

**SCRANTON PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

November 21, 2024

The Board of Trustees of the Scranton Public Library met in person and virtually on Thursday, November 21, 2024. Ms. Quinn called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM.

**Present:**

Ms. Sharon Quinn,  
*President*

Ms. Karen Bazzarri,  
*Vice-President*

Mr. Joseph X. Garvey,  
*Treasurer*

Mr. Tim McCabe,  
*Secretary*

Dr. George Aulisio

Atty. Pat Clark

Ms. Anita Cola

Mr. John Cowder

Ms. Mary Beth D'Andrea

Dr. Daniel Ginsberg

Atty. Jaime Hailstone

Ms. Linda Koons

Dr. Kenneth Mayers

**Also:**

Mr. Scott Thomas,  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Ms. Jenny Shoener,  
*Assistant to the CEO*

Ms. Michele Legate,  
*District Consultant*

Ms. Barbara McGee,  
*Friends of the  
Scranton Public Library Liaison*

**Public Comment:**

Joan Hodowanitz

**Absent:**

Elizabeth Bohan

Ms. Daysi Carreto

Mr. William Davis

Mr. Jim Henkelman

Ms. Glynis Johns

Atty. Brian Lenahan

**October Consent Agenda Items:** Ms. Quinn asked if anyone had questions regarding the October Consent Agenda items. **Action Item:** Mr. Garvey motioned to accept October's Board Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Statistical Report, and CEO Report as printed. Mr. McCabe seconded, and the motion passed.

**Communications**

**Correspondence:** Ms. Hodowanitz generously contributed to the annual holiday party, and Mr. Thomas and the Board expressed their gratitude.

**Public Comment:** Ms. Hodowanitz expressed her condolences regarding Lou Danzico's passing. She noted that his family has requested memorial contributions to the Albright Memorial Library. Mr. Danzico was a devoted library patron and a respected member of the Scranton community.

**Treasurer / Finance Committee Report:** Mr. Garvey summarized the library's various account balances and noted that investment funds have increased by \$32,000 since the beginning of the year. On November 13, Mr. Garvey, Ms. Bazzarri, and Mr. Thomas attended the Budget Hearing with members of the LCLS Board.

**Facilities Committee Report:** Mr. Cowder reported the following building updates-

**Albright Building**

**Mechanical:** The GPI report on the aging mechanical system and what may be required for its maintenance and upgrade is still pending.

**Sewer:** A scope is scheduled to clear the roof downspout connection to the existing storm sewer adjacent to the elevator.

**Nancy Kay Holmes Branch Library**

**Basement Shoring:** Champion Builders has completed the shoring of the Basement ceiling joists and installation of three new steel columns in lieu of the delivery of the Circulation Desk on the First Floor.

**Upgrade Renovations:** *There has been substantial progress in the last month.*

**Interior Cleanup:** The floors have been cleaned, and touch-up painting has been completed.

**Circulation Desk:** The Circulation Desk has been installed, and power and communication have been provided.

**Fireplace:** The installers are fabricating the sheet metal surround, and it should be completed by mid-December.

**Site Work:** All building floodlights are installed, sidewalks are now poured, ADA Ramp and handrails are in place, and an opening has been cut for the new rear entrance. Front pre-cast steps and handrails are in place. Front entrance step handrails have been installed, and repairs are being completed on the existing entrance steps. Corrective landscaping is completed on the disturbed lawn areas.

**Windows:** Replacement windows are now completely installed, and any utility penetrations through paneled windows have been completed.

**ADA Unisex Restroom:** The restroom is complete except for the door, which will be delivered and installed around December 8th.

**ADA Entrance:** The ADA Entrance automatic door was ordered and delayed until around December 8th. The new entrance has been cut and drywalled to receive the new automatic door. A temporary door has been installed.

**Furniture:** Jenny Shoener expects to receive some furniture items, including six mobile shelving units, under-counter files, and a mobile drop-box unit for the new Circulation Desk. The total earned payments to KR Construction now total \$468,322.85, including \$16,004.19 in Change Orders. The last payment of \$122,315.14 is payable by 11/28/2024. Scott Thomas is awaiting funds from the Keystone Grant. 10% Retention is currently at \$48,832.31. The library will hold retainage until the project is complete. KR has exceeded the contract deadline of November 14, 2024. Completion is not expected until mid-December. Northeast Inspection Consultants conducted the initial city building inspection last Tuesday, and several apparent violations concerning restroom grab bars, ADA signage, ramp approach, and HP Parking slopes were reported. The Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing Inspection will occur this Friday. These reports and conditions will be reviewed at this Monday's Virtual Job Meeting. Once all reports are received and after Monday's job meeting, Mr. Cowder will contact the NEIC plan reviewer to discuss options and resolutions.

**Silkman House:** The LCLS Board asked if a strategy was in place for the building. Following the completion of the Nancy Kay Holmes Branch, an SPL Board walk-through of Silkman House will be scheduled.

**Personnel Committee Report:** Atty. Hailstone reported that the Committee met on November 13 to discuss renewing the CEO's contract. The Committee will evaluate Mr. Thomas, and after review, a recommendation will be given during an executive session following December's Board meeting.

**Fundraising Committee Report:** Mr. Thomas shared the following report-

**Reaper's Revenge:** Though the Reaper's Revenge Ambassador Program debuted late in the season, the library raised \$135, the highest earning total for the new fundraiser. The library plans to participate next year.

**Annual Appeal:** The letters will be mailed in December.

**Mini-Golf:** The event has been rescheduled to February 2, and a snow date is scheduled for February 16. Tickets go on sale January 2. The community has begun donating raffle baskets for the event, and sponsorship solicitation has also started.

**"Get Carded" T-shirts:** Sales have begun and are sold for \$16 each. The shirts will also be available on Brucelli's website. Children's apparel featuring the Children's Library's mascot, Cal, is being discussed for the spring.

**Community Cookbook:** The Committee is researching ways to sell a community cookbook for the next holiday season.

**Friends of the Scranton Public Library Annual Donation:** Mr. Thomas and the Board thanked the Friends for their generous \$25,000 donation.

**Public Relations Committee Report:** On behalf of Mr. Davis, Mr. Thomas shared that Nancy Kay Holmes Branch updates will focus on the staff. Scranton Mayor Paige Cagnetti and WNEP were at the Children's Library yesterday to formally dedicate the new bench in memory of the late staff member Janie Lawless. Mayor Cagnetti also presented a proclamation from the City of Scranton to the Children's staff. Mrs. Lawless would have celebrated 23 years of service.

**Nancy Kay Holmes Steering Committee Report:** Mr. Thomas provided an update on the renovation project's current finances. All funds have been exhausted, and we await the remainder of the Keystone Grant reimbursement. A \$18,000 loss is projected. The staff is working to return the library to order now that construction is completed. Following the renovation, a soft opening will be in early January. A grand reopening is scheduled for February. The December 19 Board meeting will be held at the Branch as discussed.

**Strategic Planning Committee Report:** Mr. Thomas reported that the overall issue is for the library to remain relevant within the community. That involves library awareness and partnerships. A rough draft will be written and discussed at their next meeting. The staff and the Board will be asked to weigh in. The Committee hopes to have a finalized plan in the spring.

**Governance Committee Report:** On behalf of Attorney Lenahan, Ms. Koons reported that during the Committee's meeting on November 6, Mr. Garvey announced that 2024 would be his last year as Treasurer after 10 years of service. The Board expressed their gratitude to Mr. Garvey for his contributions.

Following that, the Governance Committee recommended the officer slate for 2025, which will be confirmed during the December meeting. They are as follows:

**President** - Ms. Sharon Quinn

**Vice-President** - Ms. Karen Bazzarri,

**Secretary** - Mr. Tim McCabe

**Treasurer** – Atty. Pat Clark

**CEO Report:** Mr. Thomas shared that two librarians will give a presentation at an assembly at West Scranton High School on December 9th. Similar assemblies are being arranged at Scranton High School. Mr. McCabe, Atty. Clark and Mr. Thomas met with Brian Costanzo and Dan LaMagna from Lackawanna College regarding the plan to close a portion of Vine Street to vehicular traffic. They are awaiting feedback from Lackawanna College regarding their commitment to this idea. LCLS has not responded to a preliminary draft of a Memorandum of Understanding between LCLS and SPL to manage the Mobile Library, Outreach Services, Technical Services, or IT Services. The new Statistical Report provides historical numbers and a discussion on what can be done to remain relevant to the community followed. Though physical circulation has declined, as it has throughout the country, Ms. Legate shared that Overdrive circulation has increased by 156% in relevance to the Strategic Plan. Dr. Mayer asked what the cost per circulation of the digital collection was. Ms. Legate said that it is exceedingly higher than that of traditional materials. For example, the lending model for one digital title costs over \$140 vs. \$40 for a physical copy. Resource allocation is adapted to what is in demand by the public. Fines may also be a circulation barrier to the vulnerable population we serve, but eliminating fees must be an LCLS System decision because it would have to be county-wide.

**District Consultant Report:** Ms. Legate reported that digital magazines and graphic novels have been added to the Libby/Overdrive collection and reviewed several best-practices policies and procedures adopted by the District and the Scranton Public Library. Best practices are updated every three years, and SPL is current. All issues are documented for review.

**New Business:**

**2025 Holiday Closings:** The 2025 library closings schedule was presented for the Board's review. **Action Item:** Dr. Mayers motioned to accept the 2025 closings. Mr. Garvey seconded, and the motion passed.

**Collective Bargaining Agreement SEIU:** The library's SEIU contract expires at the end of the year. A tentative agreement has been reached that includes a 3% wage increase for all SPL staff. Mr. Thomas has proposed that the Board ratify a decision to approve the 3% increase.

**Action Item:** Ms. Cola motioned to authorize the increase. Mr. Garvey seconded, and the motion passed.

**Personnel Committee Report:** Atty. Hailstone announced that Mr. Thomas's annual evaluation will be conducted before the next Board meeting. The Personnel Committee will call an executive session after December's meeting to present their recommendation.

**Old Business:**

**Mobile Library:** LCLS will inspect the vehicle upon delivery, which will be stored at COLTS. Christina Thomas will manage its Outreach schedule.

**SPL Holiday Party:** The party will be held on Friday, December 20, from 5 to 8 PM.

**Federated System Informational Session:** Ms. Legate and Mr. Thomas conducted this session on November 12th, and a recording is available upon request.

**Friends of the Scranton Public Library Report:** Ms. McGee announced that the Friends are giving the library a record amount of \$25,000 for their annual donation. Of this amount, \$4,000 is earmarked for the programs at the Children's Library. They have also already donated \$1,000 during the year as sponsors of the Family Mini Golf and Swingin' on Vine fundraisers. Their average donation for the past 10 years has been \$14,000. Their highest previous donation was \$20,000 in 2017. The group recently welcomed four new board members. They are Carol Shoener, recently retired from the Women's Resource Center; Mary Ann Abdo, a local poet; Donna Bowser, a recently retired PPL employee who headed up their community charity work; and Joe Schneider, a local author who has been volunteering at our book sales for years. The next book sale at the Marketplace at Steamtown is December 3-7. Beginning in 2025, they will need to pay \$50 per day, but a donation by Joan Hodowanitz has already covered that fee.

**Good and Welfare:** During a recent visit, Ms. McGee was happy to share that she discovered a library in Stamford, Connecticut, that offered a Library of Things.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Garvey motioned to adjourn; Dr. Mayers seconded, and the motion passed. The meeting ended at 5:01 PM.

The next hybrid meeting will be held at the Nancy Kay Holmes Branch on December 19, 2024, at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T. McCabe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim McCabe  
Secretary