FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BERKELEY HEIGHTS

Board of Trustees September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Board President Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Barnes read the following statement: “In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this meeting was advertised by legal notices in the Courier News. Notice was also posted at Town Hall, BHPL Website and sent to TAPinto BH at least 48 hours in advance. This meeting was included in a list of meetings approved December 8, 2025.”

1. Roll Call

Board members present: Mary Jean Barnes, Chris Reilly, Patty Pinies, Diane O’Halloran, Liz Gosen, Athena Sapir, BH Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kim Feltre, Mayor’s Alternate Susan Poage

Also present: BHPL Director Amy Steinbauer, BHPL Assistant Director Maureen Langley

2. Secretary’s Report

Board member Reilly motioned to approve the August 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes seconded by Gosen. All in favor and the motion passed.

Board member Gosen motioned to approve the August 2026 Executive Session Board Minutes, seconded by Reilly. All in favor and the motion passed.

3. Treasurer’s Report

Board Treasurer Gosen reviewed the August 2026 Financial Report, noting an increase in salary expected with new full time staff and regular weekend hours beginning in September. Reilly noted the improved format of the financial report. Gosen noted that the library is working with the township to determine the total cost of benefits and possible increases. It was noted that the Database budget line is over. Director Steinbauer indicated that the Overdrive bill was placed into that budget line incorrectly and will have it rectified.

The board reviewed the September 2026 Bill List and O’Halloran motioned to approve the September 2026 Bill List with a total of $27,273.00, seconded by Sapir. All in favor and the motion passed.

4. Correspondence and Gifts
None at this time.

5. Board Reports

Facility Committee

- The town will be sending regular updates concerning the roof repair project.
    - September 30 is the estimated timeline for completion.
    - No new leaks noted.
- Town has confirmed via the mold report that no remediation needs to begin until after the completion of the roof project.
- Head of Access continues to work on acquiring new circulation desk
    - A plan has been presented to the Facility Committee concerning the need for the updated desk, which will benefit both the patrons and staff, and include an indoor book drop.
    - QPA and the library lawyer have determined we need 3 quotes for the project.
    - The library will need to discuss the project as it pertains to structural changes as listed in the shared services agreement.
- Accessibility door project
    - Director Steinbauer discussed the need for the update including ADA compliance and sound dampening.
    - The committee has chosen Eastern Door Services as the vendor
    - Director Steinbauer will work with the town concerning a memorandum requesting this update.

Finance Committee

- The committee has completed the review and revision of the 2025 Audit for clarity and consistency.
    - Reilly motioned to approve the 2025 Audit, seconded by Gosen. All in favor and the motion passed.
- Treasurer Gosen presented the Excess Funds calculation, which will be presented to the town, along with the 2025 Audit, as part of the annual report
    - Gosen motioned to approve the 2025 Excess Funds calculation, seconded by Reilly. All in favor and the motion passed.
- O'Halloran motioned to approve the Annual State And Condition Of The Library Report as prepared by Director Steinbauer, seconded by Gosen. All in favor and the motion passed.

Personnel Committee

- Poage motion to approve the Head of Youth Services at the salary range of $75,000-$80,000, seconded by O'Halloran. All in favor and the motion passed.
- Treasurer Gosen estimates $118,000 average spend for benefits.

Bylaws and Policies Committee

- Nothing to report.

Technology Committee

- Nothing to report.

Marketing Committee

- Nothing to report.

Friends

- Bubbakoo fundraiser less successful than previous restaurant fundraisers
- Currently planning events for National Friends of the Library Week October 18-24
- Working with the library to determine best practices for running the Defensive Driving class

Also, at 7:48 pm Kristin Hayes of Wiley Malehorn Sirota & Raynes, Attorneys at Law, arrived at the meeting.

6. Citizen Hearing (Name and address)

David Sankel
75 Grandview Ave.

7. Director's Report

Director Steinbauer noted the format change of the report and noted that the library has received the grant funds earmarked for the consortium costs. The Marketing report has been reinstated and the board has asked that the report should include strategy and impact. Starting in October, the new Outreach Librarian will also present a report to the board.

8. Liaison's Report

- Schools/Superintendent
    - Great start to the school year
    - Delay in security cameras but PA systems are done
    - Currently discussions of Media Center renovations, depending on timelines, there may be a disruption of programs next Summer
    - Strategic plan is informing goals
    - First round of learning walks complete
    - Cell phone state mandate, Seniors shared that they appreciate not being attached to their phones
        - Board games now present in cafeteria
    - Met Diana, new Outreach Librarian, at Back-to-school Nights
- Mayor/Township
    - Lots on the upcoming council meeting agenda
    - Police looking to expand due to population increase
        - Anticipated more with opening of Connell
        - Lots of traffic coming into town during the week
    - Discussion of stop sign on Washington Ave. and Berkeley
    - Ongoing work on the Sewer Plant
    - Littell-Lord Fall Festival Event on October 17, library will be in attendance

        - Littell-Lord has received over $200,000 in grants for renovations
    - Poage will reach out to to Liza for building renovation updates
    - Upcoming flag raising for Hispanic Heritage Month

9. Old Business

The board is authorized to create an ad hoc strategic planning committee for the purposes of the strategic planning process. Board member Sapir was designated as board representative to the steering committee.

10. New Business

No new business.

At 8:17pm, Board President Barnes motioned to approve a 5 min break, seconded by Poage. All in favor and the motion passed.

The board returned to session at 8:21pm. Brent R. Pohlman of Methfessel & Werbel, P.C. arrived at the meeting room.

11. Executive Session

Board President Barnes read the Resolution to enter the Executive Session. Gosen motioned to enter into Executive Session, seconded by Reilly. All in favor and the motion passed. The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:23pm.

Board exited Executive Session at 9:37pm; no action was taken.

12. Adjournment

Director Steinbauer reminded the board of the LUCC Trustees Reception on Sept. 30 from 5:30-8 at the Cranford Public Library, where BHPL staff member Catherine Matera will receive an award.

There being no further business, Barnes moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:40pm, seconded by Poage, all voted in favor, and the motion passed.