

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting for February 4, 2025

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Karen Kosko, Maria McCauley, Carson McGrath, Liz Werby, Michael Baenen, Irene Monroe, Erin Wells, Risa Mednick, and Jim Roosevelt.

1. Public Comment: None

- 2. Approval of Minutes:** Chair Jim Roosevelt opened the floor for corrections or comments to the minutes from January 7, 2025. No corrections were made, and the minutes passed unanimously.

3. Branches Overview with Erin Wells:

Assistant Director of Branch Services, Erin Wells, started her presentation by introducing herself to the group and then went into detail on each of the six branches of the Cambridge Public Library. Erin started her role at CPL in November of 2023 and works out of the Central Square Branch. The Central Square Branch sees 185,000 visitors a year, more than the Main Library and is the largest of the branches, with 18 employees.

Erin noted there is a big difference between the branches based on what patrons are using each library for. For example, the Central Square Branch hosts The Literacy Project, due to its proximity to more natural locations in the City of Cambridge, nature programs are popular at Collins, and the newest branch, the Valente Branch, welcomes many teens each day as it is next to the King Open School. Erin then highlighted a few other popular programs at the branches including the Coffee and Chat event at the O'Connell Branch which draws in more than 50 patrons, the Cookbook Book Group at the Boudreau Branch, and a celebration of World Oceans Day at the O'Neill Branch with Delilah the Whale, a life-size inflatable whale.

As part of Erin's role, she also focuses on recruitment for the branches. During FY25, the Library added five new branch positions including a Teen Librarian and four new Library Clerks and hired 25 new staff members across branches. Erin gave an update on the Collins Branch closure, stating the branch is set to open in the spring. Erin opened the floor for questions from the group.

Question: When did the Main Library open?

Answer: 1889. The O'Connell Branch was the first library to open.

Question: For the staff who work in branches, do they stay in their roles, do you see any turnover and are there other opportunities for employees to grow?

Answer: Yes, there is a combination of both. Many of our CPL staff move around branches and positions. There are folks who started at Main who move to a branch. For example, the Central Square Branch has longstanding employees who have been working there for 20 years. There are a lot of opportunities for advancement in the library system.

Question: How do you do collection development and book selection for the branches? Do they purchase independently?

Answer: We like to have popular materials at all locations, so they are accessible to patrons, but we do not do the same volume of ordering Main does due to more limited space. The branches do purchase materials independently; sometimes the Collections team will keep an eye on popular titles that the branches need to have, but most of the branches handle their own buying and have their own budgets.

4. Library Updates:

Director Maria McCauley opened with a reminder for the upcoming Cambridge Public Library Legislative Breakfast on Friday, February 7. She shared an update on the RSVP list and logistics for the event. Trustee Karen Kosko will be joining Maria with the opening remarks at the breakfast.

Next, Maria shared an update with the group on recent correspondence from the Boston Medical Library on the Tiedemann Collection at the Countway Library. President Richard S. Pieters wrote to Trustee Chair Jim Roosevelt noting Harvard recently informed the Boston Medical Library that it is no longer providing access to the collection due to its legal ownership by the Boston Medical Library. The Boston Medical Library seeks to meet with the Trustees on discussing access to the collection for Cambridge residents. Executive Assistant Carson McGrath will set up a meeting with members from the Boston Medical Library and the Trustees.

Maria then moved into other Library Updates. The team celebrated milestone anniversaries for seventeen dedicated staff members at the annual Staff Appreciation Dinner on Friday, January 31. Maria shared it was a beautiful night full of friends, family, and laughter and expressed a thank you to the Friends for their generosity in funding the event. Next, Maria shared a few updates on recruitment. In late January, the Library welcomed Jane Philbrick as the new Manager of Borrower Services at Main and Brett Dixon as the new Licensed Social Worker.

Lastly, Maria noted recent programming across the branches including a workshop by Adult Services on LinkedIn Learning at Main, outreach by the Central Square Branch at Takeda Pharmaceuticals, and a Fresh Pond Nature Walk held by the O'Neill team where patrons saw a diverse mix of birds including three bald eagles. The Valente Branch visited seven Kindergarten and Pre-K classes to hand out library cards as part of the Kindergarten

Library Card Campaign. Maria also noted the Digital Equity team is expanding their free foundational tech classes to the Boudreau and O'Neill Branches and the STEAM team purchased a new state-of-the-art video camera and equipment for The Hive as part of a process to revamp the Library's workshop offerings on video production. Youth Services continued a collaboration with Joe Blatt from the Harvard Graduate School of Education where his students visited CPL for a guest lecture by Youth Services Manager Meagan Albright. Lastly, Maria provided an update on the FY26 budget process and shared a few save the dates including the Paint Party at O'Connell on 2/4 and Video Conferencing Basics with the Digital Equity team at Boudreau on 2/25.

Jim raised a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was unanimously agreed upon.