



Rochester Public Library

More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

Meeting of the RPL Board of Trustees Central Library, Rundel Memorial Building March 25, 2026 Minutes

RPL Trustees Present: Donna Benjamin, Marcus Cooper, Matt McDermott (VP), Sarah Murphy Abbamonte (Secretary), Jeffrey Tucker, Mark Wyand (Treasurer) (quorum present)

RPL Trustees Excused: Gary Brandt (MCLS Liaison), Ellen Brenner (President), James Kraus, Sharon Salluzzo (Reynolds Liaison)

Staff and Guests: City Council Liaison Mitch Gruber; City Law Department Liaison Allison Bartlett; FFRPL Liaison Donna Borgus; staff members, Emily Clasper, Katy Hasselwander, Sarah Lehman, Debi Mansour, BJ Scanlon, Geraldine Scott

Vice President McDermott called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., welcomed trustees, staff, and guests, and confirmed a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public were present who wished to address the board.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the February 2026 meeting were approved as presented.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Personnel Manager Scott called attention to the personnel changes and staffing levels for February 14, 2026–March 6, 2026, and offered to answer questions. Trustee Benjamin MADE A MOTION to approve the personnel changes. Trustee Cooper seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Library Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the financial reports with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Murphy Abbamonte MADE A MOTION to approve the monthly financial reports as presented and approved by the RPL Finance Committee. Trustee Wyand seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee Recommendations

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Trustee Cooper presented the recommended new trustee appointments and offered to answer questions. Trustee Wyand MADE A MOTION to appoint Jessica Williams to

complete the unexpired term of Elizabeth Call, effective immediately, with a term ending date of December 31, 2029. Trustee Cooper seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Trustee Benjamin MADE A MOTION to appoint Jean-Paul Scott to complete the unexpired term of Sarah Murphy Abbamonte, effective May 2, 2026, with a term ending date of December 31, 2028. Trustee Cooper seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

FFRPL Grant For Circulating Materials

Director Clasper reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Benjamin MADE A MOTION to accept the 2026 FFRPL Grant for Circulating Materials allocation of \$117,258.24. Trustee Tucker seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Central Library Evening Event Late Closing

Director Clasper reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Benjamin MADE AN AMENDED MOTION to keep the first floor of the Central Library's Rundel Building open an additional three hours until 8 PM on June 5 to accommodate the opening of an exhibit in the Mascioli Gallery commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution subject to a pending security review. Trustee Cooper seconded. After discussion, THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Closure of Frederick Douglass Community Library on April 3, 2026

Deputy Director Scanlon reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Benjamin MADE A MOTION to close the Frederick Douglass Community Library on Friday, April 3, 2026, to accommodate an RG&E transformer replacement. Trustee Murphy Abbamonte seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DASNY Grant

Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Cooper MADE A MOTION to accept DASNY funds of \$100,000 to purchase technology equipment for the Branch libraries. Trustee Benjamin seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Pomeroy Foundation Grant

Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Murphy Abbamonte MADE A MOTION to accept a Pomeroy Foundation grant in the amount of \$2,478.29 to purchase a historical transportation marker for the Feeder Canal in the City of Rochester. Trustee Benjamin seconded. After discussion, THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Love Your Library Grant Agreement

Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the item with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Wyand MADE A MOTION to approve an agreement with Monroe County Library System for the administration of the Love Your Library grant program. Trustee Cooper seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

REPORTS & DISCUSSION

Liaison from the Friends & Foundation of RPL (FFRPL)

Executive Director Borgus reported that Books Sandwiched In programs were going well, with recordings available on the FFRPL website, and announced the next review: *Mother Emanuel* by Kevin Sack, to be presented by Reverend Myra Brown of Spiritus Christi.

Director’s Report

Director Clasper reported that the New York State Board of Regents was expected to vote that day on revisions to the minimum standards for public libraries. She explained that the changes were largely administrative and centered on policy wording and placement, giving added weight to certain required policies. She noted that the direct impact on RPL would be limited because many of the required policies already existed, but that several would need updating and all relevant policies would need to be properly posted for the public.

Clasper highlighted that a key element of the revisions was the requirement for a collection development policy, including reconsideration procedures and explicit acknowledgment of diverse viewpoints, which she characterized as an important defensive tool against book bans. She added that the State Library was recommending (but not requiring) language addressing AI-generated materials in collection policies, and she advised that RPL should incorporate such language because these materials were already appearing in vendor offerings.

She further explained that, in her dual role with MCLS, RPL’s policy updates would serve as a model to help town libraries across the system meet the same standards. She anticipated a comprehensive policy review process over the coming months and indicated that the board’s policy committee would need to reconvene to undertake this work.

In addition, Clasper reported that she would attend the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference in Minneapolis, describing it as a valuable biennial, public-library-focused professional event. She also announced that the newly renovated Maplewood Community Library would quietly open to the public on April 6, with a formal grand opening in May once operations and landscaping were fully in place. Finally, she noted that National Library Week (April 19–25) would feature multiple events and advocacy activities, some of which she had listed in the important dates section of her written report.

Central Library Report

Associate Director Lehman reported that National Library Week programming would run throughout the week, highlighting Central library collections, divisions, and staff work. She noted that on Friday, April 24 at 8:00 a.m. the library would host a legislative breakfast, with invitations to be sent soon, and that later that same day there would be a screening of *Librarians* in the Kate Gleason Auditorium in partnership with WXXI, with registration available on the WXXI website.

Lehman further reported that on Monday, March 30, RocPaint would begin work on a new mural in the lower-level Link. The mural would feature five authors (primarily in the sci-fi/fantasy genre), including Octavia Butler, plus quotes and the City of Rochester symbol. She explained that the design was informed by a staff and patron survey, which found that people most strongly associated the library with being “creative, safe, free, and productive.” She emphasized that the featured authors represent voices not traditionally highlighted in the genre and that the design reflects the library’s values.

Community Libraries Report

Deputy Director Scanlon reported that PurpleAir air-quality sensors had been installed at the Arnett and Lincoln branches, with additional installations planned at Lyle and Wheatley.

He updated the board that the Phillis Wheatley Community Library roof repair equipment had arrived, and work was scheduled to begin the week of April 13, requiring branch closures on April 15 and April 29 for crane operations; staff would remain in the building those days to work on shelving and storage projects.

Scanlon noted that RPL and FFRPL co-submitted a Joseph Rippy grant request for \$44,000 to supplement programming and included \$3,000 for staff training. He further reported that branch staff days were being organized with a comprehensive report to follow once finalized; that he had joined the ArtsBloom review panel to evaluate city arts grant applications; and that RPL was working with Brockport and the city Department of Human Resources to bring social work interns into branches. There is currently one at the Lincoln branch, with a plan to seek three placements next year at Lincoln, Charlotte, and Central.

Finally, he announced plans to provide Heartsaver AED training for RPL staff in partnership with Rochester Regional Health and the Rochester Fire Department, and he praised the work of City HR's new health and safety coordinator, Marinna Parrish, for significantly improving safety walkthroughs and securing AED units for all branches.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President McDermott asked that trustees consider volunteering to be the Liaison to the MCLS Board. The MCLS board meets on the third Monday of each month at 5:00. He also noted that the Board will need to elect a new Secretary; and he reminded everyone that the next meeting will be on April 22.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10.01 a.m.

Sarah Murphy Abbamonte, Secretary