

## Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township

### March 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes

**Attendance:** Alycia Kinchloe, Julie Haywood, Jeff Chirico, Jesse Gallagher, Myron Goldman, Tim Gaudreau, Mary Kay Moran (Executive Director), Nicole Lynch (Assistant Director), Maddie MacKenzie (Administrative and Communications Associate)

**Public Comment:** None.

**Consent Agenda:**

- a. President's Report
- b. Director's Report
- c. Statistical Report
- d. Friends Reports
- e. January Minutes
- f. Finance Reports
- g. Committee Reports

**Board Comment:** Julie Haywood highlighted a number of topics from the President's Report. Julie Haywood thanked Mary Kay Moran for highlighting the importance of diversity in the CTLS collection in the March Newsletter. Julie Haywood and Alycia Kinchloe attended a training on March 15<sup>th</sup> that they shared with the Board at the Board Retreat. Julie Haywood encouraged the Board Members to take a look at the recorded videos from that training, which will be available until June 16<sup>th</sup>. At the Board Retreat, Board members developed key action items for the Board Goals. Julie Haywood requested that as Board members work on the Board Goals that are specific to their committee, they fill out the form with those key action items before their next committee meeting. The goal is to enact all of the key action items by the middle of April.

Julie Haywood emphasized the importance of taking advantage of upcoming advocacy opportunities. The Community Advisory Committee provides an opportunity to further the Board's community outreach to networks that support the library system. Board members will be reaching out to State elected officials in support of increased funding for Pennsylvania libraries. CTLS will be collecting stories during National Library Week in April to share at a face-to-face meeting with Senator Haywood and Representative Nelson. Board members are encouraged to bring their own library stories to share.

**Motion:** Myron Goldman moved to adopt the Consent Agenda, Alycia Kinchloe seconded the motion, and the agenda was adopted.

**Sunshine Announcements:** The Board approved the 2025 BOLDOCT Goals last month in an Executive Session.

**Librarian's Report (Nicole Lynch):** See attached report.

**Commissioner's Report (Jeff Chirico):** Jeff Chirico informed the Board that the Township will be ordering an appraisal of Township owned properties including the Elkins Park Library, the Township Administration Building, the Public Works Building, the Shovel Shop, etc., to evaluate their worth in the event that the Township does decide to sell. Jeff Chirico expects the results of that appraisal in April or May.

The preliminary land development plans for the former Melrose Country Club were presented to the Township Commissioners. The mixed-use development will include commercial, residential, recreational, community and medical space. Whether there will be a Township-owned pool is yet to be seen, but there is a preliminary plan to consider a community center. The School District plans to close Elkins Park Middle School next year, and put three additional modular buildings at Glenside Elementary to accommodate the students in addition to the modular buildings already at EP.

The Glenside railroad bridge construction plans were delayed until July due to the SPS fire. The Township expects construction to require approximately 5 to 6 weeks. Construction has commenced on the overpass on Keswick Avenue between Mt. Carmel and Glenside Avenues. That section of Keswick Avenue will be closed for 12 days around Memorial Day to allow for the new bridge to be installed.

The Commissioners approved the preliminary design plans for the La Mott Community Center in February. The architects are moving forward with the design plans, and the Township is hoping the permitting process can take place in late summer or early fall. The Architects then evaluated and presented the costs of the plans to the Township. With the Township's current funds, they cannot complete renovations on both floors of the building. To fully renovate both floors would cost \$6 to 7 million. The Commissioners need to decide between the no-frills plan with only waterproofing and storage space on the lower level at \$4 to 5 million. The Township approved the most expensive plan at \$7 million with the intention of fully designing the space and then stepping back if they do not secure the necessary grants.

Julie Haywood shared that the Township received state funds towards the renovation of the Rowland Community Center and inquired about how that would work with the potential Melrose Country Club community center. Jeff Chirico expressed uncertainty over the potential of a community center in the development. The Township gave a preliminary letter of intent to the developer, but the numbers have to look right to move forward. The La Mott and East Cheltenham Libraries will have seasonal openings this year. Depending on when construction begins on the La Mott Community Center, the La Mott Library will be off limits for over a year.

**Board Comment:** Myron Goldman and Mary Kay Moran asked about the probability and timeline of a centralized library. Jeff Chirico responded that there has been extensive discussion in the Commissioners' executive sessions, and they are exploring options that have not been made public and are not part of the facilities plan presented earlier this year. These options may potentially create a less expensive path forward to accomplishing the goals in the facilities plan.

Mary Kay Moran asked if there will be another opportunity for community input when the updated plans for the La Mott Community Center are made public. Jeff Chirico confirmed that there will be another community meeting with a presentation of the plans and time to provide feedback. There will have to be conversations about the limitations on library space and what is doable for CTLS and the Township. Mary Kay Moran stated that the ideal setup would include dedicated space for CTLS in the building and the ability to use the programming space for children's programming.

**Public Comment:** Bruce LaBan, a Philadelphia resident and professional engineer, requested updates on the information that he presented the BOLDOCT at the January meeting regarding problems with the boiler inspection at the Rowland Community Center. Since Mr. LaBan is not a resident of Cheltenham, he cannot speak at a Commissioner's meeting. Myron Goldman suggested that he provide the information to a Cheltenham resident who could bring it before the Township. Julie Haywood thanked him for his comment and reminded him that Jeff Chirico, a Township Commissioner, is present at the meeting and available to speak at the end of the meeting.

#### **New Business:**

#### **Governance:**

- **Approval of By-law Revisions (Alycia Kinchloe):** The Governance Committee reviewed the by-law revisions and the revisions were included in the New Business Packet. The changes made to the bylaws include 1) adding a description of the Community Advisory Committee and adding it as a standing committee of the Board, and 2) voting by proxy, allowing a board member to vote on behalf of another member who is not present.
  - Community Advisory Committee
    - **Motion:** Tim Gaudreau moved to approve the Community Advisory Committee as a standing board committee, Jeff Chirico seconded, and the motion passed.
  - Voting By Proxy
    - **Motion:** Myron Goldman moved to adopt voting by proxy, Tim Gaudreau seconded, and the motion passed.

- **Board Retreat Update (Alycia Kinchloe):** At the Board Retreat, the Board reviewed the 2025 Board goals and worked on action items. Board committee chairs should update their portion in the drive and continue to work on them for a successful 2025-2026. Julie Haywood thanked Alycia Kinchloe and Jessika McLaughlin for organizing the retreat and Mary Kay Moran for providing the essentials and attending. Myron Goldman thanked Mary Kay Moran and Nicole Lynch for working at the Elkins Park Library in the Sunday rotation, and being present in the branches.

#### External Affairs:

- **Annual Appeal Update:** The donations from the Annual Appeal increased by about 3% this year. The Annual Appeal had 64 new donors, with a donor retention rate of about 52%, above the national average of 40%. The External Affairs Committee plans to continue the donor newsletter and hold another Thank-a-Thon. Future goals include increasing monthly donations and employer-matched gifts.
- **2025 Advocacy Initiatives:** Julie Haywood sent out the information before the Board meeting. The Library System has been waiting on direction from state organizations about what is reasonable to ask from the State. The email included recommended messaging, specific numbers and asks. Jesse Gallagher requested that the Board members read the email and reach out to their local representatives.

#### Internal Affairs:

- **Revising PLGIT Accounts from Class to Prime (Myron):** Moving the PLGIT accounts from the Class to Prime designation would yield a slightly higher interest rate, while remaining extremely secure. No investing in the market is involved.
  - Jeff Chirico moved to move the PLGIT accounts from Class to Prime, Tim seconded. And the notion was approved.
- **Approval of Updated Policies:**
  - **Naming Policy:** Julie suggested changing the name of the Naming Policy to the Naming Rights and Name Recognition Policy to stay consistent with the changes in the body of the policy.
    - Julie Haywood moved to approve the Naming Policy as amended to the Naming Rights and Name Recognition Policy, Tim Gaudreau seconded, and the motion passed.
- **MOU status:** CTLS put together a Memorandum of Understanding with the Township covering expectations of management and improvements of Township owned buildings and expectations of sustainable funding of the library system and expectations concerning communications between the township and CTLS. Mary Kay Moran submitted language adjustments to the Township in early March, and will find out if they have approved them when she next meets with Allison. The next step will be to meet with a select number of Township Commissioners, including Jeff Chirico to see how best to approach presenting it to the full Board of Commissioners.
- **Community Advisory Committee:** Tim Gaudreau shared that the third Community Advisory Committee Meeting was held on March 11. The Committee focused on two main topics: partnerships with the community and how community members can influence programming. For partnerships, the Committee identified three key concepts of fundraising, advocacy and programming. CTLS has a partners list and the Board has a community stakeholders list. Committee members are working on one unified partnership matrix to log partnership information, categorize individuals and organizations we may want to work with for both the Library system and the Board to use and update. At the meeting, members also discussed ways to advocate for the library during National Library Week. Nicole Lynch sent out a draft of an email on library advocacy letters that will be sent to the Community Advisory Committee. Tim Gaudreau asked if there was additional feedback, or if it was ready to be sent to the Committee to use to reach out to their elected officials. Nicole hopes to encourage the CAC on this advocacy endeavor and others in the future. Tim Gaudreau will send out that email this evening.
- **Annual Report (Mary Kay):**
  - Mary Kay informed the Board that the Library System has submitted the Annual Report to the State and passed out an infographic with exciting library statistics to the Board, including the number of visits,

programs, program attendees, computer sessions, materials circulated and dollars saved by the community. Mary Kay Moran explained that there were no surprises, but noted the 18% increase in the demand for e-resources over the last year, which are becoming more expensive.

- Purchasing an e-book or e-resource usually involves purchasing a license, not purchasing the item. The different modes of purchase include a one-year or two-year license, 52 or 26 borrows, or whichever comes first. Mary Kay Moran estimates the average cost for an e-book is \$60 versus the \$18 average the library system would pay for a popular bestseller in print. E-audiobooks can cost upwards of \$100 versus the \$50 average the library pays for physical audiobooks. Libraries only have one platform available to purchase e-resources from, while individuals are able to purchase e-books and e-audiobooks at significantly lower rates. A number of states have brought suits against publishers for their e-book pricing model for libraries, but they have not been successful. Mary Kay Moran explained that the library system does have a set budget for digital materials and bases e-book purchases on the number of holds that have been placed on the title. Purchasing fewer e-resources, or offering fewer titles is the only way to control expenses. Last year the library system exceeded the e-resources budget due to a spreadsheet error that made it appear that the library was falling below the 12% that the State requires to be spent on collections.
- Digital materials are convenient, easily accessible, easy to travel with, and do not require a physical trip to the library. Due to their popularity with patrons, the digital materials budget needs to be increased every year at the cost of other materials. The Board discussed education and fundraising around the increased cost of digital materials. Myron Goldman suggested including an explanation of the cost and benefits of e-resources in the fundraising letter. Alycia Kinchloe suggested that most people are unfamiliar with the way libraries purchase e-books, both the increased cost and the limited amount of borrows of the purchasing model. If a patron borrows an e-book and doesn't read it, that still counts towards the borrowing limit on Libby.
- **Seasonal Branches Update:** The Library System plans to open the seasonal branches between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Both branches will be open four days a week on different days with different hours. Bill at Cheltenham Parks and Rec. confirmed that they will be running summer camp at the La Mott Community Center. The La Mott Library hours will match up so the library can hold programming with the summer camp and patrons can visit the library at pickup. The Township is not planning to hold regular programming at Rowland. Library leadership used the 2024 door count numbers to set the 2025 hours for the East Cheltenham Library. The East Cheltenham Library will host Busy Builders, Music and Movement with Ms. Ouliana, and school-aged children's programming on alternating Tuesdays and Fridays. Patron visits to the East Cheltenham Library were centered on programming. After Labor Day, the seasonal branches had about a 60% drop in the door count, so library leadership made the decision to close both branches after Labor Day.
- **Strategic Plan Update:** Mary Kay Moran shared an update on Strategic Plan Progress from the Strategic Plan Leadership Team meeting last week.
  - Partnership and outreach work is ongoing, including implementing items from the marketing plan, continuing preschool outreach, and beginning targeted senior outreach. There will be new resident postcard from CTLS included in the packet that the Township sends out to new residents, and Mary Kay Moran is working on setting up a display of CTLS promotional materials at the Tax Office to market library services.
  - The Collection Diversity team is moving closer to the goal to have 33% of library materials covering diverse topics. The team is using a grant-funded collection analysis software, and have already had the numbers increase from last summer.
  - The materials for the branch STEM kits have arrived and are in the process of being catalogued. These kits also include the new programming bots at Glenside, which are already circulating.
  - The Social Media management procedure is in place, and at the next meeting, the Board will have a Social Media Policy and Online Code of Conduct to review.

- Last year, CTLS updated the Personnel Handbook and Section 1 of the Policy and Procedures Manual. This year, the team is working on revising the Human Resources section of the Manual.
- CTLS launched a new Staff Suggestion Procedure, with a QR code and form for staff suggestions and feedback to be reviewed at leadership meetings. Leadership ran an employee engagement survey early this year with high engagement across the board, and identified a few areas for improvement.
- In 2025, CTLS is working on business collaborations, and getting public resources on the CTLS website, and starting an assessment team to develop a framework of assessment guidelines for evaluating programs and as part of the planning process for projects.
- CTLS will conduct a library survey that will inform the 2026 Strategic Plan.
- The SPLIT Team will be working on multilingual projects in 2025, including signage and collections materials in languages other than English. Mary Kay Moran met with the Assistant Superintendent of the School District about common languages in the school district. Elizabeth McGoran will be attending a festival hosted by the district's ELD department and talking to the attendees about what languages the library system might need to cover.

2025 is the last year of our current Strategic Plan, and CTLS will need to start working on a new plan this summer in order to have one in place by 2026. Mary Kay Moran will meet with Amanda, the consultant for our current Strategic Plan about the refresh process. Mary Kay Moran plans to hold the board and staff retreats again, and continue in same direction as the current plan. The Leadership Team does have suggested items to add and will be talking about how to evaluate and communicate the successes and accomplishments of the strategic plan to the community. The Library System has not done a user survey in a long time. Besides the Strategic Plan items, we want to know how people are using the library, if the hours work for them, if they are using library technology, and what they would like to see at the library. Mary Kay Moran would like to incorporate this type of survey regularly into the Strategic Plan process.

Alycia Kinchloe asked about the support that Elkins Park Middle School will need without their library. The EP school librarian asked if CTLS could incorporate their school collection, which is not feasible. CTLS will be hosting the school librarians at the Elkins Park Library on May 20th for their professional development day. Mary Kay Moran would like to talk to the EP school librarian further about her plans for the library, but did discuss the possibility of the sixth grade students in the modular buildings visiting the Elkins Park library as their library day.

**Board Talking Points:** The marketing consultant suggested a 1-page document to be handed out at Board meetings and a similar document to be shared with commissioners and stakeholders. The document includes the high priority of advocacy for increased state funding, a library story, monthly spotlights dates to keep in mind, and pictures. Mary Kay Moran passed this document out to the Board and requested feedback.

Mary Kay Moran discussed the executive order defunding the IMLS and how that would affect CTLS. As an individual library, CTLS does not receive federal funding directly, but the Pennsylvania Library Association receives federal funding that covers leadership training for librarians, grants & positions at the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, and the software used to assemble the Annual Report. The Family Place Grant and Storywalk Grant that CTLS received were federally funded by the IMLS. Access Pennsylvania, with extensive digital resources and the catalogue of materials available to borrow from around the state is partially funded by IMLS. Last year, even with IMLS funding, there was a significant increase in the delivery charges to borrow from across the state and the Montgomery Library District had to cancel select digital resources to offset the costs. Without that funding, Mary Kay Moran is not sure how CTLS could continue to provide statewide inter-library loan services. CTLS does have patrons that use that service heavily, and the yearly count of outside of the county ILL services is in the Branch Statistics Spreadsheet.

Currently, Pennsylvania libraries are focusing their advocacy efforts on increasing the funding for libraries in the state budget, since libraries receive funds directly from the State. For the time being, CTLS requests that advocacy be focused

on state elected officials, but will need to extend to the cuts to federal funding. Mary Kay Moran expressed frustration that with the exception of the American Library Association, no one in the media or the government seems to be talking about the defunding of the IMLS.

Julie Haywood emphasized the importance of focusing advocacy efforts strategically for now, but in the future suggested CTLS compile a similar fact sheet with key talking point specific to federal advocacy. Julie Haywood recommended adding CTLS branding and a window with CTLS specific statistics to the 1-page document.

**Public comment:** none.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- The next External Affairs Meeting will be held on Monday, April 7 at 6:00 PM
- The next Community Advisory Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 8 at 7:00 PM
- The next Governance Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 8 at 6:00 PM.
- The next Internal Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, April 14 at 4:00 PM.
- The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 28 at 7:00 PM at the Elkins Park Free Library.

**Motion:** Myron Goldman moved to adjourn the meeting, Jesse Gallagher seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

**The Board did not hold an Executive Session.**