

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**December 2, 2025**

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The meeting was called to order by Trustee Stephanie Najjar at 6:03 pm, with quorum having been reached by 6:00 pm.

The roll call was taken:

**Present**

Anne Quinn  
Ruth Titelbaum  
Jennifer Smith  
Stephanie Najjar  
Katrina Vassallo  
Peter Bakula  
Stacie Dolin  
Frances Gallugi

**Absent**

Kate O'Brien  
Stephanie Dallaire

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**Public Comments**

None.

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

There was a MOTION to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gallugi.

All in Favor: Yes    Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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## **Receipt of Communications**

No new communications.

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## **Director's Report**

### **Staffing**

Interviews are still underway for the remaining Aide position.

### **Budget**

I have included the budget for your review and would like to highlight the Software/IT Services line item of \$57,222. After following up with the Finance Department regarding the additional \$51,100 required to meet our NOBLE obligations, I was assured that a transfer request for these funds is scheduled for early 2026.

### **Building & Grounds**

Many of the interior lights that were previously reported as blown out have now been replaced. The Facilities Department ordered the exterior bulbs, along with the replacement parts for the damaged fixtures in the library courtyard, and we're currently waiting for those to arrive.

I'm happy to share that the elevator has been running smoothly with no issues reported over the past month.

### **Programs & Initiatives**

In late October I attended the New England Library Association (NELA) Conference, where I sat in on a presentation about how libraries can better support patrons experiencing food insecurity through community food pantries. As a result of this presentation, and with the leadership of Senior Teen librarian Amory Thomas, the library launched the Little Free Food Pantry in the courtyard foyer last week.

In collaboration with Jarrod Hochman of No Child Goes Hungry in Peabody and Peabody's Division of Social Services, the library will now be consistently offering non-perishable food items to those in need. We are also accepting donations from staff and patrons, and the Teen Advisory & Community Organization (TACO) group will be sorting contributions to ensure all items are shelf-stable.

The library is also hosting a clothing drive throughout the month of December. Clothing in good condition may be dropped off in the Teen Room on Tuesdays from 3-6PM, when the TACO group is available to sort and organize donations. Patrons will be able to browse and "shop" the clothing on Saturday, December 27th from 12-3PM. Any remaining items will be donated to St. John the Baptist Church.

### Public Service Department

The English Conversation Circles have maintained steady attendance as we head into the final month of the Fall sessions, with 34 participants in November. The Conversation Circles continue through Thursday, December 18th, and the Winter session is scheduled to begin in mid-January. The exact date and schedule will be finalized later this month.

### Teen Department

Senior Teen Librarian Amory Thomas has a full month of programming planned for December. Her programs include monthly movie nights, study groups, book clubs, and crafting sessions, as well as special activities such as a gingerbread house contest, hot chocolate making, and crochet mitten making. Amory has her monthly school visit to Peabody High School this week and is planning to visit Higgins Middle School again in January. She has also reached out to the Peabody Learning Academy and Essex Technical School and is awaiting response.

### Children's Department

In November, the Children's Department focused on keeping the library well-stocked with Thanksgiving-themed materials, including a dedicated book display and at least 165 take-home craft kits. Senior Children's Librarian Meeghan Bresnahan held two school visits, one at the Brown School and one at the library with Center School students. Looking ahead, December is packed with events, including a National Cocoa Day Party, storytime sessions, and a program on digital wellbeing sponsored by Sesame Workshop and Sesame Street.

### Creativity Lab

Creativity Lab Librarian Justin Allain received a \$2,000 grant from the Bank of America Sarah G. McCarthy Memorial Foundation to support his "Manual Mode" Analog Technology project. The funds will be used to purchase film photography processing equipment, allowing patrons to safely develop their own film without prior experience or exposure to chemicals. He is revamping the Creativity Lab site and updating policies, with a plan to complete the full Creativity Lab update in 2026. This will enable more consistent programming, classes, and opportunities for patrons. Open Labs and Bruce Orr's InkWell Art program continue to draw strong attendance.

### South Branch

The South Branch Library will be having an Intro to Knitting program for adults, taught by Senior Teen Librarian Amory Thomas, on Tuesday, December 2nd as part of the library's community craft project, Crafting Your Story. A birch bark birdhouse craft program for adults will be held on Thursday, December 11th.

## West Branch

The West Branch Library has a variety of programs planned this month. Adult book groups will continue on the first and last Thursdays, and five yoga sessions are scheduled for December. Additional adult programming includes a holiday wrapping party and a wooden ornament painting program. TACO remains popular, with 7 to 10 teens volunteering each week, and Senior Librarian Alex Pappas is exploring teen programs that could also serve as volunteer opportunities. Children's programs led by Librarian Aimee Servideo include storytimes, toddler sensory bins, and the toddler craft series. She will also host a snow dough program and a cozy storytime with cookies and cocoa for children before winter break.

## Local History

The next batch of Audubon prints is scheduled for pickup by Studio TKM for preservation in early 2026, with the exact date still to be determined.

I have also been in contact with Michelle duBois of the Winston Art Group regarding an appraisal of the library's portraits, prints, and artifacts. Once state aid funds are awarded in the next one to two months, I plan to schedule Michelle and her team to begin the appraisal process.

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

Trustee Najjar asked if there were any questions for Director Yeo. Trustee Quinn asked about the appraisal of the Audubon prints to see if it will happen soon based upon what was shared in Director Yeo's report and an estimate of the costs. Director Yeo said an existing estimate was done with the previous administration. Director Yeo is waiting on state aid to be dispersed before the appraisal can take place.

Trustee Quinn asked about the funds that we are awaiting from the Finance Department.

Trustee Titelbaum asked about a possible presentation associated with trust funds that the foundation has been given. Trustee Najjar confirmed it is an initiative being worked on with the foundation.

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

All in Favor: Yes            Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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

**Audubon:** (Trustee Dolin) Nothing to report.

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

**Personnel:** Nothing to report.

**Policy and Procedures:** (Trustee Vasallo) Nothing to report.

**Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:** (Trustee Najjar) There will be an Events Committee meeting at 5:30 PM on December 9th. Anyone who wants to help with Birds & Bubbly is welcome, as the meeting will center around picking a theme for the event. Birds and Bubbly will be held Friday, May 1st.

**Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:** (Trustee Quinn) November 5<sup>th</sup> Smith Barn had a presentation on the history of The Christmas Tree Shoppes that was well attended. The Historical Society's annual craft fair and apple bake was on November 29<sup>th</sup> at the Smith Barn. The Historical Society Open House will be at the Felton Jr. House on December 6<sup>th</sup> from 1:00PM-4:00PM. At the open house the historical society will have on display Massachusetts' contribution to the nation-wide America's Tapestry project where visitors will be invited to add their own stitches to the project.

Trustee Najjar made a MOTION to accept the committee reports, all were in favor.

**New Business:** none.

**Unfinished Business:**

Trustee Najjar proposed that the next meeting of the library trustees be on Tuesday January 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in the Sutton room at the library, all were in favor.

Trustee Najjar made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35PM. All were in favor.

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

All in Favor: Yes          Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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Submitted by Jenny Usovicz.