

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**May 13, 2025**

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The meeting was called to order by Kate O'Brien at 6:31 pm, with quorum having been reached by 6:25 pm.

The roll call was taken: (This roll call list is the voting order)

**Present**

Ruth Titelbaum  
Stephanie Najjar  
Peter Bakula  
Anne Quinn  
Stacie Dolin  
Stephanie Dallaire  
Kate O'Brien

**Absent**

Jennifer Smith  
Katrina Vassallo  
Frances Gallugi

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**Public Comments**

None.

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**Approval and Discussion of Minutes from Previous Meetings**

**Approval:** There was a MOTION to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.

All in Favor: Yes      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

**Discussion:**

Trustee Quinn asked that last month's minutes indicate that the digitization of the newspapers is a collaboration between the Historical Society and the Library.

*The minutes originally stated on p.5: "Additionally, The Peabody Historical Society is actively involved in the digitization of the microfilm newspapers."*

*Amended minutes: “Additionally, The Peabody Historical Society is an active collaborator in the library’s microfilm newspaper digitization project.”*

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### **Receipt of Communications**

Note of appreciation of the expression of condolences from the family of Rick Shruhan.

Letter from the Veteran’s council about the Memorial Day Parade on May 26th, formally inviting the Board of Trustees to walk in the parade.

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### **Director’s Report**

#### **Staffing**

Senior Public Services Librarian Max McConnell resigned from their position last month to pursue work outside of the library field. We begin interviewing candidates this week to fill the position.

Library Aide Rosemary Martin also resigned from her position at the beginning of the month to enjoy her retirement. We are still accepting applications for this position with hopes to fill it soon.

I’m pleased to announce that Megan Donoghue accepted the position of Technical Services Librarian. Megan is coming to us from the Abbot Public Library in Marblehead where she has spent three years as the Library Technical Assistant. Prior to this role, she was a Library Aide here in Peabody. Her first day is Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Budget**

I have included the budget for your review.

#### **Building & Maintenance**

The Facilities Department met with a roofing company in April to inspect the West Branch Library roof. A few spots were patched, but more issues were found during their inspection that require attention. The Facilities Department is waiting on an estimate for the repairs.

#### **Programs and Initiatives**

Birds & Bubbly was a tremendous success, with over 100 tickets sold. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Foundation members and Library Trustees for their attendance and generous support in making the event possible.

### Adult Services

The Spring concert series concluded on a high note with a well-received performance by the clarinet duo, Fiske n Fell. Theo Theoharis wrapped up his Holocaust Literature lecture series and engaged the class in selecting potential topics for the fall. Senior Adult Services and Programming Librarian Gabi Toth launched a series of sensory-friendly programs designed to support individuals with disabilities. Monthly adult craft programs continue to thrive, supported by a dedicated group of participants. Looking ahead to the summer and fall, Gabi is planning a new program series that will focus on the experiences of Holocaust survivors and their second- and third-generation descendants, potentially in partnership with Boston 3G and Salem State University. She also plans to further develop the library's inclusive programming and expand the variety of offerings in our arts and crafts sessions, led by the creative guidance of Trustee Stacie Dolin.

### Children's Department

April was a very successful month in the Children's Department with storytimes and crafting events having steady attendance. School vacation week was especially busy, with a movie night welcoming 38 patrons. The April Vacation Read-a-Thon was also a success with 11,000 minutes read by 38 registered readers. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, children's author Maya Tatsukawa will be joined by illustrator Hanna Cha to present their book *Mole Is Not Alone*. This program is sponsored by the Mass Book Awards Speakers Bureau and is presented in collaboration with the Massachusetts Center for the Book.

### Teen Department

The Teen Department had a lively April vacation, offering a variety of activities for teens. For May, Senior Teen Librarian Amory Thomas has planned a pottery workshop, movie nights, and a punk-themed tea party. In response to feedback from recent library surveys, Amory is developing new programming specifically tailored for older teens and new adults. She is also actively collaborating with local schools to prepare for the upcoming Summer Reading Program. Most of the book selections have been finalized and will be ordered within the next few weeks. This year's theme, "Level Up at Your Library," celebrates all things related to gaming and aims to engage youth through a wide range of game-inspired activities. Additionally, Amory will be attending the Massachusetts Library Association's annual conference this month and will share key takeaways with staff upon her return. She will also be presenting at the Anime Boston convention, leading a panel on Collection Management with a focus on best practices for developing and maintaining graphic novel collections in libraries.

### Creativity Lab

Creativity Lab Librarian Justin Allain reports that the Open Lab sessions have been consistently full each week. This month, he is preparing to lead two new classes: an introductory woodworking workshop and the first in a series focused on 3D modeling. Justin recently met with representatives from Harmonic Drive to discuss a potential sponsorship for a new CNC machine. His proposal has been submitted to their board of directors and is currently under review. In exciting news, the Creativity Lab has acquired a 3D scanner, which will enable the creation of a "3D copy machine" as part of the ongoing Creativity Lab 2.0 expansion.

### Local History

In April, the Local History department focused on preparing 40 Audubon prints for the Birds and Bubbly fundraising event. Studio TKM returned freshly conserved prints and four were selected for display in the Albert Cohen case in the Sutton Room.

### South Branch

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, Paul Zambella, a retired forensic scientist from the Massachusetts State Crime Laboratory, will present the Forensic Science Roadshow for adults. The final meetings of the 4th and 5th Grade Book Buddies for the school year will be held in May and meetings will resume in September. Two third grade classes from the Brown Elementary School will be visiting the South Branch on May 14<sup>th</sup> to get a tour of the library and learn about the Summer Reading Program.

### West Branch

Program attendance at the West Branch remained strong throughout April, continuing its usual high turnout with over 30 attendees for the Baby Rave and over 90 attendees for the Chicken Party. The West Branch staff is now preparing events to go along with the Summer Reading Program. West Branch Children's Librarian Aimee Servideo has begun organizing programs in themed series, including STEM-focused activities and a toddler art series. The West Branch Library is set to receive a new table for the teen area to accommodate a third gaming PC. The goal is to attract more teens by making it more fun for friends to game together.

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### **Discussion of Director's Report:**

Trustee Quinn asked about the status of the elevator, which had had a leveling issue. Director Yeo explained that when the temperature changes, the oil levels within the elevator change and the weather has been unstable lately. The oil was just changed before Birds and Bubbly and the oil valve will be replaced in July.

Director Yeo also gave a report on the status of the roof. The roof does not need a full replacement; the flat portion is fine and certain parts only need light patching, but the gutters need to be cleaned and better maintained. A full replacement would need a capital improvement, so this is a project to be revisited in the fall.

Trustee Quinn wanted the Creativity section of the report to reflect Trustee Dolin's position at the library. Additionally, she heard that *Mole is Not Alone* was controversial. Trustee Dallaire looked up the book's summary on her phone and though it did not appear divisive, Director Yeo said she would look into it.

Trustee Najjar asked if anyone had complained about the inclusivity of the programming that was mentioned in the Creativity section of the report. Director Yeo answered that there are many neurodivergent adults (including some amongst the staff) and that we hadn't been actively targeting them in programming, but the library team is excited to add this kind of programming.

For example, sensory-friendly adult lego time, and social time for sitting in a lower stimulus environment.

Trustee Quinn asked if some of the programming was more in the line of entertainment and education. Director Yeo replied that the library's original mission was education but that now it's additionally a community resource that serves a wider purpose and can bring media and experiences to those who could otherwise not afford it. Trustee Bakula mentioned that school is about education, and libraries can be for both entertainment and education. Director Yeo continued to explain that some of the events are run by staff and are not a draw on finances. Trustee O'Brien noted that some people come into the library for one thing and then realize that there's so much more (e.g. Hoopla, Kanopy, etc.) One goal of library programming is to introduce people to the library and its resources. Trustee Najjar noted that when the library requested funding during COVID, evidence of how the library served the community was needed, and the number of people who show up to events is a key piece of that, so programming needs to include a wide variety of experiences.

Trustee Bakula had been looking through old meeting minutes and saw something about revitalizing the courtyard. Director Yeo said that it was her intention to try to get it designated as a park, replace the grass, and add raised beds for programming around planting. If the space cannot be designated as a park, she would at least like outdoor cameras to keep an eye on the space to preserve it better. Director Yeo wanted to prioritize this project in the fall and believed that it would help the library to expand programming, a sentiment that was echoed by Trustee Dolin. Trustee Quinn suggested a collaboration with the Garden Club.

There will be a Book Sale on June 14th (the Saturday before Father's Day), which will be outside but in the Teen room in case of rain. There will be two collection days on the preceding Fridays.

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There was a MOTION to accept the Director's report by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dallaire.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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### **Reports of the Committees and Sub-committees**

**Audubon:** Nothing to report.

**Building and Grounds:** Nothing to report.

**Personnel:** Nothing to report.

**Policy and Procedures:** Nothing to report.

**Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:** (Trustee Najjar) Will have a more detailed report on Birds and Bubbly next meeting. Director Yeo said some plants from the Geranium Sale are left, and the price has dropped down to \$10.

**Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:** (Trustee Quinn) The Patriots' Day event generated interest among younger patrons, and they'd put out educational materials about the Centennial as well as Black soldiers who fought in the Revolution.

The Peabody Historical Society will be the Non-Profit of the Month for The NextMex Thing, a local restaurant. The NextMex Thing will donate a certain percentage of revenue for the Historical Society

The collaboration on the newspaper digitization project continues to go very well.

Elections for new officers will be held at the Historical Society's upcoming meeting on the 21st of May, and the previous president, Michael Bonfanti, will be stepping down.

On the 18th of June, the Historical Society will be holding its annual Felton Tea. The event is limited to 44 people and usually sells out within two days.

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There was a MOTION to accept the reports of the committees and subcommittees by Trustee Dallaire. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.

All in Favor: Yes                      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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### **New Business**

The Trustees were formally invited to walk the Memorial Day Parade on May 26th. A few years ago, the weather made it an unpleasant experience. The Trustees will determine if they wish to participate.

Director Yeo noted that the library will be offering the veterans space to have their meal after the event at City Hall, hopefully with food and local businesses, and a Vietnam War-era singer. There would need to be room for about 200 veterans and their families.

Director Yeo provided a follow up to her budget meeting with the City Council, where she explained the need for an increase of telephone services. Additionally, books & subscriptions (12% of the overall budget), and staffing were priority line items. It was determined that Director Yeo and the mayor will meet again before the next budget meeting, which will be held on June 24 with potential spillover to June 26th. The City Council is aware of issues a few years ago with staffing and positions being filled but Director Yeo knows they will be soon. Job postings have gone up quickly for the Public Service Librarian; first there is an internal posting and then it will go external.

Trustee Titelbaum asked if there could be a calendar invite for Trustees' meetings going forward and it was determined that there would be.

### **Unfinished Business**

On May 27th, the Peabody Medal Awards ceremony will be held, and all awardees have been notified. Trustee O'Brien has the event checklist that Trustee Najjar prepared when she was in charge of the event. Trustee Gallugi will not be emcee, but Trustee O'Brien will preside.

Peabody High School graduation is June 6th at 5 PM. The ribbons and medals have been ordered. Trustee Dallaire will present the ribbons/medals and will sit onstage to do so.

Trustee Najjar asked about a Tea with the Queen because she hadn't heard of it when asked by a friend. Trustee Quinn said there had been a Dinner with the Queen at some point with the Historical Society, but not at the library.

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The next meeting will be held on June 3, 2025, at 6:30pm in the Trustees Room.

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There was a MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Quinn. The motion was seconded by Trustee Najjar.

All in Favor: Yes      Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by,  
Julia Rowny  
Recording Secretary