

Board of Library Directors of Cheltenham Township

March 25, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Alycia Kinchloe, Julie Haywood, Jesse Gallagher, Tim Gaudreau, Emily Cheramie-Walz, Mary Kay Moran (Executive Director), Nicole Lynch (Assistant Director), Hannah Miller (Head Librarian, Glenside Branch), 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: None.

Motion: Jesse Gallagher moved to adopt the Consent Agenda, Julie Haywood seconded the motion, and the agenda was adopted.

Sunshine Announcements: None.

Public Comment General: None.

Librarian's Report (Hannah Miller): See attached report.

Commissioner's Report (Emily Cheramie-Walz):

Emily Cheramie-Walz provided the Board with an update on the Elkins Park Library's roof. Commissioner Cheramie-Walz visited the Elkins Park library on a rainy day to photograph the roof and the leaks and send them to Alyson Elliott, Allen Brown, and the commissioners. The township received three proposals for the Elkins Park Library Roof. The first option is patching the existing leaks for \$10,000. The second tier is a longer-term fix with a 10-year warranty for \$80,000. The third option would be a full roof replacement for over \$550,000. The township is leaning towards the mid-tier \$80,000 repair, and are planning to make a final decision at the April board meeting. The 10-year warranty on this repair will allow the township and CTLS time to determine the future of the buildings. Commissioner Cheramie-Walz informed the Board that the Glenside Library roof bids also went out this week, and that Alyson Elliott and Allen Brown should be ready to make that decision at the April board meeting, as well. Commissioner Cheramie-Walz continued that the libraries are the township's public facing buildings, and the Elkins Park Library roof is a visible problem with potential health concerns.

Commissioner Cheramie-Walz shared that the township has secured \$1.5 million in grant funding to be invested in the Rowland Community Center. The community has made its importance clear and expressed the desire for it to be renovated. The township has secured the same architecture firm

working on the La Mott Community Center renovations, which will lead public community forums throughout the design process. The Phase 1 planning process will mirror the La Mott Community Center renovations, with multiple opportunities for community involvement and close collaboration with the architects. Emily Cheramie-Walz announced that the township has applied for significant funding through congressional and senate appropriations through Representative Dean's and Senator Fetterman's offices as of Friday. Commissioner Cheramie-Walz assured the Board that the library will be included in the planning conversations when appropriate.

Emily Cheramie-Walz updated the Board on the search for the new township manager and chief of police. The township has contracted with the Meyner Center for the Study of State and Local Government at Lafayette College, which will lead the search for a new Township Manager, and is currently reviewing a significant pool of applicants. There will be an opportunity for the public to comment at the public meeting on Tuesday March 31, in person at Curtis and on Zoom.

Emily Cheramie-Walz reminded the Board about the township's Spring Fight Blight Event led by Dwight Pedro Lewis. Teams of volunteers will gather throughout the township to clean up public parks and spaces from 10AM-12PM on Saturday, April 18. The township will supply grabbers, gloves, vests and bags. People can register online to volunteer at set destinations including Ogontz, High School Park, Elkins Park and Wall Park, and community members can nominate their neighborhoods for a cleanup.

The Board discussed the status of the township's facilities planning. Emily Cheramie-Walz stated that the township is hoping to hold a moderated discussion about the options.

Township personnel: Henry Sekawungu, the Director of Planning and Zoning is leaving the township. The township has arranged interim staffing. Paul Leonard, the former Township Manager of Upper Dublin will be filling in on a temporary basis.

Mary Kay Moran asked about the timeline for the township manager search. Emily Cheramie-Walz responded that the commissioners were told that the process will take about 3-6 months. Each commissioner will be meeting individually with the head of the Meyner Center to discuss priorities.

There has been no further movement on the MOU. The Board decided to bring the MOU back to the township in May, after the roof conversation and the start of the search for the new township manager.

New Business:

Governance:

i. Board Goals: Each of the committees have had the opportunity to update their board goals in the drive. Julie Haywood instructed each committee to adopt their board goals at their next meeting. Jessika McLaughlin will put a dashboard together to track progress.

ii. Advocacy Toolkit:

iii. Trustee Institute: Alycia Kinchloe attended the Trustees Institute, and encouraged the Board to watch the Philadelphia Free Library's presentation about their gap in funding, getting libraries open, programming, and working with the foundation. Alycia Kinchloe also attended seminars on using AI and communicating with stakeholders. Mary Kay Moran and Nicole Lynch have also been watching the sessions and have created a summarized document of the sessions in the Board Education folder. Mary

Kay Moran told Board to use the online outline of the Trustees Handbook put together by the Bureau of Library Development. The online version will be regularly updated and expanded. Pieces of the Trustee Handbook, the communications with stakeholders seminar and sections of the Philadelphia Free Library seminar can be included to the Advocacy Toolkit.

In future committee meetings, the Board will further discuss the Advocacy Toolkit, the Strategic Impact Report, the dashboard for tracking goals, and the open Elkins Park Friends seat. Julie Haywood informed the Board that at their next meeting this Tuesday, the Elkins Park Friends will make a recommendation for the Elkins Park Board member, either Sherry Justus, or another candidate. The Board can hold a special Zoom meeting to approve the nomination, and then send the nomination to the township commissioners for official approval.

External Affairs: The External Affairs Committee is brainstorming fundraising events and working on smaller fundraising ideas.

i. Annual Appeal Report: Jesse Gallagher read the Annual Appeal report. This year's annual appeal raised \$15,000 more than last year, with a greater number of donors, new donors and a higher average donation. Nicole Lynch encouraged board members to review the donor spreadsheet in the External Affairs shared drive, and send thank you notes to donors they know personally. Nicole Lynch and Mary Kay Moran will also send thank you notes throughout the year. Emily Cheramie-Walz suggested sending out a new donor thank-you card, a lapsed donor postcard, and a high donor recognition at the end of the year. Mary Kay Moran and Nicole Lynch are working on fundraising and enhancing the donor stewardship plan through the year, and have been adding to this stewardship each year.

ii. Library Giving Day: CTLS will be participating in Library Giving Day for the second time. This year, CTLS has set a goal of raising \$1000 for the Summer Reading Challenge kickoff and programming. Mary Kay Moran thanked Nicole Lynch for her work on the Annual Appeal and donor development on top of her other tasks. The Board discussed the possibility of adding a development director to the budget. Emily Cheramie-Walz suggested working with a consultant on a part-time basis, and will show the Board example proposals of costs and details.

Internal Affairs:

i. Recommended 2026 Budget: Mary Kay Moran presented the 2026 CTLS budget, as recommended by the Internal Affairs Committee. The \$100,000 grant from the State Senate will allow the library system to maintain its level funding, meet the collections standards required by the state, and avoid reductions in staffing levels and operating hours at the Elkins Park and Glenside Libraries. CTLS will be able to bring the Head Librarians and the Assistant Director up to the minimum salary threshold in the Mid-Atlantic Employers Association study. The grant also allows the library system to account for the increase in utilities and maintenance costs. Unfortunately, after three years of flat-funding, CTLS will not be able to open the East Cheltenham Library this year or staff the La Mott Library when it reopens. This year, the library system will need to start working towards a model that will allow us to operate with further budget reductions. Mary Kay Moran has a meeting with Janice Salerno on April 9 to have a preliminary discussion on next year's budget. Next year, there will not be another \$100,000 grant, and library leadership will need to start making tough decisions to address such a significant gap in funding. The Board discussed the possibility of pursuing further grant funding.

Mary Kay Moran explained that after the IMLS was defunded by the current administration last year, there were little to no grants available. Since the IMLS has had its funding restored, that may change.

- **Motion:** Julie Haywood moved to approve the proposed 2026 CTLS budget as recommended by the Internal Affairs Committee. Jesse Gallagher seconded the motion, and the passed unanimously.

ii. Recommend commit funds to 2027 budget; to be invested in PLGIT until required: The Internal Affairs Committee recommends that CTLS commit funds from our interest accounts into the 2027 budget. The library system ended 2025 with an operational surplus of over \$60,000; three part-time staff were out on medical leave, and CTLS received a significant donation of \$50,000 to commit to the 2027 budget. These funds, currently in operations accounts, would be invested in PLGIT to earn interest. Next year, that will be included in the 2027 budget on the income line. According to the Investment Policy, CTLS will not use its fund balance on expenditures, but will maximize and utilize interest income.

- **Motion:** Jesse Gallaher moved to approve, Julie Haywood seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

iii. Elkins Park Friends Representative Update: Still awaiting a recommendation from the Friends.

Community Advisory Committee: The Community Advisory Committee met in February to discuss topics for community members to engage with throughout the year, including how each of the community member can share knowledge and leverage their expertise and connections to the community. Nicole Lynch also presented some advocacy opportunities.

i. National Library Week Kudo-Board: The Kudoboard is an online whiteboard that CTLS will use to capture stories from patrons about why they love their Cheltenham libraries. Nicole Lynch sent the Kudoboard out to the Community Advisory Committee to test, and included the link in the Board meeting agenda. CTLS will send the Kudoboard out in mid-April, and promote it during National Library Week. Folks can share stories that we can use throughout the year for advocacy to elected officials and the Annual Appeal.

ii. The Board discussed putting together a timeline for advocacy to our elected officials. Nicole Lynch and Tim Gaudreau will discuss advocacy with the Community Advisory Committee in April, and advocacy for the library appropriations PALA ask will take place in May.

Strategic Plan:

i. Impact Report: Mary Kay Moran passed out copies of the Impact Report to the Board. CTLS held the final 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Meeting last week to discuss how to publicize the report. The Impact Report is already posted on the website under the Strategic Plan section. It will be shared digitally with our CTLS donors, newsletter recipients, contacts at Arcadia University, the township department heads, the Community Advisory Committee, and the district consultants. It will also be promoted on social media. Printed copies, posters and bookmarks with a QR code will be displayed in the branches. CTLS will send out a postcard with a QR code to donors, and send out printed copies to top donors, to school district officials, local and state elected officials, and Madeline Dean's office. Mary Kay plans to keep a copy with the library materials at the township administration building. Some of the work was moved forward from the old plan, and some will continue through the new plan.

ii. 2026-28 Implementation: This week, the new Strategic Plan Implementation Team met and sent out an email to all staff with the Impact Report and an interest form for SPLIT work teams. Staff can join a work team according to their interest in the three Strategic Plan goals: build community, enrich lives, and ensure sustainability. A member of the SPLIT Team will facilitate each work teams as they brainstorm action items and activities. The SPLIT Leadership Team will combine these ideas with the suggestions from the board and staff workshops, and develop a timeline for the next three years.

Facilities: Mary Kay Moran updated the Board on a number of facilities concerns.

- **GL Retaining Wall:** Repairs to the Glenside Library retaining wall will have to wait until spring, and should be covered by insurance.
- **Bridge construction:** The bridge construction alongside the Glenside Library has restricted the next-door neighbors' ability to their driveway. CTLS agree to let them build a temporary, gated driveway into the library parking lot. The contractor will make sure that the homeowner can use their original driveway on days that the library has outdoor programming. Once the contractor removes the temporary driveway into the parking lot, they will rebuild the curb.
- **Elkins Park Library Roof:** In addition to the roof updates shared previously, the township will patch the actively leaking areas in the Elkins Park children's section to prevent further damage this spring.
- **LM and EC:** The Library System will not be able to open the East Cheltenham Library this year. Mary Kay Moran attended the La Mott Community Center renovation meeting, and reported that the township is still hoping to break ground in the spring, and reopen sometime in the summer of 2027. Mary Kay Moran plans to attend the public meetings for the Rowland Community Center renovations and will recommend a similar situation to the plan for the library at La Mott.
- **Electricity:** CTLS has experienced significant increases in electricity supply fees even though kilowatt hours were down. The Township Manager worked to decrease the library system's supply fee, and the electricity supplier should have changed this month. Nicole Lynch has not received the March electric bills yet with the updated fees.

Mary Kay Moran has researched local SHARE accounts. To be eligible, libraries need to apply with their local municipality. After consulting with the township, it seems that they have a lot of capital projects going on, and the SHARE account is not currently the right fit for the Elkins Park Library's roof repairs.

Board Education & Talking Points:

- **New Trustee Handbook:** The new Trustee Handbook is available in multiple places on the shared drive, including the onboarding and the board education sections. Mary Kay recommended navigating the handbook via the summary document in the Trustee Institute Folder, which will be added to and kept up to date.
- Mary Kay Moran passed out the talking points one-pager, which is also on the shared drive. Mary Kay Moran will provide a similar one-pager to the commissioners.
 - Emily Cheramie-Walz suggested adding a "how you can help" box for the commissioners' version with high priorities, a great story, and highlights from the Librarian's report.

Board Comment: None.

Public comment: None.

Upcoming Meetings:

- The next External Affairs Meeting will be held on Monday, April 6 at 6:00 PM.
- The next Governance Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14 at 6:00 PM.
- The next Internal Affairs Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, April 13 at 4:00 PM.
- The next Community Advisory Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14 at 7:00 PM.
- The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 27 at 7:00 PM at the Elkins Park Free Library.

Motion: Jesse Gallagher moved to adjourn the meeting, Tim Gaudreau seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

The Board moved to an Executive Session.