

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting for February 3, 2026

Location: Hybrid

Attendees: Maria McCauley, Joy Kim, Michael Baenen, Irene Monroe, Liz Werby, Karen Kosko, Risa Mednick, and Carson McGrath.

Guests: Peter Bryant, Katinka Hakuta, Regis Shields, Laura Roberts, Alta Mauro, and Klara Jelinkova.

1. **Public Comment:** None

2. **Approval of Minutes**

In the absence of Chair Jim Roosevelt, Director McCauley opened the floor for corrections or comments to the minutes from January 6, 2026. Trustee Liz Werby moved to approve the minutes; Trustee Michael Baenen seconded the approval. No corrections were made, and the minutes passed unanimously.

3. **Strategic Planning**

Director Maria McCauley and Deputy Director Joy Kim provided an update on the Library's strategic planning process. The Library is kicking off its community engagement efforts in early February to seek input from library patrons. Through February 23, patrons can participate in community chats across the branches and complete a community survey available in multiple languages. This feedback will help us improve services and set priorities for the upcoming years in our next strategic plan.

As of 4 pm that day, the Library had already received 275 responses. During the last strategic planning process, we received over 1,300 responses in three weeks.

Community chats will be held at every location, with two occurring at Main. These events are offered during a variety of dates and times. Patrons can participate in the community chats and submit their feedback via the survey as well. The community chats are opportunities for residents to meet and talk with Library leadership, managers, and department heads. All staff will be prepared to answer questions and discuss the importance of strategic planning.

The Library is excited to go through this process once again with fresh priorities and looks forward to reviewing the community feedback.

Next, Director McCauley and Deputy Director Kim went through an exercise that will be used at the community chats to receive feedback from the present stakeholders. Members of the Board of Trustees, Friends, and Foundation provided their input. After, the group reconvened and shared their thoughts.

4. Library Updates

Maria provided library updates on recent programs, services, and events. She noted the O'Neill Branch is set to reopen on Friday, February 6 after it was closed for HVAC work. The Library is also in the process of working with the City to finalize its FY27 budget.

Maria shared an important partner of the Library's, Tech Goes Home, a nonprofit organization that provides computers, internet, and training to people who face systemic barriers to technology adoption, will be unfortunately shutting down. She expressed the importance of supporting digital equity and shared some statistics on our Digital Navigator's work. The Digital Navigator completed 788 one-on-one tech consultations over the past 18 months. This role allows for more one-on-one time with individual who need varying types of tech assistance. Internally, our digital equity team works across our libraries; other library staff also assist with tech help at the Branches.

Dr. McCauley recapped the AI Town Hall event from December. The event brought community members together to discuss the important and timely topic of artificial intelligence. Attendees included students and staff from Cambridge schools, local elected officials, varying scholars, and more. It was a dynamic event and included a student showcase and panel. Maria noted it was great to have this community discourse to learn more about AI.

In collaboration with the Kennedy School, the Library hosted an event with their students on the role of libraries in strengthening communities. The event highlighted the importance of working with libraries as partners for the students in preparation for their leadership positions in the future. Maria attended the event and provided remarks.

Lastly, Maria provided a few save the dates for events including a Rolie Polie Guacamole concert at Boudreau, a Paint Party at O'Connell, and a fabric mending program at Valente. The meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm.