

**GARY PUBLIC LIBRARY
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Lucille Washington, President
Mr. Robert Farag, Vice President
Ms. Linda Collins, Member
Ms. Crystal O'Brien, Member
Ms. Jacquese White, Member (Zoom)
Mrs. Marlinda Tyson-Haymon, Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ms. McKenna Dilworth Smith, Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ms. Diana Morrow, Director
Ms. Merri Roddy, Executive Assistant
Mr. Curtis Whitakker, CPA
Ms. Kelly White, Attorney

The Meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Gary Public Library was called to order at 5:09 p.m. on Monday, September 22, 2025, by Board President Dr. Lucille Washington. Dr. Washington asked for a roll call. At the time of roll call results: (5) board members were present in person and (1) person via zoom.

ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Dr. Washington asked for a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Farag made a motion to accept the agenda. Seconded by Mrs. Tyson-Haymon. She asked for discussion. There were none. Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll Call: Yes – Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Ms. White, Mrs. Tyson-Haymon, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Washington asked the pleasure of the board regarding approval of the Executive Session.

The substitute Secretary, Ms. O'Brien, 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)(9); To discuss a job performance evaluation of individual employee. The Board certifies that

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the public was duly notified pursuant to Indiana Code 5-14-1.5-5. (Public Notice of Meetings) and that no final decisions were made during the Executive Session. Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll Call: Yes – Ms. O'Brien, Mr. Farag, Ms. Collins, Ms. White, Mrs. Tyson-Haymon, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Approval of Regular Board September 11, 2025(The Rescheduled August Meeting)

Dr. Washington asked for a motion to accept the Board Minutes from September 11, 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. Tyson-Haymon, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (6) to (0).

NEW BUSINESS

Notice to Taxpayers Public Hearing for 2026

At 5:15 p.m. Dr. Washington called to suspend the regular board meeting to start the Notice to Taxpayers Public Hearing for the 2026 budget. She called on Mr. Whittaker to proceed with the report.

Mr. Whittaker reported and explained to the Trustees all reports that were given to them. The Current Year Financial Worksheet, Budget Estimates, Estimate of Miscellaneous Revenue, Ordinance or Resolution for Appropriations and Tax Rates, and the Financial State – Proposed Tax Rate reports He also went on to discuss the newspaper reports about Lake County Library and other smaller rural libraries that are expecting financial cuts to their budgets due to Senate Bill 1. He stated that libraries like the Lake County supports itself not with property tax dollars tax dollars, but with income tax funds, therefore their funding is different from Gary Public Library. He further explained that GPL is at an advantage because they have cash due to the proper management of the budget. Mr. Whittaker showed the Trustees that at the midway point of the year the library has approximately \$3.8 million and anticipate collecting about \$3.7 million, and to finish the year with \$4 million in cash. He stated that his recommendation is to go with the budget that was just presented. He went on

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to explain the Notice to Taxpayers report and the estimated Levy for 2026. He stated that staying under the listed budget estimates, keeps the library from having to make requests to The City of Gary. Mr. Farag asked if any entity would be allowed to come and take any of the cash that the library has raised to this point. Mr. Whittaker told him it wasn't possible.

Mr. Whittaker said that Senate Bill 1 is going to impact all governmental units in the State of Indiana in various ways and the ones that will survive the most is the ones that have cash. He said what that means, being fiscally responsible the library collects about 500k-600k each year of net income. The library is currently in a good position and as long as in the next several years, they levy at the max and don't spend more than what they bring in the library will stay good.

Ms. White said that the auditor's office sent a report to the Lake County Commissioners telling them to anticipate a shortage of \$250 million that goes out to the pie that was mentioned. She said that she thinks it's imperative that the Board take heed to all the other entities and municipalities that are making provisions in advance of that shortfall. She asks that they do the same. Mr. Whittaker, said that as he mentioned the library is in good shape now, but the things he is suggesting to do is not take a hatched to the library because each municipality has different places where they are, so the library will not be where others are on the \$250 million shortage. He is not suggesting that the library sit and be idle but also not to make a rushed decision. He said that that the reason the library has so much cash is because they have been frugal, so when rainy day comes, they can shift and won't have to be like everyone else and try to shift without thought behind it.

Ms. O'Brien asked if Senate Bill 1 will have a delayed effect and if that delay will start closer to 2027? Mr. Whittaker told the board the estimated cut to the Levy for the next 3 years are as follows: 2026 \$60,529; 2027 \$69,055; 2028 \$543,434. He asked the board to keep it in context the impact on the library will be different because they spend less than what they receive. Ms. Collins asked if the Charter Schools will effect the funds the library will receive in the future. Mr. Whittaker said it would.

Ms. White recommended that the branch managers for Kennedy and Woodson get a salary raise to \$50,000. She said, before anyone else can ask for a raise it is time for us to take care of our people. Mr. Whittaker did let the board know that included in the budget is a 5% raise for all staff. Dr. Washington said that the raise is something that the committee will have to discuss because, they did it last year and it didn't turn out

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the way they thought it was going to turn out, so they are going to have to do something different this year. The budget hearing ended at 5:44 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Updated Board of Trustees Bylaws

Dr. Washington spoke to the board about the updated bylaws that have been given. She said that the format is different, page numbers were added. A key piece added to the bylaws was an Addendum: Meeting Decorum and Discipline. Section 3 Appointment of Board Members were added along with how many they have.

Dr. Washington asked for a motion to approve the updated bylaws. Mr. Farag made a motion to accept the bylaws. Seconded by Ms. Collins. She asked for discussion. There were none. Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll Call: Yes – Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Mrs. Tyson-Haymon, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (5) to (0).

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 August 2025: \$ 158,494.92

Including:

Out of Class Pay –Aug. 8, 2025: \$ 18.99

Overtime –Aug. 8, 2025: \$ 691.02

Out of Class Pay –Aug. 22, 2025: \$ 27.25

Overtime –Aug. 22, 2025: \$ 27.25

2) Payroll Expense – Estimate for September 2025: \$ 238,294.55

3) Unpaid Claims – Aug. 20, 2025 – Sept. 15, 2025: \$ 50,716.30

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4) Pre-Paid Accounts Payable Expenses –Aug. 22, 2025
-Sept. 19, 2025: \$ 87,606.29

5) Cash on Hand as of Aug. 31, 2025 \$4,771,941.58

Monthly Interest: \$ 16,394.00
Annual Interest: \$ 109,324.84

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. Collins to accept the Budget and Finance agenda. She asked for discussion. Dr. Washington asked Mr. Jackson to come to the microphone. She mentioned that last month the board discussed NIPSCO bills. She said that there was no bill last month for Main, and the bill for Kennedy was twice as high as Woodson. Dr. Washington told Ms. O'Brien to ask her question. Ms. O'Brien said that she wanted to follow up on that issue. Ms. Morrow told the Board that Ms. Lewis was the point of contact person for the NIPSCO bills. Ms. Lewis approached the board and reported that she called NIPSCO again. She spoke to the same representative from last month. Ms. Lewis told the board that Main's bill was not on the report because it came in after the report was compiled. She said that she asked the representative if someone from NIPSCO could come to the library to speak with the board. They told her they couldn't come out. Ms. Lewis reported that the problems is not the meter, it is the billing department. Their billing system is not picking up the correct reading of the meter. The company told her that meter readings have to be done manually, and they have a shortage of manpower. The library is not the only organization NIPSCO is having issues with. A discussion between the board members was had on ways they can get the issue resolved. Dr. Washington said that our attorney should draft a letter to the mayor expressing the Board's concerns with NIPSCO billing. After the discussion Dr. Washington called for a vote. Roll Call: Yes – Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Collins, Mrs. Tyson-Haymon, Mr. Farag, Dr. Washington. Motion passed (5) to (0).

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BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Mr. Jackson stated that the new boiler will get turned on in October depending on the weather. If it is too warm it won't be done because it can't be turned off. He reported that the walls are still being painted. Regular performance maintenance is continuing to be done at all the branches.

INFORMATIONAL

Director's Report

Monthly Management Reports

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs. L. Tindal spoke.

BOARD COMMENTS

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.