

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting for January 6, 2026

Location: Hybrid

Attendees: Maria McCauley, Joy Kim, Idalia Cuevas, Alyssa Pacy, Jim Roosevelt, Michael Baenen, Irene Monroe, Liz Werby, Karen Kosko and Catherine Cleary.

1. Public Comment: None

2. Approval of Minutes

Chair Jim Roosevelt opened the floor for corrections or comments to the minutes from November 18, 2025. No corrections were made, and the minutes passed unanimously.

3. Discussion on the Tiedemann Collection with Alyssa Pacy

Alyssa provided an update on the ongoing correspondence with Boston Medical Library. One new piece of information in their most recent letter is the announcement of a new facility in Westborough. The primary concern for equity and access is that this exceedingly rare collection is now warehoused rather than displayed at Harvard Medical Library, just across the river.

Trustees discussed next steps.

4. Strategic Planning Update with Joy Kim and Maria McCauley

Director Maria McCauley and Deputy Director Joy Kim recapped some of the big accomplishments from our last strategic planning process, which occurred during 2019. We're excited to, once again, go out and hear from the community on what our next plan of work should be.

We kicked off in the fall with some staff engagement and expect the community engagement facets to kick-off in early February. We'll actively promote at each of our locations, through our existing communication channels, and host drop-in events at each location. We'll also run an asynchronous public survey, which will be available in multiple languages.

We want to reach our day-to-day users, as well as members of the community who aren't able to use our system as often. This will be accomplished through connections with our community partners who serve residents across all of Cambridge. We're planning to have lots of data to crunch.

Joy and Maria will be back at the February meeting to gather thoughts from the Trustees and other stakeholders! It will be interesting to see how the public's perceptions and needs have changed since the pandemic. In addition to these changes, we may observe changes in how people choose to engage and how they weigh the current financial circumstances in their responses.

Our staff has connections at different levels at the schools. The survey will certainly be shared with them, and staff will visit them in the Teen Room and encourage them to take the survey and share feedback!

Karen Kosko shared that she was approached by Cambridge *Day*. We might consider placing an ad for the process with funds from the Foundation.

5. Library Updates

Maria reminded the group of the two lanes document that was generated to help guide the work of the Foundation and the Friends. A discussion of how we've requested funding in previous years followed. We are aware of the fact that they're not doing an annual appeal any longer, and that this is the first year of the two-lane process; there may be logistical wrinkles to work out. We should be attentive to the appropriateness of the request process regardless of the amount of funding available, without losing sight of the need to stay flexible in the face of fluctuating funding availability. We will be in communication the Foundation and the Friends about their donor prospects and engagement.

Maria shared some additional information on general goings-on around the Library. Key updates include the temporary closure of O'Neill for HVAC repairs; the ongoing celebration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution; recent author readings by the likes of Felice Frankel; the extraordinary "AI & US: Your Voice Belongs in the Future of AI" town hall and resource fair event (spearheaded by iFp with other event sponsors including Hope Group and Joint Family); recent collaborations with the Spot; an upcoming collaboration with the Kennedy School to bring some of their students here to get tours and hear from Maria on libraries and democracy; and the opening of the new drop-in resource center at the Central Square Branch.

We're working on our budget submission and are waiting to hear more as folks return from their holiday breaks. We're hoping to be able to continue important digital equity work next year. Our facilities manager is doing all he can to move our capital projects forward. We've gotten estimates on Lecture Hall improvements without enough funding available; we will keep considering this work in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.