

DRAFT Minutes for DFPL Board of Trustees Meeting 9.17.2025

Call to order:

A regular monthly meeting of the Dobbs Ferry Library Board of Trustees was held on September 17, 2025 at the Dobbs Ferry Public Library. The meeting began at 7:30pm and was presided over by Linda Stutz as President, David Tabacoff as Vice President and Jennifer Andrews as Secretary.

Attendees:

- Voting members in attendance: Linda Stutz, *President*, David Tabacoff, *Vice President*, Jennifer Andrews, *Secretary*, Erika Abelon, Sam Gruen, Alex Peck, Inna Livitz, David Agosto
- Library Staff in attendance: Erik Carlson, Director, Donna Garofalo, clerk, taking minutes
- Guests: None
- Members not in attendance: None

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the previous three meetings were reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees. No corrections or changes were requested.

Review:

1. President's Report

Trustee Terms:

- Discussed resolving the discrepancy between the Charter (5-year terms) and village code (3-year terms).
- Background: Terms changed two years ago to 3 years to support easier recruitment.
- Board discussion: Re-upping allowed for three, 3-year terms; concern over turnover and onboarding was noted but seen as manageable.
- Decision: Change Charter to match 3-year terms; Terry of WLS to provide guidance.
- Motion: To change the charter to reflect three-year terms. Motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Recruitment:

- Alyssa Kociuruba has unfortunately resigned due to work commitments. Her resignation triggers search for a new Trustee.
- Board members encouraged to review contacts for potential candidates, and the Director will post a call for Trustees on the Library website, newsletter, and the Mayor's email newsletter.

Committee Assignments and Slate of Officers:

- Committee assignment draft available on Google Drive.
- Inna agreed to replace Jennifer as Secretary starting in January 2026; other officers to remain unchanged.
- Research Committee decommissioned for now, could reconvene as a task force if needed.

- Building Task Force revived for upcoming projects, with chair and members named, and NY Forward Task Force noted as a separate group.
- All Trustees were invited to indicate interest in further assignments.

Gala and Fundraising:

- Rivertowns Libraries / Chamber of Commerce Gala has been postponed to March of 2026.
- Bios and headshots for library honoree requested for submission by October 1.
- Training session attended by members raised questions about trustee fundraising—legally permissible, but strategic caution needed (e.g., to avoid implication of surplus funds).
- Action items: Policy committee to compile fundraising communications from lawyer, clarify guidance, and coordinate outreach to other libraries and legal/training resources for best practices.

2. Director's Report

- New library clerk Christina DeRusso hired; strong background in PR and communications; expected to support outreach and social media work alongside Rose.
- Patron banned for repeated misconduct; action documented per procedure, with support from police.
- Construction aid grant awarded: covers half of the costs for new carpeting, a compressor, security cameras, and upgrades to the teen area.
- Library banner redesign and placement in progress; pneumatic lift has been repaired, measurements for installation completed.
- Friends of Wicker Creek exhibit moved from Village Hall to library entrance; plans to update its casing and move to the current CD area when CDs are removed.
- New carpeting has been installed on the first floor.
- HVAC: Compressor repairs continue to be a large financial burden; Ossining Library's HVAC struggles and bond issue discussed as a precedent.
- Next steps: Develop a financially strategic case for further upgrades, leveraging usage data, environmental and budgetary impact. Engage with DPW, frame arguments to Village for a larger library upgrade similar to Ossining. Director asked to draft a letter to Village for Board review and input.
- Saturday morning library hours continued with generally positive staff feedback.
- A January retirement party for staff member is needed.

3. Librarians' Report

- Summer reading program had robust engagement: over 150 children, approximately 30 adults; teen sign-up remained low.
- Positive numbers reported for general program attendance
- Trustee expressed concern about the lack of teen engagement in recent months of programming; Director noted a need for staff performance review and support.

4. Friends of the Library

- Friends to participate in Oct 3 Ferry Festa with quilt raffle, chair massage fundraiser. Holiday sale planned for December 6.
- Mini-golf fundraiser planned for January; efforts being made to secure larger sponsors, both local and beyond. Suggestion made that mini-golf be advertised during the well-attended Halloween haunted house at Library.
- Fundraising remains challenging due to senior-dominated membership, minimal endowment returns, and limited participation by younger community members.
- Discussions included recruiting a fundraising consultant and/or leveraging Christina's expertise for PR support.
- Board noted the need to review the financial management of the Friends endowment and the potential for a cooperation agreement to align common goals.
- Discussion ongoing about best practices and boundaries for joint fundraising and expenditure.

5. Committee Reports

Policy Committee:

- Work in progress on template letters for reconsideration of collection items; aiming for alignment with ALA policies.
- Need to revisit Alyssa's uncompleted work.

Finance Committee:

- Budget and construction aid contracts reviewed and approved; processes proceeding smoothly and finances in order.
- No concerns for the current fiscal year.

Personnel Committee:

- Employee Handbook review continues, with outside legal review and higher-than-expected legal expenses incurred.
- Project completion expected later in the year.

Building Task Force: NY Forward Grant

- Trustees thanked Alex Peck for his thoughtful work on the Library's grant proposal. Community plaza redesign presented as aligned with NY Forward Grant priorities.
- Main elements: glass wall for visibility, new exterior false ceiling, kitchen remodel with exterior service window, and a public art budget.
- Librarians have been asked to generate lists of possible event/program ideas for the proposed spaces and gather reference images of past events.

Old Business

Items for Vote

- Approval for decommissioning outdated equipment and furniture given; bundled approval as a group motion.
- WLS Service Level Agreement (IT/digital content services) approved.

Announcements and Upcoming

- Next meetings scheduled: October 15 and November 19, 2025.
- Board training with Terry Kirchner scheduled for 7pm before next two Board meetings, offering required continuing education credits. Trustees encouraged to suggest topics for Terry to cover.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting ended at 8:45pm.

Secretary signature: Jennifer Andrews 9/30/2025

Date of approval by the Board: