

Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

October 21, 2025

The Geauga County Public Library Board of Trustees met in regular session on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at the Thompson Branch.

Call to order and roll call: President Karen Delano called the board meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. and the roll call was conducted.

Present: Kristen Brickman (4:02), Karen Delano, Josh Hutchinson, Crist Miller, Paul Newman, Kate Pitrone, Jake Yanchar
Kris Carroll - Director, Lisa Havlin - Fiscal Officer, Katy Farrell – Assistant Director

Also Present: Mary Balog, Nicole Burnside, Rachael Hartman, Denise Javins, John Johnston, Judy Lasco, Erika Noark, Marlene Pelyhes, Mike Pope, Debbie Schrock

Approval of Minutes: Exhibit 10/25/A
The minutes of the September regular board meeting were approved as presented upon motion by Kate Pitrone and seconded by Paul Newman.
The motion passed.

Ayes: Delano, Hutchinson, Miller, Newman, Pitrone, Yanchar
Nays: None

Communications: Exhibit 10/25/B
No additions to the communications included in the board packet.

Kristen Brickman arrived at the meeting.

Agenda: Exhibit 10/25/C
Paul Newman made a motion, seconded by Kate Pitrone, to approve the agenda as presented.
The motion passed.

Ayes: Brickman, Delano, Hutchinson, Miller, Newman, Pitrone, Yanchar
Nays: None

Fiscal Officer's Report: Exhibit 10/25/D
Approval of Disbursements and Gifts Exhibit 10/25/E
Kate Pitrone made a motion, seconded by Jake Yanchar, to approve the Fiscal Officer's Report including September disbursements and gifts as presented in the board packet.
The motion passed.

Ayes: Brickman, Delano, Hutchinson, Miller, Newman, Pitrone, Yanchar
Nays: None

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Enacted and Proposed Changes to Property Tax legislation

Fiscal Officer, Lisa Havlin, reported the Ohio Senate has recently voted to override the governor's veto and approved the budget provision that eliminated replacement levies. She also highlighted House Bill 137 which would impact the library's ability to place a levy on the ballot.

Director's Report:

Exhibit 10/25/F

Director Kris Carroll highlighted several topics from her report. Kris also mentioned House Bill 137 and its impact on the library and has contacted our state representatives to voice her concern. Kris noted that we had received the soil boring locations for the new Chardon branch and she had contacted the appropriate vendor. Kris thanked Debbie for her work on the Donor Appreciation event. Karen Delano stated that she attended the event and the demonstration of the Maker Space and Digital Legacy Lab equipment was informative and well-received.

Assistant Director's Report:

Exhibit 10/25/G

Katy reported that Lauren Smyth, Digitization Specialist, has been digitizing GCPL records and photos. The documents will be used for the Chardon branch's grand opening. Katy also reported that the changes to Lines & Links have allowed staff to rework the programming process. In the future, there will be four seasonal issues with rolling registration for programs. This change will hopefully reduce the number of patrons being locked out of programs and the number of patrons that register but do not show up for programs.

Paul Newman asked if staff contact patrons prior to the program. Katy responded that patrons receive reminders by text, email, and/or phone calls.

Human Resources Report:

Exhibit 10/25/H

Human Resource Actions

Exhibit 10/25/I

Paul Newman made a motion, seconded by Crist Miller, to approve the Human Resource Actions including third-quarter Outstanding Service Awards, as presented in the board packet. The motion passed.

Ayes: Brickman, Delano, Hutchinson, Miller, Newman, Pitrone, Yanchar

Nays: None

HR Manager, Nicole Burnside stated that the Outstanding Service Award continues to be a successful program with about 50 submissions a quarter.

2026 Minimum wage

Nicole also reported that the minimum wage for 2026 has been set at \$11.00 per hour.

Local Manager's Report

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Mary Balog, Thompson Branch Manager, shared ways the library is supporting students at Global Connection Academy, which is housed in the old Ledgesmont School. Mary presents storytimes to four classes each month and recently presented the Rascal Reader program to the kindergarten classes. Mary also provided training in bibliographic instruction for the upper classes.

Mary shared an invitation to Thompson's 5th Anniversary Party, to be held November 1. The party will feature games, crafts, puzzle exchange, and Digital Legacy Lab demos. Hemly Hardware and Prima Dolce Bakery & Coffee Shop donated gift cards for raffle prizes.

Committee Reports:

Facilities Committee

Exhibit 10/25/J

Kris reviewed the Facilities Committee minutes that were included in the board packet.

Kris also discussed the Chardon branch project cost overruns and meetings that were recently held with Regency Construction and Bostwick Design to reiterate the library's non-negotiables to bring the project in on budget with the space needed for the library and Administrative Center.

Unfinished Business:

Kris has been in contact with West Geauga Schools about their planned project for a new well and water treatment plant. Kris, Lisa, Scott Amstutz, Director of Operations and Instructional Technology for West Geauga Schools, and Karen Pavlat, the school's Fiscal Officer, recently met to review the project and discuss its impact on the library. At that time the library was asked to pay \$6,000 plus one-half of the well project.

After the meeting with school representatives, Kris consulted our legal counsel who reviewed the lease and gave a verbal opinion that the library was not required to pay for the new well. Kris has since emailed the school to inform them of our attorney's advice and to ask for documentation pertaining to the project. Kris had not received that information prior to the board meeting.

New Business:

Discard List

Exhibit 10/25/K

Jake Yanchar made a motion, seconded by Crist Miller, to approve the discard list including items for the upcoming garage sale, as presented in the board packet.

The motion passed.

Ayes: Brickman, Delano, Hutchinson, Miller, Newman, Pitrone, Yanchar

Nays: None

Board Development:

Exhibit 10/25/L

Kris shared a letter she received from Carolyn Brakey, County Commissioner and Charles Walder, County Auditor, asking for input on House Bill 96 and its potential impact on property taxes. It is estimated that the library would lose \$170,000 annually if the county

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enacted a piggy-back tax exemption. The board agreed that Kris should write a letter voicing their concern with enacting a new tax exemption.

Karen Delano asked about planned programs at the library to educate patrons about the impact of potential property tax reform. Kris replied that the first meeting is planned in Bainbridge and will be presented by the League of Women Voters discussing how property taxes work and how they impact services.

Foundation Report:

Exhibit 10/25/M

Debbie Schrock reported that the Foundation had a phenomenal Murder Mystery event and there are tentative plans to continue the event next year. Debbie also mentioned that the Winter Wonderland of Trees event has started and trees are available for sponsorship. Decorated trees will be auctioned online and in person.

Comments From the Public

Cris Takas, League of Women's Voters representative, asked if the soil borings were needed because of chemical products present in the soil. Kris explained that prior borings had indicated "fatty" clays on portions of the property that could need remediation. Cris also asked about craft supply donations. Katy replied that it would be best to contact the branch manager to see if the supplies could be used by the library.

Adjournment

Paul Newman made a motion, seconded by Crist Miller, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.

Crist Miller, Secretary

Karen Delano, President