

Rocky River Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, August 26, 2026

The regular meeting of the Board of Rocky River Public Library was held in the Auditorium of the Library on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Don Bierut, Deb DeCarlo (remotely), Ann Gynn, Deborah Huff, Matt Kninckman, and Cynthia Schafer.

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

Not Present: Stacey Ganor

1. CALL TO ORDER: Ann Gynn called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. There were no public comments.

2. HVAC DISCUSSION ROGER RIACHI: Mr. Riachi provided an update on the HVAC project. Since the previous meeting, the project team has completed the design work for the new equipment, including equipment locations, ductwork, and electrical requirements. The drawings have been submitted to the City of Rocky River for review, and all necessary materials have been ordered. The project is anticipated to begin in approximately two weeks.

The project will be completed in several phases:

- Installation of the new rooftop units.
- Work in the main penthouse, including demolition and removal of existing equipment.
- Work in Penthouse C.
- Replacement of existing damper boxes with new VAV boxes throughout the building.
- Finalization of controls and programming Training of staff on operation of the new controls.

The contractor plans to mobilize on September 8. During the week of September 8–11, work will include setting roof curbs and structural steel supports beneath the new rooftop units. Work will also occur in Rooms 122, 210, and 212, as well as in both mechanical rooms. The following weeks will focus on installation of ductwork and electrical components serving the rooftop units, with rooftop work expected to be substantially completed by the end of September. Work in the main penthouse is expected to begin in early October and continue through approximately November 6. Work will then transition to Penthouse C and is expected to continue through approximately the week before Thanksgiving. Some additional interior work, including work in Room 120, will occur during this period. Beginning in late October and continuing into early November, crews will work throughout the building to remove the existing dampers and install the new VAV boxes. The goal is to achieve substantial completion by

Thanksgiving, complete controls programming and installation by mid-December, and then conduct staff training before final project turnover.

Parking and Site Logistics: The contractor will need to utilize a portion of the west side of the parking lot to safely stage equipment, dumpsters, and crane operations to facilitate loading and unloading to the roof. The project team has met with library representatives to identify locations for the dumpster, traffic adjustments, and equipment laydown areas. The contractor will provide advance notice of activities that will affect library operations, including crane work, room shutdowns, and other significant construction activities. The project team will work with Peter, Trent, Greg, and Library staff to finalize specific dates and communicate them in advance. The Board discussed parking for construction workers. The project team will explore options for utilizing a limited number of spaces at the school across the street and will seek to minimize use of public parking spaces. Mr. Riachi also discussed coordination with the middle school, particularly because school traffic uses the library parking lot. Mr. Matera noted the school has been made generally aware that the project is forthcoming, and more detailed communication will occur once firm construction dates are established.

Communication and Scheduling: A weekly Wednesday meeting will be established as a two-week look-ahead meeting. The contractor will provide updates on work completed during the previous week, planned activities for the upcoming week, anticipated shutdowns, room impacts, crane operations, and other significant construction activities. The project team will also hold weekly owner-contractor meetings with library representatives throughout the project. As crane operations are weather-dependent, dates may occasionally need to shift; however, the contractor will provide as much advance notice as possible. Library staff will receive weekly email updates, and Microsoft Teams will be used to provide an opportunity for staff communication and feedback. Public communication will be provided through the library's social media, email communications, and newsletter. Project photographs will also be provided periodically to help illustrate the progress and explain the work to the public. The Board discussed the importance of communicating with nearby residents, particularly regarding construction noise and early work hours. Construction will begin as early as 7:00 a.m., consistent with applicable city requirements. The contractor will make every effort to complete demolition and other noisy work as early as practical.

Interior Impact: During September, some construction activity will occur above the children's area, including the four offices in that corner of the building and the Schlather Room. Staff working in the affected offices may need to temporarily relocate for approximately one week. Ductwork will also be installed through portions of the Schlather Room. Some areas may need to be temporarily closed to the public for up to approximately one week. Artwork in the area will be evaluated to determine whether individual pieces need to be removed during construction. The project team noted that the HVAC work may not be highly visible to patrons, but the completed improvements are expected to improve airflow, temperature regulation, and overall comfort throughout the building. The Board also noted that crane operations will

provide a more visible indication of the project activity. The team will continue coordinating construction activities to minimize disruption to library operations and patrons.

3. SPACE ANALYSIS DISCUSSION: Andrew Whitis of OhioNet presented the library's space assessment, which supports Strategic Plan 2025–2028, particularly Strategic Direction 1, "Cultivate an accessible, comfortable, and functional space for patrons," and Strategic Direction 3, "Strengthen connections between the library and the community."

Mr. Whitis summarized the assessment's key findings and opportunities. The library is well used, but the building's original design allows sound to carry between spaces, creating conflicts between activities such as tutoring, teen use, and quiet study. He noted that doors opening into the Schlather Room also contribute to noise entering an area intended to be quiet.

The assessment identified opportunities to make better use of the existing building rather than pursuing a major renovation or addition. Potential changes discussed included:

- Reconsidering the use of the Schlather Room and potentially creating individual study or work pods. Evaluating the Periodicals Room, including the possibility of relocating some materials and repurposing space for study, work, additional collection space, or display of the Cowan Pottery collection.
- Considering relocation of the large-print collection to make better use of existing space and potentially expand or relocate the teen area.
- Exploring possible relocation of teen activities, including potential use of the mezzanine and shared programming areas, to reduce traffic and noise conflicts.
- Evaluating the existing public computer lab and whether its current configuration continues to meet patron needs.
- Improving wayfinding and signage throughout the building, particularly as collections and services are relocated.
- Increasing the visibility of the Cowan Pottery Museum and collection through signage, displays, and improved wayfinding.
- Considering improvements to the circulation area and adjustments to shelving in the children's area.

Mr. Whitis emphasized that these recommendations should be considered as an interconnected plan rather than as isolated changes. He recommended making decisions about collections and service locations first, followed by comprehensive wayfinding improvements and then secondary physical improvements. Board members discussed the need for patron and staff input before implementing changes. Mr. Matera noted that the assessment, staff experience, existing usage data, community input from the strategic planning process, and additional staff and patron feedback would all inform the next steps. The Board also discussed the importance of implementing any collection reductions or relocations gradually and communicating the reasons for changes to patrons. The Board discussed the balance between maintaining the historic character of the building and making spaces more functional and

modern including deteriorating wallpaper and changing space needs. The discussion also considered the continued demand for teen space, study areas, meeting spaces, and “third spaces” for work and study. Mr. Whitis noted that remote work may continue to support demand for such spaces. The proximity of the middle school was also discussed as a factor. Board members expressed appreciation for the detailed assessment. Mr. Matera stated this will be ongoing, multi-year process to gather information, establish priorities, develop a timeline, and strategically re-envision the space.

4. BUSINESS OF THE BOARD

APPROVAL OF JULY 29, 2026 BOARD MEETING MINUTES: Ms. Gynn asked for any changes or corrections to the meeting minutes. Ms. Huff made a motion to approve the July 29, 2026, Board Meetings Minutes, seconded by Ms. Schafer. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

FISCAL OFFICER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: Mr. Costello presented the financial report and board members were directed to the accompanying graphs for additional context. Cash on hand totaled slightly more than \$8 million and was lower than at the same time last year. The decrease was attributed in part to the timing of real estate tax advances, capital-project encumbrances, and the use of reserves to offset deficits in various funds. Investment rates remained steady at approximately 3.4% to 3.8%. The Federal Reserve made no rate change at its July meeting, and future changes will continue to be monitored. Mr. Costello reported that work was underway on the financial forecast, including a review of year-to-date results, potential changes to the Public Library Fund (PLF), and an anticipated decline in interest income as reserves are used for the capital project. The forecast will assess reserve adequacy and the potential timing of any future request to voters for additional funding. PLF revenue was near budget but below the prior year, as anticipated under the State of Ohio’s new funding method. Libraries now receive a fixed line-item appropriation rather than a percentage of the state’s General Revenue Fund. Mr. Costello is working with OLC to determine the difference between the current fixed appropriation and the amount the Library might have received under the former formula. He will update the Board as additional information becomes available. Real estate tax receipts were slightly below budget because of timing. The Budget Commission was finalizing appraisals and had issued smaller advances while preparing settlements expected in August and September. Total expenditure remained consistent with prior years. At midyear, the Library typically had spent approximately 45% of its annual budget and historically finished the year under budget. The graphs showed no significant outliers and will inform year-end projections and assumptions for the five-year forecast. The completed forecast will be presented at the next board meeting.

APPROVAL OF JULY 2026 FINANCIALS: Ms. Schafer made a motion to approve June 2026 Financials, seconded by Ms. Huff. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF JULY 2026 GIFT REPORT: Ms. Gynn noted no gifts were received in July. Mr. Knickman made a motion to approve the July 2026 Gift report, seconded by Ms. Huff. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Matera reported the consortium confirmed at the end of the previous week that they had received the information needed and is working with the subcommittee on next steps. The library has formally applied to join the consortium, and the process continues to appear promising. The library is awaiting information regarding the remainder of the process, including the required buy-in amount, which has not yet been determined. Additional information will be shared with the Board as it becomes available. The tentative implementation date being considered is November 1, subject to completion of the remaining steps and all necessary parties being aligned. Mr. Matera noted the overview of the proposed marketing services revamp. The packet included draft materials outlining changes to two positions whose responsibilities have evolved over time and have not always been clearly delineated or aligned with the library's current marketing goals. The proposed changes include revisions to job descriptions, tools, organizational structure, and the overall marketing model. The changes are intended to provide greater clarity and effectiveness rather than represent a major organizational shift. Rob Isom will present the new marketing vision to the Board at the September meeting, including the proposed campaign model and new marketing tools. Jacob Marquis will provide an update on the current branding process. Working with the Library's management team, the marketing department will establish alignment around the marketing strategy and determine how management can best support the marketing team. Communication of the strategy to the remaining staff will take place in October or November. Staff will be informed of the changes during this period so employees understand what to expect from the Marketing Department, how campaigns will be prioritized, and how the new marketing approach will support the Library's overall goals. The draft job descriptions included in the packet are intended as summary versions. More detailed job descriptions are expected to be developed, with the Personnel Committee reviewing an early draft. A final version is anticipated for consideration as part of the personnel materials presented for approval in December. The final descriptions are not expected to differ substantially from the drafts currently included in the packet. Mr. Matera reported that the review and update of the employee handbook are underway. Staff were invited to provide input regarding potential changes, including corrections, outdated provisions, and policies that no longer reflect current practices. The review is intended to maintain consistency between the written handbook and day-to-day practices while also providing an opportunity for staff input regarding workplace expectations and policies. Proposed changes will be reviewed by

legal counsel before being presented to the Board. The Board will have an opportunity to provide feedback and request revisions before final approval. Mr. Matera shared preliminary information regarding a proposed change to the library's PTO holiday system. Currently, certain holidays are handled through PTO holiday hours that employees may use later, subject to various administrative requirements and prorating rules. Mr. Matera is proposing to replace this system with a closed, paid observed holiday model. Under the proposed model, the library would close on designated observed holidays and employees would receive the holiday as a paid day rather than receiving PTO holiday hours to use later. The proposed model would reduce administrative complexity, simplify holiday communications, and provide greater clarity for staff and patrons. The current system can be confusing, particularly when holidays fall on weekends and the Library remains open while other organizations observe the holiday on a weekday. The proposed change would result in approximately two additional public closure days per year on average, although the exact number would vary by year. A review of the next eight years indicated approximately 14 to 18 closed days annually under the proposed holiday schedule. The Christmas and New Year's holiday periods in the upcoming years would have a particularly noticeable effect because of the way those holidays fall on the calendar. Another proposed change would be to treat Veterans Day as an observed paid holiday when it falls on a weekend. Veterans Day is currently treated as a floating holiday, while the library's other floating holidays generally occur on Mondays. No action was requested from the Board at this meeting. The proposal will be discussed further by the Personnel Committee and brought back to the full Board in September for any action requiring formal approval. Mr. Matera discussed the recent decision to discontinue the Craft Corner, which had operated for approximately two years near the puzzle section. Staff explained that, while the program had a small group of dedicated users, inconsistent donations, limited demand, and unusable materials made it difficult to effectively serve the broader community. Staff are considering replacing the ongoing Craft Corner with periodic craft-swap programs to reach more patrons and distribute useful materials. The library will continue offering craft programs through the Crafting with the Curator series and other adult programming, with the goal of maintaining affordable creative opportunities for the community. Mr. Matera noted two anonymous comments regarding the Craft Corner and discussed communicating the change through a future newsletter or other broad outreach. The Board expressed appreciation for the library's continued efforts to provide creative and crafting opportunities.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST PERSONNEL REPORT: Mr. Matera reviewed the personnel report and noted Page Maeve Costello resigned from the Library to attend college out of the area. Adjustments include a decrease in hours for Circulation Associate Amani Salti, and Circulation Associate Daniel Smith is now a general substitute. Ms. Huff made a motion to accept the May Personnel Report, seconded by Mr. Knickman. All trustees voted yes. Motion carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Ms. Gynn reported that the Foundation expects to add a few new members as it implements its new board process. One prospective member had previously applied to serve as a Library trustee and is now joining the Foundation board, illustrating how the process helps the Library build relationships with new people. The Foundation is also considering whether to continue managing its funds independently or transfer them to the Community West Foundation for administration. Board members received a message from the school board president seeking information and feedback about the Library's trustee selection process. Ms. Gynn responded, including an explanation of this year's unusually strong candidate pool, which the school board welcomed. The inquiry focused on understanding the process and how it compares with practices in other communities. Ms. Gynn explained that the dedicated email announcement attracted applicants who otherwise might not have known about the opportunity. Ms. Gynn also noted that the process is especially equitable because every applicant is interviewed by the selection committee, and the Board has generally supported this approach. She reiterated that the full Board may review the applications, résumés, and other materials submitted by trustee candidates. The school board representative may make these materials available to all Library trustees; as public records, they are also available to anyone. The Library director may participate in the process at the director's discretion. The next Cowan Pottery exhibit opens September 10, and trustees were encouraged to attend if available. Ms. Gynn also asked for the total number of subscribers who had opted to receive the mailed edition of *Inside View*. Staff estimated that more than 400 people, possibly as many as 500, had opted to receive it by mail. This will be the first edition mailed only to subscribers who opted in; the spring edition had already been distributed. Ms. Gynn then raised scheduling for the November budget meetings and noted that Krista would schedule the November budget meetings. She added these will focus on the budget and should be added to everyone's calendar. The meeting dates will be discussed further.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

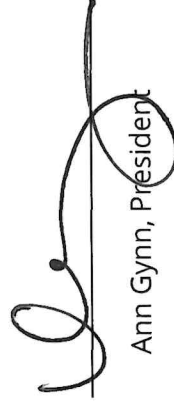
Building & Grounds: No Report – next meeting September 30, 2026, at 4:00pm.

Executive Committee: No Report

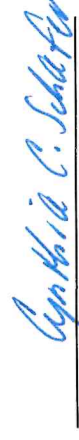
Personnel: In Ms. Ganor's absence, Ms. Gynn noted most items discussed at the August Personnel Committee have been discussed in this meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS: None.

6. ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.



Ann Gynn, President



Cynthia Schafer, Secretary