

THE FERGUSON LIBRARY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
September 16, 2025

Present:

Board Members: R. Mercede (Chair); M. Mays Green (Vice Chair); A. George (Treasurer); S. O'Shea (Secretary); S. Frederick; A. Livingston; T. Lucero; L. Miller

Citizen Advisors: A. Better-Wirz; A. Bingaman; E. Bromley; B. Brucker; S. Fitzgerald; J. Freeman; W. Hill; A. LiVolsi; R. McManus; M. Millian; M. Moore; J. Orlikoff; R. Shaw; D. Stein

Guests: Gordon Yeager

Staff: A. Knapp; J. Fulcher Anderson; L. Avellar; N. Bochicchio; C. Hubbard; S. LaPerla; D. Lyles; A. Marrocolla;

Board Chair RJ Mercede called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm. With a few new members of the Board and Citizen Advisers, everyone was asked to introduce themselves.

Minutes

A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the June 17, 2025 Board Minutes. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

The June financials reflected some budget pressures, largely due to higher-than-expected costs for part-time and over-time hours in the Maintenance Department. We were over budget due to the move from the South End Branch to Southfield, a long-term employee on extended sick leave for much of the fiscal year, and the added expense of a part-time supervisor. Accounts payable at the end of June included some bills that arrived after the month-end, and accrued paid time off (PTO) remains a recognized liability.

July's financials indicated that spending is generally on target across most expense categories, and the City's annual allotment is expected soon. Treasurer Andy George noted the importance of maintaining a \$500,000 reserve cushion to safeguard against potential financial pressures.

Alice Knapp announced that Keith Mueller has joined the leadership team as Chief Financial Officer and Director of Administrative Services.

CEO Reports

Ms. Knapp introduced Susan LaPerla who presented a detailed report on the Strategic Framework Dashboard and the June CEO report, which focused on a year-end review. The report showed that while the number of in-house programs has remained relatively

the same as last year, the attendance numbers have notably increased. It also highlighted several new programs that drew larger audiences.

The July CEO report focused on identifying future trends in libraries, including emerging technologies, such as AR and VR experiences, expanding digital collections, and the growing demand for flexible spaces. The August CEO report highlighted the success of the Summer Reading and Learning Clubs programs, along with a range of community outreach programs.

Executive Committee

Mr. Mercede said the Executive Committee met on September 15, 2025 and discussed the agenda for today's board meeting.

Building Committee

Steven Frederick gave a report on the August 12, 2025 Building Committee Meeting. BLT (Building Land Technology) informed the library that it would have to vacate 78 Southfield Avenue by August 16. The Lathon Wider Center (the South End Branch location) is still being repaired and won't be available until mid-fall (at the earliest). The Lafayette (a new apartment building), located at 821 East Main Street, has offered the library a temporary space for a pop-up library. The audiovisual repairs at the Main Library and Bennett Branch are near completion. The Main Library HVAC repair is still ongoing, and phase one installation is expected to begin this fall. Main's youth services area is being redesigned to make better use of its space and will be funded by the Ferguson Library Foundation. Ed and Sue Greenberg's donation of \$200,000 will allow the Bennett Branch Youth Services space to be renovated. This new area will be named after the Greenbergs. A number of smaller projects were discussed: Main Library lobby doors are being repaired, EV charging stations at the Bennett Branch will be reformatted to a payment system.

Long Range Planning Committee

The Long Range Planning Committee met on August 14, 2025 and Stephanie O'Shea provided an update on the meeting. The committee met with Dominique Moore and Angla Hunt of My Architecture Workshops to discuss their efforts on community conversations and how we could use them to prepare for our strategic plan. This group has worked with the City of Stamford on the Jackie Robinson Park and Cove/East Side plans. The library is planning a board retreat this November with My Architecture Workshops.

Foundation Library Board

Prior to the Foundation's annual board meeting scheduled for September 18, 2025 the Ferguson Library Board of Trustees will need to adopt the Foundation budget, as well as new officers for the Foundation board.

The Foundation budget was presented, a motion made and seconded to approve the budget. All voted in favor.

A new slate of Foundation board officers, along with new Foundation board members, was presented. The motion was made, seconded, and all voted in favor.

Election of New Foundation Trustees for 2025-2028

Ellen Bromley
Gordon Yeager

Election of Foundation Officers for 2025-2026

Chair	Ann H. Zucker
Vice Chair	Ellen Bromley
Treasurer	Anderson R. Livingston
Secretary	Michael A. Hyman

Foundation Board of Trustees

Robert J. Granata	2023-2026
Polly O'Brien Morrow	2023-2026
Stephanie O'Shea	2023-2026
Mary Sommer	2023-2026
Ann Zucker	2023-2026

George Boyce	2024-2027
Scott Conley	2024-2027
Michael Hyman	2024-2027
Sopong Kim	2024-2027
Anderson Livingston	2024-2027
Robyn Whittingham	2024-2027

Ellen Bromley	2025-2028
Gordon Yeager	2025-2028

The Library board was also asked to approve the resolution for the receipt of two special gifts from the Foundation board.

Resolved:

That the Ferguson Library Board of Trustees accept the following two gifts from the Ferguson Library Foundation:

- \$100,000 to refresh the first floor of the Main Library Youth Services Area
- \$37,000 to work with My Architecture Workshop to conduct community conversations for the strategic plan

A motion was made and seconded to accept these gifts; all voted in favor and the motion carried.

Friends of Ferguson

Anne Bingaman, the new Friends President, gave a brief update on the recent Arts & Crafts on Bedford Street and the Friends Book Shop participation, which garnered a

record sales profit. There are a number of upcoming events that were mentioned: the library's partnering with Avon Theatre on October 29, to show the film *The Librarians* followed by a panel discussion. A Civility lecture on September 17 with Karen Elliott House on her book about Mohammed Bin Salam; Celebrity Chef and Cookbook author Lidia Bastianich on October 28; bestselling biographer Andrew Morton on October 23 who will discuss his new book *Winston and the Windsors*; and bestselling author David Baldacci will be here on November 11 to discuss his newest book in the Nash series.

Old Business

HVAC Update

Phase 2 of the HVAC project will be going out to bid soon. Phase 1 is near completion.

New Business

2024-2025 Annual Report

A draft version of the 2024-2025 Annual Report was provided for review.

Citizen Advisors and Committee Assignments for 2025-2026

A list of citizen advisors and committee assignments for 2025-2026 was distributed.

Board Retreat – November 1

Ms. Knapp mentioned the board retreat scheduled for November 1, 2025 at 10 am. Dominique Moore and Angla Hunt of My Architecture Workshops will conduct the session.

All Day Staff Professional Development Day

Connie Hubbard spoke about the library's second all staff professional development day set for Friday, November 7, with Chuck Presbury presiding. The theme is "Ferguson – Better Together". It will have a keynote speaker and distribute service awards to staff. The board and citizen advisors are welcome to attend a reception following at the First Presbyterian Church.

No executive session was held, but Mr. Mercede asked the Board of Trustees to turn in their signed conflict of interest form.

With no further business, Mr. Mercede motioned for the meeting to end; it was moved and passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Stephanie O'Shea
Secretary