

CRANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

May 13, 2026 – 6:00pm

Cranston Public Library, Oaklawn Branch

Present were:

Michael Goldberg

Regina Spirito

R. Drayton Fair

Lisa Kirshenbaum

Diane Schaefer

Jack Tregar (arrived @6:16p)

Ed Garcia (Library Director)

Emily Brown (Oaklawn Supervisor)

Allyson Van Wyk (Secretary to the Board)

Excused:

Taino Palermo

INTRODUCTION:

The regular meeting of the Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order on Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 6:02pm at the Cranston Public Library, Oaklawn Branch.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Drayton Fair to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 15, 2026. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION REPORT:

Administrative Updates

-After several reports from patrons about fraudulent credit card charges and after consultation with the Cranston Police, the Library released a public fraud alert. This was posted to our website, social media and newsletter. WJAR and WPRI picked up the story.

-The City Council unanimously passed the Resolution calling on full funding of state aid. Director Garcia testified during the Senate Finance Committee meeting on May 7 in support of S2812 which calls for full funding of state aid to libraries.

-The Library received a \$400 Litter Free RI micro grant and held two volunteer clean-up events. 4/22 RI Energy volunteers cleaned up the Auburn library grounds and filled 34 lawn bags with leaves and debris, 4/23 teen volunteers at Central with an Earth day clean-up filled eight contractor bags of trash.

-The Library hosted the Senate Service Academy at Central on 4/25 with Senators Reed & Whitehouse. We also held some photo shoots with the Senators, Director Garcia and CPL staff to promote National Library Week.

-The Library signed an MOU with the Cranston Herald to allow us to digitize and host the paper on our website. Director Garcia has been working for two years on this.

-The Cranston Police presented Active threat training for library staff. The Police will come back for additional scenario training at our upcoming June staff meeting.

-Director Garcia attended a library town hall hosted by Senator Reed on May 4th in Providence.

-Director Garcia drafted a letter of support for a H8211 at the request of Rep. Rebecca Kislak (RI-04, Providence). H8211 asks for an appropriation of \$10 million to hire Community Health Workers to place in Libraries throughout the State. Director Garcia's letter additionally requests allocation of funds to participating Libraries to offset the operations cost of the program. The request came to the Director on May 11 and needed to be submitted for a May 12 hearing.

Buildings & Grounds

-The Library has scheduled with Northeast Tree to remove the large shrubs and three dead trees at the Oaklawn branch. The cost will be \$3500.

-The Library completed the bid waiver process with the Cranston Board of Purchase. Maplewood Landscaping was the lowest quote at \$11,800 based on 15 cuts at the Central Library, Auburn, Knightsville, Oaklawn branches along with shrub maintenance and spring and fall cleanups.

-The volunteer project to paint the exterior of the Oaklawn branch led by Cranston Cares and the Cranston Rotary has been postponed until September. Director Garcia needs to submit building permits for both the painting and an exterior "adopt-a-spot" style exterior sign to the Cranston Historic Commission for approval since the library is located in the Oaklawn Village Historic District. If approved by the Commission the Trustees will also need to approve.

Programming

-The William Hall Library 100th anniversary celebration was held on May 2. Director Garcia was the opening speaker followed by Senator Reed, Congressman Amo, Mayor Hopkins, Senator Vargas and Rep. McNamara. Over 200 people were in attendance and the Hall Trust provided free food trucks and an indoor history of the Hall Library exhibit. YS Librarian Martha Boksenbaum provided outdoor kids activities and Branch7 was on hand for library card sign ups and selling CPL swag on behalf of the Friends.

Branch7 Outreach

-Youth Services staff are teaming up with the Cranston Public Schools Family Center to offer two special events for families at the imPOSSIBLE DREAM playground, on June 3 (the previously scheduled May 13 event had to be missed due to staff illness). The library has partnered with the Family Center many times in the past 10 years. However, the Family Center was restructured last year and these are the first events they have offered this school year. The imPOSSIBLE DREAM playground is designed to be fully accessible to students with disabilities and features swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, basketball, miniature golf, and a life-size dollhouse. Library staff will bring Branch7 to the playground and offer library card signups and books to checkout.

Summer Reading Kick-off

-After 3 years at Sprague Mansion, we are bringing the summer reading kick-off back to the William Hall Library this summer. On June 25, from 4:30-6:30 PM, we will be giving away books at our free book fair, and celebrating the beginning of our summer of "Hidden Wonders." Activities include a Minecraft bounce house, Musical Statues garden, Hidden Picture gallery, and Dragon Egg hunt.

Library Card Design Contest

-This summer we are running our library card design contest again! The contest will run June 25th (the summer reading kick-off) to July 31st. We will have three open studio times in July for people of all ages to come to the library and work on their designs. All entries will be displayed in the Giles Room art gallery from August 3-17th. The library will select a winner in three age categories (ages 8 and under, ages 9-15, and ages 16+). These winning designs will be made into special edition library cards for distribution in mid-September.

Staff Updates

-Communications Manager Sarah Bouvier has received an American Library Association PR Xchange award for the design of the 2025 Summer Reading Brochure. This is the third award she has received for her design work for the Cranston Public Library.

-Coordinator of Adult Services Dave Bartos, who serves on the RI Genocide Education Commission joined other commission members at the General Assembly to be recognized during Genocide awareness month.

-The Library will hold a spring staff meeting on June 11th. Locations scheduled to open on Thursdays will have a delayed opening until 12pm. The Trustees are invited to attend.

-The Business Manager will be out on medical leave starting May 28th for an estimated 6 weeks. Director Garcia will assume duties pertaining to the budget and invoices, while the Admin assistant will handle payroll while the Business Manager is out.

William Hall Library Trustee Updates

- The William Hall Trustees have awarded a bid to replace the boiler at the Hall Library. The winning bid came in much lower than the initial quotes. Ed Garcia will meet with the Champlain Commission to discuss using the remaining Champlain funds toward the replacement of the

William Hall Library elevator. There is a 6–8-week lead time for delivery of the new boiler, installation tentatively in late August/early September.

-The Hall Trustees approved the renovation of the access ramp and installation of an automatic door to the entrance of the Auditorium.

ADA signage for the accessible entrance and additional dogs on leash signs are in process.

BUDGET REPORT:

Director Garcia presented the fiscal year operating budget report for the period ending April 30, 2026.

OAKLAWN LIBRARIAN REPORT: By Branch Supervisor Emily Brown

Programs

-Oak Lawn offers a minimum of six youth programs a month, as well as one or two teen volunteer opportunities. Teen volunteers have taken over decorating the windows and bulletin boards, as well as setting up scavenger hunts for kids and making prizes for those scavenger hunts.

-Youth programs drive door count. Average monthly door count since July is 570, but in October 2025, when we offered 11 youth programs, door count was 700.

-Since the Oak Lawn library is now closed on Saturdays, we have found an alternative model for elementary age programming: We offer 45-minute elementary age programs once a month on a weekday at 4 PM. Programs are held upstairs in front of the Children's nonfiction section, which is more accessible than the downstairs program room.

Collections

-Smaller adult collections (Large Print, New Books, AV) have been rearranged to create a more appealing browsing area when you first enter the library, and this month we added a bookstore style tiered display for new materials.

-Since July, we have added a significant number of titles to the two collections with the highest circulation per item: board books and Large Print.

Staff

-Now that Oak Lawn is staffed by a rotation of YS librarians, there is always one full-time librarian and one part-time circulation assistant in the building. There is a clear division of labor that results in a high level of service to the public, and the cost of staffing is very predictable.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adoption of revised Computer, Internet and Wireless Use Policy:

Director Garcia presented the revised Computer, Internet and Wireless Use Policy. The last review and revision were in 2023. This revision revises and reforms the policy to align with our new policy format along with alignment with the new Library Use Policy. Language was simplified and reorganized. Policy language and definitions were added concerning network security, personally identifiable information, and mobile printing. Several outdated policy sections were removed.

A motion was made by Drayton Fair to approve the revised Computer, Internet, and Wireless Use Policy as presented. Jack Tregar seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

A motion was made to add an agenda item: Discussion of the Arlington Branch/ Senior Center potential closure pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-6 (b).

Drayton Fair motioned, Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

The Mayor's revised proposed FY27 budget was distributed, which included the closure of the Cranston Senior Center. This action would also close the Arlington Branch, which is co-located in the Senior Center. A draft letter to the Cranston City Council was distributed. The letter urged the Council to restore the funding to keep the center open. The letter explained the history of the Arlington library dating back to 1895. The letter also explained the obligation to maintain an Arlington Library from the 1968 agreement when the Arlington Public Library Association joined the newly formed Cranston Public Library system and from 1986, when the Library Board of Trustees turned over the Arlington library building to the city to be demolished for the construction of the Senior Center. There was a guarantee made to have space for a library in the Senior Center.

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to approve the drafted letter of detailing the history of the Arlington branch, and its necessity within the Arlington community. Diane Schaefer approved. Motion carried (6-0).

Sent to all City Council Members, and cc'd to the Mayor.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn the regular meeting of May 13, 2026 at 7:19pm by Jack Tregar. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (6-0).