

**2024 EPL Board of Trustees**  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, March 10, 2025  
6:00pm, Central Branch

**Attendees:**

**Trustees Present**

Debbie Kroupa	Maggie Leglise	Koneake Lawrence	Scott Serazin
Patricia Schrull	Rhonda Smith	Ray Armstrong	Sam Battle

**Trustees Absent**

Jessica Schneider

**Staff:**

Macy Southard	Frank Szuch	Kathy Runser	Jennifer Starkey
Debby Perkins	Jennifer Beno	Allison Monai	

**Visitors:**

There was one visitor present whose name was not provided.

The Board met at the Central Branch Library. Debbie Kroupa called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Debbie welcomed all Attendees.

**Consent Agenda Items:**

- **Approval of February 2025 monthly meeting minutes**

- **Personnel Actions:**

New Hires:

Pamela Lewellen, Librarian - Keystone Branch

Terminations:

Andrew Turner, Tech III - Fleet Services

Internal Status Changes:

Jenny Beno, Youth Service Manager to Adult & Youth Services Manager -West River

- **Memorials & Contributions**

East Elyria Kiwanis	\$263.41	Restricted - educational materials for children
Elizabeth Taylor Memorial	\$352.00	Restricted - additions to the obituary, history and music collections
The Fetcenko Family	\$19.99	In Memory of Joseph Taylor
Bryan & Maureen Hoersten	\$50.00	Unrestricted
Andrew & Phyllis Allan Fund	\$678.00	Unrestricted
The Ron & Rose Marie Capasso Fund	\$75,000	In Honor of Bernadine Capasso and In Memory of Ralph Capasso.

Patricia Schrull moved to approve the Consent Agenda Items. Ray Armstrong seconded the motion. The Board approved the Consent Agenda Items. (***Resolution 23.25***)

**Fiscal Officer's Report:**

**Financial Update:**

Year-to-date expenses have exceeded revenue by \$335,000. EPL will be receiving the 1st half levy payments in March. A comparison of YTD 2024 is provided. Note: YTD 2025 includes an additional payroll as compared to YTD 2024.

**Permanent Appropriations Motion:** Board approval of the permanent appropriations for 2025 is required to be submitted to the Lorain County Auditor's Office by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Request motion to approve permanent appropriations of \$10,378,937.18 for fiscal year 2025. No changes since December, minor changes in investment funds.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Debbie Kroupa	X			
Jessica Schneider				X
Maggie Leglise	X			
Scott Serazin	X			
Sam Battle	X			
Ray Armstrong	X			
Koneake Lawrence	X			
Patricia Schrull	X			
Rhonda Smith	X			

Scott Serazin moved to approve Resolution 24.25. Patricia Schrull seconded the motion. The Board approved Resolution 24.25.

**State Budget News:** In February, Governor DeWine released his budget proposal that expressed committed support to public libraries and included an increase on the PLF % from 1.7% to 1.75%. Recently, OLC has communicated several challenges to funding public libraries that are being discussed in the Ohio House:

A group of legislators in the Ohio House are advocating to reduce or eliminate the Public Library Funding. OLC has asked that library Directors, Fiscal Officers, and Board Members contact their House Representatives requesting continued support of funding for public libraries. Emails were sent to Representative Kellie Deeter and Speaker Matt Huffman. More information to come.

HB 137 was introduced by Representative Brian Lorenz that would allow taxing authorities to decide not to move forward with a library levy request and deny voters a say in how their property taxes are spent. Currently, this bill has no co-sponsors or been assigned to a committee. OLC has asked library Directors, Fiscal Officers, and Board Members to contact Representative Lorenz and their House Representative to express opposition to this bill. Emails were sent to Representatives Lorenz and Manning.

**Transfer of Funds Motion:** EPL received \$75,000 donation for the renovation of the West River Storytime room. The budgeted appropriation for this is in the Building Fund. Request motion to transfer \$75,000 from the General Fund to the Building Fund.

Rhonda Smith moved to approve Resolution 25.25. Sam Battle seconded the motion. The Board approved Resolution 25.25.

Sam Battle motioned to approve the Fiscal Officer's Report. Ray Armstrong seconded the motion. The Board approved the Fiscal Officer's Report. (**Resolution 26.25**)

### **Director's Report:**

#### **1. Facilities and project updates**

##### **a. Central delayed opening days**

Delayed openings at Central due to the HVAC system not fully heating property. The temperature was in the upper 50s, which is not comfortable for staff and patrons. Making the call for the delayed opening worked out since there were higher temperatures in the afternoon; this happened for two days in a row. The HVAC system did not heat properly because the control board is dying, this will be fixed once the adjustments are handled.

##### **b. Story time room**

###### **i. Timeline**

The design is still being decided upon but right now, there is a sketched design that consists of a concept drawing that will have a tree with hanging panels resemble the top of a tree like you are walking into a forest.

Timeline: First our maintenance team will handle the cabinet removal, then floor installation in April. Finally, our maintenance team will make a rough cut of painting and any other small tasks to prepare for the installation of cabinets.

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, there will be a ribbon cutting event with a Royal story time.

###### **ii. Concept drawing**

##### **c. HVAC project**

EPL received four RFQ's for consideration of the HVAC project and has scheduled interviews with 2 companies so far. Next is the awarding of the contract and the decisions will be presented to the Board in April.

#### **2. Operations updates**

##### **a. Safety training**

Frank has met with almost all our branches to train our staff on the safety of our buildings. There will be 9-10am delayed openings so staff can attend. So far, staff responses are positive.

##### **b. Staff annual evaluations**

More details are to come, this will be happening this year!

##### **c. Climate Report/Wrap up**

Our Climate Survey took place last spring, and a set of action items were created after a series of meetings with staff. With this wrap up report, our staff will see the progress of each item. Staff will get an update later this week to wrap up the study. This survey will happen every 2 years to maintain a good climate and feedback from and with the staff.

#### **3. Legislative updates**

##### **a. HB 28**

OLC testified to the house finance committee, advocating to increase PLF to 2% to account for potentially lower state revenue. Their biggest argument is that libraries are receiving the same amount of state funding as 25 years ago. We are paying close attention to two bills:

- House Bill 137: this would allow taxing authorities to decide not to move forward with a library levy request and deny voters a say in how their property taxes are spent.
- House Bill 28: this would eliminate the authority to levy replacement property tax levies.

##### **b. Advocacy action plan**

The plan is to continue to message Legislators and work with the Marketing and PR team. Our focus is on the necessity for technology, developmental disabilities, services with seniors, and adult literacy. EPL will be participating in the advocacy plan as much as possible.

#### **4. Events**

##### **a. OLC Legislative Day April 8, Columbus OH**

- b. OLC Trustee Dinner May 8, Independence OH
- c. Staff development day, April 4 Central Library

5. **Presentation: Review of metrics and strategic goals**

Jen Starkey and Kathy Runser presented the 2024 key metrics. A few important takeaways:

- The program attendance stats show that there was a decrease in numbers that started after 2022 which could be related to COVID.
- A attendance is going up and children attendance is staying stagnant.
- Reasons that door count may be lower than normal include increased use of e-media and a lower number of books being published.
- So far in 2025, Central and WR door counts have been high.

The 2025 Strategic goals focus was also discussed. Managers have met to create action items for 6 goals that are the focus for 2025. There are 7 action items that focus on increasing programs relating to technology, increasing partnerships, and improving access to digital resources. After this year we will develop the next plan.

6. **Guest Speakers**

- a. YS/AS Manager, Jenny Beno and Librarian, Allison Monai to discuss homeschooling programs and their utilization of the Thinking Money for Kids grant

Jenny and Allison talked about the homeschool programming offered at West River. With doing this programming, it was noticed (within the last few years) that there was a greater number of kids coming so it was important to provide specific programming. Allison joined in 2021 and agreed to take on the monthly program that turned into the monthly STEM homeschooling program. This program is for ages 10-14 and modified to offer a homeschool STEM junior program at the same time.

During these programs, Allison shows PowerPoint presentations on various subjects like forensics, architecture, biology, human body (skeletal and muscular so far), renewable energy, solar system, weather), and tons more.

In spring, they will be offering a "Money Matters" homeschool program. The American Library Association provided a grant to help teach kids financial literacy. Materials were sent to help teach budgeting and other items relating to finance. The kids always have a lot of fun!

Allison and Jenny look forward to changing the topics away from STEM for homeschoolers to keep them coming in.

Maggie Leglise motioned to approve the Director's Report. Ray Armstrong seconded the motion. The Board approved the Director's Report. (**Resolution 27.25**)

**Presidents report:**

AdHOC recruitment committee established last meeting: Scott, Pat, and Jessica. This committee will come to the next meeting with an outline to move forward with the process of finding a new trustee by July.

As discussed at February's meeting, the House Bill 257 was passed so it will be necessary to soon put together a committee to edit the Bylaws and participate in ongoing meetings. The Bylaws will need a full review, this is open to members.

Koneake Lawrence motioned to approve the President's Report. Rhonda Smith seconded the motion. The Board approved the President's Report. (**Resolution 28.25**)

**Committee Reports:**

**Elyria Friends:** The Friends had a meeting last Friday where they discussed working on how to increase our visibility; one of the volunteers is working to create a marketing plan. They are also working with Jen H for a calendar and social media content. Lastly, the Friends are now accepting public book donations on the Last Friday of the month instead of first Friday of the month.

Ray Armstrong motioned to approve the Committee Reports. Patricia Schrull seconded the motion. The Board approved the Committee Reports. **(Resolution 29.25)**

**Old business:**

EPL brand identity refresh

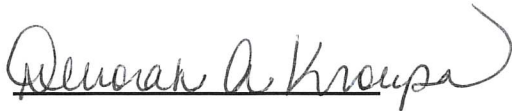
At the Board meeting last month, Jen Harmon and Jen Starkey presented the rebranding project for EPL. They discussed the process and inclusion of the community survey results on how the new logo and slogan were brought to be.

Before the motion to approve, there was brief discussion of decisions to remove the word, "System", differing logos per branch/separate organizations, and budget concerns.

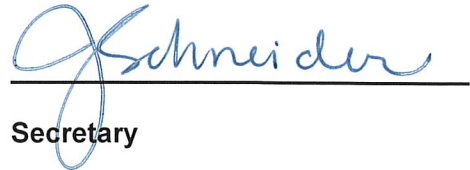
**Motion:** To approve the adoption of the new branding logo, story, and colors, effective immediately with a public release in September.

Rhonda Smith moved to approve Resolution 30.25. Maggie Leglise seconded the motion. The Board approved Resolution 30.25.

**Adjournment:** Ray Armstrong motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sam Battle seconded the motion. The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 pm. **(Resolution 31.25)**



**President**



**Secretary**