 31, 2026 for the Town Budget Select Board meetings. Some discussion follows about Mercurio's introduction to Brookline's key Town players. Mercurio answers questions from the Board regarding the possible budget cuts.

2. The past year shows an 8% increase in online usage for the Library. Mercurio recognizes the Youth Services Department which has shown a 30% increase in attendance this past year. Mercurio explains the difference between passive programming and active programming.

VII. Trustee Committee Summaries - committee heads present a short mid-year update to the Library Director:

A. Trustee Development - Vogt presents recent accomplishments of the committee including Trustee Handbook and Orientation tours; she invites Mercurio to attend a meeting and share any experience she may have had with other boards.

B. Library Functions - Burstein presents recent work of the committee, including reviewing and updating all policies. The committee will soon look again at Library Facility and Grounds Policy. Mercurio expresses interest in coming to a meeting and learning more.

C. Staff Appreciation - Chanyasulkit presents recent accomplishments of the committee including gift baskets and gift certificates and notes that the committee wants the staff to know how much the Board recognizes and appreciates them.

1. Some discussion regarding the budget and the staff appreciation event that the committee puts on each year. Chanyasulkit asks that Mercurio and Savin tell the committee when the date for next staff development day has been chosen so they can possibly get started on planning an event for part of that day.

2. Savin notes that this will be a good opportunity for department heads of the library to recognize their staff.

D. Investment Sub-committee - Lohe explains the important differences between this committee and the Finance Committee; she observes how helpful it is to have this subgroup of experts helping her manage the Board's endowment funds.

1. Livingston observes that a meeting between the Board and Foundation Treasurers would allow for better understanding and coordination of its resources.

- E. Advocacy Committee - Margolis reports that the Advocacy Committee is questioning its purpose.
 - 1. Burstein refers to the recent IMLS statement issued nationally and suggests that the Advocacy Committee discuss it.
 - 2. Silver has shared a list of suggestions for the Advocacy Committee and asks Mercurio for her perspective. Vogt says that the MBLC has recommendations that would apply to this committee's mission.
 - 3. Silver suggests that one way the committee might advocate for the community is to propose a mobile book service that could reach patrons who are less mobile and can not go to the library in person. Livingston says that the Senior Center has this service. Bloomenthal mentions Friendship Works as a relevant organization. Aquilane says that there might be other ways to implement mobile services besides a bookmobile and the Foundation might be interested in supporting such a venture.
- VIII. New Business:
 - A. Friends - Franco describes the upcoming Valentine's Day staff lunch sponsored by the Friends at all three library branches.
 - B. Foundation – Aquilane explains that the Foundation is working with the Friends to improve their alignment in order to best serve PLB.
 - 1. Team Brookline has some fundraisers coming up for Marathon fundraising. PLB's own IT Specialist, Kaden Casanave, will be running the Boston Marathon for Team Brookline.
 - 2. A Foundation representative will attend the Library Board meeting each month. The Foundation is voting on amending its bylaws because they currently state that an ex-officio officer for the Foundation is a member of the Board of Trustees
- IX. Old Business
 - A. The Board discusses past efforts to obtain an electric bookmobile. Goleman remarks that she has read about electric bookmobiles being used in numerous library systems, eg. Los Angeles and Sacramento, and that the necessary technology seems to exist.
- X. Remarks for the Good of the Order - n/a
- XI. Adjourn -- Burstein makes a motion to adjourn; Bloomenthal seconds. All present vote yea. The meeting is adjourned at 7:55pm.

Attested by Judith Goleman, March 9, 2026

