

FREEPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 8, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Freeport Public Library Board of Trustees was held in the Library Boardroom on Wednesday, October 8th, 2025. Vice President Tasha Mazique called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Notice is hereby given that a majority of a quorum of the members of City Council of the City of Freeport may be present at the above-referenced meeting. No action on the part of the City Council will be taken.

Trustees Present:

Betty Butler, Al Evon, Alan Greene, Lucas Kramer, Tasha Mazique, Julie Reynolds, Roger Schulz, Michelle Swalve

Trustees Absent: Mary Kaufman

Also present, Executive Director Ashley Huffines and Ky Eckert acting as the Recording Secretary.

II. CHANGES/CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Huffines asked if the board wished to talk about the union contract further in closed session. The board declined the closed session.

III. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC/MEDIA

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(Greene/Shulz) Motion to approve September 10th Regular Meeting Minutes and September 10th Closed Session Minutes
8 in favor/ 0 opposed. Motion carries.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT

September's finance report showed a few lines that have been over spent, as we have tracked throughout the year. Huffines and Eckert are working together on a reappropriation spreadsheet that outlines what the library is spending and how to spend the budget appropriately in this last quarter of the year to prepare for budget reappropriation. Postage was overspent due to a procedure change that started this year. Circulation is sending postcards to new patrons to verify addresses. This process has had a positive impact on the return of items from new patrons this year. Evon asked about income, Huffines replied she is unsure if the library will receive more income tax in 2025. She plans to check in with City Finance about the last payment for income tax.

(Evon/Greene) Motion to approve September 2025 Financial Report.
8 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carries.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

None.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

New PrairieCat App

PrairieCat launched a new app this month with different software that has proven to suit the library's needs very well. This app can be used to check holds, pay fines and fees, browse the collection, and view your digital library card. Huffines spoke about being excited to offer this to patrons. It is available now, patrons can download it for free from the App store and Google Play Store.

Administration

Huffines reviewed the bylaws' guidelines for public comment and closed session in response to the public comment at last month's meeting. The city's attorney advises not to respond to public comment, as well. Greene also mentioned that we could have denied the gentleman's public comment last month since he arrived after the public comment portion of the meeting. Huffines replied that she knew he needed to speak with the board, and allowed it.

Unfortunately, the library's main book distributor, Baker and Taylor, announced they will be closing at the end of 2025. This did not come as a surprise, but librarians are setting up accounts with other book distributors to find suitable replacements. Schulz asked about working directly with publishers, and Huffines explained the benefits of using a library book distributor rather than directly with publishers, including the discounts and various services book distributors provide.

Personnel

Library Clerk 4, Mike Sherman, recently submitted his resignation letter. His last day is Oct 31st. We wish him well! The job post will go up tomorrow (10/9).

Facilities

Huffines informed the board of a series of facilities maintenance issues. There have been several miscellaneous plumbing issues, Bill George has been fixing them as they arise. On Oct 2, a cast iron pipe in the ceiling above the History Room cracked, which caused a larger leak. Helm had to remove the ductwork to access the cracked pipe, and replaced it. No equipment or materials were damaged.

Huffines shared the proposal for the restroom remodel from NICAM. They are starting with the two public restrooms on the main floor, at less than \$10,000 per restroom (at prevailing wage). Based on the current budget report and the recent increase in facility repairs, Huffines recommended using reserves to pay for the remodel. There is \$50,721.26 in the Building Account and \$108,242.85 in the Capital Equipment account. She reviewed the proposal with the board and the listed updates which include new sinks, painting, countertops, rubber baseboards, and cleaning.

Not listed, both restrooms will get new faucets installed through Bill George Plumbing, and the men's room will get a new hand drier through Quality Electric, to match the women's room.

The window repair on Clark St will be pushed to Spring of 2026.

Huffines reviewed her outreach and meetings for September including WEN, Rotary, and Art Commission. She was happy to report that all of the sculptures have been installed along Chicago Ave and the response has been very positive!

Evon asked about the email exchange with Glenn Busch, from last month's public comment about periodicals. Huffines replied that she sought counsel from other professionals, including the attorney, who confirmed his email was not a personal attack. Huffines chose not to reply, but spoke with Mayor Miller, who responded to his email. There has been no further communication.

VIII. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

Adult Services/ Tech Services

Huffines reviewed the August and September reports for Adult Services and Tech Services, highlighting programs and attendees, outreach, notarizations, and other statistics. A new section has been added to the collection called Adult Learners, thanks to a donation of books from Highland Community College, for adults learning to read English.

Circulation

Huffines reported over 9,000 for circulation in September. One of the library's digital collections, Boundless, is owned and run by Baker & Taylor. Currently the program is still running and will be moved to a different platform in the transition. Hotspots are still circulating heavily and we have added more to the collection. Huffines also reported an increase in curbside pick ups.

Youth Services

Huffines reviewed the stats for the Youth Department including programs, attendance, and field trips. Amanda Meyers also attended a LACONI professional development day at DuPage Children's Museum about the power of play and how to incorporate STEM play at your library. Teen programming also continues to grow. Outreach statistics are going up again as Meyers is back in the schools every week.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Bathroom Remodel Proposal

Huffines reviewed the timeline for the proposed remodels. Gavin from NICAM construction predicted it will take about 4 weeks to get materials in, then they can start shortly after. They expect it to be a few days of work.

(Greene/Schulz) Motion to approve bathroom remodel proposal as presented.
8 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carries.

FY2026 Holiday Calendar & Board Meeting Dates

Huffines reviewed the holiday calendar with the board, including the 2 days off for July 3rd and 4th. State holidays must be observed on weekdays, and the library will also be closed on that Saturday. The November 2026 board meeting will be the 18th rather than the 11th because of Veterans day. No other changes.

(Greene/Reynolds) Motion to approve 2026 Library Board Meeting Calendar and Holiday Closures as presented
8 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carries.

XI. DISCUSSION

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

(Schulz/Butler) Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:39pm.
8 in favor/0 opposed. Motion carries.

Submitted by Ky Eckert