



May 13, 2026

Dear Council President Wall and members of the Cranston City Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees regarding the proposed closure of the Senior Center in the Mayor's amended FY27 budget. The Trustees recognize the difficult financial situation the city faces; however, closing the Senior Center will have severe consequences for library services as well. Specifically, this decision would force the closure of the Arlington branch library, which is co-located in the Senior Center.

Closing the Arlington Library will have adverse effects not only on Senior Center clients, but also on Arlington neighborhood residents who will be left without dedicated library services. That area of the city needs improved library services, as reflected in the city's comprehensive plan. Many residents lack personal transportation to the Central Library, and inadequate cross-town public transit makes access to library services in the Arlington community even more critical.

The Arlington Library has a long and proud history in our city, deeply linked to the founding of the Senior Center itself. The Arlington Public Library Association was formed in 1895 and was first located in a district hall, later moving to a site on Cranston Street in 1907.

The Arlington Library operated as an independent neighborhood library for 75 years. The Cranston City Council established the Cranston Public Library system in 1966, inviting the existing six neighborhood libraries to join.

The Arlington Public Library Association signed an agreement on December 11, 1968, transferring its assets to the city and formally joining the Cranston Public Library in 1969. That agreement states: "The City of Cranston, through the account of the Cranston Public Library, shall maintain and operate a library in the Arlington area for so long as it deems advisable, paying for all expenses thereof."¹

The Cranston Public Library continued to operate the Arlington Library at the Cranston Street location for another 16 years. After years of struggling to maintain the aging building, the Library Board of Trustees entered into an agreement with the City of Cranston in February 1986, transferring the Arlington Library site to the city for use as the new Senior Center. This agreement included a provision guaranteeing "a defined space for the library at the Senior Center."² The library building was then demolished, and the new Senior Center was constructed following a bond approved by voters in November 1986.

140 Sockanosset Cross Road, Cranston, RI 02920

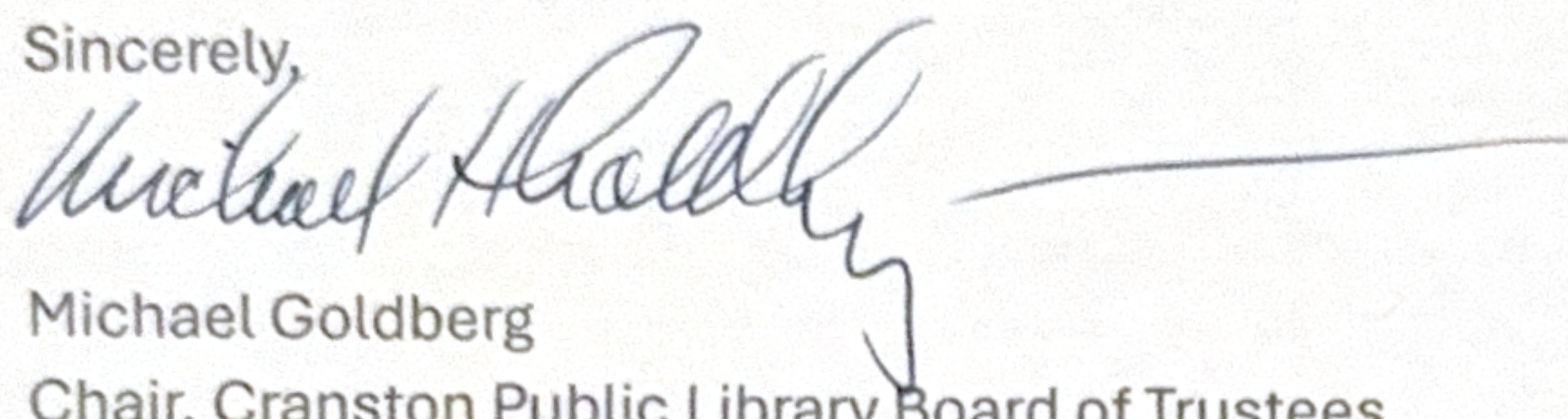
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Since then, the library has operated within a space of 550 to 600 square feet inside the Senior Center. Although the Arlington Library's situation is unique due to its co-location, the Cranston Code of Ordinances § 2.44.010 grants the Library Board of Trustees authority to determine how library facilities are distributed throughout the city.

We respectfully urge the Council to honor the city's longstanding commitment to Arlington residents and restore access to the Arlington Library by restoring funding for the Senior Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael Goldberg", followed by a long horizontal line.

Michael Goldberg
Chair, Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees

cc. Cranston City Clerk, Mayor Kenneth J. Hopkins

¹ Arlington Public Library Association, Agreement for Transfer of Library Assets (Dec. 11, 1968) (on file with the Cranston Public Library).

² Board of Trustees, Cranston Public Library." Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees." February 11, 1986. Office of Library Administration, Cranston Public Library.