

CRANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

March 11, 2026 – 6:02pm

Cranston Central Library, Seminar Room

Present were:

Michael Goldberg

Regina Spirito

Lisa Kirshenbaum

Diane Schaefer

Jack Tregar

Excused:

R. Drayton Fair

Taino Palermo

Ed Garcia (Library Director)

Julie Holden (Assistant Library Director)

Ally Van Wyk (Secretary to the Board)

INTRODUCTION:

The regular meeting of the Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order on Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 6:02 pm at the Cranston Central Library.

MINUTES:

Edits to make: Page 1- Minutes section: Change typo of 2025 to 2026.

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 11, 2026 as amended. Lisa Kirshenbaum seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION REPORT:

Administrative Updates

-Director Garcia attended the COSLA Voices for Libraries event in Washington DC on March 4 & 5 and held productive meetings with our Congressional delegation on federal funding for libraries.

APPROVED 4-15-26

-The Cranston Public Library Association (CPLA) reports a \$500 grant from Coastal1 Credit Union and \$1500 from BankNewport in support of the summer reading program.

-Day of Service with the RI Historic Records Advisory Board has been scheduled for March 16.

-Blizzard of 26 update: We were closed completely from Monday Feb. 23-27. The William Hall library served as an off-street parking location because of the citywide parking ban, which began at 3 pm on Sunday Feb. 22. During the storm, the Auburn branch is the only location that lost power. Ocean State Libraries extended all item due dates and holds pick-up dates out to Monday March 2. Statewide delivery was also cancelled for most of the week. The city plows & front end loaders arrived on Thursday Feb. 26 which allowed us to open the following day. Dozens of cars visited the Central library on Thursday to drop off items in the book drop and to see if we were open. On Friday, 517 people visited the Central library.

-The Library participated in a blanket drive for warming centers serving the homeless in conjunction with Operation Nod during the month of February. Collections buckets were placed at the Central Library and the William Hall Library.

-The Cranston Plan Commission approved our capital budget request at the hearing on March 3. The RTU 1 rooftop unit project for Central was approved with a \$0 budget as we have received funding for this project through the Community Municipal Libraries grant.

-The Library has submitted our stage II application for the Community Municipal Libraries grant. The funds for this grant have been reallocated and the Cranston allocation has been increased to \$201,995.

Buildings and Grounds

-RI Energy will have a staff volunteer day for a spring clean-up of the Auburn property on April 23 during National Library Week.

Programming

-The library is hosting the CPSED ArtsFest from March 4-30. The reception will be held on March 18th. An invitation was previously sent to the Trustees.

The Library is running 143 programs during the month of March.

Staff Updates

Julie Holden visited the State House twice (March 3 & 4) to testify in person on this year's library ebook contract bills.

BUDGET REPORT:

The FY26 budget report was reviewed. The library is projected a \$109,000 surplus due to unfilled staff vacancies. The administration is looking at several building and supply needs to spend these funds on before the end of the fiscal year or the funds will rollover into the Library Reserve Fund.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adoption of Tangible Gifts Policy:

The drafted Tangible Gifts Policy was presented to the Board. This policy outlines the process for the board to accept high value gifts such as rare books, artwork, maps, furniture etc. in compliance with existing statutes and IRS regulations. This policy will replace the existing Art Donations Policy.

A motion was made by Lisa Kirshenbaum to approve the Tangible Gifts Policy and rescind the Art Donation Policy. Jack Tregar seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Revision to the operating hours of the Auburn branch:

The revised Auburn branch operating hours were distributed to the Board. The plan for revised hours keeps the total open hours at 42 and is budget neutral. The hours will be adjusted to allow for opening for a full day on Thursday.

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to approve the revised Auburn branch operating hours. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Request for Board of Trustees to authorize a letter of support to the RI General Assembly for H7606/S2525 and H7691/S2812:

H7606/S2525 establish enforcement limitations on contract terms for the licensing of electronic books or digital audiobooks to libraries to preclude the library from being subject to unfair sales practices.

H7691/S2812 requires that the state's share to public libraries be fixed at twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount appropriated by the city or town in their budgets for fiscal year 2027. In The Governor's budget for FY27 state aid is funded at 24.1% resulting in a projected \$9,500 loss for the library. These bills call for full funding of state aid which would result in an increase of \$23,011 for the library. The Board previously requested that the Cranston City Council adopt a resolution for full funding of state aid. After discussions between City Council President Wall and Director Garcia, that resolution is tentatively on the schedule for the March City Council meeting.

A motion was made by Diane Schaefer to authorize letters of support to the General Assembly for H7606, S2525, H7691 and S2812. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Future requests will be brought to the Board of Trustees for a letter of support to be drafted if time allows. The Library Director may write a letter on the Board's behalf if immediate response is needed.

Agreement with Bay State Books for processing deaccessioned library books:

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to approve the use of Bay State Books as a book removal vendor and the installation of a locked, staff-only book donation bin at Central for a one-year pilot. Diane Schaefer seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Ratification of collective bargaining agreement with NAGE R1-97:

The drafted collective bargaining agreement with NAGE R1-97 was presented to the Board as negotiated by the Personnel Committee. The draft cba codifies compensatory time rules, changes the workweek to Sunday-Friday and authorizes a 2% cost of living increase for all classifications for 2027 and 2028.

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement with NAGE R1-97 as presented. Diane Schaefer seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

NAGE R1-97 is scheduled to ratify the cba on March 12.

Adoption of FY27 operating budget request to the City of Cranston:

Two proposed FY27 operating budget requests were presented to the Board, One reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee which included a 2.52% overall increase and a level-funded budget at the request of the Mayor's office. Director Garcia presented alternative options for potential reductions to achieve a level-funded budget. The City of Cranston has also asked the library to take over responsibility for landscaping and snow removal moving forward. The City assumed responsibility for these services in 2008. This will be an additional cost that the library will have to absorb in a level-funded budget. The city committed to continuing to sand the library parking lots during winter storms.

A motion was made by Lisa Kirshenbaum to approve a level-funded FY27 operating budget request as submitted. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn the regular meeting of March 11, 2026 at 7:25pm by Jack Tregar. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (5-0).