

Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township

July 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Alycia Kinchloe, Julie Haywood, Jessika McLaughlin, Jeff Chirico, 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. May Minutes
- f. Finance Reports
- g. Committee Reports

Motion: Jeff Chirico moved to adopt the Consent Agenda, Alycia Kinchloe seconded the motion, and the agenda was adopted.

Sunshine Announcements: None.

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

Commissioner's Report (Jeff Chirico): Jeff Chirico thanked CTLS for participating in the Free Ice Cream Summer Block Party. Jeff Chirico shared that the final design work of the La Mott Community Center renovations is underway. The Commissioners expect to have the final designs in early fall, with construction hopefully commencing in early 2026.

Jeff Chirico shared updates on the Cheltenham Parks and Recreation Department, now under new leadership. The summer concert series has been expanded from 4 to 8 shows and is now being held in different parks throughout the Township. Many of the concerts are aligned with a new beer garden, Brews with a View, in partnership with The Ways Restaurant and Brewery and additional food vendors. Parks and Rec. are offering new children's programming throughout the year, and the Glenside and Conklin Pools, also under new leadership, have opened on time for the first time in many years. The Township is also planning for the 250th anniversary of Cheltenham. Jeff Chirico highlighted the opportunity for CTLS to partner with Parks and Rec. to host celebrations and programs on local history.

The Township is currently looking for a new Assistant Township Manager after Megan Hart's departure this spring. Jeff Chirico announced that the Township has reached an agreement to purchase the Pitcairn buildings on Township Line Road by the Jenkintown Train Station. The plan for the buildings includes police headquarters, administrative and municipal services and a centralized library, but more information will be shared later this summer. Julie Haywood asked about the timeline. Jeff Chirico expects that the Commissioners will know within a week, but clarified that the plan is less certain now

than when it was announced last week. Mary Kay Moran may know more after her meeting with the Township Manager on July 24. Jeff Chirico expressed concerns about the plan and questioned whether it is the right way to move forward.

Public Comment: None.

New Business:

Governance: Alycia Kinchloe provided a brief update from the last Governance Committee meeting. The Committee conducted a review of select internal procedures and shared drafts of the updates. Julie Haywood made the last round of edits and is now reviewing the procedures with the legal team.

Strategic Plan Refresh (Mary Kay Moran): Mary Kay Moran reminded the Board that the Board Strategic Plan Workshop will be held on Sunday, October 5 at the Elkins Park Library.

- **Community Survey:** The final version of the Community Survey has been uploaded to the Board shared drive. To develop the questions included in the Community Survey, the Planning Team met with Fast Forward Libraries about what the library system wants to know from the community. The Planning Committee provided feedback on the first draft, and then second drafts of the survey. The survey will be available on paper and online in a digital format. Survey responses go directly to our Fast Forward Libraries consultants who will compile the results into a learning report at the end of the survey period. For the widest possible distribution, the Planning Team has prepared e-blasts, social media posts and posters, bookmarks and lawn signs with a QR code to promote the survey. Lauren Walter from the Township will share the survey in the Township e-blast, and Mary Kay Moran has reached out to the School District. The Planning Committee will also be working on a survey specifically for the CTLS Board and staff.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** One of the consultants will be video-conferencing with stakeholders for a community needs assessment. CTLS has invited ten or eleven individual stakeholders, including the two candidates who won the commissioner primary election, school administrators, three people from the Community Advisory Committee, Mr. Taylor from the NAACP, and Yin Liu from PASSi, Penn Asian Senior Services.

Julie Haywood encouraged the Board to widely share the Community Survey to ensure that CTLS has the most possible feedback and community input for the next stage of the strategic planning process. Julie Haywood will send out the Board Survey and requested members submit any comments and feedback by Friday.

External Affairs:

Thank-a-Thon: Nicole Lynch reminded the Board about last year's Thank-a-Thon, at which Board members called donors to have thank you conversations. The External Affairs Committee aims to organize another Thank-a-Thon in late September or early October, but may need to adjust as it is a busy time of year for the Library System. In the next couple of weeks, Mary Kay Moran and Nicole Lynch will send out potential dates. Last year, CTLS provided scripts with frequently asked questions for Board members to use for the hour-long event. Studies show that even leaving a message benefits donor retention.

Julie Haywood reminded the Board that they are still looking for two members to compete on the CTLS Board team in the Community Spelling Bee. Jeff Chirico will be hosting the Bee. If you'd like to participate, email Elizabeth McGoran at the Elkins Park Library. Each participating organization will have a team of two, and there is no limit on the number of teams that can compete. There is no fee to participate, but there will be paid raffles and such to raise funds for CTLS.

Internal Affairs:

Budget: This year, the budget process will be different. CTLS will be submitting the proposed budget to the Township Finance Director, who will then input it into the Township's new financial software. Mary Kay Moran will meet with the Township Manager and the Fiscal Director on August 20th to learn where the Library System's proposed budget stands. In the fall, there will be public budget workshops, but Mary Kay Moran does not know the details or that process yet.

Mary Kay Moran presented the final budget approved by Internal Affairs Committee. The 2026 budget includes a 3.2% increase in appropriations from the Township, \$20,000 from an operational surplus that the library system had in 2024, and an estimate that we will receive about 4.3% in interest and dividends on the fund balance to use towards the budget. This budget includes a 2.5% COLA for all staff. There are currently four staff members below the minimum recommended MEA threshold. This budget proposal would bring everyone up to the minimum thresholds, and moves some staff closer to the median. The only staff currently at the median are a few Library Assistant 1s who have been with CTLS for 20 to 30 years. This year, the 2024 range was increased by 1.5% as recommend by MEA to account for inflation.

Julie Haywood reminded the Board that the MEA study was done a couple of years ago and the Library System is still playing catch-up to bring all staff to the minimum and move long-term staff towards the median. The Board discussed potential additional structures for raises and increased salary transparency. Jeff Chirico suggested that it may not be possible to deliver on future predictions due to the uncertainty of funding. Nicole Lynch clarified that the MEA range study does take qualifications into account, but is not merit based. Board members expressed that 2.5% does not constitute an adequate cost of living increase, while acknowledging the financial realities of uncertain funding and the challenges the Township is facing.

The budget includes a projected increase in gifts and donations. Mary Kay Moran estimated about a 3% increase in annual appeal donations and a 2.5% increase in non-appeal donations based on the past few years. The state aid is included as flat in the budget, although the state budget has not been passed yet. Julie Haywood highlighted the opportunity to reach out to local and state officials about increasing the funding for libraries.

Community Advisory Committee: The Community Advisory Committee will be working to spread the word about the Community Survey, and several members will be part of the community needs assessment interviews. The Committee is continuing to build out the partnership list, and like the other Board committees, monitor the state and library budget processes.

Seasonal Branches Update: The seasonal branches have officially been disconnected from MCLINC, and went with super-hotspots for internet service. The La Mott Library is small enough to avoid range and traffic-based service disruption, but the East Cheltenham Library is having issues. Each year we see

fewer and fewer people at the seasonal locations; the circulation and door count numbers for both locations are down by about half from last year. Mary Kay expressed hope that visits will pick up in July. Especially at the East Cheltenham Library, the door count is program driven, and the Cheltenham Parks and Recreation Department is not running any programming at the Rowland Community Center this year. The Township is holding camp at the La Mott Community Center this year, and Carolyn is coordinating story times and activities with the camp director.

Board Talking Points: The Pennsylvania State Budget has not been passed. Due to other non-library factors, the PALA does not expect that the libraries will receive a funding increase. Mary Kay Moran explained that the advocacy is now focused on urging elected officials to complete the budget process. If the State does not pass the budget, funding will not be dispersed to the district on schedule. The longer the process the process is delayed, the more difficult it becomes for the district. The district subsidizes the delivery of materials between Montgomery County Libraries, and provides postage and shipping for all Inter-Library Loan materials across the state, the Overdrive/Libby platform, shared digital resources, like Mango Languages, Beanstack, Scholastic Teachables, and special teen programs. If the district does not get their money, they will not be able to pay their bills. Previously, when the state did not pass the budget on time, libraries loaned money to the district to prevent disruptions in services.

Mary Kay Moran reminded the Board that it is not too late to sign up for the CTLS Summer Reading Challenge before it ends on August 16. The last big program of the summer will be Silly Joe Sings, a family music program at the Elkins Park Library on August 11. This summer, CTLS is featuring Mango Languages, a digital language-learning resource comparable to Rosetta Stone. Mary Kay Moran announced several Save the Dates, including community events at La Mott, the Board Strategic Planning Workshop and the CTLS Community Spelling Bee.

Mary Kay Moran uploaded an article on how libraries are supporting communities during power outages, storms, wildfires and other climate-change based disasters to the Board shared drive.

Public comment: None.

Upcoming Meetings:

· The next External Affairs Meeting will be held on Monday, August 4 at 6:00 PM. · The next Internal Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, August 11 at 4:00 PM. · The next Governance Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 12 at 6:00 PM. · The next Community Advisory Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 12 at 7:00 PM. · The next Board Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 24 at 7:00 PM at the East Cheltenham Free Library.

The meeting adjourned and the Board moved to an executive session.