

**PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**February 10, 2026**

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The meeting was called to order by Frances Gallugi at 6:31 pm, with quorum having been reached by 6:27 pm.

The roll call was taken:

**Present**

Ruth Titelbaum  
Katrina Vassallo  
Peter Bakula  
Anne Quinn  
Stacie Dolin  
Frances Gallugi  
Stephanie Dallaire  
Caitlin Guyette  
Cassandra Loizides

**Absent**

Kate O'Brien  
Stephanie Najjar  
Jennifer Smith

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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 Dallaire. The motion was seconded by Trustee Titelbaum.

All in Favor: Yes    Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

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**Receipt of Communications**

No new communications.

## **Director's Report**

### **Staffing**

Library Aides Thomas Rutigliano, Marissa Bradstreet, and Veronica O'Leary resigned from their positions this month to pursue full-time employment opportunities elsewhere. Library Aide Angelina Bucco began last week and is already performing very well in her role. Interviews for the remaining two Library Aide positions are currently underway.

Technical Services Assistant Librarian Karen Vocino will be retiring after 21 years of dedicated service to the Peabody Institute Library. Karen has been responsible for processing all library materials for our three libraries, assisting with cataloging, withdrawing items from the collection, providing service at public desks, and much more. She will be greatly missed, and we wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement. Her last day will be Thursday, February 12.

An updated job description for the Technical Services Assistant Librarian position has been submitted to the union president and liaisons for review. Once that process is complete, it will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department and the Mayor's Office along with a request-to-hire form. Our goal is to post the vacant position early next week.

### **Building & Grounds**

The Facilities Department continues to work with our new HVAC company, Cannistraro, and the new control systems company, Howse Corporation, to diagnose heat-related issues at the Main Library. Cannistraro is currently in contact with the boiler manufacturer to determine next steps regarding replacement of the boiler's printed circuit board. We expect to receive more information within the next few weeks.

The West Branch Library has had a few leaks due to the recent heavy snowfall. Custodial staff and the Facilities Department are closely monitoring the roof and are in contact with the roofing company to address any additional repairs as needed.

### **Programs & Initiatives**

#### **Adult Services**

The Adult Services Department is seeking an ESL teacher to provide English as a Second Language instruction at the Main Library, with recruitment efforts underway through local teachers, City Hall, and library social media.

In recognition of Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, the library hosted a commemorative program on February 2, which will be repeated for the Senior Center at the end of May. The spring concert series begins on March 2, and Theo Theoharis will return on Wednesdays in March with lectures on *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, *The Autobiography of*

*Benjamin Franklin*, and the Declaration of Independence in honor of America250. Additional America250 programming includes a cemetery tour with the Historical Society, a “Write Like the Founding Fathers” calligraphy program, and related book lists and displays.

### Public Services

The English Conversation Circles and the Citizenship Study Group will resume this month and run through early spring. Numerous existing volunteers and several are returning to support the English Conversation Circles, along with several new volunteers.

The department is seeing high usage in many of our popular databases. Usage for FY26 (July–December 2025) remains strong, with Ancestry.com recording 478 searches, Consumer Reports logging 1,434 pages viewed, Hoopla reaching 2,160 patrons with 7,628 circulations, and Kanopy generating 18,505 visits and 3,897 plays.

### Technical Services

Drop-In Tech Help attendance dropped slightly in January, likely due to cold temperatures and heavy snowfall. Senior Technical Services Librarian Lindley Valcarcel has completed transferring files to the new staff Google Drive and is now developing a procedure document to guide staff in accessing and adding to the files.

### Teen Department

Senior Teen Librarian Amory Thomas has many exciting events planned for February, including a Candy Tasting Event, crepe making, and a Winter Reading Challenge, offering almost daily opportunities for teens to participate. Due to low registration numbers, the SAT/ACT Practice Testing sessions have been moved to March in hopes of generating more interest. The Teen Advisory and Community Organization (TACO) has been a great support, assisting with tasks such as cleaning storage spaces, genre stickering for the Children’s Department, and brainstorming ideas for future programming. Amory also has school visits planned for Higgins Middle School and the Peabody Learning Academy, with regular high school visits continuing successfully. In addition, Amory is actively applying for grants to support the Summer Foods Program, aiming to increase participation and provide higher-quality food for families this summer.

### Children’s Department

Attendance for children’s programming continues to reach record numbers, with over 30 babies and caregivers attending Baby Storytime and an average of 26 children and caregivers at Thursday Night Drop-In Craft events. February is packed with programming, including a Valentine’s Day tote bag decorating and storytime event, as well as a fairy pinecone craft.

Senior Children’s Librarian Meeghan Bresnahan has also launched a project to add more descriptive stickers to the spine labels of materials. These stickers, covering topics such as Christianity, Judaism, Native American culture, immigration, and more, aim to help patrons more easily find the materials they’re interested in.

### Creativity Lab

Creativity Lab Librarian Justin Allain completed development of the lab's scheduling software, which launched successfully and is being used by patrons with ease. This month, he will begin offering "Focused Labs," designed for patrons who are interested in using the lab but may not have a specific project in mind. Each month, Justin will introduce a new project that patrons can schedule time in the lab to complete.

Justin is also working with a patron to host a cosplay club on the last Thursday of every month, providing support as participants work on their costumes. Additionally, Justin was interviewed by *North of Boston Magazine* for a feature in the March issue highlighting the Creativity Lab, community crafting, and the evolving role of libraries.

### South Branch

The South Branch Library will host a yarn bird craft program for adults and teens on Thursday, February 12. Several programs for children and their caregivers will take place during February school vacation week, including Family Mystery Bingo, a hot chocolate storytime, and Family Movie Night. Local children's performer Carole Finn-Weidman will visit the South Branch on Wednesday, February 18, for a storytime event where she will be dressed as Elsa the Snow Queen. Senior South Branch Librarian Amy Titus will also attend South Memorial Elementary School's annual Literacy Night on February 26, hosting a library station where students can sign up for library cards and check out books.

### West Branch

The West Branch anticipates a busy February with regular programming and AARP Tax appointments, now back on Mondays. Both adult book groups continue as scheduled, along with TACO on Thursdays for teen volunteers. Adult Yoga with Jacqui Orphanos runs on Wednesdays through mid-April. Winter craft programs for adults this month, including Gnome Paint Brushes and Pine Cone Roses, are both fully registered.

Children's Librarian Aimee Servideo continues her popular storytime, toddler sensory bins, and ongoing Toddler craft series, all well attended during the winter months. She will also host Valentine's Day card-making and a Family Rave, giving kids a fun activity during school vacation week.

### **Old Business**

The Winston Artory Group has been scheduled for the library's art appraisal during the week of March 9.

The library will celebrate George Peabody's birthday this month with an interactive display inviting patrons to answer the question, "If you could fund one thing in your library, what would it be?" Patrons will be encouraged to write their responses on Post-it notes and add them to display boards that will be located near the front of the Main Reading Room.

### **New Business**

Library administration would like to schedule the next all-staff meeting for Thursday, April 2. I respectfully request the Board's approval to close the Main Library and branches from 9:00am to 1:00pm to accommodate the meeting.

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

Trustee Quinn asked about the status of the funds transfer, and Director Yeo responded that she will continue pushing for it. The Library might have another challenging budget year ahead.

Trustee Quinn asked if anything was planned for Karen Vocino's retirement. Director Yeo responded that the staff will celebrate her service on the morning of February 12th with breakfast treats, as she did not want a large party.

Trustee Titelbaum asked about the state of the pipes and expressed concern that they might be at risk for freezing. Director Yeo clarified that the HVAC system is getting too hot, particularly on the second and third floors, not too cold. Snow blocking the outside unit has been a problem. The two new companies, Cannistraro and Howse Corporation, are still learning the units and are working together on the issue.

Trustee Titelbaum asked about whether the art appraisers will have access to the Audubon prints. Director Yeo sent them a digital file of images of all of the Audubon prints to cut down on the time and cost of appraisal. The appraisers' full report will come back in 6-8 weeks.

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

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

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:** (Trustee Loizides) Nothing to report.

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

**Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation:** (Trustee Najjar was not present) Trustee Quinn gave a brief update that they are working on the Birds and Bubbly event, determining the theme.

**Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society:** (Trustee Quinn) An interesting tidbit from the archives: She read about a historical George Peabody plate that was deemed so valuable that it was given to the library vault.

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### **Approval of the Committees and Subcommittees**

There was a MOTION to accept the reports of the committees and subcommittees by Trustee Titelbaum. 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**

There was a MOTION to close the libraries on April 2 for the next all-staff meeting by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.

All in Favor: Yes          Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

### **Further Discussion of New Business:**

Director Yeo described the staff training, which has a “back to basics” theme. There will be refreshers on technology including printers, copiers, fax, microfiche, and safety-related training to ensure that staff feel safe and empowered to tackle difficult situations with patrons.

A short discussion of safety ensued. Trustee Bakula asked if any sites are restricted on Library computers. Director Yeo explained that restricting internet access can have an impact on Library funding. Trustee Quinn asked about security camera monitoring. Director Yeo noted that the cameras installed have paid great dividends, since she can take screenshots and make sure individuals causing problems are on file.

Trustee Dolin suggested that an Events committee be created in place of the eliminated Personnel committee, since it can be challenging to stay on the ball for the events cycle such as George Peabody birthday, the ordering of the Peabody Awards, etc. The Trustees were not sure about whether there is a specific procedure creating a committee. President O’Brien will attend the next meeting, the table until then. Trustees Guyette and Dallaire expressed interest in leading such a committee.

Trustee Dolin would also be interested in consultation with Director Yeo in creating a list of the programs offered by the library and finding the “real-world” cost to use as documentation for budget meetings with City Hall and a demonstration of what is given to the community for free. Director Yeo noted that the Foundation helps bring in some outside programs, but the Library obtains most of the materials for its programming from state aid. Trustee Dolin asked about structuring the effort: Should all of the Trustees sit down together and work on this, or could a spreadsheet with an itemized list be made for ease of remote work. The City Council has requested a list of our services, an org chart, etc. for a budget presentation and such a list would be an asset. Trustee Guyette asked if more context could be given for budget cuts. Director Yeo explained that the City’s health insurance costs have risen, and the Library has a smaller budget so it is felt more acutely when services are cut. For example, the telephone budget is already maxed out and excess is taken from state aid. Trustee Guyette asked if there were ways to encourage patrons to reach out to the local government—QR codes in public spaces, for example?

A short discussion of carpooling to the Legislative Breakfast followed.

### **Unfinished Business**

Trustee Titelbaum asked about any events planned for George Peabody’s birthday. Yeo noted that the event was described in more detail in the Director’s Report, and was hopeful that this would be a low-key, fun way to celebrate.

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The next meeting will be held on March 3, 2026, at 6:30pm in the Sutton Room.

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There was a MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Gallugi The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.

All in Favor: Yes    Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by,  
Julia Rowny  
Recording Secretary