

SCRANTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thursday, October 16, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the Scranton Public Library met in person and virtually on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at the Albright Memorial Library. President Quinn called the meeting to order

Present:

Ms. Sharon Quinn,
President

Ms. Karen Bazzarri,
Vice-President

Atty. Pat Clark
Treasurer

Mr. Tim McCabe,
Secretary

Ms. Daysi Carreto

Ms. Anita Cola

Mr. John Cowder

Ms. Mary Beth D'Andrea

Ms. Channel Evans Kearse

Dr. Daniel Ginsberg

Atty. Jaime Hailstone

Ms. Linda Koons

Mr. Keith Williams

Also:

Mr. Scott Thomas,
Chief Executive Officer

Ms. Michele Legate,
District Consultant

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

Ms. Jackie LaPolla,
Business Manager

Public Comment:

Ms. Joan Hodowanitz

Absent:

Dr. George Aulisio

Mr. William Davis

Mr. Joseph X. Garvey

Mr. Jim Henkelman

Atty. Brian Lenahan

Dr. Kenneth Mayers

at 3:31 PM.

Visit from Sandy Longo, LCLS Executive Director: Ms. Quinn and the Trustees welcomed Ms. Longo to the meeting. Mr. Thomas invited her to discuss the possibility of the library system adopting a "fine-free" policy and to address public relations matters. They began their discussion by proposing the elimination of fines for library use across all LCLS libraries. However, Ms. Longo pointed out that one of the seven LCLS libraries vocally opposed this proposal, as they view fines as a source of revenue. This disagreement creates a conflict, since the LCLS Board prefers to have unanimous support for the initiative. To seek potential compromises, a meeting has been scheduled with the system directors. The next LCLS Board meeting is set for November 24 at 4:45 PM. Mr. Thomas plans to attend and advocate for the shift to a "fine-free" system.

Ms. Longo then shared that in the past, the System had received PR services from Joe Gibbons, a retired reporter for the Scranton Times who also ran a PR and marketing business. Mr. Gibbons engaged with the System as a passion project and did not charge the standard rate for his services. Once Mr. Gibbons needed to resign, a system-wide PR team was established

to continue his work. However, with the need for a new website, a professional design firm will be required. Ms. Longo is working to obtain three quotes from three different local businesses, and Mr. Thomas requested that a PR RFP be written. Further discussion followed.

September Consent Agenda Items: Ms. Quinn asked if anyone had questions regarding the September Consent Agenda items. **Action Item:** Dr. Ginsberg moved to accept the September Board Meeting Minutes (once the change is made), the Treasurer's Report, the Statistical Report, and the CEO Report. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, and it passed.

Communications

Correspondence: Mr. Thomas announced that Jessica Serrenti, the IT and Digital Services Manager, has received the New Professional Librarian Honors Award from the Pennsylvania Library Association (PALA). Ms. Quinn will send a letter to Ms. Serrenti on behalf of the Board, congratulating her on her achievement.

Public Comment: Ms. Hodowantiz mentioned that during the last City Council meeting, she requested that a paper copy of the proposed 2026 budget be made available for public viewing at the library. She made a similar request at the County Commissioners' meeting, asking that their budget be distributed to all seven libraries in Lackawanna County.

Treasurer / Finance Committee Report: Atty. Clark noted that we are 75% through the year and have achieved 85% of our revenue while utilizing 75% of our expenses. This puts us ahead of schedule in terms of our budget. He mentioned that the District Library Center (DLC) is still awaiting funding from the state; in the meantime, the SPL operating budget is covering the DLC costs. Additionally, the Wells Fargo investments are performing well due to market increases.

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

Albright Building

Mechanical: On September 24, Mr. Cowder and Mr. LaPolla met with an engineer from Smith Miller Associates for an HVAC assessment of the Albright Library. Following a walk-through, Smith Miller Associates submitted a proposal on September 30 for \$7,800 to be completed within four weeks of signing. After Mr. Cowder requested clarifications, they provided a revised proposal on October 8, maintaining the original price. For comparison, the previous proposal from GPI Engineers was \$12,500. Mr. Cowder recommends that the Board approves this proposal promptly to finalize the budget and maintenance results before the end of the year.

Sewer: Nothing new to report.

Vine Street Commons: Nothing new to report.

Fence: Painting has been completed.

Elevator: Following an annual maintenance inspection on Thursday, October 9, Otis Elevator reported that the elevator requires a new hydraulic valve, new hydraulic fluid, and repacking of the lift cylinder. \$19,000 was quoted for this work, and the Library is responsible for the disposal of the used hydraulic fluid. Mr. Cowder concluded that the cost falls within the usual range for

these repairs and recommended Otis for the job, given the specialized materials involved and warranty concerns. At Mr. Thomas's request, Otis provided a detailed breakdown of the materials and labor needed for the work.

Nancy Kay Holmes Branch Library

Automatic Door: The door is operating.

Fencing: Mr. Cowder and Mr. Thomas will seek quotes from additional companies. The anticipated cost is approximately \$10,000.

Front Entrance Stairs: The concrete shows signs of spalling. KR Construction was notified of warranty repairs on September 24. Mr. Cowder provided the necessary specifications for the proper repair. Sam Backiewicz, KR's Construction Manager for this project, contacted the original contractor; however, the contractor refused to make the repairs. KR is currently seeking an alternative masonry contractor. Mr. Cowder emphasized that, due to the expected decrease in temperatures in the coming weeks, the repairs must be completed promptly to comply with the surfacing manufacturer's instructions.

Gutters: Mr. McCabe mentioned that the building's gutter system is showing wear and should be addressed. Mr. Cowder offered economic solutions, and Mr. Thomas added the suggestion to the capital project list.

Silkman House

On Tuesday, October 14, after Dunmore Borough Council approved it, Technical Services relocated its operations to the Dunmore Community Center and officially vacated Silkman House.

Children's Library

The portico's ceiling is damaged and requires emergency repair. The main entrance of the building is closed, and patrons are being directed to the side entrance. Alleyway traffic poses safety concerns. Ms. Longo is seeking repair quotes from three different construction companies.

Mr. Cowder noted that the Facilities Committee will meet in November to discuss future capital projects.

Public Relations Committee Report: Mr. Thomas reported that the Bookmobile remains the primary focus, along with the Reaper's Revenge fundraiser.

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

Reaper's Revenge: We are again partnering with Reaper's Revenge in Scott Township for the Halloween season. The library will receive \$2 per regular admission and \$5 per VIP ticket when the purchaser uses the special QR Code on the flyer.

Annual Appeal: Preparations are being made.

Mini-Golf: The event is scheduled for February 1, 2026.

The newly revamped Fundraising Committee is considering a fundraiser called Adopt-A-Book, proposed by Ms. McGee. After further research, Mr. Thomas is strongly in favor of the idea, and

the Committee has decided to move forward. They anticipate that the fundraiser will take place next fall.

Governance Committee Report: Nothing to report.

CEO Report: Mr. Thomas reported the following update-

Bookmobile: SPL's \$19,000 materials budget for the Bookmobile is under dispute. It was suggested that materials should not be purchased but borrowed from the shelves of other LCLS libraries. Mr. Thomas disagrees with this idea because it would involve offering outdated items, and he believes it would negatively impact circulation statistics for the other libraries. He and the Board strongly believe the Bookmobile should have a separate collection.

District Consultant Report: Mr. Thomas reported on behalf of Ms. Legate that the Office of Commonwealth Libraries has completed the user manual for Trustees. Ms. Legate will share the details of the manual at the November Board meeting.

New Business: Nothing to report.

Old Business:

Strategic Plan Update: Mr. Thomas shared that he is working on a package report to tell SPL's story, Ms. Shoener is designing a statistical sheet for the project, and a list of capital needs is also being developed.

Friends of the Scranton Public Library Report: Ms. McGee reported the following updates-

Boscov's Friends Helping Friends: 25% off coupons for the *Boscov's Friends Helping Friends* fundraising event will be sold at the Albright Library, the Children's Library, and the Nancy Kay Holmes Library for \$5. The event will be held on October 22 this year, and the group will be staffing a table at Boscov's. During the event, the group plans to offer patrons forms to submit recipes for SPL's cookbook fundraiser.

SPL Trustee's Fundraising Committee: Mr. Thomas invited President Jill Cadden and Carol Shoener to serve on the Trustee's Fundraising Committee.

Book Sale: The final book sale of 2025 will take place from December 2 to December 6. Mr. Thomas is reviewing the tentative 2026 sale dates. There will be four five-day sales at the Marketplace at Steamtown in March, June, September, and December, plus one sidewalk sale at Albright at the end of July. This plan, which involves four longer sales and one sidewalk sale, works better than this year's three longer sales and three sidewalk sales because setting up and packing up leftovers can be exhausting to do in one day. The longer sales usually bring in \$4,000 to \$5,000, while sidewalk sales earn about \$2,500.

Good and Welfare: Dr. Ginsberg read an article aloud on Hannah Carlson's book, "Pockets." The book discusses the evolution of garment pockets and how they help us navigate the world. The book can be found in the SPL collection.

Mr. Williams suggested that the Scranton Walkability Plan be accessible to patrons in the Reference department and the Nancy Kay Holmes Library.

Adjourn: Dr. Ginsberg made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Koons seconded, and the motion passed. The meeting ended at 4:49 PM.

The next hybrid meeting will be held at the Albright Memorial Library on November 20, 2025, at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. McCabe", written in a cursive style.

Tim McCabe
Secretary