



Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
The Board of Trustees
Webster Groves Public Library
December 17th, 2025

The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Webster Groves Public Library was held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 17th. President Anita Radcliffe presided, and Library Director Madison Morris kept the minutes. Also present: Trustees Fred Toelle, Leanne Waugh, Janey Worthington, Lea Ann Coates, Jenine Harris, and Sherry Taylor. Not present: Trustees Dana Cooley, Ed Scholl and City Council Liaison David Franklin.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Minutes of the November 19, 2025 Meeting

Ms. Worthington moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Toelle seconded. All were in favor, and the minutes were approved.

Correspondence

Stifel

See Old Business: *Bond/Tax Levy Issue*.

President's Report

Ms. Radcliff thanked everyone for contributing to the ham and turkey for the Library's staff development day.

Librarian's Report

Ms. Morris reported that the HVAC project is moving forward. The contract has been signed, and work will hopefully begin by the end of December. She stated that on the lower temp days the building has been chilly, but space heaters are being utilized, and signs have been put up to make patrons aware that the heat is not fully working.

She stated that the vacation policy which was approved at the November meeting has been rolled out to full-time staff and is now uploaded and tracked in the library's timekeeping system.

Ms. Morris also said that the air compressor which is hooked up to the Library fire/sprinkler system needs to be replaced. The new compressor has been ordered, and she is anticipating this being around a \$6,000 project.

Advanced Planning

Dr. Harris reported that she is working on a report evaluating how the Library is doing thus far regarding the strategic plan. She stated she is working with the Library's System Administrator, Tim Nix, to review data that goes along with the initial plan and will report on this in the new year.

Building and Grounds

Ms. Waugh said the Librarian's report covered building and grounds.

Finance

Ms. Morris reported that the voided checks on the financial report were all checks that had to be canceled and reissued.

She also stated that a patron had donated \$58,000 to the Library. Ms. Morris said she would include a report about this in the January Board Packet.

Money has continued to be transferred from the investment account to the checking account to keep the checking account at adequate levels. Most of the Library's tax money comes in during the months of December and January.

Ms. Waugh moved to approve the financial report. Dr. Harris seconded. All were in favor, and the report was approved.

Human Resources

None.

Policy

None.

Friends Report

Ms. Taylor reported that the Friends have recruited a new board member, Gary Gray, who will also serve as the new Friends of the Library Treasurer. He will be starting in that role in January along with the other new officers: Nancy Leahy, President, Sue Jagler, Vice President, and Debbie Ladd, who will continue her role as Secretary.

City Hall

None

Old Business

Bond/Tax Levy Issue

There was discussion regarding the City of Webster Groves potentially placing two tax increases on the April 2026 ballot: a sales tax increase and a fire district tax increase. It was also noted that the ballot would include city council races and the mayoral election. Board members expressed concern that having multiple tax initiatives on the ballot at the same time as a potential Library measure could negatively affect election outcomes.

The Board also discussed the broader economic climate, including the rising cost of living and inflation, and how this environment could reduce public support for a tax increase.

Discussion then turned to the Stifel communication and potential tax levy options.

Ms. Morris stated that the communication highlighted the complexity of the Library's current financial situation, noting multiple interrelated factors and remaining unknowns, including the senior tax freeze, the temporary levy approved in 2009 that will partially expire in 2029, and the resulting impacts on both operating expenses and future capital needs.

Ms. Morris expressed that she did not feel confident the Board could fully analyze these issues and communicate them clearly to the public in time for an April 2026 ballot. As stewards of taxpayer funds, she emphasized the importance of ensuring that any future ballot initiative is not rushed and that the Library can present its needs and financial responsibility in a clear, accessible manner.

Board members agreed that the information currently available is difficult to understand and that voter education would be challenging within a short timeframe.

Ms. Morris recommended tabling a Library ballot initiative until a later date.

Ms. Morris reported that, following the recent HVAC down payment, the Library's reserve account stands at slightly over \$1 million. She noted that property tax revenues received in December and January could largely be transferred to the reserve account to earn interest and moved back to the operating account as needed.

The Board discussed that the Library should remain financially stable for another year; however, building systems continue to fail, and additional major capital projects remain, including roof replacement. Combined with the partial expiration of the temporary levy in 2029 and its impact on the operating budget, the Board agreed that the Library should continue planning for a future levy. Possible election timelines discussed included August 2026 and April 2027.

There was discussion about proactively sharing information with the community regarding the building's condition and the Library's financial challenges in order to build understanding for a future levy request.

Ms. Morris noted that the Library building's 75th anniversary will occur in 2026 and suggested incorporating information about the building's needs into anniversary-related communications.

The Board also discussed collaborating with the Friends of the Library to help disseminate information. Ms. Morris stated that once additional information is compiled and a clear plan is established, she will engage the Friends in outreach efforts.

Ms. Waugh moved that the Library gather additional information and not place a Library funding ballot initiative on the April 2026 ballot, with the intention of reconsidering a ballot initiative in the future. Ms. Worthington seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

New Business

Board Committee Addition

Ms. Morris requested that the Board add a temporary committee to help her continue to work through tax levy information and options.

Ms. Waugh moved to create a committee to handle ballot initiatives that is only in existence until a ballot is passed. Ms. Taylor seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Ms. Coates stated she would be on the committee.

Ms. Morris said she would follow up via email to see who else would be interested in being on the committee and would schedule the first meeting in the new year.

Resolution of Reimbursement for Capital Expenditures

Ms. Waugh moved to approve the resolution determining the intent of the City of Webster Groves Municipal Library District to reimburse itself for certain capital expenditures. Mr. Toelle seconded. All were in favor, and the resolution was approved.

Adjournment

Dr. Harris moved to adjourn, Ms. Waugh seconded. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:57.