



A COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY

3939 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Drafted
5/8/2025

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Members of the public who wished to attend could do so in-person, or via Microsoft Teams at columbiaheightsmn.gov/join-a-meeting and entering Meeting ID 271 987 908 772 and passcode T2uo3T8N at the scheduled meeting time. For questions, please call the library at 763-706-3690.

The meeting was called to order in the Library Community Room by Melanie Magidow at 5:35pm.

Members present: Melanie Magidow; Olga Herrera; Theresa Strike; Amina Maameri; Chris Polley; Amáda Márquez Simula (City Council Liaison). **Members remotely present:** N/A. **Members absent:** N/A. **Others present:** Renee Dougherty (Library Director); Nick Olberding (Board Secretary); Aaron Chirpich (City Manager). **Public present:** N/A.

1. An amended agenda was approved with the addition of a Statement from City Manager Aaron Chirpich.
 - a. Aaron Chirpich introduced himself to the Library Board and thanked them for their service to the City. He assured them that City Administration was taking seriously the situation involving a hateful, racist outburst directed at a Parks/Rec Commissioner during a recent meeting's community forum. Aaron has been speaking to the League of Minnesota Cities and the City Attorney; with the help of other city staff, they're collaborating on plans to properly confront and de-escalate any similar incidents at city events/meetings while considering safety, freedom of speech, and other relevant factors. Their hope is to put together clear guidelines and have training sessions for board/commissioners, liaisons, and staff on how to properly handle similar situations. The City is committed to being welcoming, diverse, and inclusive while standing behind commissioners, staff, residents, and visitors who face hatred and bigotry!
2. **Annual Election of Board Officers:** The Board members briefly expressed their interest and/or indifference to being Chair/Vice-Chair for the next year; in the end Chris nominated Melanie as Chair and Theresa as Vice-Chair for the coming year. **A Motion was made to elect Melanie Magidow as Chair of the Library Board, and Theresa Strike as the Vice-Chair, it was seconded and all in favor.**
3. The Minutes of the April 2, 2025, Library Board Meeting were **moved and approved.**
4. **Review of 2025 Operating Budget:** 32.88% of the year and 29.52% of the budget expended.
 - a. **Repair & Maintenance (44000):** Front-end spending on annual maintenance contracts.

Community Forum: Opportunity for public input. **No correspondence and no public in attendance.** The CHPL website now has a contact form to submit questions or concerns: <https://chplmn.org/board>

New Business:

5. **Art Exhibit Application:** The Board reviewed the included application submitted by Julie Marckel on behalf of [Change Narrative](#) for an art exhibition in the Library Community Room; the description being a series of paintings related to their project *Resilient Landscapes for Reimagined Futures* about cross generational stories of environmental justice and climate change. The group would install and insure the artwork in the Library's Community Room with the knowledge that it is a public space, and the art is not to be sold on the grounds. We will partner with the group on a kick-off event in conjunction with the exhibit. **A MOTION to approve Julie Marckel's art exhibit application was made and unanimously approved.**
6. **General Discussion of 2026 Budget:** Library Director, Renee Dougherty, opened the discussion on the upcoming 2026 Budget as a prompt for the Library Board to share their thoughts and ideas on priorities to include in budget planning.
 - a. With the loss of the 21st Century Learning Center Grant (shared by the Library, Parks/Rec, and ISD-13) we have about ~\$10,000 less to spend on **youth programming**, but we will try to stretch the budget as far as possible to make up the difference and not diminish our programming. The Board asked whether the Foundation could help make up this loss, but they have already committed to 3 yearly installments to

cover part of the parking lot expansion costs.

- b. Maintaining our **current service hours** was a priority mentioned by Renee; there have been some tough staffing weeks due to illness and not having a large staff with back-up capacity, so it's probably not feasible to extend hours more. Full-time staff have been flexible about modifying schedules to cover evenings when part-time staff are unavailable. Regarding **part-time staffing**, shifts, and coverage, Renee is working on solutions, but budget changes are not necessarily the issue.
- c. A library friends **book sale** was brought up as a supplemental revenue source. Renee said our year-round **sale cart** has been performing better than any of our recent book sale events so this will be ongoing.
- d. The **print versus digital** idea came up; we will continue utilizing both, but Columbia Heights has a lower-than-average adoption rate. Digital accounts for < 25% of our item circulation, and CHPL's digital circulation accounts for <5% of the county's digital circulation according to Anoka County Library statistics.
- e. **Language Collections** are actively growing, but there is not a dedicated budget item for specific languages; the print collection budget for a typical budget year is ~\$50,000. Currently youth have a larger world language collection, but youth /adult collections will continue growing; additional vendors would help. The Board mentioned periodicals in other languages as well. The Libby eLibrary also has a selection of non-English titles, but they need to be searched for, and it may be difficult to find for a non-English reader...instructions or tutorial video translated in other languages would be helpful.

Director's Update:

7. March Board Report: Provided as an FYI.

- a. **MN Attorney General's Clean Slate Program** was a successful event garnering over 200 attendees seeking criminal record expungement. Keith Ellison was in attendance to kick-off the event.
- b. The **Metro HRA Housing Voucher Waitlist Application** was open **April 9-16** with representatives onsite several days to assist applicants in person.
- c. It's time again to **review library policies** and it was agreed that due to the situation at the Parks/Rec meeting addressed earlier, a good idea would be to start with the Behavior Policy.

8. Board Books:

- a. Melanie: *Eleanor and the Cold War* Ellen Yardley; *Safiyah's War* Hiba Noor Khan
- b. Chris: *Heck (graphic novel)* Zander Cannon; *Dragon Painter* William Worthington (streaming on Kanopy)
- c. Aaron: *F*ck Your Feelings: Master Your Mind, End Self-Doubt, and Become a More Significant Human* Ryan Munsey ([CHPD Roll Call Podcast](#) guest—Episode 22)
- d. Amina: *Pachinko* Min Jin Lee
- e. Renee: *The Light Eaters: How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth* Zoë Schlanger
- f. Amáda: *Plastic People (documentary)* Ben Addelman/Ziya Tong ([Public Screening @ CHPL, June 12, 6:30pm](#))
- g. Theresa: *Babel, or the Necessity of Violence* R.F. Kuang
- h. Nick: *The Rainfall Market* You Yeong-Gwang
- i. Olga: *Solito: A Memoir* Javier Zamora

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas P. Olberding
Recording Secretary, CHPL Board of Trustees