

DOWNINGTOWN LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

19 November 2025, 7:00-8:00 PM Library Krapf Room

PRESENT: Amy Kelly, Beth Valocchi, Carol Klein (Secretary), Debbie Shupp, Desiree Threadgill, Emily Interrante, Francine Dague (President), Jasmine Smith (Library Director), Jennifer Breton (SAC Rep), Kelsey Houdeshel, Marcy Hessinger (Vice President), Ron Dankanich (Treasurer), Mary Beth Hudak (Friends). Meghan Zeigler (Zoom).

ABSENT: Jack Hines, Josh Young, Mark DeWitte, Whitney Kalmbach.

Approval of Minutes: At 7:00 PM, President Francine Dague called the meeting to order and called for approval of October Minutes. Ron Dankanich moved to approve; Amy Kelly seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Library Director's Report & Monthly Statistics—Jasmine Smith reported healthy October **STATISTICS, especially in the face of the October system outage:** Open 27 days in October 2025, the Library's increases over October 2024 included Total Year-to-Date Circulation (174,206 vs 164,445); Total Card Holders (12,951 vs. 11,911) with 117 New Patrons; Total Programs (97 vs. 76); Total Live Program Attendance (2,036 vs. 1,280); and Monthly Patron Visits (12,833 vs. 12,333)—a 500 "door count" increase. Juvenile and Teen Live Attendance were 1302 vs. 662 and 10 vs. 0 respectively, reflecting new Teen guidelines. Currently there isn't a way to record Teen volunteers' efforts in the State Reports. Adult Live Attendance was 463 vs. 336.

The **Annual Appeal letter** went out on November 17 (Monday). The Library was voted a **Nextdoor Fave** (Favorite), which means that the community likes us! The Library will receive a Nextdoor door sticker and a trophy for our Nextdoor Page, and will be featured on the Neighborhood Faves page, accessible from every Neighbor's app.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS. Sensory Friendly Storytime for ages 1 – 4, led by Miss Emma, a certified Special Education Teacher, is waitlisted. Class size is limited to 8 children and their accompanying adults. Other popular programs/events (many of which have been sold-out or waitlisted) continue, including Youth Services Coordinator Rebecca Viola's **Baby Play Time, Drop-In Family Storytime, Toddler Time, and Story Tots.** The **Dungeons & Dragons Campaign** for Young Teens beginning October 25 was waitlisted, and **Lego** continued on October 27. The **Not-So-Spooky Storytime Costume Parade** was October 30, followed by **Halloween Games & Activities** on October 31. **I Love Dogs!—a Local Author Family Event** was November 1. Coordinator Sarah Barker keeps Teens/Adults engaged with programs such as the **Solar Viewing Drop-In** (November 1), **Board Game Night, Knitting/Crochet/Fiber Arts, Writer's Group, Monthly Book Clubs, Conversational English, Chair Yoga, Mah Jongg 101 and Free Play.**

FACILITIES/PROPERTY. The Library will close at 5:00 PM the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, the entire day after Thanksgiving for carpet cleaning, and at 12:00 noon on December 4 so that the Outreach Committee can set up for the Donor Party. **Computer issues connected with the Outage** are almost completely resolved. Security adjustments continue, including migrating to a Cloud-based system.

FUNDING. Pennsylvania approved the 2025-2026 \$5M budget increase for Public Libraries. The PA Department of Education reported that more than half of Pennsylvanians are regular users of library services. Also, the Downingtown Library is approved for the **Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)**. EITC allows eligible businesses to receive state tax credits for donating to approved educational organizations, including public libraries. Jasmine spoke with a **Special Purpose Entity** who may be able to secure the Library some funding (for a fee). Ron Dankanich moved to approve pursuing working with a **Special Purpose Entity**; Desiree Threadgill seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

PA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PA FORWARD PROGRAM. PA passed using Library Services & Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), administered by the PA Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries and the Commonwealth of PA, to support the **PA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PA FORWARD PROGRAM**. Jasmine shared the PA Library Association congratulatory **Gold Star Letter** with the Board. Downingtown Library is distinguished as one of 140 out of 465 public libraries in PA who achieved this distinction for “high quality of literacy programming” in the five areas: Basic, Civic/Social, Financial, Health, and Information.

Treasurer’s Report—Ron Dankanich presented September and October 2025 financial reports for approval. **September 2025 financial reports** were sent November 4 (released November 3). The **Revenue Activity** spreadsheet showed \$27,000.00 in revenue from Caln Township; \$557.58 from Charges including for Patron Printing and Lost Books; \$1,273.40 from Fines & Overdues; \$539.47 in Donations; \$3,615.80 from Fund Raising Events; as well as \$114.55 from Annual Giving. Of **Total Expenses**, \$5,965.51 was for Library Materials including \$3,332.96 for E-Books and \$26,220.37 was for Personnel Expenses. There was a \$91.00 Capital Outlay for Computer Software. Ron reviewed the **October 2025 financial reports**, also sent with the November meeting packet. The **Revenue Activity** spreadsheet showed \$21,019.00 and 2,625.00 in revenue from Chester County and West Bradford Township respectively; \$16,518.55 from the Friends’ Fall Book Sale; \$1,940.72 from Fines & Overdues; \$331.14 in Donations; \$2,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA); \$10,787.44 from Fund Raising Events; as well as \$1,441.64 from Annual Giving. Of **Total Expenses**, \$3,267.08 was for Library Materials and \$37,237.75 was for Personnel Expenses. There was a \$203.19 Capital Outlay for Computer Software. Beth Valocchi moved to approve the September and October Financials subject to audit; Debbie Shupp seconded. All were in favor; the motion passed.

Ron **commended the Outreach Committee** for being under budget and said that we will pay Kimmel Bogrette in stages as Expansion work is completed.

Committee Reports

The Board Governance/Nominating Sub-Committee— Beth Valocchi presented for consideration a **revision to the Personnel Policy concerning carryover vacation time for full-time employees**. Ron Dankanich moved to approve the revision; Desiree Threadgill seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed. **In December, the Board will vote on the 2026 Executive Committee** with nominations requested by December 1. For **2026 Committees**, Francine said that she will be pleased to be the **System Advisory Counsel (SAC) Representative**. The SAC representative attends four meetings per year, some of which are on Zoom. Carol Klein said that she will be pleased to join the **Governance Committee**.

Finance/Property— Ron Dankanich reported that toilets are working again after the overflows from toilet blockage (for improper materials being put into the toilets) were fixed.

Personnel— Ron Dankanich reported that the Personnel Committee met to hear Jasmine Smith's wonderful reviews and to discuss salary increases for the Staff. Ron presented Jasmine's and the staff's salary increases for approval. Beth Valocchi moved to approve; Marcy Hessinger seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Community Outreach, Fundraising, and Major Gifts—Emily Interrante.

- The October 25 **D-town Brew-Down** at Minquas Fire Company event raised \$10,432. Ticket sales were down, but expenses were low. Emily requested approval to donate \$500 to Minquas Fire Company No. 2 for kindly hosting and assisting with the event. Ron Dankanich so moved; Jennifer Breton seconded. All were in favor, and the motion passed.
- **Beeramid tickets** raised \$5,000+. Thanks to Amy's persistence and persuasion, there were 11 cases of beer!
- The **2nd Annual Puzzle Contest** was November 14. Twelve teams attended, with two teams from Penn State Berks County. Everyone had a great time. The event raised \$343.63.
- Emily requested volunteers and wine donations for the **December 4 Donor Party**. 459 invitations were sent, 376 by email and 83 by land mail. As of this afternoon there were 45 accepts (including "+ 1's") and 28 regrets. RSVP deadline is November 27. Valley Gardening Club's Beth Valocchi, Debbie Miles, and Elyse Ford will decorate. Francine and Jasmine will speak, with Jasmine covering past successes, the Gold Star present, and the future Expansion. The 150th Anniversary logo and two Expansion renderings (all three on easels) will be covered when guests enter and then unveiled. There will be 8 high-top tables. Food will include Kelsy Houdeshel's charcuterie boards; Beth's shrimp; Emily and Beth's dips, and Carol's, Emily's, and Jasmine's desserts. Mary Beth Hudak kindly offered to bake as well. Guitarist Chris Lebresco will perform. Library "Did you know?" history facts will be displayed on tables; Kristen Richard's photos will stream on Front Desk and Program Room screens. Signage will close Library parking for the event.
- Beth Valocchi reported that **the 150th Anniversary Committee** met October 27. Elyse Ford (Valley Garden Club) donated her services to decorate for the **December 4 Donor Party**, when the **150th logo** will be revealed ("Celebrating 150 years 1876 – 2026"). Two logo versions were developed—one with/one without the words "Downingtown Library." Thanks to Ron Dankanich's request, Denron Signs donated printing and hanging a large (15 x 3 feet), heavy-duty **banner displaying the 150th Logo** outside the Library during 2026. Downingtown Borough waived the signage permit fee. Interested municipalities and other community organizations signed up for successive **one-month displays** in the Library (using the bookshelves just inside the main door) during 2026 and perhaps into 2027. The Friends have the first time slot. Beth reserved for the Library the December 2026 time slot, which might feature the Library's Expansion. A separate **Downingtown Library History Display** will be albums featuring facts researched by Carol Klein and Debbie Shupp, starting with the Chester County and Downingtown Historical Societies' archives and the Library's historical minutes. The Library's **February 11th afternoon 150th Birthday Party** will follow a **morning Birthday Storytime/Children's Party**. Via Emily Interrante's creative children's activity, for display throughout 2026, they will wish the Library a happy 150 years. Ron Dankanich is building three tiers to display 150 cupcakes, homemade by volunteer bakers. Sarah Barker and

Jasmine Smith are finessing BeanStack to collect and tabulate patrons' votes for **DL's Top 150 books survey**, kicking off in December and ending in January with a list to publish and also incorporate into Summer Reading. The **next meeting will be in January**. [Also see **East Brandywine Neighbor's magazine and Christmas float entries**.]

- **East Brandywine Neighbors monthly magazine's February issue** will spotlight the Library's 150th Anniversary on the cover and in a feature article. A photographer has completed the photo shoot, including Jasmine's gold 1-5-0 balloons. The magazine will spotlight a staff member each month during 2026. Jasmine will reach out to see whether readers could be encouraged to check out the municipality displays at the Library, changing each month.
- **The Good Neighbor Christmas Parade (ending at Green Street) is December 13**. The 150th Logo and Banner will be incorporated into the Library Float decorations. Kelsey Houdeshel reported there are enough candy canes on hand.
- The 2026 **Whisky Tasting** will be held February 7 at Northbrook Market Place, at the corner of Route 842 and Northbrook Road, West Chester, in the upstairs event area. (See online photos.) Jack will round up sponsors for beer, wine, etc. The whisky will be donated. Jack requests Silent Auction Items and will share more information shortly.

The System Advisory Council (SAC)'s budget was not back yet, so there was no report from the November 11 meeting. **Jennifer Breton** said that she is stepping down from the Library Board due to increasing job responsibilities.

The Expansion Committee—Francine Dague reported for Jack Hines. Jack has continued to meet with the architects and the municipalities about the **Expansion Plans and Funding**. The Expansion Committee will discuss **HVAC options** for the Conceptual Plans. Francine secured the Library's Expansion as **a line item** (that is, a specific detailed entry designating a funding allocation) **with PA State Senator Carolyn Comitta**.

Friends Report—Mary Beth Hudak reported that the Fall Book Sale raised almost \$18,000, of which \$15,000 will be donated to the Library. STEM and Honor Society students and Downingtown Strong volunteers assisted with the Book Sale. (The Friends especially need individuals who can help with the heavy lifting.) There was an anonymous donation of a laptop, allowing the Book Sale to connect to the Library's Square to allow credit cards use and increase sales. Books that didn't sell were designated for organizations such as Books For Taiwan (especially children's books and cookbooks to help teach English) and local Little Free Libraries, whose on-the-spot donations were put into the Duck. Friends held back three bags of books for Outreach to use at the township fairs. West Bradford Township's fair in May is the first.

New Business—Carol Klein reported that Downingtown Borough Mayor-Elect Erica Deuso will proclaim **19 – 25 April 2026** (ALA's National Library Week) as **"Downingtown Library Week"** in honor of the Library's 150th Anniversary.

There being no additional New Business, at 8:02 PM, Francine Dague requested a **motion to adjourn**. Ron Dankanich so moved; Desire Threadgill seconded. All approved, and the meeting was adjourned.

The Board's next meeting will be December 17 in the Krapf Program Room.

Respectfully submitted by Carol S. Klein, Secretary