

CRANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

A meeting of the Cranston Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 6:01 pm at the Cranston Central Library.

Present were:

Michael Goldberg

Regina Spirito

R. Drayton Fair

Lisa Kirshenbaum

Diane Schaefer

Jack Tregar

Ed Garcia, Library Director

Julie Holden, Assistant Director

Allyson Quintanilla, Administrative Assistant

Excused: Jen Cowart

INTRODUCTION: 6:01 pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

MINUTES: 6:01pm

A motion was made by Jack Tregar to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 11, 2024, with pending changes. Diane Schaefer seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION REPORT: 6:01pm

Administrative Updates

The Annual survey and state aid application and certification has been submitted to OLIS.

The Providence Public Library received a grant to place 30 Chromebooks at both the Auburn branch and the William Hall Library for use with RIFLI ESL classes.

National Friends of the Library Week is October 20-26.

Central will be a polling place on November 5th. The library has been in communications with the Director of Elections concerning election security.

Julie attended the Northeast Summit on Climate Adaptation webinar on September 24. The summit was a collaborative effort among the Sustainable Libraries Initiative and state libraries in the Northeast. Library staff from NY, ME, and VT who had experienced tremendous damage due to flooding gave tips and advice for continuity of operations, insurance, and essential preparation for flood/climate events in library buildings.

The mayor scheduled one on one department meetings. The purpose of the meeting was discuss the year in review and the direction of the year to come. Director Garcia was able to address several topics with the Mayor ranging from communication with the administration, library budget, and building needs.

Buildings & Grounds

The City of Cranston Highway Department repaired some broken parts of the walkway between the Hall library and the Hall Manor.

Basement door framing to prevent flooding at the Knightsville branch has been completed.

There are some damaged panels on the walkway in the front of the Central Library that will be repaired tomorrow.

Programs

Summer Reading program recap attached to the administration report. Diane Schaefer and Lisa Kirshenbaum asked about Use assessments from the school systems to identify success of summer reading programs. Potentially identify weaknesses and strength to allow the library to target those areas. Reading support specialist from one of the schools to help evaluate how effective our programs are.

Museum pass program annual circulation report attached to the administration report.

The library is hosting the CCAP Mobile Medical Van for a free Flu shot clinic at Central parking lot in partnership with the OneCranston Health Equity Zone on Wednesday October 9th 2-4pm. No insurance needed.

Friends of the Cranston Public Library annual book sale is scheduled for October 26 10a-4p.

Staff Updates

Jennifer Berube has been hired as a full-time circulation assistant at Central replacing the recently retired Ilene Bojar. Jennifer previously worked at Central as a part-time circulation assistant.

Director Garcia has been appointed to the Presidential Advisory Committee for ALA President-elect Sam Helmick. Ed was also appointed to the ALA Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC).

Julie has been asked by the New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS) to mentor Evan Barta, the new assistant director of the Warwick Public Library, and member of the 2024-25 NELLS cohort.

BUDGET REPORT: 6:15pm

The budget actuals as of September 30th were presented and reviewed.

A draft FY24 budget report will be prepared for the November meeting if the City audit is not finished by then.

NEW BUSINESS: 6:25 pm

Approval of revised Employee Handbook:

A draft of the revised Employee Handbook was reviewed. Changes were made as requested from the September meeting.

A motion was made by Drayton Fair to approve the revised Employee Handbook as presented. Jack Tregar seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

ADJOURNMENT: 6:34 pm

A motion was made by Regina Spirito to adjourn the regular meeting of October 9, 2024. Jack Tregar seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

2024 Museum Pass Statistics

(January 1 - September 9, 2024)

	2024	2023
Audrain Automobile Museum	7	
Blithewold Mansion & Gardens	25	18
Boston Museum of Fine Arts	54	43
Boston Museum of Science	82	52
The Breakers Mansion	68	26
New Bedford Whaling Museum	26	17
New England Aquarium	124	16 *
Newport Art Museum	8	9
Providence Children's Museum	63	65
RISD Museum	24	12
Roger Williams Park Museum of Natural History	17 **	23
Roger Williams Park Zoo	40	
Save the Bay's Hamilton Aquarium	13	
Total Borrows	551	281

* The New England Aquarium 2023 statistics are only from September - December.

** The Museum of Natural History was closed for several weeks in June, July, and September of 2024.

Comments:

The Adult Services Department is proud to share that the Cranston Public Library's Museum Pass program has increased in both popularity and checkouts this year. We attribute this increase to many factors. In addition to implementing an easy to use reservation system for the public, we have added several new museums over the past two years thanks to the support of the Friends of the Library. Our Museum Pass program has also attracted notice across the state as the *Audrain Automobile Museum*, *Breakers Mansion*, and *Save the Bay's Hamilton Aquarium* have reached out to us directly to offer their pass free of charge.

Our Library Communications Manager has also increased our marketing with new signage, flyers, and email blasts. It has reflected back in some impressive numbers including the New England Aquarium pass with 124 borrows and the Boston Museum of Science with 82 borrows. We expect by year's end to have more than doubled our total borrows over last year.

Youth Summer Reading Report 2024

For many years, the goal of the summer reading program has been to increase the amount of reading young people do over the summer. Unfortunately, it is not easy to measure how much the community is reading. The library relied on self-reporting, and the reports themselves, in the form of summer reading records, became the heart of the summer reading program. However, measuring and reporting an activity is not the same as enjoying and having access to an activity.

Over the past three years, the youth services department has shifted from trying to increase the amount of reading young people do over the summer to increasing the number of young people who have access to and enjoy library services over the summer. Summer is still a critical time, when school libraries are closed, so access decreases, but many children have more time to read for pleasure and develop a love of reading and independent learning.

Our strategy this summer was to offer many different ways to participate in summer reading, to expand our offsite programming, and to develop programs specifically for underserved populations. In order to maximize participation, we minimized barriers like registration. This means we have limited data on who exactly participated and how they benefited. However, total participation data is strong:

- Total attendance at children's events was 1,000 higher than last year.
- The number of people who requested our custom coloring and activity book was twice the number of people who requested a kit last year.
- The total number of teen volunteer hours increased 22% over last year.

These numbers indicate that we were successful in removing barriers, increasing capacity, and reaching a larger number of children.

Strategies in detail:

Offering many different ways to participate

We continue to offer a summer reading raffle to incentivize participation in summer reading. This year, the theme was Time Travel Adventure, and children could earn raffle tickets by keeping track of their reading online using Beanstack, completing the color-by-number reading record that was sent home with every Cranston public elementary school student, or completing activities in the custom coloring and activity book created by CPL staff.

Expanding off-site programming

This is the second year the summer reading kick-off has been held at the Governor Sprague Mansion, in census tract 147, the neighborhood with the lowest rate of youth library cards, according to 2022 data. In addition to launching our summer reading program in this neighborhood, we visited weekly as part of the free Farmer's Market at the Bain Track, and we added two more evening family events at the mansion in July and August. We brought Branch7 to all of these events, and offered library card registration and book circulation at every event except the kick-off, where we did a book giveaway instead.

Developing programs specifically for underserved populations

This year, we decided to focus on outreach to the growing Multi-language Learner population in Cranston. The population of English language learners in Cranston Public Schools has doubled in the past 8 years (from 514 in 2015 to 1,080 in 2023), and we suspect that this population has some barriers to using the public library. To address this, we developed a series of 8 programs, at different locations, that did not require registration, were open to all ages, and consisted of hands-on activities that didn't require verbal or written instructions. We translated the flier for these programs into Spanish, which 80% of the MLL population speaks, and we created a form so families could request an interpreter (in any language offered by Pinpoint Translation services) at these events. Although these events were well attended, and often by people who had not come to our regular weekly events, we did not receive any requests for interpreters. Our goal for next year will be to conduct more marketing and outreach to this population before the summer starts so that we can be more confident we are reaching them.

Adult Summer Reading Report 2024

Unlike school-age patrons, adults have no assigned reading over the summer. The Adult Summer Reading program is focused on inviting patrons to engage with the library during the summer months through programming, craft activities, and some low-impact suggested reading activities. As with past years, these activities were incentivized through a prize raffle component. Our department also made an effort to participate in library outreach activities coordinated by the youth services department.

Our programming was very strong this summer. Over the nine weeks of summer reading we held 62 adult events across the six branches with a total attendance of 1011 patrons. In particular the craft programs were well attended and received; four craft programs had full attendance as did a zine making workshop facilitated by local artist Iris Wright. The zine workshop was funded by the OLIS adult summer reading mini-grant. Our one other paid presenter event this summer, a needle felting crafting workshop in July with Stacey Grant, was also fully attended. In addition we are seeing new and younger attendees at these events, some of whom returned for the August craft programs.

For the past three years we have used Beanstack to track patron activities and award incentives, with each completed activity awarding one entry in the summer prize drawing. We noticed that a majority of patrons who registered for the Adult Summer Reading challenge on Beanstack did not complete any activities. In an effort to reach these patrons, we modified the incentive structure this year: every patron who completed at least eight activities would earn a free mini cheese pizza from The Big Cheese & Pub. Unfortunately the data show that this did not adequately incentivize these patrons:

	ASR 2021	ASR 2022	ASR 2023	ASR 2024
Total Participants	113	122	83	98

Badges Earned	ASR 2021	ASR 2022	ASR 2023	ASR 2024
0	66	75	41	52
1	6	10	13	6
2	4	6	3	13
3	7	4	5	9
4	1	3	3	4
5	1	2	1	4
6	4	5	4	2
7	2	1	5	0
8 or more	22	16	8	8
% zero participation	58.41%	61.48%	49.40%	53.06%

The 2024 Beanstack challenge was on par with the previous three years, but we did not see an appreciable change in the number of registered patrons who did not participate at all. It is possible that patrons who didn't begin the challenge right at the beginning of the summer did not have enough time or opportunities to complete the required activities for this challenge. In the end, we awarded a pizza coupon to any patron who completed two or more activities, resulting in 40 patrons who were awarded a free pizza.

Adult services also began playing more of a role in library outreach this summer. Staff tabled at the summer reading kickoff at Sprague Mansion, handing out summer reading flyers, general library information available for patrons, and creating library cards. For the first time this year we also included some adult-audience books at the free book fair, which was enthusiastically received by attendees. Of the thirty-seven books we purchased, only two were left by the end of the event. The adult services department also joined with youth services in staffing Branch7 outreach at the OneCranston HEZ Farmer's Market at Bain Middle School track, which allowed us to increase visibility of adult services staff and resources in the community.

Looking ahead to next year's Adult Summer Reading program, this year's performance will inform our future plans:

- We are going to pivot away from Beanstack for 2025, opting for a paper-only challenge, possibly returning to a bingo card summer reading concept.
- Collecting book reviews to post in the library, creating a visual representation of ASR participation that grows over the summer.
- Weekly prize drawings, creating ample opportunities for patrons to participate at any point in the summer.
- More programming! Including adult events concurrent with youth services programs, low impact drop-in craft programs, and passive programming.
- Increased outreach participation, including:
 - Purchasing more free books for an adult audience to give away at the kickoff;
 - Including an activity at the kickoff event geared to an adult audience; and
 - Conducting 2-3 adult audience outreach events with Branch7.