Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Library
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 28, 2026 at 5:30 pm
Sawyer Free Library Conference Room
2 Dale Avenue, Gloucester, MA

As the recent amendments to the open meeting law allows, this committee will continue to hold meetings remotely. Adequate alternative access to the meeting is provided through the zoom link below.

And via ZOOM : https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85276115907

Attendance: *in person:* Fran Aliberte, Christine Araujo, Geoff Bradford, Peter Brau, Jason Brisbois**,** Rick Ciolino**,** Steven Lewis, Cheryl Marks, Kathleen Reynolds, Dawn Sarrouf, Library Director Jenny Benedict, and guest Christine Armstrong
Via Video conference: Joe Grella (joined at 5:50), Jeremy Melvin (joined at 5:50), Leora Ulrich

Not Present: John Day, Jen Holmgren, Peter Lawrence

1. 5:36 Call to order

2. Welcome and introductions
    a. Peter B moved to welcome Leora into the meeting. Fran seconded and the motion was approved via roll call.
    b. 5:50 Peter B moved to welcome Joe and Jeremy into the meeting. Fran seconded and the motion was approved via roll call.

3. Approval of minutes from June 23, 2026. Jenny offered a clarification. Fran moved to approve the minutes as amended and Peter B seconded. Dawn, Christine A, Kathleen, and Steve abstained and the minutes were approved as amended.

4. Fundraising Update – Christine
    a. We have raised $1.8 million this year. Five outstanding pledges were paid since the last meeting. We have $1.185 million in outstanding pledges.
    b. Spring appeal: We set a goal of $60,000 and have raised $148,074.
    c. Events:
        i. September 18 Art Auction: We have the call out to artists and sponsors. There will be both silent and live auctions. There is small committee but more help would be appreciated. They will need help hanging items before the event and checking out at the event. The live auction will take place in the Community Room and the silent auction in the Matz Gallery.

5. Director Review – Geoff
    a. Geoff and Jenny met to review the past year and plan for next year. Geoff noted that it was a good year for the Library and commended Jenny on her ability to synthesize ideas for donors, creating the AmeriCorps position and the two Early Learning positions, as well as the ability to manage complex construction projects, and navigate grant applications and management.
    b. Fran proposed doing something to thank the staff for their work. Jenny noted that the Board is providing lunch for the staff development day tomorrow. Geoff pointed out that state law prohibits any “gifts” over $50 per person per year.

6. Treasurer's Report - Joe
   a. Report: Because we are mid-audit Joe did not prepare a financial report. He did share an update on investments. Total investments are up over the course of the fiscal year even with money having been drawn from the accounts. Joe reminded Trustees that the Vrachos account is restricted to capital improvements; Joe recommends we use it for maintenance and repairs. The small restricted funds account is comprised of several small funds; we cannot touch the principal but we take the interest and dividends every year. We have a brokerage account for gifts of stock.
      i. Peter moved to accept the report as presented. Fran seconded and the motion was approved via roll call.
   b. Loan update:
      i. Joe reported on an email from City Treasurer, Conor MacCorkle asking about our payment plans for the next fiscal year. The project projects savings of approximately $1.483m out of a projected cost of $29m.
      ii. Next payment: We budgeted $1m for principal and $500,000 for interest. Joe suggests we give them the $1.33m in the BG Building Fund.
      iii. After brief discussion it was agreed that the Executive Committee will meet to draft a plan for review at the next Board meeting.
   c. Transfer $50,000 to City for Early Learning Center staffing
      i. The Board has already approved this expense. City Council approved the expense. The position has been posted. Joe will make the transfer.
      ii. Steven moved to transfer $50,000 to the City for the ELC staffing. Jason seconded and the motion was approved via roll call.

7. Finance Committee update – Peter B
   a. The auditors have begun their work.
   b. This year they are focusing on investments, the merger with the Foundation, the new building, the loan from the City and the interest payment. The Finance Committee meets this week.
   c. The auditors will bring draft financial statements to the Finance Committee for review in September before presentation to the full Board.

8. Committee Reports
   a. Corporate Communications – Fran
      i. There was a nice piece in the Gloucester Daily Times about library summer programs.
      ii. Fran reminded new members that they will need to choose a committee to serve on in the next few months.
   b. Saunders House – Geoff
      i. Middle Street Door: the new door will be installed this week.
      ii. Structural reinforcement: Still pending the fire suppression update. Hope to have this done by the August Board meeting.
      iii. Grant update: Jenny is pursuing a state grant for the new accessibility lift.
      iv. Murals: A researcher from Harvard came to look at the murals as part of a bigger project. He will be in touch when he is ready to publish his paper.
   c. Building & Grounds
      i. The question was raised about landscaping maintenance.
      ii. Jenny noted that a diagram drawn by G2 of the native landscaping has been posted on the website. There will be signs posted in the garden as well. The link to the landscaping page will go out in the August newsletter.
   d. Lyceum – Steven
      i. The Committee is beginning to discuss topics for 2027.

ii. They visited the Meeting House with the hope of holding a program there in the fall, but agreed it was not suitable for their needs.
iii. Upcoming topics for events: AI, what democracy means, state of world health.

9. Next Meeting: August 25, 2026

10. 6:35 Adjourn

Respectfully submitted, Tracy Bowen

Motions Summary
Peter moved to accept the Treasure's Report as presented. Fran seconded and the motion was approved via roll call.

Steven moved to transfer $50,000 to the City for the ELC staffing. Jason seconded and the motion was approved via roll call.

Actions Summary
The Executive Committee will meet to draft a payment plan for the City to be reviewed at the next Board meeting.