

CRANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

September 10, 2025

Cranston Central Library, Seminar Room

6:00 pm

Present were:

Michael Goldberg

Regina Spirito

R. Drayton Fair

Lisa Kirshenbaum

Diane Schaefer

Dr. Taino Palermo

Jack Tregar

Ed Garcia, Library Director

Julie Holden, Assistant Library Director

Allyson Van Wyk, Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCTION:

The regular meeting of the Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees was called to order on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 6:00pm at the Cranston Central Library.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 9, 2025. Lisa Kirshenbaum seconded. Motion carried (7-0).

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

The Cranston Public Library received a restricted donation of \$181,717.89 from the Estate of Frank DePasquale to be used exclusively at the Knightsville Branch. The funds have been placed with the Cranston Public Library Association to invest on behalf of the library for use at the Knightsville branch.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION REPORT:

Administrative Updates

-Cranston Code of Ordinances

The city is re-codifying the code. The library will no longer be providing print updates. The library will de-accession our print copies.

-At the end of August, the Library deactivated all branch Facebook accounts except for William Hall Library and will continue to maintain the main library page.

-The 2025 library entry in the American Library Directory has been completed.

-The Ocean State Libraries (OSL) membership agreement for FY26 has been executed.

-The 2025 LORI Resource Sharing Certification has been submitted to the Office of Library and Information Services.

-We now have 3 bike locks for checkout at Central for when patrons forget their bike locks. They can be checked out for use while the patron is in the library. All other branches have bike locks already.

-The 2025 SCOOP disaster plan update has been completed and submitted to the Office of Library and Information Services.

-The 2025 OLIS annual survey and state aid certification and application has been submitted.

-The annual Rhode Island Technology Education Access Fund certification has been submitted. This form authorizes Ocean State Libraries to manage our Internet through the Universal Service Fund or eRate program.

Library Buildings & Grounds

-The Knightsville branch was closed on July 18 due to lack of A/C. The unit has been repaired.

-The Hall Trust has contracted with an architectural firm to redesign the ramp into the auditorium at the William Hall Library to fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

-The Hall Trust is reviewing bids for the new boiler at the William Hall Library and should be awarding that shortly.

-The Hall Trust has contracted with Heritage Preservation to study the existing windows at the William Hall Library for energy efficiency, airflow, and preservation.

-The library's RFP for 3 year maintenance contract on our HVAC systems garnered 2 bids from local companies. The lowest bidder was Arden Engineering. We are working with them to finalize a contract.

-A small sinkhole opened up in the lower parking lot near a drain at the Central Library. The Highway Department repaired the damage.

Programs

- A blood drive was held in June at the Central Library. We had 14 donors present and 2 deferrals resulting in 12 successful donations. That will help up to 36 lives.
- Summer Reading Program update: For the adult raffle giveaway this summer, we had 5,552 raffle tickets and over 220 book or movie reviews submitted by patrons. Raffle prizes were gift cards to local businesses such as Sweenor's and Dave's.
- September is Library Card Sign Up Month, and we have created a "participation poster" at Central visually detailing the number of new library cards people get in September.
- We are partnering with the Cranston 250 Commission to host "America's Tapestry" three times in September, once at Hall and twice at Central. Participants will help embroider a 3' by 5' linen tapestry to help celebrate next year's 250th birthday of the United States. The panel depicts Rhode Island's involvement in the American Revolution.

Staff

- Nomi Hague has been appointed the new Auburn Branch Librarian. Nomi had been serving as the Auburn Youth Services Librarian since December of 2021. Prior to joining the Cranston Public Library, Nomi was the Director of the Langworthy Public Library in Hope Valley from 2019-2021 and was the Assistant Director of the Cross Mills Public Library in Charlestown from 2012-2019.
- The administration intends to create a Public Services and Outreach Librarian instead of replacing the Auburn Youth Services position. This position would report to the Library Director and would manage and conduct library outreach activities. They would be specifically responsible for the home bound delivery services, coordinating our ESL/citizenship classes, and Branch7. This librarian would also be in charge of building community partnerships, as well as supporting other librarians within the CPL system. This position will be posted later this week.

BUDGET REPORT:

The draft FY25 final actual expenses/revenues was presented and reviewed. The final numbers will be available upon completion of the City of Cranston audit, targeted for completion in October 2025.

The FY26 budget actuals as of August 31, 2025 were presented and reviewed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Approval of revisions to the Employee Handbook including compliance with amendments to RI Gen. laws and revision to the Travel Policy:

The revised Employee Handbook distributed to the Trustees includes revisions to several sections for compliance with newly amended statutes in Rhode Island General Laws. Section 10.3 – "Dress and

Appearance” has been revised to comply with RI Gen. Laws §42-112-1 and protected hairstyles. Section 16.6 is added to comply with employee free speech rights as outlined in RI Gen. Laws §28-7-50. Section 6.6 - “Travel Policy” has been revised to place a 15% limit on reimbursements for tips to taxis and riding shares services when traveling on approved library-related business out of state to be in line with non-profit best practices.

Originally placed on the agenda was revisions to Section 18.8 – “Reasonable Accommodation for Menopause” to comply with RI Gen. Laws §28-5-7.4. Library Director asked that section be continued until the October 2025 Trustees meeting to allow for further staff feedback and revisions.

A motion was made to approve the revised Employee Handbook, excluding Section 18.8 “Reasonable Accommodation for Menopause” by Jack Tregar. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (7-0). Section 18.8 will be continued until the October 2025 Trustees meeting.

Review of the designated use language to the Cranston Public Library in the Peterson Memorial Trust for potential use at other library branches:

The Cranston Public Library is a beneficiary of the Peterson Family Memorial Trust. Until recently the library did not retain any paperwork concerning the bequeathment of this trust, and the general understanding was the funds were to be used exclusively at the Auburn branch. Chair Michael Goldberg was able to contact the law firm originally responsible for drafting the Trust to obtain the trust language pertaining to the library.

The relevant language from the trust document is:

"Ten percent (10%) thereof to the Cranston Public Library, Cranston, Rhode Island, to be used to the extent appropriate for the benefit of its Auburn branch."

Review of this language shows that the Peterson Trust funds are not for the exclusive use at the Auburn branch but to the extent appropriate, meaning that funds can be used at other Cranston Public Library locations if needed.

Director Garcia asked the Board of Trustees to discuss and determine guidelines on spending for branches other than Auburn. All Trustees agreed that the majority of the spending should stay available for use by Auburn. The current balance of Peterson Trust funds held by the library is \$26,492.

The Board of Trustees agreed on the following guidelines:

- Use of designated funds over \$1,000 annually from the Peterson Family Memorial Trust for Cranston library locations other than the Auburn branch must be authorized by the Library Board of Trustees. The Trustees will review in one year for any additional guidelines if necessary.

A motion was made to approve the above terms by Dr. Taino Palermo. Lisa Kirshenbaum seconded. Michael Goldberg abstained. Motion carried (6-0).

ESL Classes funded with Peterson Fund:

The current FY26 budgeted amount to the Providence Public Library's RIFLI division to hold the Citizenship Classes at the William Hall Library and ESL classes at Central and Hall is \$13,325. The classes at Central and Hall are relocated from the Auburn branch as was reported to the Trustees over the summer. The past two fiscal years, the library has used \$16,000 in funds from the Peterson Trust to pay for the ESL classes at Auburn.

Ed Garcia is requesting the Board of Trustees approve the use of \$5,000 from the Peterson Trust to support the continuation of these classes at the Central Library for FY26.

A motion was made by Drayton Fair to approve the use of \$5,000 from the Peterson Trust for support of the FY26 RIFLI classes. Lisa Kirshenbaum seconded. Michael Goldberg abstained. Motion carried (6-0).

CLOSED SESSION:

Closed Session pursuant to RI Gen. Laws §42-46-5 (2)

A motion was made at 6:57pm to enter into closed session pursuant to RI Gen. Laws §42-46-5 (2) by Dr. Taino Palermo. Drayton Fair seconded. Motion carried (7-0).

Discussion in closed session included: Discussion of collective bargaining with NAGE R1-97, legal discussion of amendments to RI Gen. Law 28-9.4-8, and use of reserve funds for Librarian II – branch librarian contractual retirement payout.

A motion was made at 7:04pm to end closed session pursuant to RI Gen. Laws §42-46-5 (2) by Jack Tregar. Regina Spirito seconded. Motion carried (7-0).

A vote in closed session was reported out. The Trustees voted to approve on a vote of 7-0 the use of \$26,566.73 in library reserve funds for Librarian II – branch librarian contractual retirement payout.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:05pm

A motion was made to adjourn the regular meeting of September 10, 2025 by Regina Spirito. Diane Schaefer seconded. Motion carried (7-0).