PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes of Meeting

September 1, 2026

The meeting was called to order by President Kate O'Brien at 6:32 pm, with quorum having been reached by 6:30 pm.

The roll call was taken:

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

Public Comments

None. (This is usually none, just replace if there are comments.)

Discussion and Approval 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.

Receipt of Communications

No new communications.

Director's Report

Staffing

In June, Library Aide Emily Bouffard was promoted to the position of Teen/Children's Assistant Librarian. She has already done a wonderful job in her new role, creating new programming opportunities and bringing fresh ideas and energy to the Teen and Children's Departments.

Library Aide Angelina Bucco resigned in mid-August to begin her first semester of graduate school in Paris. Following Emily's promotion and Angelina's resignation, we offered the vacated hours to staff members whose hours were reduced as a result of FY27 budget reductions. We will continue this practice with future resignations to help restore hours for staff affected by the reductions.

Building & Grounds

The Main Library's HVAC system performed well overall throughout the summer. There were a few instances when the chiller tripped, causing temperatures in the building to rise. The issue was traced to a bad pressure sensor, which has since been replaced.

During one of the heavier rainstorms in August, the courtyard foyer experienced some minor flooding due to clogged drain grates and cracked concrete along the doors. The grates were cleared of debris, and the cracked concrete was repaired.

Several work orders have been submitted for the West Branch Library, including replacement of stained ceiling tiles, power washing of the vinyl siding, and leveling of the memorial bench, which has sunk into the ground. The sidewalk along the exterior of the building is also in need of repair. The Facilities Department will be taking a closer look at the area this week to determine what repairs are needed.

The third floor Technical Services office will be getting thermal window film to help reduce the high temperatures in the space. Despite efforts to lower the temperature, the office tends to stay warmer than the rest of the building due to its location and large windows.

The Teen Room will be undergoing a renovation beginning in late September, with the work expected to take about four weeks. The stained carpet will be replaced with laminate wood flooring, and the walls and bookshelves will be repainted with new colors. All lighting will be replaced with energy-efficient LED fixtures with new dimmers and switches.

Policy & Procedure

Library Administration, with input from staff members, has begun a review of the Library's existing policies. Two updated policies are being presented to the Board for consideration tonight, and I am happy to explain the reasoning behind each change during the discussion of New Business. I request that the Board of Trustees vote to approve both policies.

The Library's annual craft fair will take place during the Holiday Stroll on Saturday, November 28. I ask that the Board approve the request to allow participating vendors to sell their goods inside the Library.

Programs & Services

Adult Services

English Language Learning remains a strong focus of the Adult Services Department, with plans to expand tutoring, offer another Beginner-level ESOL class this fall, and resume English Conversation Circles in September. Staff are also recruiting additional volunteers and updating the Library's English Language Learning collections by re-cataloging, weeding outdated materials, and adding new titles in multiple languages.

Adult programming remains well-attended, with the popular Houseplant Repotting Party now planned as a quarterly program. The Library also completed its America250 film series and will continue film programming this fall with a Humphrey Bogart series and a special screening of *From Here to Eternity* (1953) to commemorate the anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

Public Services

Senior Public Services Librarian Justin Liberti is working to restart the Library's successful résumé assistance program. Patrons will be able to submit their résumés by email for review by designated librarians, who will provide feedback and suggested revisions as their schedules allow. Completed reviews will be returned to patrons electronically with the librarians' notes and recommendations.

Teen Department

The Teen Room will be unavailable to patrons from Friday, September 18 to the end of October while the space undergoes renovation. During this time, Teen programming will continue in the Creativity Lab or Tech Lab, led by our new Teen/Children's Assistant Librarian, Emily Bouffard.

Senior Teen Librarian Amory will be on maternity leave from September 21 through mid-November.

Teen programming attendance was high over the summer, with particularly high attendance at the Teen Murder Mystery Party and the Teen Resin Crafting program. The Teen Department also served 753 lunches through the Summer Foods Program.

Children's Department

The Children's Department had a successful summer, with 198 children completing the Topsfield Fair Read and Win Challenge and 81 participants in the Beanstack Summer Reading Challenge. Program attendance was also strong, with 2,082 participants across the three branches as of August 25. The Department was featured in the *Lynn Daily Item* for the popular Read with Rabbits program led by Library Aide Adria Schuneman. Fall programming is already underway, with a full schedule of programs planned, including Applepalooza, a pumpkin puzzle craft and storytime, and a variety of other seasonal activities.

Creativity Lab

Creativity Lab Librarian Justin Allain received a $3,700 grant to create a plastic recycling center in the Creativity Lab. The grant will fund a plastic shredder, mold injector, and converted pellet printer. Justin has also begun ordering new and updated equipment for the Lab using previously awarded grant funds. The CNC machine has been delivered and assembled and is awaiting installation of a dedicated electrical outlet by Facilities. Once all equipment has been received and installed, the Library will hold a reopening ceremony to celebrate the updated Creativity Lab.

South Branch

The South Branch Library had a busy summer, with strong attendance at summer reading and children's programs. Due to consistently high attendance, the weekly Toddler Storytime was offered twice a week during July and August. Other popular programs included Family Bingo, LEGO programs, movie nights, and other activities.

Fall programming will include a Botanical Gelli Print program for adults with local artist Brooke Lambert on September 10, as well as the return of the 4th and 5th grade book clubs. The South Branch also distributed more than 900 handmade children's craft kits during FY26, the majority of which were created by Library Aides Arrianna Servideo, Lauren Bennett, and Olivia Grabowski.

West Branch

The West Branch will continue its regular September programming, including book groups and yoga, along with two adult craft programs featuring pumpkin decoupage and decorated mason jars. West Branch Children's Librarian Aimee Servideo will continue her regular programs, including storytime, toddler sensory bins, and the Toddler Craft Series, as well as a back-to-school self-portrait craft. The West Branch has also started a Little Free Pantry, similar to the one at the Main Library. The pantry was created by Ty Morley as an Eagle Scout service project and includes labeled bins where community members can leave or take needed items. Senior West Branch Librarian Alex Pappas is working with Ty to promote the pantry to the Peabody community.

Discussion of the Director's Report

Trustee Najjar asked how the changes in hours have affected the work at the branches. Director Yeo responded that staff members log any calls or instances of seeing patrons try the doors after closing hours. Yeo was working at the South Branch on the smoky day and people wanted to come into the building. She wondered if it would make more sense to have branches be open in the afternoon and not the morning to help get kids into the library. It seems like an idea to revisit in FY28, and July 1st seems like a good time to turn it over in advance of a new school year.

Trustee Titelbaum asked if the individuals whose hours were reduced have sought or received unemployment benefits. Director Yeo hasn't heard about unemployment from anyone–many of them work multiple jobs and so she's not sure if anyone needs anything in that regard.

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: (Trustee Loizides) Nothing to report.

Building & Grounds: (Trustee Vassallo) No report past what was in the Director's Report.

Events: (Trustee Dolin) We need to start thinking about George Peabody's birthday celebration.

Policy and Procedures: Trustee Dallaire sent proposed new policies to the Trustees for discussion later in the meeting.

Liaison to the Peabody Institute Library Foundation: (Trustee Najjar) The Planning Committee discussed the International Festival later this month. The Foundation will be selling whoopie pies (chocolate only) from Spinelli's. Planning for Birds and Bubbly has begun.

Liaison to the Peabody Historical Society: Trustee Quinn was not present.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

New Business

Three votes were conducted based on policies sent in advance by Trustee Dallaire, which were reviewed in the meeting.

There was a MOTION to materials circulation policy by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Gallugi.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

There was a MOTION to computer equipment policy by Trustee Najjar. The motion was seconded by Trustee Vassallo.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

A short discussion about vendors at the upcoming craft fair preceded the vote. Trustee Dolin asked if the only restriction was that vendors cannot sell food products. Director Yeo noted that she could not find anything in past rules about that restriction.

There was a MOTION to accept the admission of vendors during the craft fair by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

Trustee Gallugi informed the Trustees that the Garden Club will put its customary wreaths up around the exterior of the Main Branch around November 23rd (prior to the holiday fair).

Unfinished Business

The Trustees voted to authorize an expenditure of $13,290 to Advantage Archives for the microfilm digitization project.

There was a MOTION to accept the expense by Trustee Gallugi. The motion was seconded by Trustee Dolin.

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 6th, at 6:30pm in the Sutton Room.

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

All in Favor: Yes Any Opposed: No
The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Julia Rowny
Recording Secretary