

YONKERS PUBLIC LIBRARY
MONTHLY MEETING
CRESTWOOD LIBRARY
DECEMBER 18, 2025

ATTENDANCE

TRUSTEES:	Nancy Maron John Daily Jr. Joseph Puglia Stephen Jannetti Michael Sabatino Patricia Phelan Ofunne Edoziem
LIBRARY DIRECTOR:	Jesse Montero
ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR:	Shauna Porteus
BUSINESS MANAGER:	Vivian Presedo
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY:	James Hackett
WLS BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:	Trustee Phelan
UNION REPRESENTATIVE:	Brandon Neider
GUESTS:	Z. Baird, Patricia Ricardo-Ortiz, Cathleen Walsh, Gloria Fields, Nancy Wissman

The Board Meeting began at 7:01 pm.

President Maron opened the meeting by acknowledging the Friends of Crestwood Library.

Cathleen Walsh, President of the Friends of Crestwood Library (FOCL), welcomed the Board of Trustees and thanked them for holding the meeting at Crestwood. She noted that Crestwood is celebrating its centennial year and outlined a series of planned events and author programs marking the milestone. Ms. Walsh also thanked trustees and library leadership for attending the Friends' recent holiday breakfast and expressed appreciation for the ongoing partnership between the Friends group and the library.

MINUTES

On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded by Trustee Jannetti and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Minutes of the Meeting of November 20, 2025.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Director Montero thanked the Friends for attending the meeting, acknowledging the large audience. He began the report by discussing the range of holiday and community events held across the library system. Winter Wonderland programs were hosted at all three branches and collectively drew several hundred visitors. The Friends of Crestwood Library held their annual holiday breakfast on December 2, attended by staff, trustees, Friends members, and special guests including State Senator Shelley Mayer; Crestwood Library was also honored with lighting the Crestwood community's Christmas tree on December 4. Additional holiday gatherings and toy giveaways were hosted in partnership with organizations including the Family Services Society of Yonkers, The Autism Project, and the Dominican Cultural Association.

Director Montero reported that on December 5, Russell Martinez, Supervisor of Custodians, received the second annual Yonkers Public Library Distinguished Service Award from the Foundation for the Yonkers Public Library (FYPL). Mr. Martinez was also presented with a proclamation from Mayor Mike Spano, recognizing his years of service and his critical role in maintaining library facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, overseeing major renovations, supporting the Feeding Westchester Pantry, mentoring custodial staff, and leading fundraising efforts for breast cancer awareness. He added that the Distinguished Service Award will continue as an annual tradition, following last year's recognition of custodian Reggie Hill for lifesaving actions.

Director Montero reported that on November 25, YPL awarded its first-ever Yonkers Public Schools Summer Reading Challenge Trophy to PEARLS Hawthorne School, whose students logged more than 5,300 books during the Summer Reading Challenge. The trophy is intended to rotate annually to the school with the highest participation, where it will hopefully encourage friendly competition among schools. Director Montero believed that the initiative reflects the deepening collaboration between YPL and Yonkers Public Schools and increasing engagement by teachers, librarians, and administrators in promoting summer reading.

Director Montero announced that YPL was awarded a \$40,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), marking the third consecutive year the library has received this funding at the same award level. The grant will support operations at the Riverfront Art Gallery, arts and cultural programming and art installation projects at all three libraries and the Museum Pass program. He noted that maintaining funding at this level is a significant achievement in the current competitive grant environment. NYSCA support this year has already funded four gallery exhibitions, nearly 400 arts programs attended by approximately 12,000 people, and the *Everybody Belongs Downtown* mural by artist Victor Alexander St. Hilaire (VASH) in the Riverfront Library Children's Room.

Assistant Director Porteus updated the Board on the completion of the Riverfront Library Wayfinding Project. The two year project was funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and focused first on planning and design with a consultant, followed by full implementation aimed at making the building more intuitive, accessible, and welcoming for patrons. Improvements include updated and code-compliant restroom signage, enhanced directories, branded and color-coded floors, clearer identification of key spaces such as the sensory room, and prominent new entrance signage reinforcing the Riverfront Library brand. She believed the project

significantly improved navigation in what has historically been a challenging building layout and represents an important investment in patron experience.

Trustee Sabatino arrived at 7:20 pm.

GUEST SPEAKER

Z. Baird, Branch Administrator of the Crestwood Library, presented an overview of Crestwood's operations, achievements, and community impact. She highlighted the dedication of the Crestwood staff, recognizing both full-time and part-time employees for their contributions to programming, outreach, and daily service. Ms. Baird emphasized staff professional development and leadership, noting multiple presentations delivered at library conferences and academic institutions on topics including sustainability, children's services, and innovative programming. She described how Crestwood has transformed its indoor and outdoor spaces to support cultural celebrations, environmental initiatives, literacy programs, and intergenerational engagement. The presentation also underscored strong partnerships with FOCL, FYPL, city agencies, schools, and numerous community organizations. Ms. Baird concluded by thanking library administration, trustees, staff, volunteers, and partners for their continued support, noting that Crestwood Library remains a vibrant, inclusive community hub with a strong foundation as it enters its centennial year.

President Nancy Maron commended the depth and intensity of activity at the Crestwood Library and highlighted the effective connection between current initiatives and the library's long-range planning goals. She also noted her appreciation for staff development and internal advancement, emphasizing the importance of career pathways within the organization. Trustee Puglia echoed these sentiments, applauding the creativity and impact of library programming across the system. He emphasized the library's essential role in enriching the quality of life in Yonkers and the value of library service.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

There was no union representative's report.

PERSONNEL REPORT

There was no personnel report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Outreach - Trustees Edoziem (chair), Jannetti.

Trustee Jannetti updated the Board on ongoing outreach planning focused on services and engagement with senior community centers. He described continued conversations with Kelly Chiarella and Wendy Cuevas, with plans to convene a working meeting in

early January to identify opportunities for collaboration. Proposed ideas include pop-up library card sign-ups at senior centers and organized visits bringing seniors to libraries for programming and initiatives such as Winter Reading, Library Week, and other seasonal events. Trustee Jannetti noted his intention to spend time at Crestwood speaking directly with seniors and expressed optimism that these efforts will result in meaningful outreach in the coming months.

Fundraising & Development - Vice President Daily (chair)

Foundation Update: President Maron reported that the Foundation's Annual Appeal is underway, combining a strong digital campaign with a targeted print mailing for donors who prefer traditional outreach. She noted that the campaign has made solid progress and is already approximately halfway to its fundraising goal, even before the mailed appeal was fully distributed. She also announced that the annual gala will take place on April 16, with Mayor Spano as guest of honor, and invited trustees to participate in gala planning efforts beginning in January. President Maron further proposed convening representatives from the Foundation and Friends groups to discuss coordinated advocacy efforts, emphasizing the importance of presenting a unified voice in support of the library.

WLS REPORT

There was no WLS report.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

On motion of Trustee Daily, seconded by Trustee Phelan and unanimously carried, the Board approved payment of bills as listed on Schedules #882.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Montero led a discussion regarding long-standing overdue and lost-item fines accrued prior to the Library's elimination of late fees, noting that these long-standing balances continue to block access for many patrons, particularly youth. He reported that more than 8,800 accounts carry balances over \$25, which is the threshold to block an account, largely stemming from YPL materials and often dating back many years, with little realistic prospect of collection. Administration proposed developing a tiered, criteria-based approach to forgiving older, YPL material-only fines in order to re-engage lapsed users and increase library use. Trustees expressed support for the concept and emphasized the importance of thoughtful messaging and clear communication about borrowing policies. The Board asked that administration continue to develop the plan, including outreach strategy and evaluation measures, and report back prior to implementation.

President Maron reminded trustees of the upcoming annual meeting and the election of officers for the new year. On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Puglia and

Board Meeting –December 18, 2025

unanimously carried, the Board created a Nominating Committee and appointed Trustee Jannetti as its chair to seek a slate of nominees for office to present at next month's annual meeting.

Director Montero presented a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with SEIU Local 704B to address long-standing operational needs related to the transportation of library materials and supplies between locations. The agreement establishes a daily stipend of \$25 for custodial staff assigned driving duties, aligning compensation with previously-used library titles while remaining consistent with existing job descriptions and fiscal constraints. Administration added that the arrangement supports core operations, including inter-branch logistics and the Feeding Westchester food pantry program. On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Puglia and unanimously carried, the Board authorized Director Montero to sign the MOA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Trustees, library employees and the gathered public took a moment to wish community member Gloria Fields a happy birthday.

Librarian Nancy Wissman shared with the Board that a storytime participant inquired about making a donation, indicating increased visibility of the Foundation's appeal. She also suggested outreach to senior centers through hands-on technology assistance to help patrons access digital resources such as Libby and Hoopla.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Maron motioned the Board into Executive Session at 8:07 pm to discuss the performance and employment history of an employee and asked Director Montero, Assistant Director Porteus and Business Manager Presedo to join them.

The Executive Session ended at 8:50 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Annual Meeting: Thursday, January 15, 2026 at 7:00 pm at Grinton I. Will Library

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Puglia and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the Meeting at 8:51 pm.

Jesse Montero
Library Director & Secretary