

AKRON-SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MAY 29, 2025

Secretary Bernie Rochford called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Akron-Summit County Public Library to order at 4:34 p.m. in the Community Room of the Norton Branch Library. The following members of the Board answered the roll call: Angela Neeley, William Rich, Bernie Rochford, and Ray Weber. John Frola and Joseph Ferrise were absent. Present from Library staff were Pamela Hickson-Stevenson, Michelle Scarpitti, Michelle Alleman, Tori Berger, Mike Bianchi, Kaitlin Booth, Andrea Cowgar, Mike Derr, Pat Manning, Ryan McCoy, KT Mockensturm, Heather Otto, Peter Schantz, Sara Schwendeman, Dana Setting, and Melissa Walker. Mary Bird, Stacy Bray, Gerri Bowen, Diana Marthey, Mary Ozbolt, Mary Popio, Robyn Shondel, as well as Karen Nist with AUI and representatives from SEIU were also in attendance.

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Ms. Neeley, to adopt the agenda as distributed. The motion was adopted without dissent. 25-41
AGENDA

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Ms. Neeley, to adopt the minutes of the regular meeting on April 24, 2025. The motion was adopted without dissent. 25-42
APRIL REGULAR
MINUTES

There were no remarks from the President. PRESIDENT'S
REMARKS

Michelle Scarpitti, Fiscal Officer, presented the executive summary and financial report for April 2025. In April, the Library received the first half real estate settlement. Expenses included annual renewals and the county settlement tax fees. APRIL 2025
FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Mr. Weber, to adopt the financial report for April 2025. The motion was adopted without dissent. 25-43
ADOPTION OF APRIL
FINANCIAL REPORT

Vice President Joe Ferrise arrived at 4:36 p.m. and assumed presiding. Ms. Scarpitti reported the Library received \$8,699 in monetary donations and approximately one and half pages of other donations. DONOR GIFT LIST

Mr. Rochford moved, seconded by Mr. Weber, the acceptance of the donations and gifts with great appreciation. The motion was adopted without dissent. 25-44
ACCEPTANCE OF
DONATIONS & GIFTS

Ms. Scarpitti presented the investment report for April 2025. The Library received \$47,949.71 of interest with approximately 70% credited to the general fund. The only change to investments was a transfer of cash between the Star Ohio and Huntington Main accounts. APRIL 2025
INVESTMENT REPORT

[The investment report is appended to the minutes.]

Heather Otto, HR Director, presented the Personnel Report and stated there were no changes to the report since distribution. Ms. Otto highlighted the retirement of Yolanda Watkins who worked for the Library for 38 years. PERSONNEL REPORT

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Ms. Neeley to adopt the personnel report. The motion was adopted without dissent.

25-45
PERSONNEL REPORT

AKRON-SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
Personnel Report – May 2025

RESIGNATIONS:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Bodnar, Gerald	Akron Police Officer	05/14/2025	Security
Cox, Russell	Akron Police Officer	05/14/2025	Security
Holland, DeAndre	Akron Police Officer	05/14/2025	Security
Johnson, Fred	Akron Police Officer	05/14/2025	Security
Mosley, Ashanti	Shelver (Casual)	05/02/2025	Maple Valley
Mostar, John	Akron Police Officer	01/03/2025	Security
Payne, Glenn	Akron Police Officer	05/14/2025	Security
Spicer, Hannah	Shelver (Casual)	05/19/2025	Green
Wolfe, Sophia	Shelver (Casual)	05/24/2025	Nordonia Hills

SELECTIONS:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Caskey, Paige	Accounting Assistant	04/28/2025	Business Office
DeCapita, Taylor	Shelver (Casual)	05/19/2025	Green
Ebner, Dominic	Shelver (Casual)	05/05/2025	Norton
Evans, Daudi-Amir	Shelver (Casual)	06/02/2025	Children's & Teen
Garner, Audrey	Shelver (Casual)	05/19/2025	Mogadore
Gould, Savannah	Librarian – Intermediate/Teen	06/02/2025	Children's & Teen
Hereford, Madison	Shelver (Casual)	06/02/2025	Children's & Teen
Mainville-Davis, Joan	Sub. Public Service Assistant	04/30/2025	Public Services
Morgan, Esther	Shelver (Casual)	05/19/2025	Green
Nichols, Rebekah	Shelver (Casual)	05/05/2025	Norton
Robertson, Lydia	Shelver (Casual)	05/19/2025	Green
Wood, Elissa	Shelver (Casual)	06/02/2025	Green

CHANGE OF CLASSIFICATION (STATUS)/TRANSFER:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Trask, Gregory	Branch Manager		Northwest Akron
	Branch Manager	06/09/2025	Portage Lakes

RETIREMENT:

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Agency</u>
Watkins, Yolanda	Public Service Assistant II	05/31/2025	Circulation

Yolanda Watkins Employment History:

- Student Assistant – Community Relations (04/07/1987 – 08/15/1988)
- Library Clerk I – Technical Processing (08/16/1988 – 10/24/1993)
- Library Assistant I – Circulation (10/25/1993 – 06/20/2009)
- Public Service Assistant II – Circulation (06/21/2009 – 05/31/2025)

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

	<u>06.16.09</u>	<u>06.09.10</u>	<u>05.18.19</u>	<u>05.20.20</u>	<u>05.15.21</u>	<u>05.17.22</u>	<u>05.17.23</u>	<u>05.21.24</u>	<u>05.21.25</u>
Full-Time Staff:	291	270	277	47	249	257	258	256	260
80 Hrs. Exempt	--	--	--	--	44	42	43	42	43
75 Hrs. Non-Exempt	--	--	--	--	205	215	215	214	217
Part-time/Job-Share:	68	54	46	0	40	49	42	42	37
Shelvers (Casual):	86	73	78	0	50	49	55	59	58
Total number of Staff:	445	397	401	47*	339	355	355	357	355
Full-Time Equivalents:	339	307	302	*All other staff furloughed	275	287	286	284	285

NOTES:

- These numbers cannot be compared from month to month since the numbers may not reflect additions and deletions to the payroll system as the changes are made immediately before or after the date the personnel action is effective.
- Previously, the Library employed Student Assistant who had to be full- or part-time students and who worked between 8 to 20 hours per week performing shelving duties and other limited tasks. "Shelvers (Casual)" is a designation approved at the August 2023 Board of Trustees meeting. This role performs the same duties and works the same hours as Student Assistants, but it eliminates the requirement that the person be a student. Counts from before the September 2023 Personnel Report reflect those in the Student Assistant position, and counts from September 2023 and thereafter reflect those in the Shelver (Casual) position.

Pam Hickson-Stevenson, Executive Director, asked the Library's Deputy Director, Michelle Alleman, to present information regarding a hiatus with OhioLINK and SearchOhio. OhioLINK is a consortium of Ohio's colleges and universities that exists primarily for library resource sharing. SearchOhio is a network of public libraries developed to share resources. Ms. Alleman reported OhioLINK will not be available until end of October, and on August 1, SearchOhio will not be available because both will be engaged in systems changes. OhioLINK and SearchOhio are interconnected so the systems are being upgraded in two stages. The hiatus information has been shared with Library customers through the website and bookmarks. Public service staff have been trained on providing assistance to customers who will not have access to the other libraries' collections. There may be an increase of items will be on ASCPL shelves during this hiatus. Ms. Alleman also

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
REPORT –
OHIOLINK AND
SEARCHOHIO
HIATUS

reported the 2025 Work Plan contains a statement regarding an examination of the Library's provision of traditional interlibrary loan (ILL). This action was based on low use, concerns about ILL fees increasing, and items not being returned. Ultimately, Library administration concluded it was time to discontinue the traditional ILL service.

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson reported the Library likely will be choosing a different integrated library system (ILS) for provision of its circulation services, customer database, catalog, and other material-related services. It is common for libraries to migrate to new systems. ASCPL has been with its current vendor for nearly 20 years. Library administration is looking at two products, Koha and Aspen, provided through vendor ByWater Solutions. Other public libraries have provided positive feedback about switching to Koha and Aspen. Ms. Hickson-Stevenson believes it will be a more responsive system with an effective and intuitive discovery layer through which users search the catalog. It is also less expensive than the Library's current system.

INTEGRATED
LIBRARY SYSTEM

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson read the report of the Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting on behalf of Mr. Weber.

REPORT OF THE
BUILDINGS &
GROUNDS
COMMITTEE

On Thursday, May 29, 2025, the Buildings & Grounds Committee of the Akron-Summit County Public Library met at the Norton Branch Library. Committee Chair Ray Weber called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. In attendance were Buildings & Grounds Committee members John Frola and Bernie Rochford. Library staff members Pam Hickson-Stevenson, Michelle Alleman, Tori Berger, Peter Schantz, Michelle Scarpitti, and Sara Schwendeman also attended.

Mr. Rochford moved, seconded by Mr. Frola, to adopt the agenda as distributed. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Pam Hickson-Stevenson presented information regarding the success of the bond issue and next steps. She provided an overview of some of the more immediate actions needing to be taken, including engaging an architectural firm to conduct the necessary programming and design work. Other actions needed include negotiating a contract with the architectural firm, developing a Request for Qualifications document, which will be the first step in selecting a Construction Manager at Risk (CMR), conducting interviews with the CMR candidates, negotiating a CMR contract, and determining the sequence in which projects will be performed. She noted the sequence could be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Michelle Scarpitti provided information on the selling of bonds and provided an overview of the needs for that process including the potential of working with an underwriting firm and the need for bond counsel. Ms. Hickson-Stevenson asked the committee to consider recommending to the Board engagement of Bostwick Design Partnership to continue the project and design work.

Mr. Rochford moved, seconded by Mr. Frola, to recommend to the Board engaging Bostwick Design Partnership to move forward with the design work. This motion was adopted without dissent and now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-46
ENGAGING
BOSTWICK DESIGN
PARTNERSHIP
(BDP)

The motion to engage Bostwick Design Partnership to move forward with the design work was adopted without dissent.

Mr. Weber moved, seconded by Mr. Rochford, to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate the contract with Bostwick Design Partnership. This motion was adopted without dissent and now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-47

AUTHORIZING
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR – BDP
NEGOTIATIONS

The motion to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate the contract with Bostwick Design Partnership was adopted without dissent.

The Committee voted to go into Executive Session at 4:10 p.m. for the purpose of considering the purchase of property. The roll call vote was unanimous – Frola, aye; Rochford, aye; Weber, aye. The Committee entered public session at 4:20 p.m.

Mr. Frola moved, seconded by Mr. Rochford, to recommend to the Board that the Executive Director be authorized to enter into negotiations for the purchase of property in Springfield Township. This motion was adopted without dissent and now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-48

AUTHORIZING
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR TO
NEGOTIATE
PURCHASE OF
PROPERTY

The motion that the Executive Director be authorized to enter into negotiations for the purchase of property in Springfield Township was adopted without dissent.

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson next provided a review of a lease renewal agreement for the Springfield-Lakemore Branch Library. The Library used the services of Jason Laver with CRESCO Real Estate to negotiate with the landlord's agent. The new lease renewal agreement includes a 365-day termination clause and the reduction of the terms of the lease from seven years to three years. The Library's legal counsel reviewed the renewal agreement. She stated she is waiting for a response from the landlord regarding some changes recommended by the Library's legal counsel, but the committee agreed that moving ahead with approval was the right next step.

Mr. Rochford moved, seconded by Mr. Weber, to recommend to the Board approving the lease renewal agreement for Springfield-Lakemore Branch Library pending acceptance of revisions by the landlord. This motion was adopted without dissent and now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-49

LEASE RENEWAL
AGREEMENT FOR
SPRINGFIELD-
LAKEMORE
BRANCH

The motion to approve the lease renewal agreement for Springfield-Lakemore Branch Library pending acceptance of revisions by the landlord was adopted without dissent.

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson last shared information about a suggestion from the Akron Community Foundation that the Foundation and the Library collaborate on a mural to be located at Main Library. The Committee members requested Ms. Hickson-Stevenson obtain more information before taking any next steps.

Having reached the end of the agenda, Mr. Weber adjourned the meeting at 4:26 pm.

Pam Hickson-Stevenson, Executive Director

Next, Mr. Rochford read the report of the Personnel Committee.

REPORT OF THE
PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE

On Tuesday, May 20, 2025, the Personnel Committee met in the Lolita K. Adair Board Room at Main Library. Committee Chair Bernie Rochford called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. Also in attendance were Committee members John Frola, William Rich and Ray Weber. Angela Neeley was also present. Library staff members Pam Hickson-Stevenson, Heather Otto, Michelle Alleman, and Sara Schwendeman also attended.

Mr. Rich moved to adopt the agenda as distributed. The motion was adopted without dissent.

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson thanked Ms. Otto and her team for the concise report distributed to the Committee members prior to meeting. Ms. Otto presented an overview of the health benefits renewal, including other insurance carriers bidding on the Library for its business. She reported that if the Library were to go back to including spousal coverage, it would increase the cost for both the Library and staff by approximately 50%. Therefore, there would be no recommendation to return to spousal coverage and the proposals she would review would be for employee and employee plus children coverage.

Ms. Otto stated that SummaCare offered a flat renewal of 0%. Other carriers offered increases in costs or had poor reviews of service. The Affordable Care Act requires employers to have an affordable plan, which the Library has in SummaCare due to the three network tiers it offers. Staying with SummaCare also eliminates any disruption to Library employee coverage. Due to these factors, Ms. Otto and the HR team recommended staying with SummaCare.

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Mr. Weber, to recommend to the Board retaining SummaCare as the health insurance provider. The motion was adopted without dissent, and this now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-50
HEALTH
INSURANCE
PROVIDER

The motion to retain SummaCare as the health insurance provider was adopted without dissent.

Related to ancillary benefits, Principal Dental is issuing a rate increase of 14%. All other insurance carriers offered increases as well. Ms. Otto recommends staying with Principal, considering it would not disrupt employees' current coverage. Principal Vision issued a 10% rate increase. With other carriers offering rate increases and offering provider networks with fewer options than Principal's VSP network, Ms. Otto recommended Principal for vision insurance. Staying with Principal would minimize disruption for staff and the risk of in-the-door pricing with increases (sometimes substantial) the next year. Ms. Otto also recommended keeping Principal for the Library-provided and voluntary life insurance benefits.

Ms. Otto also explained the monthly increases employees will pay, depending on coverage level, will be minimal. Increases for dental will be between \$1.21 and \$3.84 per month, and increases for vision will be between \$0.14 and \$0.42.

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Mr. Weber, to recommend to the Board

keeping Principal for all ancillary benefit products and keeping the employer/employee cost share structure the same. The motion was adopted without dissent, and this now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-51
ANCILLARY
BENEFITS

The motion to keep Principal for all ancillary benefit products and keeping the employer/employee cost share structure the same was adopted without dissent.

Ms. Otto next explained the Library offers three voluntary Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs): health care, dependent care, parking and transportation. Additionally, the IRS has updated employee FSA contribution limits to the following 2025 amounts: Health: \$3,300 per year; Parking and Transportation: \$325 per month. There was no increase in contribution limits for dependent care. The IRS also increased the FSA rollover amount from \$640 to \$660. She recommended remaining with the FSA vendor, Northwest Group Services, increasing health FSA contribution and rollover limits to the 2025 IRS levels, and keeping the parking/transportation reimbursement to reflect the highest reimbursement amount expected (i.e. \$70 per month for High/Market garage parking).

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Mr. Weber, to recommend to the Board the FSA contribution limit changes. The motion was adopted without dissent, and this now comes as a recommendation to the Board.

25-52
FSA
CONTRIBUTION
LIMIT CHANGES

The motion for the FSA contribution limit changes was adopted without dissent.

Ms. Otto next presented a diversity report. Despite increased recruiting efforts, the diversity numbers still dropped in 2024. Attracting candidates who reflect the communities the Library serves to create a welcoming and comfortable environment for all is the goal. For 2025, the HR team's plan includes, but is not limited to: expanding community activities, working with Marketing department for signs and language within job postings as well as completing a day in the life for typical positions. ADP also has expanded the hiring pool for the Library by automatically uploading job postings to Indeed and ZipRecruiter. The Committee members discussed the efforts, and Ms. Otto addressed questions.

Broadly, the Library is not having trouble filling positions. The Library utilizes Handshake for college contacts that focus on universities in and near Summit County. Competitive pay is still a struggle, particularly with PSA positions. The Library's turnover was 20% in 2023/2024, which is in line with the national average.

Ms. Neeley suggested sending a recruitment ad directly to Ohio colleges, including HBCUs. Students may move to a different city for a managerial position. It was also recommended to walk job postings over to the University of Akron and place them on bulletin boards belonging to student groups.

The Committee members thanked Ms. Otto for the report and the efforts the HR team is making.

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson announced the McDowell Scholarship awardee is Mya Taylor, who is completing a dual master's degree in library and information

science and public administration. The McDowell Scholarship will reimburse only for tuition for the MLIS degree. The Committee shared their support of the scholarship program and the importance of keeping it a viable option at the Library.

Having reached the end of the agenda, Mr. Rochford adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.

Pam Hickson-Stevenson, Executive Director

Ms. Hickson-Stevenson presented to the board an Endowment Fund disbursement request in the amount not to exceed \$250 to provide light refreshments for a donor recognition event on June 1. The request is made to the Akron Community Foundation, which manages the Library Endowment Fund.

NEW BUSINESS –
ENDOWMENT
FUND
DISBURSEMENT

Mr. Rochford moved, seconded by Ms. Neeley, to approve the \$250 disbursement request from the Akron Community Foundation. The motion was adopted without dissent.

25-53
APPROVED
DISBURSEMENT

Tori Berger, Branch Manager of the Norton Branch Library, thanked everyone for coming to the Norton Branch. Ms. Berger presented on the many community collaborations between the community and branch staff, including 48 events that resulted in making 5,600 connections in 2024. Ms. Berger spotlighted Mary Bird, Children’s Librarian, who has been at the Norton Branch for 27 years and is well known in the community. Ms. Berger also highlighted Norton Schools, Norton Farmers Market, and Norton Community Cider festival as some of the events attended and the incredible team effort of the Norton branch staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE
TEAM REPORT

There was no public participation.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

Mr. Rochford congratulated the Library staff on the passing of the Library’s levy, stating the work the Library staff does each day makes a difference. Ms. Hickson-Stevenson concurred that receiving 68% of affirmative votes is a testament to their work of the Library.

FOR THE GOOD OF
THE ORDER

Mr. Rich moved, seconded by Mr. Rochford, to go into Executive Session at 5:16 p.m. for the purpose of considering the employment of a public employee and the purchase of property. A roll call vote was initiated, which resulted in a unanimous decision as follows: Mr. Ferrise – Yes; Ms. Neeley – Yes; Mr. Rich – Yes; Mr. Rochford – Yes; Mr. Weber – Yes. The Board of Trustees returned to public session at 6:08 p.m.

25-54
EXECUTIVE
SESSION

With no further business, Mr. Ferrise adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President

Secretary