

## **Rocky River Public Library**

### **Board of Trustees Meeting**

**Wednesday, December 10, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Board of Rocky River Public Library was held in the Auditorium of the Library on Wednesday, December 10 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Don Bierut, Jenny Fisher, Stacey Ganor, Ann Gynn, Deborah Huff, and Cynthia Schafer

Not Present: Matt Knickman

Also Present: Peter Matera, (Director), Trent Ross (Deputy Director), and Will Costello (Fiscal Officer)

**1.CALL TO ORDER:** President Jenny Fisher called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

### **2.BUSINESS OF THE BOARD**

**a) APPROVAL OF OCTOBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES:** Ms. Fisher asked for any changes or corrections to the meeting minutes. Ms. Ganor made a motion to approve the October Board Meetings Minutes seconded by Ms. Gynn. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

**FISCAL OFFICER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:** Mr. Costello reported the rate drop that occurred on December 10, will continue to impact reserves and interest earnings. This impact was already considered during budgeting and forecasting. Ongoing discussions with Brian Carter at Fifth Third will focus on strategies to maximize interest income as rates decline, including shifting toward longer-term CDs to balance the portfolio and secure higher yields over time. The General Fund is in essentially the same position as this time last year, which is a positive outcome. Through October, the General Fund shows a surplus of nearly \$900,000. By year-end, the expectation is to finish at break-even or better - a significant improvement over the original 2025 budget projections. Every revenue category is performing at or above budget, and expenses are below budget across all categories, resulting in favorable variances throughout. Mr. Costello noted this is due to strong expense management by administration. The Emily Bishop gift positively impacted results, but other revenue categories also exceeded expectations. Interest income is above budget. Public Library Fund (PLF) revenues are slightly above budget. Real estate taxes and homestead revenues are tracking as expected. Miscellaneous revenue includes a notable reimbursement from the county for appraisal fees that came in under cost. Overall, financial performance is significantly better than budgeted, even after planned transfers. The Capital Fund is projected to end the year with approximately \$2 million. Planned transfers were discussed previously in Finance Committee meetings and will be reviewed further. Going forward, year-to-date expenditures from all funds will be included in board packets to provide a clearer

picture of total spending across all funds, not just the General Fund. Ms. Schafer made a motion to approve the October Finance Report seconded by Mr. Bierut. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2025 FINANCIALS:** Ms. Schafer made a motion to approve the September 2025 Financials, seconded by Mr. Bierut. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2025 GIFT REPORT:** Mr. Matera mentioned several generous donations in October including gifts from Emily Bishop, Lois Miskoe, RRPL Foundation, and the RRPL Trustees in honor of Melissa Stickney. Ms. Gynn made a motion to approve the October 2025 Gift Report, seconded by Mr. Bierut. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 06-25 PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2026** Mr. Costello explained while some libraries adopt a temporary appropriation at the start of the year and then approve permanent appropriation later, RRPL adopts a permanent appropriation. Adjustments may be made if needed because the library appropriates at the fund level not by individual line item. The proposed resolution communicates to the county that the library has sufficient resources available and is authorized to expend up to the stated dollar amounts without requiring additional resolutions. This is intended to prepare for anticipated major expenditures. Capital planning is informed by a facilities maintenance report that is updated regularly. Funds are transferred to ensure adequate preparation for building maintenance and upcoming capital needs. It was emphasized that the appropriations represent the maximum authorized spending levels and do not obligate the library to spend the full amounts. Mr. Costello also noted statutory deadlines: a temporary appropriation must be approved before year-end, and a permanent appropriation must be approved by March. Ms. Schafer moved to approve Resolution 06-2025, seconded by Ms. Fisher. The roll was called; the vote resulted as follows:

Roll Call	Yes	No	Absent
Mr. Bierut	x		
Ms. Fisher	x		
Ms. Ganor	x		
Ms. Gynn	x		
Ms. Huff	x		
Mr. Knickman			x
Ms. Schafer	x		

**APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 07-25 TO TRANSFER FUNDS FROM GENERAL 101 FUND TO THE CAPITAL FUND 401:** Mr. Costello recommends the transfer of \$1,000,000 to the

Capital Fund. The Capital Fund is expected to end the fiscal year with approximately \$2,000,000, and this transfer would increase the balance in anticipation of a major HVAC capital expenditure. While the Library had previously planned for a \$2.5 million project cost as a conservative estimate, the building assessment projected \$1.6 million. Carrier submitted a budgetary estimate of approximately \$1.3 million, which is significantly lower than earlier projections. Ohio Schools Council (OSC) offers access to a state-approved HVAC vendor, Gardner. Use of the OSC vendor would eliminate the need for competitive bidding. Gardner is scheduled to conduct a walkthrough to provide a preliminary estimate. Once that estimate is received, administration will determine whether to proceed through OSC or pursue competitive bidding. An additional benefit of working through OSC is access to grant-writing services. OSC will evaluate whether the project meets eligibility criteria for energy efficiency grants related to HVAC upgrades. If eligible, OSC would facilitate the grant application process. The grants would focus on energy cost savings and may include related systems such as LED lighting, though much of that conversion has already been completed. It was noted that the next round of grant funding would occur in September. Some portions of the project could begin prior to grant approval, with grant funds potentially applied retroactively. Mr. Costello stated that administration does not expect the final HVAC cost to reach \$2.5 million and anticipates a more realistic range of \$1.3 to \$1.8 million, but feels the \$1,000,000 transfer remains appropriate. While investment earnings flow to the General Fund regardless of fund placement, transferring the funds to the Capital Fund reflects proper financial planning and communicates the intent to reserve funds for capital projects. This is a one-time transfer, and future annual transfers are not required. In response to Mr. Bierut's question regarding levy planning, administration confirmed that discussions with the schools continue to suggest 2027 as a potential timeline. Ms. Ganor moved to approve Resolution 07-2025, seconded by Ms. Gynn. The roll was called; the vote resulted as follows:

<b>Roll Call</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Mr. Bierut	x		
Ms. Fisher	x		
Ms. Ganor	x		
Ms. Gynn	x		
Ms. Huff	x		
Mr. Knickman			x
Ms. Schafer	x		

**APPROVAL OF 2026 EMPLOYEE RATES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 21, 2025:** Mr. Matera noted the proposed rates from the salary schedule include a 3% across-the-board

increase and additional adjustments for employees identified in the compensation study as low in range or impacted by peer equity. All compensation elements discussed are reflected in the proposal. The updated salary structure and pay grades were provided for informational purposes only and do not require approval. One employee at the top of the salary range will not receive the 3% increase and will instead receive a lump-sum payment. Five new hires will remain at their current rates as listed. Under the new hiring procedure, employees hired between October 1 and December 31, 2025 will be eligible for the across-the-board increase in April 2026, subject to good standing. This increase is budgeted but will be reflected later through a personnel adjustment rather than the salary schedule. Mr. Bierut made a motion to approve the 2026 Employee Rates effective December 21, 2025, seconded by Ms. Huff. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

**DIRECTORS REPORT:** Mr. Matera reported the salary schedule did reflect the positions updated in the Circulation restructure recently added to the board site. The access control upgrade started Tuesday, December 9th. The team has been diligent in marking all the doors affected. The software has been installed which allows for a lot of control such as programming key cards for specific doors in specific zones, or group doors together. Trent credentialed all the new key cards into the software system and delivered them to managers. The maglocks that were on the emergency exits in the stairwells have been removed. IPS has been very informative and accessible and they work very quickly. Mr. Costello reported on a recent meeting with Greg Marcus from Rocky River Schools to explore health insurance options. Mr. Markus came very well prepared and obtained detailed numbers from their broker. Overall, the option is something worth continued consideration, but it was not a clear yes or no. One notable positive is that the school system switched to Anthem last year, which aligns with our current carrier. In general, the plans are competitive and comparable, but there are trade-offs that would need to be carefully weighed. The school district shops insurance every three years and operates under three-year contracts. Mr. Markus shared that the district does not typically move carriers unless there are significant savings, which is what prompted their recent move to Anthem. While there is potential to move again if something highly competitive emerges, this would require a vote among the 17 districts in the cooperative, making it a complex process. The cooperative could absorb our group with comparable plans, though one option would result in slightly higher costs. This raises the question of whether the added security of being in a co-op outweighs the flexibility of remaining on our own. There was also agreement that shared messaging and collaboration between the school system, and the library would be a positive signal to the community. The consensus was that this warrants further conversation, with additional numbers brought to the board at a future meeting to fully evaluate the pros and cons before making any decision. Mr. Matera mentioned that the state is requiring a formal cyber security program by **July 1<sup>st</sup>**. This program goes beyond a single policy and must address multiple components, including incident response, backup strategies, staff training, and risk management. He reported that the library already has several

cybersecurity measures in place, but additional work is needed to fully meet state requirements. A new training initiative—developed in partnership with Clevnet and the Ohio Cyber Range Institute will help staff understand all required elements and support the development of the full program. A kickoff meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, with managers and selected board members invited to attend. Most staff and trustees will complete a short, general cybersecurity training, while a small group of administrators will complete more advanced modules. The Technology Training Department plays a central role in this effort. Amy Gallagher, Technology Administrator, oversees cybersecurity as part of her role. Doug Fink leads staff training and is key to making complex cybersecurity concepts accessible to employees. Senior leadership and staff with higher-risk system access will also participate in advanced planning and safeguards. The library has already taken steps toward cybersecurity readiness, including organization-wide multi-factor authentication and long-standing use of a password manager. These practices have contributed to a strong cybersecurity culture across the organization. Following training and planning, a resolution to adopt the cybersecurity program will be presented to the Board prior to the July 1 deadline.

**APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER PERSONNEL REPORT:** Mr. Matera noted this report with eight new appointments reflects the work that was done over the last few months in terms of employment. Melissa Naymik who previously worked in the youth department is now working as training services specialist. Circulation Assistant Bryan McNamara, who recently celebrated his 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at RRPL retired Friday, December 5th. Ms. Ganor made a motion to approve the November and December Personnel Report seconded by Ms. Huff. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL RESOLUTION 08-25 APPOINTING THE FISCAL OFFICER AND DEPUTY FISCAL OFFICER FOR 2026:** Mr. Costello noted the date was changed in Resolution 08-25 in the last paragraph from 2025 to 2026 after the packet was sent last week. Ms. Gynn made a motion to approve as amended, Resolution 08-25 Appointing the Fiscal Officer and Deputy Fiscal Officer, seconded by Mr. Bierut. The roll was called; the vote resulted as follows:

Roll Call	Yes	No	Absent
Mr. Bierut	x		
Ms. Fisher	x		
Ms. Ganor	x		
Ms. Gynn	x		
Ms. Huff	x		
Mr. Knickman			x
Ms. Schafer	x		

Motion carried.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Ms. Fisher announced the slate of officers for 2026, which will be voted on at the next board meeting on January 28, 2026. Historically, officers of the Board have been selected based on seniority. With trustee terms changing from seven years to four years, the Board anticipates moving toward a more formalized process for officer selection, which will include use of the nominating committee. To date, the nominating committee has consisted of the full Board. While future changes to the officer selection process may occur, the proposed slate of officers for 2026 is as follows: Ann Gynn as President, Stacey Ganor as Vice President, and Cindy Schafer as Secretary. Board members were advised to bring forward any questions or concerns prior to the January 2026 meeting. Ms. Fisher noted that while this year was challenging there were many things to be proud of. The year started with the loss of our director, but Peter Matera's work as interim director was seamless, and the trustees are grateful for his leadership and how well he stepped into the role of Director. She thanked the entire board for their time, effort, and patience, especially to Cindy Schafer, whose historic knowledge was essential to the success of the year. Thanks to the leadership team, especially Trent Ross, whose knowledge and leadership have made an enormous difference. She made special reference to the Library staff and stated "We see your work, and we know how much effort it takes. Through leadership changes, funding challenges, and uncertainty, you've continued to step up and serve our community with excellence".

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Building & Grounds:** Mr. Matera noted the committee reviewed the HVAC updates.

**Personnel:** Ms. Ganor explained that most of what was discussed at the Personnel meeting was already covered; however, she noted the personnel committee will be working on removing the 'interim' from Trent Ross's title. Ms. Ganor congratulated staff members Megan Alabaugh and Shannon Copenhaver on their recent Ohio Library Council Conference presentation. They are excellent representatives of the Library.

**Strategic Task Force:** No report.

**4. NEW BUSINESS:** Ms. Gynn commented positively on the Strategic Plan brochure, noting that it was well done, clearly explained, and appropriately credited contributors. She asked that the Library consider sending an email specifically dedicated to the Strategic Plan to individuals in the library's database and, if possible, to participants who completed the related survey, potentially in the first quarter of the new year. The goal would be to share the completed Strategic Plan with a broader audience. Mr. Bierut asked if there was a mechanism in place to answer the patron comments that are shared in the Director's Report. Mr. Matera stated that all comments are reviewed and considered; however, follow-up is not always possible or necessary. When contact information is provided and follow-up is requested or appropriate,

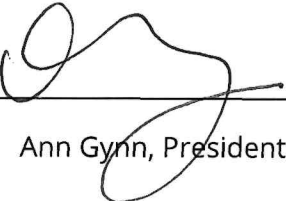
someone from the Library will respond. Other comments are informational in nature and do not require follow-up.

**5. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE EMPLOYMENT OF A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE:** Ms. Fisher made a motion to move to executive session. The roll was called; the vote resulted as follows:

Roll Call	Yes	No	Absent
Mr. Bierut	x		
Ms. Fisher	x		
Ms. Ganor	x		
Ms. Gynn	x		
Ms. Huff	x		
Mr. Knickman			x
Ms. Schafer	x		

The board exited executive session at 6:55 p.m.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.



Ann Gynn, President



Cynthia Schafer, Secretary