

YONKERS PUBLIC LIBRARY
MONTHLY MEETING
GRINTON I. WILL LIBRARY
MARCH 19, 2026

ATTENDANCE

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| TRUSTEES: | Nancy Maron John Daily Jr. Joseph Puglia Stephen Jannetti Patricia Phelan |
| LIBRARY DIRECTOR: | Jesse Montero |
| ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR: | Shauna Porteus |
| BUSINESS MANAGER: | Vivian Presedo |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY: | James Hackett |
| WLS BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: | Trustee Phelan |
| UNION REPRESENTATIVE: | Dominick Savarese |
| GUESTS: | Abdool Jamal, Tara Somersall, Patricia Ricardo, Connie Cullen, Z. Baird |

The Board Meeting began at 7:00 pm.

President Maron opened the meeting by welcoming Abdool Jamal, who was recently appointed by the Yonkers Public Schools Board of Education to the Board of Trustees following the expiration of Ofunne Edoziem's term at the end of last year. While Mr. Jamal has not yet been sworn in by the City Clerk, he was pleased to attend and observe his first meeting and looked forward to working with the Board. He introduced himself as the Deputy Commissioner of IT for the City of Yonkers and discussed his work implementing technology in government operations, law, public safety, data and cybersecurity, as well as his background and education in mechanical engineering. Trustees and others in attendance introduced themselves to him as well and congratulated him on his appointment to the Board.

MINUTES

On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded by Trustee Phelan and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of January 15, 2026 and the Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 19, 2026.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Director Montero began his report by recognizing YPL’s February programming in celebration of Black History Month, which included film screenings, a lecture on the history of African Americans in the Yonkers Police Department, book discussions, cultural performances, art workshops, and cooking demonstrations.

Director Montero provided an update on the capital budget. Of the projects included in the City’s adopted budget, YPL received \$1,000,000 for Crestwood Library Improvements and \$97,000 for a new vehicle from the City’s recent municipal bond. The Crestwood funds will support ADA upgrades including a new lift, restroom improvements, and regrading of walkways; the vehicle funds will be used to purchase a new truck. Unfortunately \$3,600,000 in funding for the renovation of the Will Library Auditorium was not included in the bond, but the library will apply for it again.

Director Montero also reported on recent facilities upgrades. Workroom improvements at Will Library, including new staff cubicles, are substantially complete, though work remains in progress due to a backlog resulting from the collapse of the library’s primary book distributor Baker & Taylor. At Riverfront Library, the Community Room audiovisual upgrade was completed with the installation of a new projection screen, joining previously upgraded speakers, tables, and chairs. A new wheelchair lift at Will Library’s Auditorium has been installed which restored full ADA compliance to the building. Looking ahead, upcoming projects include repaving of the Will Library parking lot and Phase One of Crestwood Library Improvements, covering window replacement, façade repair, new carpet, and interior painting, with a construction schedule expected by the end of the month.

Director Montero reported on recent grants. YPL received approximately \$17,000 from the Westchester County Board of Legislators for health and wellness programs, technology classes, and arts programming, noting that YPL is one of only two libraries in the county to receive this type of funding. YPL also received a \$5,000 grant from New York-Presbyterian’s Government and Community Affairs Division to support health and fitness programs and programming for older adults, including health workshops delivered by New York-Presbyterian staff. Director Montero also noted that YPL’s AARP tax assistance program, the only such site in Yonkers, returned for its second year at Will Library with appointments available through Calendly.

Assistant Director Porteus reported that the 2026 Winter Reading Challenge concluded on March 15 with over 28,000 books read systemwide, a 103% increase over the prior year and well above the goal of 20,026. More than 1,000 participants remained engaged throughout the full challenge. She credited strong school partnerships, cross-departmental staff involvement, and the Beanstack platform. Planning is now underway for the Summer Reading Challenge, which will be led by children’s librarian Laura Cacace and carry the theme of “Unearthing.”

Director Montero provided some context for two statistical trends in recent monthly reports. YPL experienced a significant decline in Hoopla usage in February due to WLS budget cuts that imposed a countywide checkout quota. In March YPL reinvested savings from unfulfilled print orders to partially offset the reduction, and usage is expected to rebound. Reduced circulation and visit counts in January and February could also be attributed to weather-related closures, which resulted in approximately 6% fewer open hours than in the same period last year. Director Montero indicated that the library will provide narrative context alongside statistics in future reports to help distinguish operational trends from external factors.

In response to trustee questions, Director Montero and Assistant Director Porteus discussed the collapse of Baker & Taylor, a 200-year-old book distributor that abruptly closed in December 2025 following a period of declining service. YPL identified the deteriorating situation early and transitioned to an alternative vendor, Ingram, in advance of the closure, but industry-wide disruptions have still posed challenges. Trustees commended library staff for their proactive response.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

SEIU Local 704B President Dominick Savarese delivered the Union Representative's report. He was pleased to report that the Union has reached a tentative agreement with the Library on a new labor contract and was hopeful a final agreement would be ready for ratification shortly.

PERSONNEL REPORT

On motion of Trustee Jannetti, seconded by Trustee Daily Jr. and unanimously carried, the Board acknowledged the following terminations:

Donahue, Alleah; Page (P/T), \$17.00/hr, eff. 1/20/2026

Manning, Keisha; Permanent Librarian I, \$69,993/yr, eff. 2/2/2026 (resigned)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Maron was pleased with the results of the February special meeting where the Board discussed committee work for the year and thanked trustees for attending. Committee chairs and trustees were invited to provide a brief overview and update of their respective committees.

Finance, Budget and Planning – Trustee Puglia (chair)

Treasurer Puglia reported his interest in taking a more active role in the budget process, including greater involvement in budget formulation and procurement. President Maron noted that the committee's near-term priority is to arrange meetings with City Council members to share the library's budget proposal and encourage their support ahead of the adoption of the executive budget.

Policy – Trustee Sabatino (chair)

President Maron reported on Trustee Sabatino’s behalf that the committee will focus this year on reviewing and updating existing policies and developing new ones in compliance with a New York State mandate requiring Board-approved policies on disaster-preparedness, fiscal oversight and staff management, drawing on state guidance and examples from peer libraries when they become available.

Employee Relations – Trustee Phelan (chair), Trustee Puglia

Trustee Phelan reported that the committee’s priorities are support for contract negotiations and developing a plan for trustees to visit and shadow staff at library branches. President Maron encouraged the committee to develop a structured plan for the visits in coordination with library administration, with a view toward rolling out the program in the fall.

Buildings and Grounds – Trustee Daily Jr. (chair)

Vice President Daily reported two areas of focus for the committee: staying engaged with developments related to a potential fourth branch location and developing a data-driven approach to quantifying the patron experience across library facilities, with an initial report anticipated for the board later this year.

Outreach – Trustee Jannetti (chair), Trustee Phelan

Trustee Jannetti reported that he looks forward to resuming outreach conversations with Kelly Chiarella at the Office for the Aging. He discussed plans to coordinate presentations around summer reading and existing branch programming. President Maron noted that the committee also plans to develop a presentation that can be shared with other trustees to encourage community members to participate in the library through volunteering, trusteeship, the Friends groups, and the Foundation.

Fundraising & Development – Trustee Daily Jr. (chair)

Foundation Update: President Maron reported that planning for the Foundation annual gala on April 16 honoring Mayor Spano was progressing well. Invitations have been out for approximately ten days and the event has already reached half of its attendance target. She encouraged trustees to promote the event and noted that early bird pricing is in effect through April 3.

WLS REPORT

Trustee Phelan summarized a written report from WLS Executive Director Terry Kirchner, noting that the WLS Board would meet next week. She highlighted two time-sensitive advocacy action items: trustees were urged to contact their New York State legislators in

support of library funding as the state budget process for FY2026–2027 remains ongoing, and to be aware of federal budget developments affecting libraries.

Trustee Phelan also noted that 2025 Annual Reports are due to the Division of Library Development by April 16 using the new Counting Opinions reporting tool. She also referenced WLS information on the state-mandated policy updates due by January 1, 2027, consistent with Director Montero’s earlier reports.

The Board discussed the appropriate scope of trustee advocacy; President Maron suggested that the broader question of when and how trustees might engage in wider advocacy efforts would be a worthwhile topic for future discussion.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

On motion of Trustee Puglia, seconded by Trustee Jannetti and unanimously carried, the Board approved payment of bills as listed on Schedules #884 and #885.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 7:00pm at Riverfront Library

On motion of Trustee Daily, seconded by Trustee Phelan and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the Meeting at 7:57 pm.

Jesse Montero
Library Director & Secretary