

**MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

1. At a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Monroe County Library System held on January 14, 2026, at the Ellis Library & Reference Center, the meeting was called to order by Chair Peven at 5:00 p.m. Ms. LaPensee declared that a quorum was present.

Present: Rob Peven, Chair; Beth LaPensee, Vice-Chair; Rita Gordon, Secretary; Betzi Lievens, Trustee; and Nancy Bellaire, Director

Excused: Mike Grodi, Trustee. Mr. Grodi attended as a member of the public via Zoom Teleconference.

Staff: Lou Komorowski; Regina Manning; Marsha Langenderfer; Paul Robinson; Barbra Krueger; Stephanie Wintersteen

Judge Michael Brown greeted the board and swore in Betzi Lievens for her five-year term.

A quorum being present, the Board proceeded to transact business.

2. Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Rob Peven, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.
3. Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Rita Gordon, to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.
4. Public Comment
Lou Komorowski welcomed the board to Ellis. He and Youth Services Lead Stephanie Wintersteen shared information about upcoming programs and partnerships at Ellis. He also introduced Regina Manning and Marsha Langenderfer.
5. Board of Trustees Reorganization
Motion by Ms. Gordon, supported by Ms. LaPensee, to nominate Rob Peven for the position of Chair. There were no other nominations. Motion by Ms. Gordon, supported by Ms. LaPensee, to close nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Rob Peven. Motion carried.
Motion by Ms. Gordon, supported by Ms. Lievens, to nominate Beth LaPensee for the position of Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations. Motion by Ms. Gordon, supported by Ms. Lievens to close the nominations and cast a unanimous vote for Beth LaPensee. Motion carried.

Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Betzi Lievens, to nominate Rita Gordon to the position of secretary. There were no other nominations. Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Betzi Lievens, to close the nominations for secretary and cast a unanimous vote for Rita Gordon. Motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda – Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Rita Gordon, to accept the items on the consent agenda as presented, and place on file. Motion carried.

7. Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Nancy Bellaire reported that our December financial reports are now in the printed packets. We received about 98% of our expected revenue in 2025, including about \$211,662 that the auditors will move onto the 2026 financials. We spent almost 93% of our planned expenditures. The Penal Fine distribution in January was \$71,635, as compared to the \$47,635 that we received last year in January.

Facilities Committee – Construction at the Navarre Branch is making progress with windows installed now. The project is still on track for a late spring opening.

Policy and Personnel Committee – No meeting.

Technology Committee – No meeting.

Woodlands Update – Nancy plans to attend the Woodlands Library Advisory Council meeting on January 15.

Legislative Update – Nancy shared an article about the passing of Michigan State Librarian Randy Riley.

8. Unfinished Business – The Draft AI policy remains in committee.

Motion by Rita Gordon, supported by Betzi Lievens to approve the 2026 draft meeting schedule, replacing the Summerfield-Petersburg Branch with the Maybee Branch for the April meeting.

9. New Business

Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Betzi Lievens, to approve the bills for the month ending December 31, 2025, in the amount of \$298,306.21. Motion carried.

Discussion regarding 2026 Board Committee assignments resulted in Chair Peven joining the Facilities Committee as chair, and Trustee Lievens joining Mike Grodi on the Legislative Committee.

Motion by Rita Gordon, supported by Betzi Lievens, to approval the proposal from Calkins, Hehl, Rafko for the audit for the year ending December 31, 2025, for the amount of \$13,700. Motion carried.

Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Rita Gordon, to cancel the February board meeting. Motion carried.

Motion by Rita Gordon, supported by Beth LaPensee, to adopt a Defined Contribution Retirement Plan for long term employees, with the match and details to be determined after the MERS financial transfer from Alerus to Blackrock is complete. Motion carried.

Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Rita Gordon, to rehire Nancy Bellaire, following her retirement date under current terms of employment, based on the legal opinion from the Retirement Board Fund Attorney. Motion carried.

Barbra Krueger shared a pyramid of statistics with the board.
Paul Robinson updated the board on plans to implement Multi-Part Authentication by January 31, per our cyber insurance carrier's requirements. Paul will check in with the board on MFA at the March meeting.

10. Nancy Bellaire updated the board on the 2026 Blues Series including a new portable sound system and lights, an upcoming grant possibility from the Ralph C. Wilson Foundation, and a Monroenews article on the donation of a church to LaSalle Township that could be home of a new library.
11. Board comments – The board thanked Lou, Stephanie, and the staff for their hospitality and updates. Rita Gordon thanked the board for adding Maybee to the 2026 calendar and said that she is excited for the next year. Beth LaPensee thanked the staff for the pyramid of numbers. Betzi Lievens said that she is glad to join the board. Rob Peven thanked his colleagues and said that he is looking forward to the new year.
12. Public comment—Mike Grodi said that the Library Board is the best board to sit on, with not only great board members, but a great staff. He welcomed Betzi and congratulated the officers. He said that we are well positioned for the coming year.
13. Announcements
Date of Next Board Meeting – Wednesday, March 11, @ 5 p.m. at the Erie Branch Library, 2065 Erie Road, Erie, Michigan.
14. Adjournment
Motion by Beth LaPensee, supported by Betzi Lievens, to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Peven, Chair

Rita Gordon, Secretary