PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of Meeting

June 2, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Trustee Gallugi at 6:31 pm, with quorum having been reached by 6:28 pm.

The roll call was taken:

Present	**Absent**
Ruth Titelbaum	Caitlin Guyette
Katrina Vassallo	Jennifer Smith
Stephanie Najjar	Cassandra Loizides
Peter Bakula	Kate O'Brien
Anne Quinn	
Stacie Dolin	
Frances Gallugi	
Stephanie Dallaire	

Public Comments

None.

Approval and Discussion of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Trustee Quinn proposed an amendment to May's minutes pertaining to the outgoing Curator of the Peabody Historical Society. Sophia Richter was good at getting volunteers (not staff) to focus on collection management. *The minutes have been changed to reflect this.*

There was a MOTION to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dallaire.
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

Receipt of Communications

No new communications.

Director's Report

Staffing

The Peabody Institute Library is pleased to welcome back Tristin Hubisz as a summer intern later this month. Tristin will assist the library by covering key shifts while staff members take summer vacations, helping to maintain consistent service for patrons throughout the busy summer season.

Budget

The City's proposed FY27 budget includes reductions that require the library to decrease staffing expenditures. Since the last Board meeting, I've met with Senior Branch Librarians and reviewed several service reduction scenarios in an effort to minimize the impact on the community. Adjustments were made to the original proposal, which had included the elimination of both evening and weekend branch hours. The revised plan preserves one evening of branch service each week while maintaining Saturday hours, allowing the library to continue providing important access to residents while still achieving the required budget reductions.

If approved by the City Council in mid-June, the following service changes would take effect on July 1:

- South Branch and West Branch hours on Tuesdays will be reduced, with both locations closing at 5:00PM instead of 9:00PM.
- South Branch and West Branch hours on Wednesdays will be reduced, with both locations closing at 1:00PM instead of 5:00PM.

Staff members affected by these reductions have been notified of the anticipated schedule changes. Additionally, should future Library Aide vacancies occur, available hours will first be offered to employees whose schedules were reduced as a result of the budget cuts before external hiring is considered.

Building & Grounds

All exterior bulbs and globe fixtures for the Main Library's exterior lighting have been replaced.

In May, a memorial bench honoring former Library Trustee Richard Shruhan and his wife, Vicki Shruhan, was installed in the Main Library courtyard. The bench overlooks Main Street and serves as a lasting tribute to their support of the library and the broader community. I have

contacted Rick and Vicki's daughter, Courtney, regarding her family's availability for a small dedication ceremony and am awaiting a response.

Programs & Initiatives

Adult Services

Adult Services is kicking off several America250 programs in June. On June 17, the library will screen *1776*, which portrays the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. On June 24, the Adult Services Department and the Teen Department will host a sing-along screening of *Hamilton*, with patrons encouraged to attend in Colonial-era attire.

The annual Adult Summer Reading Bingo Program begins June 1 with an America250 theme. Participants can complete activities related to Revolutionary history, founding documents, and local historic sites for a chance to win prizes. Completed bingo cards will also earn participants a complimentary pass to the USS Constitution Museum.

Public Services

English Conversation Circles concluded for the summer on May 15 and will resume in mid-September, with volunteer and participant recruitment beginning in August. The one-on-one English Language Tutoring Program launched in April has been highly successful and will continue through June. A second tutoring partnership has recently been established to help a patron improve conversational fluency for the workplace. The Citizenship Study Group completed its spring session on May 11 and will also return in September, with recruitment beginning in August. Weekly Ancestry Help Sessions concluded on May 19 and are scheduled to resume in August.

Teen Department

The Teen Department hosted several successful programs in May, including its annual themed tea party, where teens learned about tea varieties and etiquette while enjoying refreshments. June programming includes a tie-dye T-shirt event, a live animal event with Curious Creatures, and a Summer Reading Journal Program.

Preparations for Summer Reading are nearly complete, pending finalization of the high school's summer reading list. The department has selected prizes, planned themed activities, and launched its Beanstack Summer Reading platform. Summer programming begins in July with a planned library-sponsored trip to the Peabody Essex Museum, craft programs, and a vampire-themed murder mystery event. Summer Eats returns for its 17th year from July 6 through August 13, providing free lunches and daily programs for teens and children. The department is also awaiting confirmation on two teen summer intern positions through MassHire.

The Teen Room is expected to receive upgraded computers through a grant partnership with UMass Lowell, addressing ongoing issues with the current equipment. Installation is anticipated before the fall. Looking ahead, the department is planning middle school outreach visits in September.

Children's Department

June programming in the Children's Department is off to a strong start, highlighted by a magic show with Mike Bent that ties into this year's Summer Reading theme, "Ready, Set, Grow!" The department is also preparing to launch its Summer Reading programs and looks forward to another busy and successful summer season.

Creativity Lab

The Creativity Lab continues to expand its maker equipment and capabilities. Creativity Lab Librarian Justin Allain recently acquired a professional large-format screen printer through a donation. This new equipment will allow patrons to create custom-printed T-shirts, tote bags, flags, posters, and other projects.

Justin is also in the process of purchasing a CNC machine and an industrial sewing machine. The CNC machine will allow patrons to carve and shape wood and metal for projects such as signs, block prints, chess pieces, badges, and other custom creations. The industrial sewing machine is designed to handle heavy-duty materials such as leather and canvas, expanding opportunities for advanced sewing and fabrication projects.

South Branch

The South Branch Library has several programs planned for June, including an origami animal bookmark workshop, Family Mystery Bingo, and a suncatcher-making program for children.

In preparation for Summer Reading, all classes from South Memorial Elementary School, kindergarten through fourth grade, will visit the library to learn about this year's program. Students will receive information about the Summer Reading Beanstack Challenge, along with a Topsfield Fair Summer Reading card to encourage participation throughout the summer.

West Branch

The West Branch Library's June schedule includes its regular book groups, yoga classes, and TACO programming, along with two adult craft programs focused on painting coasters and creating seashell charm candles. The branch will also host Attorney Kyle McGah for a seminar on estate planning.

Trustee Quinn asked if there were still any maintenance problems at the West Branch. Director Yeo responded that the last issues were the toilets clogging, but that has been fixed.

A discussion followed about the budget:

- Trustee Gallugi asked about the duration of reduced library hours, and it was clarified that the reduced hours will be from July 1 to June 30th (a full fiscal year).

- Director Yeo is now ready for the Trustees to talk to the city councillors. The councillors' budget meeting is June 16th and the community should know beforehand. Director Yeo gave Library staff permission to discuss the budget and its implications with library patrons.

- Trustee Najjar asked about what amount of money would be required to meet the library's desired level of funding. She noted that having a simple number to use in conversations (such as "all we need is *x* dollars") would be helpful. Director Yeo's current estimate was $100,000, but she wanted to verify the number. She noted that the priorities were on maintaining current staff and keeping the branches open. She is willing to cut some subscriptions and leave two current vacancies open.

- Trustee Najjar followed up on the staff question and asked if other city departments are making staffing cuts. Director Yeo's conversations with people from the police, facilities, fire, and education department seem to indicate that while cuts are not being made, the departments aren't hiring and/or filling vacant positions at the moment. She said she is not aware of any departments that have to cut working hours. Trustee Quinn noted that in the summertime, the police and fire department employees take significant overtime.

- Trustee Najjar asked if the library's accreditation is at risk of being removed as happened in Marblehead. Director Yeo noted that things seem all right for now and she hopes to keep hours fair for staff by returning any lost hours if she can. If someone resigns, then their hours will be given back to others based on seniority.

- Trustee Quinn asked if any other departments' accreditation have the same time-based constraints as hours. Director Yeo noted that it might be the case for Parks and Recreation and the Council on Aging. Trustee Najjar responded that the teachers' union can set some requirements on educators' hours.

There was a MOTION to accept the Director's report by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No

The motion was carried unanimously.

Reports of the Committees and Sub-committees

Audubon: (Loizides absent)

Buildings and Grounds: (Vassallo) nothing to report.

Events: (Dolin) nothing to report.

Policy and Procedures: (Dallaire) Nothing outside of the Director's Report.

Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation: (Najjar) Nothing to report.

Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society: (Quinn) The Peabody Historical Society had their annual membership dinner on May 20th, where officers were elected (with the same slate as before). They received a report from the Treasurer that the IRS is looking into the Historical Society, since they are generating income from renting event spaces to support their activities. The Treasurer is working on compliance.

There was a MOTION to accept the reports of the committees and subcommittees by Trustee Vassallo. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

New Business

There was a MOTION to take a hiatus over the summer and resume meetings in September by Trustee Dallaire. The motion was seconded by Trustee Vassallo.
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Trustee Bakula asked if the library could look for local businesses to donate their services to beautify the courtyard. Trustee Gallugi noted that the Peabody Garden Club is working on the front and asked if they should consider working on other areas.Director Yeo noted that she wants to redo the courtyard entirely eventually. She can ask the Preservation Committee about the possibility of getting their help for the new space.

Trustee Titlebaum mentioned that there was a flag drop off box at the police station.

The next meeting will be held on September 1, 2026, at 6:30pm in the Sutton Room.

There was a MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Quinn. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dallaire.
All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Julia Rowny
Recording Secretary