

MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Pound Ridge Library District
Location: 271 Westchester Ave, Pound Ridge, NY
February 18, 2026

Vice President Jenna Wise called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM. She welcomed trustees, staff and guests.

Present: Anne Benefico, Robert Bellhouse, Richard Levan, Christina Sassi-Lehner, Valerie Shiba-Silverman, Jenna Wise

Absent: Richard Esman (excused); Lexie Gallo-Cook (excused); Marvin Markowitz (excused).

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Mr. Levan made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2026, meeting; Ms. Bellhouse seconded; all in favor.

The next two meetings are as follows: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 7:30 PM; Wednesday April 22, 2026, at 7:30 PM.

Buildings & Grounds – Bonnie Schwartz

A copy of the Building and Grounds Report was included in Google Docs prior to the meeting. Ms. Schwartz highlighted the following:

- Snow Removal: snow has been removed from the flat part of the roof; snow has been cleared from the area in front of the emergency exit door located in the foyer leading to the non-fiction room; snow has been cleared near the handicapped spaces.
- A spring inspection of the flat roof will be conducted by Perry Roofing to evaluate any damage.
- The driveway has incurred damage due to salt use, curbs have been impacted by plowing activities, and potholes have formed in the neighboring driveway.
- Plumbing issues are being addressed at the cottage.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Bellhouse

A copy of the Treasurer's Report was included in Google Docs. Mr. Bellhouse highlighted the following:

- A CD which matured has been reinvested in a new CD at Chase.
- Account balances total \$1,723,390.35 (Chase, Key Bank, Westchester Financial Advisors).
- The first draft of the Financial Management Handbook is complete.

Warrants. *Mr. Bellhouse made a motion to approve the warrants in the amount of \$52,493.80; Ms. Benefico seconded; all in favor.*

Committee Updates

Finance. Mr. Bellhouse is exploring opportunities to utilize grants and the Foundation to help offset future expenses.

Technology. Ms. Wise and Ms. Coulter are reviewing proposals and portfolios from two designers for the rebranding initiative. The new technology build is expected to take approximately one month.

Governance/Legal. Mr. Levan called for an Executive Session to discuss proposed revisions to the wording of the By-Laws concerning Trustee vacancies. He also announced that the Legal Committee will be reviewing the Library's Personnel Policies.

Public Relations. Ms. Wise and Ms. Coulter announced that the Library will continue operating as a Passport Processing Center. Announcements will be made on social media and in the press. This follows the enactment of new federal guidelines that nonprofit organizations are no longer permitted to process passport applications affecting many neighboring libraries, but not the Pound Ridge Library. Ms. Coulter has been in touch with the Stamford Library System to let them know their patrons can get in touch with our library for this service.

Program Development. Ms. Shiba-Silverman continues to liaise with the PRES PTA to explore ways the library can serve as a resource in support of school activities. She expressed enthusiasm for the Lunar New Year Celebration scheduled to take place at the library on February 22.

Human Resources – Ms. Benefico will work with Legal Committee and Ms. Coulter to update the Personnel Policies.

Long Range Planning – Mr. Bellhouse expressed a desire for the committee to expand its outlook beyond a three-year timeframe, with particular attention to anticipating possible structural developments affecting the building.

Parking Improvement. Mr. Bellhouse reported that the Library plans to retain land use attorney Ms. Gerri Tortorella. The approach to the parking improvement project will be three-fold and concentrate on safety, access, and capacity.

Director's Report – Jennifer Coulter

- Ms. Coulter participated in Library Advocacy Day in Albany. She had the opportunity to meet with Senator Harkham and Assemblyman Burdick to discuss budget requests and legislative priorities such as civil service reform.
- Passport Services will continue at the Library.
- Streaming Services are being cut – library patrons are facing a limit as to what they can borrow in movies, audiobooks and other titles.
- Parking Lot Attendant has been discontinued. Ms. Coulter will look into a new company.
- There is a new reading program app available on Google Play and Apple App Store.
- Projector Replacement. We have two proposals from DNR and Unsolicited. *Ms. Wise made a motion to approve up to \$11,000.00 for funding the new projector and associated installation and support services; Mr. Levan seconded; all in favor.*
- NYS requires a Community Survey, which should include a community-based long-range plan and a periodic evaluation of services and community needs. Previously, the survey was mailed and copies were available at the library. The Public Relations and Long-Range Planning Committees will meet to determine next steps. Ms. Coulter was asked to share questions and topics from prior surveys.
- The Library is celebrating 75 years of service in 2027! Ms. Coulter will gather ideas and input from community and trustees on how to mark this historic milestone.
- Human Resources / AED & Safety Training: Following last month's suggestion to purchase an AED, Ms. Coulter surveyed staff on their interest and comfort with AED training. Emphasis was placed on calling 9-1-1 first in an emergency. CPR training was also suggested. Mr. Bellhouse recommended creating a governance document outlining procedures. Ms. Coulter will consult other institutions on their practices. The Legal Committee will meet with Ms. Coulter to continue the discussion.
- Donation received in the amount of \$50.00. Thank you, Jonathan Goldman.
- Reminder to Trustees to complete their 2 hours of required training for 2026. Ms. Coulter reminded the Trustees that on March 5, Morgan Stanley is hosting an event for library leaders, architects, planners, community and financial partners, and arts/cultural organizations to move from ideas to action. Attendees will earn 1.5 hours of training credit.
- New York State now requires Trustees to sign an Ethics Statement and a Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure. Ms. Coulter included copies in the Trustees' folders for signature.

8:22 PM New Business - none

8:22 PM Public Remarks

- Ms. Janis Knorr and Ms. Rena Goldstein raised concerns about lack of parking for the popular senior chair yoga program on Thursdays, which has run for 12+ years. They noted that some patrons occupy parking spaces all day without participating in programs, using the library as a place to stay all day and eat their meals. They requested that the Trustees develop a plan to ensure at least one hour of parking each Thursday for chair yoga attendees. Ms. Carmichael noted that the Board has been working on a solution for several years. Ms. Knorr also raised concerns about the chair lift and lavatory plumbing. The Board assured the guests that the parking issue will be addressed, the chair lift company has been contacted, and plumbing repairs will be completed. Ms. Carmichael thanked the Board for considering the purchase of an AED machine and complimented the library as a beautiful place that serves the community.

8:39 PM Public Meeting Adjourned

8:50 PM Executive Session Commenced

9:15 PM Executive Session Adjourned

9:15 PM Public Meeting Reopened

The Legal Committee has recommended that two of the sections of the by-laws relating to vacancies (Article II, Section 5 and 6) be eliminated and that a sentence be added to Article II Section 4, which also addresses the issue of vacancies.

Sections 5 and 6 currently provide as follows:

Section 5. Any vacancy occurring in the office of a Trustee shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board; provided, however, that the person so appointed to fill any such vacancy shall hold office until the next annual election of Trustees (referred to as the "Appointment Term"). If a Trustee is appointed to fill a vacancy, the Trustee can still be elected to serve for two consecutive three-year terms after their Appointment Term ends.

Section 6. There may be a time when an election includes an unfilled Three-Year term (referred to as a "Remainder Term"). In an annual election that includes a Remainder Term(s), the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes will each fill a Three-Year Term. The candidate(s) receiving the next highest number of votes will

fill the Remainder Term(s) in descending order based upon the number of votes received. The purpose of filling the Remainder Term this way is to ensure that the all [*sic*] Board seats are not filled in the same year, the filling of Board seats is on a cycle with 3 seats filled at a time.

The Legal Committee concluded that both sections are problematic because they conflict with the Act that created the Library District and must, therefore, be eliminated in their entirety.

To address the issue of filling board vacancies, we propose the following sentence be added **to the end** of current **Sec. 4** (Art. II) which already addresses vacancies. The additional sentence should read as follows:

“As vacancies occur trustees shall be elected at the annual election provided for in these By-Laws to serve three-year terms by the voters of the Pound Ridge Library District, such terms to commence on the first day of the month next following the election.”

Mr. Levan made a motion to eliminate two of the sections of the by-laws relating to vacancies (Article II, Section 5 and 6) and approve the wording in Article II Section 4 of the by-laws (highlighted above) regarding trustee vacancies: “as vacancies occur, trustees shall be elected at the annual election provided for in these by-laws to serve three year terms by the voters of the Pound Ridge Library District.....”. Ms. Benefico seconded. All in favor.

9:18 PM Public Meeting Closed