



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES OF JULY 28, 2025 REGULAR MEETING

Present: K. Brown, H. Campos, J. Davis, T. Griffin, M. Gualtieri, J. Iovino, M. Jukoski, B. Sayet, C. Seeman, W. Vincent

Staff: N. Kennedy, C. Special

Not Present: P. Kinder, K. Kriss

Call to Order: Mr. Griffin called the regular meeting of the Otis Library Board of Trustees to order at 5:02pm. A quorum was present. No changes were made to the agenda. The minutes of the annual meeting held in June were reviewed (motion to accept made by Mr. Gualtieri; seconded by Ms. Jukoski; all approved; motion passed).

Reports:

President: Mr. Griffin noted he was filling in for this meeting as Ms. Kinder was unable to attend. He shared a book recommendation with the board.

Director: Ms. Special noted that before the meeting, the bylaws and committee assignments were sent out. She requested that people sign up for committees, either joining a new committee or remaining on their current one(s). All members on the bylaws and policy review committee stayed and Ms. Jukoski joined. All members on the advocacy committee stayed and Mr. Davis joined. All members on the development committee stayed and Ms. Vincent and Mr. Iovino joined. The executive committee will include the new officers, as well as the finance committee. All members on the nominating committee stayed and all members on the personnel committee stayed. Ms. Special reminded the board that meetings are always on the fourth Monday at 5:00pm except for May 2026. That meeting will be moved to the following Monday due to the holiday.

Ms. Special welcomed the new board members: Wendy Vincent, Joshua Davis, and Helar Campos and reported that Ms. Jacaruso resigned from the board effective July 28, 2025. Ms. Special noted that it is the first year of the strategic plan and there is work being done in regards to a timeline with some tentative dates. Ms. Special

reminded the board of the new app available. Ms. Special reported that stats and programming are doing very well. One area that needs review is the circulation of print materials.

Ms. Special shared that the celebrations for the library's 175th anniversary are going well and even received coverage in the *Norwich Bulletin*. Otis Library will also be celebrating 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, with programs, displays, and exhibits planned through December 2026. Ms. Special reported that funding is needed for these programs, and various grants are being considered for these purposes. Ms. Special shared that long-time library supporter, Carol Lahan will be holding mental health hours at Otis Library starting in September. This will not be therapy; Ms. Lahan will be offering a listening ear to patrons and offering appropriate resources.

Ms. Special informed the group that attendance was lacking for literacy volunteers, so they were connected with Thames River Community Services, and English language and basic literacy classes will be offered to the families Thames River Community Services supports. There is also an opportunity for literacy volunteers to work with Sacred Heart School in Taftville and another opportunity to work one-on-one with a local teen. Otis Library still supports and partners with literacy volunteers even as they branch out to new locations.

Ms. Special informed the board of new legislation passed, such as SB 1271 and SB 1234. Ms. Special reported she is working on reviewing and updating policies to ensure they are current with new laws. These policies being current ensures the library gets funding from the State.

Ms. Special noted that the library will be looking into switching to a new internet provider moving forward, which will save around \$3,000 per year. There are some discussions that need to be had first with NPU and CEN. In relation to WIFI, Ms. Special reported that she is considering shutting it off at night to help with some of the issues that occur in front of the building. That, too, needs discussions with interested parties before it can be implemented.

Ms. Special mentioned that as soon as the Library of Things policy is approved, the Library of Things will launch to the public. We switched to Transparent Language from the Pronunciator language-learning platform, effective August 1. The quality and offerings are similar, but Transparent Language is significantly less expensive. Staff are being trained on the new platform before it is launched to the public.

Finance:

Mr. Gualtieri reported that the fiscal year ended on June 30 with income reaching 99.7% of the budgeted goal. He noted increases in both service fee and passport income, though unrestricted income fell short by approximately \$18,000. He commended Ms. Special for keeping expenses well managed at around 96% of the budget. Mr. Gualtieri emphasized the ongoing need for additional revenue, which has prompted the exploration of new

fundraising options. With the recent closure of Staples, staff have observed new opportunities for providing services. Ms. Special shared that envelopes and manila folders are now available for purchase, and that laminating and poster printing services will be offered soon. Mr. Gualtieri also reminded the board of the upcoming mayoral election this fall, noting the uncertainty it brings, and stressed the continued need for funding to support the library. He concluded with an update on recent changes implemented by the financial advisor. (Motion to accept made by Mr. Sayet; seconded by Ms. Jukoski; all approved; motion passed).

**Nominating
Committee:**

Mr. Sayet informed the board of three new prospective board members: David Moreno, Shayleen Alfieri, and Jerry Smith. A vote was taken to bring them onto the board. (Motion to accept made by Mr. Iovino; seconded by Mr. Gualtieri; all approved; motion passed).

**Fundraising and
Development:**

Ms. Special referenced the development report that had been submitted before the meeting and provided an update on upcoming fundraising efforts. She announced that a bingo fundraiser is scheduled to take place at Foxwoods Casino on Friday, October 3. The goal is to reach 300 attendees, and Ms. Special expressed hope that both staff and board members will assist in promoting the event and selling tickets.

**Friends of
Otis Library:**

The new president of the Friends, Mr. Joshua Davis, was welcomed onto the board. Mr. Davis noted that the Friends will meet again in September.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

Ms. Special reminded the board that participation is always needed at library events, and a signup sheet was emailed to all members before the meeting.

Adjournment:

With no further items for discussion, the meeting ended at 5:34 pm. (Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Jukoski; seconded by Mr. Iovino).

Respectfully submitted,

Naomi Kennedy