



A COLUMBIA HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY

3939 Central Ave NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Drafted
2/6/2025

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 Rachelle Waldon at 5:33pm.

Members present: Rachelle Waldon; Melanie Magidow; Chris Polley; Carrie Mesrobian; Amina Maameri; 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). **Public present:** Theresa Strike.

1. The Meeting Agenda was **approved**.
2. The **Minutes** of the **January 8, 2025**, Library Board Meeting were **moved and approved**.
3. **Review of 2024 Operating Budget:** 99.9% of the year and 91.59% of the budget expended; we were able to pay 2024 bills through the first week of February.
 - a. **E-Books (42183):** Invoiced \$10,301 for the period of July-December 2024 (less than anticipated), paid today to be applied to the 2024 budget.

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:

4. **Anoka County Library goes Fine-Free:** As of January 1st, Anoka County has joined us in eliminating late fees for patrons (lost/damaged material fees still apply); all MELSA libraries are now fine free. Columbia Heights has been fine-free for several years now and even though we promoted it at the time, some patrons likely still don't know; we hope anyone unaware will find out through ACL's current promotional campaign reach.
5. **Upcoming Spring Programs and Events:** Renee shared some upcoming events with the Board:
 - a. **Arabic Storytime:** With Amina's help one session occurred in January, with another coming up on February 15th. All involved believe it succeeded in being a welcoming environment where attendees felt comfortable to be involved and communicate freely in Arabic.
 - b. **Evening Storytime:** The first session landed in a stretch of very cold days, so attendance was low, but we will continue the evening storytime to provide an option for working families to attend.
 - c. **Ancestral Connections:** MN Arts Board 2024 Creative Individuals grant recipient Nyttu Chongo is holding 3 sessions here. He creates a meditative space with the music of traditional African instruments to allow exploration of self, identity, and the past. Join one or all sessions. Amáda attended the first one and said that she did experience a feeling of warmth and connection!
 - d. **Pet Beds (with HeightsNEXT):** Saturday, February 8, is the annual Pet Bed assembly event with finished beds being donated to Midwest Animal Rescue & Services; this is a popular event that generally produces between 80-120 hand-tied fleece pet beds of varying sizes (using donated and discarded stuffing and fabric) for the local animal shelter. There has been interest in more events, but additional shelters would need to participate because MARS cannot handle more beds than this event provides.
 - e. **Puzzle Contest & Exchange:** On Saturday, March 8, from 10am-Noon the library will host another team Puzzle Contest (teams of 2-4 must register to participate), but this one will be followed by a puzzle swap in which people may bring puzzles to trade with other attendees (puzzles must be 300+ pieces and in good condition). Also of note, **HeightsNEXT** will be hosting a **Puzzle & Board Game Swap** on Thursday, February 13, at 6:30pm in the lower-level senior room of Murzyn Hall.
6. **MNDOT Central Avenue Open House:** Minnesota Department of Transportation presented an update on the

progress of the Central Avenue redevelopment project at a community meeting on February 4. MNDOT gave a 15-minute presentation and displayed maps for community feedback. Findings indicate that the road was poorly planned and it's time to improve the corridor due to above average fatalities; intersections are too far apart, jaywalking is frequent, signals are not adequate, and generally the wide-open design of the road leads to faster traffic than the 30-40mph limits allow. Drivers go with what feels comfortable regardless of the posted speed. MNDOT is assertively seeking community input; all entities along Central have been notified of potential impacts and solicited for their comments/concerns about the impending road reconstruction.

Director's Update:

7. **December Board Report:** Provided as an FYI.
 - a. **Hennepin County Library (Northeast):** The nearest HCL library branch (2200 Central Avenue NE) will be closing February 24 for renovation (through late 2025). This may cause an increase in patrons to Columbia Heights from northeast Minneapolis, although material holds from Northeast will be redirected to their Pierre Bottineau, St. Anthony, and Arvonne Fraser locations.
8. **Board Books:**
 - a. Carrie: *Unnatural Causes (Adam Dalgliesh mystery)* P.D. James; *The Sapling Cage (YA series)* Margaret Killjoy
 - b. Melanie: *Ayesha at Last* Uzma Jalaluddin; *Wednesdays at the Tower (youth series)* Jessica Day George
 - c. Renee: *Guide Me Home (Highway 59 series)* Attica Locke
 - d. Chris: *Putin's Russia: The Rise of a Dictator (graphic novel)* Darryl Cunningham; *Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat (2024)* Johan Grimonprez (streaming on Kanopy)
 - e. Rachelle: *1984* George Orwell; *Where the Library Hides (Secrets of the Nile series)* Isabel Ibañez
 - f. Amáda: *North Country: The Making of Minnesota* Mary Lethert Wingerd
 - g. Nick: *The Body* Stephen King
 - h. Amina: *IF I MUST DIE: Poetry and Prose* Refaat Alareer
 - i. Theresa: *Sunbringer (Fallen Gods series)* Hannah Kaner; *Time Traveler's Guide to Elizabethan England* Ian Mortimer; *That Librarian: The Fight Against Book Banning in America* Amanda Jones; *Northanger Abbey* Jane Austen
9. **AI-Generated Slop Is Already In Your Public Library (article):** Chris Polley sent this article out to the board members for their information. Our Library's digital collection is provided by Overdrive as part of the MELSA consortium agreement. Currently the Overdrive digital collection available throughout the seven county metro is created through active human curation and selection, rather than an all-or-nothing approach that includes the artificially generated slop referred to in the article. This will be something to keep an eye on, as this type of material can pass off misinformation and disinformation as fact, which can be dangerous.
10. **Rotary Club Grant:** Amáda informed the Board that the local Rotary club is looking for opportunities to fund youth literacy and education. In the past they would buy dictionaries for school district students, but as physical dictionaries are becoming less utilized, they are open to fresh ideas like youth world language collection funds for the Library or bilingual books for area schools. If interested in pursuing funds for this type of purpose, we should email the Rotary expressing our interest.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas P. Olberding
Recording Secretary, CHPL Board of Trustees