

**Nashville Public Library Board of Trustees**  
**Minutes**  
**October 21, 2025**  
**Hermitage Branch Library**  
**Meeting Room**  
**3700 James Kay Lane**  
**Hermitage, TN 37076**  
**12:00 PM**

**Members Present:** Joyce Searcy, Katy Varney, Charvis Rand, Keith Simmons, Kate Ezell, Dr. Nadine de la Rosa, Rosalyn Carpenter

**Library Staff:** Terri Luke, Susan Drye, Jena Schmid, Chantel Clark, Andrea Fanta, Kyle Barber, Linda Harrison, Shawn Bakker, Cynthia Moynihan, Marteja Bailey, Jenny Lane, Noel Rutherford, Angia Jones, Calvin Thomas, Dan Padilla, Emily Talbot, Larry Jirik, Forrest Eagle, Hannah Gerst, Kris Cagle, Travis Humbert, Joan Brasher, Katy Gillen, Jessica Siddhharth, Nikki Glassley, and Emily Kriebel

**Others:** Macy Amos and Kelli Woodward, Metropolitan Attorneys at Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County; Jeanie Elias; Amanda Hinson; Nick Martindale, Channel 2 News

- I. Call to Order / Roll Call
  - a. Joyce Searcy called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM.
- II. Metro Ordinance required to be announced at all Board Meetings – *Chair, Joyce Searcy*
  - a. “Pursuant to the provisions of § 2.68.030 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws, please take notice that decisions of the Nashville Public Library Board may be appealed to the Chancery Court of Davidson County for review under a common law writ of certiorari. Any appeal must be filed within sixty days after entry of a final decision by the Board. Any person or other entity considering an appeal should consult with an attorney to ensure that time and procedural requirements are met.”
- III. Public Comments
  - a. “Pursuant to T. C. A. § 8-44-12, time is reserved at the beginning of Library Board meetings for which there is an actionable item on the agenda for public comment germane to items on the agenda. Up to five people will be allowed up to three minutes each to speak. Speakers must register within one half hour prior to the beginning of the meeting by signing their name on a physical sign-up sheet available at the entrance and identifying any agenda item on which they intend to comment.”

- b. Jeanie Elias spoke about concerns regarding noise and student behavior at the Green Hills Branch Library. Ms. Searcy thanked Ms. Elias for her patronage and noted some concerns would likely be addressed during the renovation later this year. Ms. Searcy also asked Ms. Elias to speak with the Assistant Director of Branch Services to further address concerns.
- c. Amanda Hinson spoke to the board about improving cellar connections at branches. Ms. Searcy thanked Ms. Hinson for her time and advised her to speak with Metro ITS as NPL must adhere to Metro standards.

IV. Board Chair Comments, *Joyce Searcy*

- a. Ms. Searcy, Terri Luke, Larry Jirik, and Kate Ezell attended a webinar on policies about intellectual freedom and artificial intelligence. Mr. Jirik is working to develop an AI policy for NPL.
- b. Ms. Searcy and several other board members attended the NECAT awards ceremony. Ms. Searcy noted that the NECAT community is outstanding, the team at NECAT is excellent, and it will be wonderful to get a new studio space in the coming years.

V. Approval of Minutes: September 16, 2025

- a. **Dr. Nadine de la Rosa motioned to approve the minutes. Charvis Rand seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

VI. Library Director Report, *Terri Luke*

- a. Ms. Luke provided an update on the Main Library restoration. NPL continues to lean on the expertise of First OnSite. Metro Codes and the Fire Marshal have been out to assess the scope of work, and Susan Drye is working with the architectural firm to help the restoration company create a plan. NPL is eager to reopen and welcome customers back, but Ms. Luke pointed out that many customers are continuing to use the library at other locations. Ms. Luke thanked staff for their support and flexibility.
  - i. Kate Ezell asked about the need for architects at this stage. Ms. Drye explained that when the walls were opened, the work became classified as a major renovation, meaning that the library will need permits to complete the work. NPL needs stamped drawings from the architects to acquire the permits.
  - ii. Ms. Luke thanked Metro Codes and the Fire Marshal for their fast response. Once work begins, it will take about 40 days to complete. It is unlikely the

library will be able to obtain occupancy until the work is finished and approved.

- b. Ms. Luke and Ms. Searcy met with Councilmember Vo to discuss NPL's key strategies and the Continuous Improvement Plan. Councilmember Vo was very engaged and had excellent suggestions.
- c. Next week, Ms. Luke will begin interviews for the Assistant Director of Innovation, Collections, Shared Systems, and Technology.
- d. The Capital Spending Plan presentation in September went very well, and there was a follow-up meeting to discuss the timelines of the Hadley Park and Richland Park projects. The library should find out more about funding in November or December.
  - i. Mr. Rand asked about the plan for Hadley Park. Ms. Drye explained that because the property between the library and Wendy's did not want to sell their land, a new plan must be made. Ms. Luke stated she is working with General Services to find a new location close to the current one.
  - ii. Keith Simmons asked for an update on the Green Hills renovation project. Ms. Drye stated that they are in the process of picking a general contractor. There were lots of applications, and she suspects the library will be closed starting in January.
- e. Two graduate-level marketing professors from Vanderbilt University have agreed to help NPL with the customer service survey. Chantel Clark, Andrea Fanta, and Jena Schmid will be collaborating with the professors and their students to build and distribute the survey.
- f. Ms. Luke agreed that the NECAT awards were amazing, and the community creates incredible work. She thanked Larry Jirik for his continued leadership.
- g. The AI webinar that Ms. Searcy mentioned also included a section on intellectual freedom. Ms. Luke noted that NPL has a strong collection development policy in place and felt confident in addressing intellectual freedom. Mr. Jirik will chair a new AI taskforce.
  - i. Ms. Searcy added that NPL seemed to be ahead of the curve and did not deal with the same issues other libraries were experiencing.
- h. Mark Crowder and Brandon Castro will co-chair a safety and security taskforce.
- i. Andrea Fanta, Linda Harrison, and Ms. Luke will attend the Urban Libraries Council Conference in Cincinnati, OH in October. The conference will focus on advocacy efforts.

- j. Congratulations to both Ms. Searcy and Rosalyn Carpenter! Joyce received a new title, **Assistant Vice President for Community and Government Relations**. Rosalyn received the **Women of Legend and Merit Award**. Thanks to both of you for the difference you make in the community.

VII. Foundation Report, *Shawn Bakker*

- a. The new NPLF Strategic Plan was passed by the NPLF board and is now in the implementation phase.
- b. The plan has two primary guiding principles: trust-based philanthropy and the library is for everyone – so are we.
  - i. Trust-based philanthropy focuses on collaboration between a funder and the entity being funded. NPLF wants to continue to pass on unrestricted donor funds in an unrestricted way.
  - ii. The library is for everyone, and NPLF wants to be mindful of this and work to adapt appropriately when it comes to fundraising efforts. They want to invite all people to give but ensure that no one feels obligated to give. When planning events, NPLF will make sure leadership represents the Nashville community.
- c. Over the next five years, they will focus on three main priorities:
  - i. Begin Bright – NPLF is working to raise the last \$6 million to ensure the program is fully endowed, and after that, they will move toward stewarding the donors and reporting back outcomes from the program.
  - ii. Grow Our Circle – currently, there are about 1400 donors to the Foundation, which is a small percentage of Nashville. NPLF would like to expand the network of donors. In doing so, they hope to explore ways to support the collection.
  - iii. Expand Advocacy – already the Foundation has made strides in this area, but they would like to continue moving forward. There are many opportunities to continue expanding advocacy efforts.
    - 1. Mr. Rand thanked Ms. Bakker for an excellent report and asked if NPLF is looking at other ways to diversify their revenue streams. Ms. Bakker explained that NPLF has three primary revenue streams: corporations/grants, individuals, and events.

2. Mr. Simmons noted that a larger amount of smaller donors could be another revenue bucket. Ms. Bakker agreed, and Caitlin Reed, Director of Community Giving at NPLF, is researching how other libraries approach this bucket. They have not yet picked a strategy, but it does pair with fundraising for collections.

#### VIII. New Business

- a. Approval to close early on New Year's Eve 2025, *Susan Drye*
  - i. Several years ago, the Board granted the library director the ability to close early the day before Thanksgiving in perpetuity. Last year, we requested to close early the day of New Year's Eve but forgot to ask for it in perpetuity. This vote is to fix that.
  - ii. **Katy Varney motioned to approve the request to close early on New Year's Eve in perpetuity. Ms. Ezell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**
- b. Vote to approve the Digital, Education, and Workforce Development Grant, *Susan Drye*
  - i. Ms. Drye introduced Marteja Bailey, NPL Grants Coordinator, who has been working on this grant. Ms. Bailey explained that NPL's Digital Inclusion team has been awarded the Broadband Digital Skills, Education, and Workforce Development grant by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD). This funding is intended to enhance the Senior Tech Academy, building on the foundational efforts of Marian Christmon in support of NPL's Digital Inclusion Initiative. This grant will be used to deliver digital skills training to 120 senior citizens, with the grant covering up to 90% of the eligible project costs, requiring a 10% matching contribution from the library. The Senior Tech Academy will provide basic digital skills training, a complimentary tablet upon completion of the program, and assistance in applying for affordable internet access for participants' homes.
  - ii. Ms. Bailey explained that to fulfill the requirements of this grant, NPL requests the Board's approval to collaborate with Tech Goes Home TN, a nonprofit organization that partners with schools, public libraries, and

various non-profits to provide free courses aimed at fostering technological proficiency within the community. They have worked with Metro Nashville Public Schools, several local organizations, and departments within Metro successfully.

1. Mr. Rand asked how long the program would run and if it would require new positions. Ms. Bailey stated these funds would be used to enhance a current program.
2. Ms. Searcy asked where the enhancements would be targeted. Ms. Bailey did not know the exact branches, but it would be three of our branches and they would most likely be in the urban core.
3. Ms. Ezell asked how long we would have to use the funding. Ms. Bailey answered that NPL would have until October 2026 to use the funds.

**iii. Mr. Rand motioned to approve the grant. Ms. Varney seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

## IX. Staff Report

- a. Library Board Service Award Recognition for Angia Jones and Calvin Thomas, *Joyce Searcy*
  - i. The NPL Board would like to recognize two of NPL's employees: Angia Jones, Circulation Assistant at the North branch, has worked for Metro for 40 years and Calvin Thomas, Maintenance Supervisor, has been with Metro for 30 years. Ms. Searcy thanked them both for their years of service.
    1. Ms. Varney stated that while we talk about how great the library is, we need to remember it is great because of the people who are here day after day and year after year. Both Ms. Jones and Mr. Thomas thanked the Board for their recognition.
- b. Out of Service Area, *Noel Rutherford*
  - i. Ms. Luke prefaced the presentation by noting that there would not be a vote today on the issue. She has also spoken with the Mayor about this, and he has instructed the library to serve Davidson County residents.

- ii. Over the years, wait times for our digital media have gone up. Popular items can take up to 10 months, which means we lose customers. Ms. Rutherford proposed eliminating the out-of-county fee and reducing the service area. Out-of-county customers would not be able to check out items but would still be able to use our facilities. Customers in our reduced service area but not in Davidson County would still have access to physical materials but would not be able to check out digital items.
- iii. Ms. Rutherford cited several reasons to consider this change, including:
  - 1. TN Reads is a digital collection available to Tennessee citizens in all counties except for the four metropolitan counties. TN Reads is much larger than our collection, and the wait times are shorter.
  - 2. NPL is a county library. With the current service area, we are trying to meet the needs of too many people. We do not have the resources to be a state library.
  - 3. Several large city libraries have already implemented this change, including Chicago, King County, Las Vegas, Detroit, Kansas City, San Diego, and Washington, D.C.
- iv. The current service area extends into both Kentucky and Alabama, as well as most of Tennessee. The proposed service area would include Davidson County, as well as the 13 counties immediately surrounding Davidson.
- v. This change would not happen immediately, and the rollout would be slow. Customers who have already paid for a year of access would still receive that year, but they would not be able to renew access the following year. NPL would also need to create talking points and provide training to staff to handle the change.
- vi. Reducing the service area would mean reduced wait times and it would free up some collection funding. Ms. Rutherford noted that this change is also fair, as Davidson County residents are the ones paying for these services with their tax dollars.
  - 1. Mr. Simmons asked about customers who still have full access cards but have moved out of our service area. Jenny Lane explained that it would be the next project.

2. Ms. Searcy asked if it was possible for customers to use fake addresses to apply. Ms. Lane answered that card registrations are run through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification system to attribute a name to a particular address. If the verification fails, or the customer declines the verification, they must come into a physical location.
3. Mr. Simmons noted this change was discussed previously, but the number of users was small enough to not warrant a change. Ms. Rutherford stated that out-of-county users account for 10-15% of our usage.

c. Equal Access Introduction, *Chantel Clark* and *Cynthia Moynihan*

- i. Chantel Clark introduced Cynthia Moynihan. Ms. Moynihan is the manager for Equal Access.
- ii. Equal Access includes services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as well as the Talking Library.
- iii. Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is turning 45! Because of grant funding, LSDHH can offer services to the entire state of Tennessee. About 13% of Tennesseans have difficulty hearing. LSDHH just hired a new program manager, Beth Williamson.
- iv. The Talking Library is celebrating 50 years! All through 2026, there will be lots of events to celebrate. TL offers services and reading to help with various disabilities. Volunteers read newspapers, magazines, books, and more to ensure people have access to these items.
- v. Ms. Moynihan invited the board to attend Feel the Music with Mandy Harvey on February 21<sup>st</sup> at McGavock High School:
  1. Ms. Varney asked how to become a reading volunteer. Ms. Moynihan stated that those interested can fill out a form on the Talking Library website: <https://library.nashville.gov/nashville-talking-library/volunteer>

d. Hermitage Branch Library Report, *Emily Talbot*

- i. Ms. Luke introduced Emily Talbot, manager of the Hermitage Branch. NPL has been lucky to have Ms. Talbot, and Ms. Luke thanked her for her years of service.



- ii. Ms. Talbot stated she is proud to have been with the library for 25 years. Hermitage was built on the site of the James Kay family farm, and the Kay family continues to support the library. With a community center and police station next door, Hermitage is able to easily connect with other Metro entities. The Hermitage Friends group stays active, running book sales and advocating for the library. They are the fourth busiest branch in the system.
- iii. Ms. Talbot and her team strive to be a community living room, and when customers want to try a particular activity, they try to accommodate. Hermitage hosts a variety of programs

X. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 1:53 PM

**Next Scheduled Board of Trustees Meeting**

**December 9, 2025**

**Edmondson Pike Library**

**Meeting Room**

**5501 Edmondson Pike**

**Nashville, TN 37211**

**12:00 PM**