

**GARY PUBLIC LIBRARY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Lucille Washington, President
Mr. Robert Farag, Vice President
Ms. McKenya Dilworth Smith, Secretary
Ms. Linda Collins, Member
Ms. Crystal O'Brien, Member
Ms. Jacquese White, Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mrs. Marlinda Tyson-Haymon, Member

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ms. Diana Morrow, Director
Ms. Merri Roddy, Executive Assistant
Pamela May, Technology Manager
Mr. Curtis Whitakker, CPA
Ms. Kelly White, Attorney (Zoom)

The Meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Gary Public Library was called to order at 5:26 p.m. on Monday, October 27, 2025, by Board President Dr. Lucille Washington. Dr. Washington asked for a roll call. At the time of roll call results: (6) board members were present.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Dr. Washington asked for a motion to accept the agenda. Ms. Dilworth Smith made a motion to accept the agenda. Seconded by Ms. Collins. She asked for discussion. There were none. Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll call: Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Ms. White, Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Secretary certifies for the record that the Executive Session held prior to this meeting was held pursuant to Indiana Code 5-14-1.5-6.1. Agenda, Executive Session of the Board of Library Trustees of the Gary Public Library IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(7); For discussion of records classified as confidential by State or Federal. The Board certifies that the public was duly notified pursuant to Indiana Code 5-14-1.5-5.

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(Public Notice of Meetings) and that no final decisions were made during the Executive Session. Dr. Washington asked for a motion to approve the Executive Session. Mr. Farag made a motion. Seconded by Ms. O'Brien. Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll call: Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Ms. White, Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Approval of Regular Board October 27, 2025

Dr. Washington asked for a motion to accept the Board Minutes from September 22, 2025. Ms. Collins made a motion to accept the minutes. Seconded by Mr. Farag. She asked for discussions. There were none. Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll Call: Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Ms. White, Mrs. Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

BUDGET ADOPTION HEARING

Budget Adoption Hearing for the Gary Public Library Operating Budget for year ending December 31, 2026 5:30pm

At 5:30 p.m. Dr. Washington called to suspend the regular board meeting to start the Budget Adoption Hearing for the 2026 budget. She called on Mr. Whittaker to proceed with the hearing.

Mr. Whittaker reviewed the terms of the 2026 operating budget that was presented in the September board meeting. He stated that the new budget is balanced, and that amount is \$4,857,803. The only increase from last year's budget is the request for a 5% staff raise cost of living adjustment. After his report he asked for questions or comments. Ms. Dilworth Smith asked Mr. Whittaker if he was completely confident on the numbers he projected. He stated he was. Ms. White asked if the board was tabling the salary increase portion of the budget as discussed. Dr. Washington explained that the whole budget is being voting on. Ms. O'Brien asked if this vote is approving everything that is listed as is in the budget. Ms. O'Brien and Ms. White asked for clarity

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on what is being approved. Dr. Washington explained that the budget is being adopted but there will be further discussions on certain parts of the budget after it goes through the Budget Committee and Finance Committee, especially for particular items. Mr. Farag suggested the trustee meet on a more regular basis instead of waiting until October, so that everyone's concerned can be addressed. He stated that the discussion that they had in the Executive Session is just the tip of the iceberg. Ms. O'Brien stated as a new board member she wants to have a better understanding on what she is voting on. She asked if she is only voting on the bottom-line numbers and not the itemized listing on what was proposed? Dr. Washington told her that's what she was voting for. Mr. Whittaker stated that those two are not inseparable. They are one in the same. You all are voting on exactly what is in the budget. Ms. O'Brien asked if her vote says she agrees with lines 1-101. Mr. Whittaker said, yes. Ms. White asked the attorney to explained what they are actually voting on. Attorney White explained about the levy and the need to request the maximum amount of money. She stated that the itemized numbers are separate and complete from what you pay people. The attorney stated that what you are paying people has nothing to do with what is on the budget. She stated it can be discussed later rather than hold up their budget. Attorney White told them they can come back to the conversation. She stated just because you are voting on this budget it doesn't mean that is what you have to pay the people. Dr. Washington stated they are voting for the bottom line of what they are asking for.

Mr. Farag moved to adopt the Gary Public Library Operating Budget for year ending December 31, 2026. Seconded by Ms. Dilworth Smith. Roll Call: Yes - Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Abstained – Ms. White. Motion passed (5)-(1)-(0).

COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATES

Building and Grounds

Ms. White asked Mr. Jackson to come up and give the report on the committee meeting held on October 13, 2025, Mr. Jackson reported that the libraries are switching over to the winter, and so far, everything is running great. He reported that at the committee meeting the air conditioner was on its last days, but they have the winter to get quotes for a new one. Mr. Farag asked for an update on the clean-up in the basement. Mr. Jackson reported that cleaning is going well, but all of the garbage is not out yet. They need the manpower.

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Technology Committee

Ms. O'Brien reported on the committee meeting that was held on October 13, 2025, by thanking the staff for providing all the information she requested in reference to the equipment, purchases and dates purchased. At the meeting she stated that she found out that all the computers for the patrons are available, and the technology staff is working on upgrading and replacing staff's computers. They discussed the hardware, software and the Techmobile that is supporting the committee. She stated that she is continuing to challenge the staff to evaluate what the tech mobile looks like from a programming standpoint, by expanding the Techmobile in the schools and target audience that have schedules after 4pm. Ms. O'Brien stated that she has seen a slight difference with some of the programming but wants to include more youth when it comes to things happening in the Makerspace. She told the board to continue to be on the lookout for the things coming down the pipeline with technology.

Budget and Finance

Mr. Farag reported on the committee meeting held on Oct 17, 2025. He suggested that after the 1st of the year the board trustees meet and discuss everything that relates to the budget. All board members need to attend. Ms. Morrow stated that in that meeting it was agreed on that an HR person was needed.

NEW BUSINESS

Fractional HR Position Engagement Letter/Contract

Ms. Morrow asked the board to approve the contract for a part-time HR Specialist. She stated that the contract states an hourly rate at \$50.00 per hour. Dr. Washington asked if it was for 4 hours a day 5 days a week. Ms. Morrow stated the hours can be decided on. Ms. O'Brien asked what specific support Ms. Morrow sees the HR Specialist providing at the Main Branch compared to the two other branches. Ms. Morrow stated that the new person would serve for all the staff for all branches. The HR Specialist would also be supporting working on the library's policies and updating position descriptions. This position will be in communication with the Trustee, Director, and staff. Mr. Whittaker stated that the HR Specialist would also serve as a buffer, so if a staff person has an issue with the Director, they certainly should not go to the Board, this person will be a none-bias person to speak with about their issues. He also stated that this person would give recommendations for automated timesheet so that staff can get away from using paper timesheets.

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Mr. Farag stated that a lot of things that were discussed in today's meeting an HR Specialist would have been dealing with. He thinks it's a good and smart move. Ms. O'Brien asked if this person has any experience working in libraries or this industry. She stated after reading her resume her experiences is more geared towards for-profit industry. Ms. Morrow stated that this person didn't mention that she had any library experience. She stated that after meeting with her, she did her research on the library, and she seemed like she will be a good fit for the library. Ms. Dilworth Smith ask Ms. Morrow if she has any indication of how many hours this new HR Specialist would work. Ms. Morrow stated that most part-time hours here at the library range from 18-25 hours a week, so she anticipates at least 20 hours a week for this contract. Ms. O'Brien asked if Ms. Morrow has an estimated time frame of keeping this contact of if she was looking to find a full-time staff person. Ms. Morrow stated she doesn't have a timeframe, but she thinks this person would recommend whether a full or part-time person is needed long term. Ms. White stated that she doesn't believe that the board has had enough time to review this contract. She thinks a further discussion should be had. She also suggested a "Not to Exceed" clause be added to the contract and two more candidates to be reviewed. Dr. Washington stated that assuming that this contract would be helping find a permanent HR Specialist. Mr. Farag stated that the discussion that was had in the Budget and Finance Committee meeting was in depth and can't agree with stalling or delaying any action on this position because it's imperative that this position is filled. Ms. Collins agreed that the position is definitely needed. Ms. White asked the attorney to chime in on the discussion. Attorney White said in her opinion they shouldn't sign an engagement letter. The contract should be signed to protect the Board and the Administration Office. She recommends redoing the contract. Attorney White asked the board if this is something that needs to be voted on today. She asked if a committee meeting can be held? Mr. Whittaker stated that the idea was presented in the Budget and Finance Committee meeting, and it was discussed that it's urgent to fill the position. The "Not to Exceed" clause is something that can be added to the contract, but the contract should be moved forward. Dr. Washington asked the board if it would be to their advantage to enter into the contract up to December 31st. To take care of the immediate needs they have and this person can help find a permanent specialist. Ms. O'Brien stated that she goggled HR support and found ADP and Bambi that offer HR support plans that are significantly less. She also suggested that looking to use HR professionals within Indiana may have some different resources at a lower cost. Dr. Washington suggested that the time frame of 8 weeks could help with the immediate needs. Ms. Dilworth Smith stated this is an example of leadership as opposed to management. She appreciated the proposal and the timing of this proposal because to her it's a demonstration of leadership and that's what's to be expected from

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board's only employee. She stated, that if the leader and only employee says this is what she needs to make the library whole, then she is going to support that.

Dr. Washington asked for a motion to approve the contract to add "Not to Exceed" clause to protect the board and staff. Ms. Dilworth Smith made a motion. It was seconded by Mr. Farag. Roll Call: Yes - Ms. Collins, Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. No - Ms. White, Ms. O'Brien. Motion passed (4)-(2).

Change in Position Description from Controller to Accounting Manager

Ms. Morrow asked the board to approve the change in position from Controller to Accounting Manager. She stated that she received information from Ms. O'Brien and she and Mr. Whittaker worked on it. The starting salary will be \$54,285.75. Mr. Farag moved for the change in position. Seconded by Ms. Dilworth Smith. Dr. Washington asked for questions or comments. Ms. Collins asked when the position would be effective by. Ms. Morrow stated that it will be advertised as soon as it is approved. Roll Call: Yes - Ms. Collins, Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. No - Ms. White. Motion passed (5)-(1).

Carnegie Corporation of New York \$10,000 Gift

Ms. Morrow reported that the library was awarded a gift of \$10,000 from the Carnegie Corporation due to GPL once having a Carnegie Library which was the Tolleston Branch. She reported the gift can be used however the library chooses. All the information was sent in and now they are waiting on the payment. The PR department will do some advertising about the gift.

BUDGET & FINANCE

Mr. Whittaker requested approval from the Board to accept the recommendation to approve agenda items 1 – 4 of the Budget and Finance Agenda. Line item 5 is informational:

1) Payroll Expense – Actual for September 2025: \$ 151,398.26

Including:

Out of Class Pay –Sept. 5, 2025: \$ 29.67

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Overtime –Sept. 5, 2025:	\$ 361.78
Out of Class Pay –Sept. 19, 2025:	\$ 36.68
Overtime –Sept.19, 2025:	\$ 303.93
2) Payroll Expense – Estimate for November 2025:	\$ 154,401.43
3) Unpaid Claims – Sept. 16, 2025 – Oct. 23, 2025:	\$ 86,309.11
4) Pre-Paid Accounts Payable Expenses –Sept. 20, 2025 -Oct. 22, 2025:	\$ 194,397.45
5) Cash on Hand as of Sept. 30, 2025	\$4,508,915.37

Monthly Interest: \$ 14,797.05
Annual Interest: \$ 124,121.89

Mr. Whittaker asked the board to approve the report. Dr. Washington asked the board for a motion to approve the Budget and Finance Agenda. It was moved by Mr. Farag and seconded by Ms. Dilworth to accept the Budget and Finance agenda. She asked for discussion. Dr. Washington asked about the large amount of Amazon purchases. Ms. Morrow stated that Baker and Taylor is going out of business and going forward Amazon and other vendors will be used to purchase materials. There were more questions about bills entered into the system. Ms. Morrow explained that there's a difference on how bills have been entered by the new staff person versus the last staff person. Discussions about Trust Tech were also answered by Mrs. May. After the discussion Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll Call: Yes – Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Ms. White, Ms. Dilworth Smith, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

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BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Same info from the Building and Grounds Committee Meeting

PERSONNEL

Resignation

Mary Lewis, Administrative Office, Accounting Supervisor, Effective: Oct. 3, 2025

Termination

Elizabeth Perez, Facility Service Custodian (PT) Effective: Oct. 6, 2025

INFORMATIONAL

Director's Report

Monthly Management Reports

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BOARD COMMENTS

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

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PRESIDENT: Lucille S. Washington
Dr. Lucille Washington

**VICE
PRESIDENT:** Robert Farag
Mr. Robert Farag

SECRETARY: _____
Ms. McKenya Dilworth Smith

MEMBER: Linda Collins
Ms. Linda Collins

MEMBER: _____
Ms. Jacquese White

MEMBER: _____
Mrs. Marlinda Tyson-Haymon

MEMBER: Crystal O'Brien
Ms. Crystal O'Brien