



# Board of Library Trustees Meeting

Thursday, July 31, 2025 at 7:00 PM  
Watertown Middle School Auditorium  
68 Waverley Ave, Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

## Minutes

Documents used and/or referred to during this meeting include the following: June 2025 Meeting Minutes; FY26 Year to Date Budget Report; FY25 and FY26 Budget Comparisons; FY26 Griffin Fund Report; Burke Fund Report; FY26 HATCH Summary; Donations; Director's Report; Art Gallery Applications; WCOD Grant Application; After Hours Request; Chair's Statement of Policy in Response to Suggested Summer Reading List Feedback

1. Call to Order @7:02PM
  - A. Present by roll call: Director Long, Trustee Young, Trustee Su, Trustee Murphy-Holroyd, Trustee Keary, Trustee Hammonds, Trustee Kokoros, Assistant Director Maturevich
2. Secretary's Report
  - A. Minutes of June 3, 2025 Meeting
    - i. Trustee Murphy-Holroyd noted that Section 4c1 was missing the word "noted", needs to update.
    - ii. Motion to approve by as amended by Trustee Young, seconded by Trustee Kokoros, motion approved unanimously.
3. Public Forum
  - A. Chair Hammonds explained the rules of the public forum, comment must be addressed to the Chair, and they will have 2 minutes maximum, 20-minute forum, and the Board does not respond.
  - B. 47 people signed up to speak for the public forum.
  - C. All public forum speakers (9 in total) spoke regarding one of the books that was part of the Watertown Public School's Suggested Summer Reading List for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, developed jointly by WFPL and WPS, "A Map for Falasteen" by Maysa Odeh.
  - D. The 9 public forum speakers were:
    - i. Kelly Linehan – Watertown resident, librarian at another city, share their support of the summer reading list.
    - ii. Merrie Najimy – Watertown resident, former president of Massachusetts Teachers' Association, shared their support of the summer reading list.
    - iii. Debra Neiman – Watertown resident, shared their concerns about a title on the summer reading list.
    - iv. Jae Johns – Watertown resident, librarian in another city, shared their support of the summer reading list.
    - v. Rachael Sack – Watertown resident, shared their concerns about a title on the summer reading list.
    - vi. Lisa Capoccia – Watertown resident, Watertown School Committee member, shared their support of the summer reading list.
    - vii. Sharon Krebs – Watertown resident, shared their concerns about a title on the summer reading list.
    - viii. Abby Yanov – Watertown resident, shared their support of the summer reading list.
    - ix. Andrea Fiorillo – Cambridge resident, librarian at another city, share their support of the summer reading list.
4. Financial Report
  - A. FY26 financial report presented by Trustee Kokoros.
    - i. The library has used 13.3% of the annual budget, on track.
    - ii. Griffin Fund update
    - iii. Burke Fund update
    - iv. Hatch financial update

- v. Motion to approve the financial report as reported by Trustee Murphy-Holroyd, seconded by Trustee Young, motion passed unanimously.

B. Consideration and Action on Acceptance of Donations

- i. Watertown Community Foundation donated \$2,610.75 to Project Literacy for the month of June and July.
- ii. Motion to approve the donation of \$2,610.75 by the Watertown Community Foundation to Project Literacy by Trustee Murphy – Holroyd, seconded by Trustee Su, motion passed unanimously.

5. Chair's Report

A. Chair Hammonds read the Statement of Policy in Response to Suggested Summer Reading List Feedback. A full copy of the statement is attached to the meeting minutes.

- i. The Chair asked the Trustees for their support in affirming our commitment of the current library Collection Development Policy.
- ii. Motion to affirm our commitment to the current library Collection Development Policy by Trustee Murphy Holroyd, seconded by Trustee Young, motion passed unanimously.

6. Director's Report

A. General Updates

- i. The new hygiene station has been a success with the help of City Public Health department.
- ii. You Belong postcards were sent out to neighborhoods that had the fewest card holders as an invitation to come to the library.
- iii. Community Outreach
  - a. WFPL's Leaning Corner during the Watertown Pride event was a success.
  - b. Carey, the teen librarian, met with Wayside and Dr. Daly of WPS as part of the Teen Advisory Board. Recruiting high school students that want to be mentors to middle school students about to enter high school.
  - c. Arsenal Park ribbon cutting event attended by Kim and Kirsten.
- iv. Programs
  - a. Grace Lin children's author event was a success with 200 participants.
  - b. Mid-summer reading party, with almost 350 participants attending.
  - c. Plant swap even had 150 participants.
  - d. Project Literacy has been busy with classes, all full, including mornings and evenings, Director Long mentioned her appreciation for all the volunteers.
  - e. Parent Class offered by Project Literacy was popular – the class help connect new Watertown residents to resources available and the introduce them to the community.
- v. Facilities updates
  - a. Hatch had to suddenly close due to plumbing issues at the residential building for 3.5 days.
  - b. New HVAC units for the library were ordered and will be installed in October – the City Council approved extra funding for new HVAC units.
- vi. Personnel updates
  - a. Michelle Lavelle was promoted from part-time to full-time Local History Specialist.
  - b. Alice Morrow is the new Hatch Coordinator.
  - c. Two Library Assistant II full time roles are starting, one in July and one in September.
  - d. Kathleen Brennan has accepted a new role as Head of Children's Librarian at another library. We will greatly miss her.

7. Old Business
  - A. No old business were discussed.
  
8. New Business
  - A. Consideration and Action on 2026 Gallery Application Proposal
    - i. The packet presented in the meeting included 13 applications, 7 applications were from Watertown residents and these were accepted. The remaining 6 applicants were non-residents and the library accepted in the order of the date these applications were received.
    - ii. Motion to approve the 2026 gallery applications as proposed by Trustee Young, seconded by Trustee Keary, motion passed unanimously.
  - B. Consideration and Action on WCOD (Watertown Commission on Disabilities) Request
    - i. Director Long / Allie Fry would like the Trustee's support to submit a grant to the Watertown Commission on Disabilities, which will request \$1,300 for live captioning (ASL and CART) services for a collaborative event between the WFPL, COD, and World in Watertown. The COD would like to fund these services for WFPL upon the submission of this grant.
    - ii. Motion to approved the grant application of \$1,300 to COD for the joint event by Trustee Murphy- Holroyd, seconded by Young, motion passed unanimously.
  - C. Consideration and Action on After Hours Event
    - i. Yo Yo Ma is performing at the Boston Symphony Hall on November 21, 2025, from 7-10 PM and has selected WFPL one of ten cultural organizations to livestream his Bach Project.
    - ii. The performance will extend past the normal library hours on that evening, and Director Long is asking for the approval of the extended library hours on November 21, 2025.
    - iii. Motion to approve the extended library hours on November 21, 2025 for the special Yo-Yo Ma livestream event by Trustee Young, seconded by Trustee Su, motion passed unanimously.
  
9. Requests for Information and Responses
  - A. There were no requests for information.
  
10. Date of next meeting
  - A. Sept 3, Wednesday at 7PM, at WFPL.
  
11. Adjournment @8:01
  - A. Motion to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Keary, seconded by Trustee Young, motion approved unanimously.

### **Statement of Policy in Response to Suggested Summer Reading List Feedback**

As chair of the Board of Trustees, I acknowledge the library's receipt last month of a Request for Reconsideration from a Watertown Resident. A Request for Reconsideration is a process outlined in our Collections Development Policy to consider moving a book to a different area within our collection or removing it from our collection entirely. In this instance the requestor asked that the library remove a title from the Watertown Public School's Suggested Summer Reading List. So, Library Director Long accepted this request in good faith as a courtesy and treated it as a feedback similar to a public comment. In light of this request and community inquiries on the Watertown Public School's Suggested Summer Reading List, as a chair, I want to fully transparent about this matter to the public and issue the following Statement.

To provide background relative to this request, the 2025 Watertown Public Schools Suggested Summer Reading List followed the same internal process previously used for the past 10 years. Library staff

reviewed the previous year's "Best of" lists, award winners, and reviews from established publishers. There is not any one person responsible for the selection of titles on the summer reading list. The list is initially drafted by professional library staff and those suggestions are sent to the Watertown Public Schools for their review before finalizing and publishing the final list.

None of the titles on any of the lists are required reading. The summer reading lists may or may not be used in an entirely voluntary manner at an individual or family's sole discretion.

WFPL's list process is consistent with Library policies and procedures, the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement, and their national professional standards for intellectual freedom. The Library curates the collection following board-approved policies and related national ALA procedures, which outline a range of selection criteria for the Library to weight in choosing materials, which library staff also apply to their process for reading lists. These criteria, include:

- Serving Library patrons of all ages and cultural backgrounds, realizing that patrons have diverse needs, interests, value systems, and reading abilities. Not all materials will be suitable for, or of interest to, all segments of the community.
- Current events and critical assessments in review media (book reviews and awards).
- Consistent with national library standards, the Library provides free and equitable access to a diverse range of library resources.
- The Library does not act *in local parentis*... the Library defers to parents' and families' own rights and responsibilities to guide their children's reading and the viewing of library materials as they so voluntarily choose. And finally,
- The Library endorses and defends the concept of intellectual freedom as protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and as codified by the ALA's Intellectual Freedom policies and principles.

Part of WFPL's mission is to provide access to books for readers of all ages and expand our understanding of people with different backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs.

The Library affirms its commitment to intellectual freedom and the rights of all individuals to choose their own literary pursuits in their own discretion.

Thank you.