

**MINUTES**

OCPL Board of Trustees' Meeting  
February 12, 2025  
In-Person/ZOOM Meeting  
Central Library, Board Room  
4:00 p.m.

**ATTENDING  
(In-Person)**

M. Bilbo Coughlin	E. Kochian
D. Dixie	M. Mahar
S. Edelstein	T. Mulvey
J. Hurst-Wahl	

**ATTENDING  
(Zoom)**

D. Dell	N. Marquis
H. Holtz	N. Scavone
E. Gonzalez	A. Snyder
K. Lighton	

**ABSENT**

L. Dyer

**ALSO PRESENT**

D. Marmor	C. Johnson
R. Battelle	A. Perrine
J. Bleich	S. Rorer
M. Foster	T. Walters
R. Gilbert	Y. Williams
K. Hayduke	K. Schellinger

**WELCOME**

Mr. Edelstein called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Mr. Edelstein acknowledged and congratulated Ms. Marmor on her retirement. He considered it a pleasure working with her and thanked her for all her support, especially during the Strategic Plan. He along with the Board wished her well.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No Public Comment

## CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Kochian moved the consent agenda, which includes the minutes from the January 15, 2025 meeting.

Ms. Bilbo Coughlin seconded; motion passed unanimously.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### Motion

Ms. Mahar made the following motion:

*Resolution: 25-05*

**Be it Resolved**, that per Section 105 of the Public Officers Law, this board shall now move into executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment history of a particular person. Attendance at this executive session will also include non-board members Dawn Marmor and Amanda Perrine.

Mr. Mulvey seconded; motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered executive session at 4:04 p.m.

The Board reconvened the open session at 4:32 p.m.

## PRE-READS/ COMMENTS

Mr. Edelstein thanked everyone for their Pre-Reads and Board Reports. He felt were all very useful. Mr. Kochian mentioned some things that he considered noteworthy that should be shared with the public.

## DISCUSSION

### Strategic Pathways

Mr. Edelstein acknowledged Ms. Holtz and Ms. Scavone from Stillwork Consulting Group LLC, who attended the meeting by zoom, who have been instrumental in facilitating the work on the Strategic Plan. He also acknowledged the staff and the Board members who have been helpful in getting to this point as well. It has been eight months of hard work.

Mr. Edelstein gave a short review of the background of the Strategic Plan. Every five years the Public Library System must have a strategic plan and update. At the end of 2023 Stillwork Consulting Group LLC, was engaged following an RFP review process. A group of Board members and staff attended the strategic planning sessions. Surveys were conducted for staff, the public, and the Board. The information compiled helped guide in determining which core things to focus on. From a high level what stood out was that people love the library. It has a lot to offer. The idea of doing more and growing the system was very clear.

Things to focus on:

- Outreach
- Getting the message out
- Making sure the communities are served
- Governance work

Four core pathways were identified. Ms. Holtz added that in addition to the surveys a lot of discovery work was done, as well as work done understanding current capacity at the library. She felt the work she was most proud of was working with the team. They identified approximately 20 people to interview and conducted focus groups which really helped form these pathways.

Ms. Dixie questioned how the library works with non-profit agencies and possible partnerships in the Grow Services Pathway. Mr. Edelstein asked her if there was any language she would like to see in the Grow Services pathway where it doesn't reflect the priority that we need to be doing more in the Partnership and Outreach pathway. Ms. Hurst-Wahl felt there was already language in the Outreach and Partnership pathway. Mr. Edelstein mentioned that the two pathways, although similar, had enough difference to keep them separate. He is open to adding language the Board members think would make sense. Ms. Dixie felt the two pathways could be combined.

Mr. Edelstein asked Ms. Holtz to give her perspective on how we arrived at the different pathways. Ms. Holtz noted that the pathways belong to the organization and worked very hard to ensure they remained so throughout the entire process. She pointed out, something to keep in mind, was that all the pathways have similarities and have touch points with each other. A team of board members and staff met every other week for 8 to 10 months. They looked at surveys, capacity assessments, interviews, discovery, and had a board retreat. The Sharing, Sustaining, Success pathway emerged early on. This pathway centers around expanding the information about the library. It covers everything from community awareness to evaluating programs to making certain the community knows about them and gets in to see them, as well as the library being around long enough to have a stable financial future.

#### Grow Services and Programs

This pathway has a focus on literacy and the role the library plays. The conclusion is that the library is not to provide literacy services but to make sure the library literacy activities are in line and integrated with the existing programs that might be in the community. This pathway also looked at physical spaces.

#### Expand Outreach and Partnership

One of the priorities of this pathway was about opportunity with new corporations coming into town and how to tie in with that. It was also learned during the process that parts of the community are not aware the library is available to them possibly because of language or cultural barriers. This is another outreach opportunity as well as perhaps partnering with groups that work with people with learning disabilities. The library is a rich opportunity for these types of outreaches as well as connecting back to patrons to make sure they are being heard.

### Bolstering Leadership

This pathway focuses on strengthening the Board and the staff. The staff was found to be extraordinary and one of the library's major strengths. Some things that came up in discussions were how to keep the staff sustained and retained as well as sharing important information with staff.

Ms. Marmor pointed out that once the pathways are agreed upon, they will inform us how we go forward in partnerships, programs, and policy creation. She felt it was important when adopted that we follow through keeping in mind that it can be very easy to lose track along the way. Also, when talking about accessibility, she felt it was in a very broad sense.

Mr. Kochian asked Mr. Edelstein how he sees us putting this to work once voted on. Mr. Edelstein said he was excited to get thoughts from staff on how and where to take action. He feels there are opportunities for the Board to be more strategic regarding how Trustee funds are used to help pilot programs. He felt it would make a better argument when communicating with the County or State representatives when asking for help to fund in more of a long-term way. In addition, he feels having more conversations with FOCL about partnering and our priorities would help them better fundraise and is absolutely something that we can help with. He feels that the Board member's connections with existing organizations can help better leverage their connections with elected officials. He feels our ability to help support and fund is exciting. Working with the Executive Director to support programs that will be offered, as well as advocating and connecting he considers core items.

Ms. Holtz pointed out that this is a living document meant to be visited often and updated as needed.

Ms. Marmor added that going through this process was valuable. One thing she discovered was that the library engages in a lot of planning, and planning is different than strategizing. She felt we need to be mindful of that. Mr. Edelstein noted that once the document has been approved there should be regular reviews.

Mr. Mulvey wanted to follow up on execution. He used an example of a stalled building project. He asked how we go beyond deliberation and become effective in whatever it takes to see it through. Mr. Edelstein mentioned that we need to know what is out there already. The buildings have been there for a long time and the populations have changed so we need to get a sense of that from a physical perspective and how it maps to the community as a whole. Ms. Perrine, referring to the stalled project, commented that it was a project funded through state grants and has a timeline.

Mr. Mulvey wanted to know what the implementation devices are that would be adopted as part of this process. Mr. Edelstein thought the Executive Director would bring the needs to the Board. He suggested the

Board can make sure there are steps and progress. Mr. Mulvey would like the Board's ability, role, function, and objective defined. He thinks it fits into the strategic pathways when dealing with a specific project. Mr. Edelstein feels we should have more clear reports and have more discussions on the progress of these projects.

Ms. Hurst-Wahl commented that even though the Board will be adopting the Strategic Plan it's for the whole organization.

Ms. Mahar compared the Strategic Plan to a road map. She suggested each department take pieces of the road map and develop plans. It would include their job descriptions, the budget, and what grants will be applied for. She felt that would be the direction to move in. They should constantly update it, asking, did it meet this pathway, and continually refer to it.

Ms. Bilbo Coughlin suggested priorities be the specific focus of the regular review and the direct role of the Director, to bring things that are needed to the Board. Mr. Edelstein felt the Board could do some work to be clear on how to execute.

Ms. Gilbert suggested incorporating the pathways that are being advanced into the resolutions for the different grants. Mr. Edelstein thought it was a great idea.

Mr. Kochian was happy with the positive references to literacy and connections such as the Syracuse City School District. He felt a lot of libraries are working on school readiness, early literacy, and adult literacy. He feels we are going in that direction in the strategic plan.

Mr. Edelstein discussed the next steps, which include putting the strategic plan on the agenda for next month to officially adopt. He encouraged the Board to read and make comments to be considered. He would love any feedback in terms of a roll out plan or execution. Mr. Edelstein clarified that the pathways, objectives, and the information listed in the tables would be voted on.

Ms. Bilbo Coughlin mentioned that the NY State Education Department changed ESL (English as a Second Language) to ELL (English Language Learners). She felt this was an important distinction.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

*Resolution: 25-02*

Mr. Kochian moved the following resolution:

**Resolved**, That the OCPL Board of Trustees approves the grant application submission for a Literacy Coalition Champions Grant for up to \$7,000 to purchase an AWE Learning Platinum V3 All-In-One Computer designed for early learners, as well as a collection of Decodable Early Reader books

Ms. Dixie seconded; motion passed unanimously.

*Resolution: 25-03*

Ms. Dixie moved the following resolution:

**Resolved**, That the OCPL Board of Trustees approves the grant application submission for a CLRC Catalyst Grant for up to \$1,200 to go towards establishing an Educational Toy Library at Soule and Hazard Branch Libraries.

Ms. Bilbo Coughlin seconded; motion passed unanimously.

*Resolution: 25-04*  
**(Withdrawn)**

Ms. Hurst-Wahl moved the following resolution:

**Resolved**, That the OCPL Board of Trustees approves the revised Patron Code of Conduct Policy.

Mr. Kochian seconded; A discussion followed.

This motion has been withdrawn due to Union concerns voiced by Ms. Foster. Feedback from the union is expected in the next 7-10 days. The policy will be brought back for a vote in March.

Mr. Mulvey moved to withdraw this resolution. Ms. Dixie seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **OTHER**

Mr. Edelstein expressed his gratitude to Ms. Marmor for moving on so many of the different policies up for review.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Hurst-Wahl moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mahar seconded.

Mr. Edelstein adjourned the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Sharon Rorer  
Administrative Assistant

Central Library located at 447 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202-2494  
Phone 315-435-1900 Fax 315-435-8533 [www.onlib.org](http://www.onlib.org) Executive Director, Executive Director

Beauchamp Branch \* Betts Branch \* Hazard Branch \* Mundy Branch  
Paine Branch \* Petit Branch \* Soule Branch \* White Branch