



**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
3939 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MEETING MINUTES**  
Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Drafted  
3/5/2026

**ATTENDANCE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

Members of the public who wished to attend could do so in-person, or via Microsoft Teams by entering **Meeting ID 245 476 655 774 13** and **passcode bY2b8Mf7** at the scheduled meeting time. For questions, please contact Administration at 763-706-3610.

The meeting was called to order in the Library Community Room by Melanie Magidow at 5:30pm.

**Members present:** Melanie Magidow; Theresa Strike; Chris Polley; Olga Herrera; Amina Maameri; Laurel Deneen (City Council Liaison). **Members remotely present:** N/A. **Members absent:** N/A. **Others present:** Renee Dougherty (Library Director); Ally Addison Shauer (Library Supervisor); Nick Olberding (Board Secretary). **Public present:** N/A.

1. The **Agenda** was **approved** as is, but with new Supervisor Introduction moved to the beginning.
2. The **Minutes** from **February 4, 2026**, Library Board Meeting were **moved and approved**.
3. **Review of 2026 Operating Budget:** 16% of the year completed and 13.6% of the budget expended.
  - a. Nick wanted to note that this report exported from the City's general ledger software no longer has an encumbered column (funds allocated for specific expenses by purchase order but not yet paid).

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

**Old Business:**

4. **Staffing Update:** We hired two new Library Supervisors (Ally & Elijah), one of which we were introduced to tonight during her second evening of onboarding and training. Unfortunately, Elijah was offered a promotion with his full-time retail employer after his first day of training with us and chose to accept their offer. Renee reviewed our options and has opted to continue with only one new Supervisor for the foreseeable future and re-evaluate hiring after we see how well it works over the next few months.

**New Business:**

5. **New Supervisor Introduction:** Ally was introduced to the Library Board, who were very appreciative of her choosing to expand her career to the Columbia Heights Public Library. She has worked for both Hennepin County Library and Scott County Library, in supervisory, technology, administrative, youth services, and outreach-oriented roles over the years. She was very interested in the Board members and their motivations for getting involved, which included reasons such as wanting to help build/maintain the bridge between the Library, community, and schools; fond family histories and memories of libraries; giving back to the community; helping support immigrant neighbors and being attentive to the community.
6. **2025 Year-in-Review:** The Board was provided with an infographic depicting year-end statistics. As compared to the previous year, visits increased 15% with items borrowed up 3%; number of programs went up 5% and an increase in attendance of 12%; Wi-Fi sessions increased 16% and library computer sessions up 17%. Some of the increases can be partially attributed to Hennepin County's Northeast Library being closed for much of the year. The Board asked if we would be promoting this. Yes, it will be included in the City's annual report and the statistics will be submitted to the MN Department of Education for our annual report. Additionally, it could be posted to Facebook, included in the City Newsletter, and added to the website. The self-directed programs were the Summer Reading Program, Winter Reads Program, and the Tiny Art Project.
7. **Library Metrics Comparison 2020-2024:** Compiled with data from previous years' data maintained by State Library

Services of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Board was presented with a comparison of trends and statistics from 17 comparable libraries in the state (serving populations of 12,000-24,000). Per capita, we come out at the higher end for percentage of population with library cards, number of visits, total circulation, but also operating cost.

## Director's Update:

8. **January Board Report:** Provided as an FYI.
  - a. The Board was appreciative of the inclusion of **Palestinian authors** in a recent book display.
  - b. The Board asked if **public school field trips** that were cancelled due to winter storms and ICE enforcement have been rescheduled now that the district has lifted travel restrictions? Staff are saving dates in April for them.
  - c. **Conversation Circles** promos have been added back to the LED marquee. A **Spanish language learning group** met in the Community room as an independent group not sponsored by the Library.
  - d. Staff will explore partnering with **SACA Food Shelf** on a food drive.
  - e. The increased **police assistance** needed for the month was noted.
  - f. This is Melanie's final meeting of her term; she was thanked for her time, perspective, and insight into library legislation gained from working at Minitex. **Thank you, Melanie!**
  - g. Melanie shared cost savings from the resource sharing and consolidated subscriptions that **Minitex** provides various library systems. Anoka County alone benefits from savings of \$900,000/year; all MN libraries' total savings are close to \$33 million.
9. **Board Books** (what we're reading, watching, playing, listening to, or simply recommend):
  - a. Theresa: ***Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race*** Margot Lee Shetterly; ***Severed: A History of Heads Lost and Heads Found*** Frances Larson; ***A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*** Rebecca Solnit
  - b. Chris: ***Chunky (youth graphic novel)*** Yehudi Mercado; ***Sudden Fiction Latino: Short-Short Stories from the United States and Latin America*** Robert Shapard, James Thomas & Ray Gonzales (editors)
  - c. Melanie: ***The Letter for the King (Letter for the King youth series)*** Tonke Dragt
  - d. Amina: ***The Summer I Ate the Rich*** Maika & Maritza Moulite; ***The Clear Quran: A Thematic English Translation of the Message of the Final Revelation*** Dr. Mustafa Khattab
  - e. Olga: ***So Far from God*** Ana Castillo
  - f. Laurel: ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** Douglas Adams; ***Rat Scabies and the Holy Grail: Can a Punk Rock Legend Find What Monty Python Couldn't?*** Christopher Dawes
  - g. Renee: ***A Council of Dolls*** Mona Susan Power (Library Book Club selection)
  - h. Nick: ***And Then There Were None*** Agatha Christie

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Nick Olberding  
Recording Secretary, CHPL Board of Trustees