

MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Pound Ridge Library District
Location: 271 Westchester Ave, Pound Ridge, NY
August 31, 2026

President Richard Esman called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM. He welcomed trustees, staff and Mr. Neal Rentz from The Recorder.

Present: Anne Benefico, Robert Bellhouse, Richard Esman, Lexie Gallo-Cook, Christina Sassi-Lehner, Marvin Markowitz, Valerie Shiba-Silverman, Jenna Wise. Mr. Esman noted that there are currently eight trustees following the resignation of Richard Levan. Ms. Benefico's term will expire in September. Following the trustee election to fill the two open seats, the Board will return to nine trustees beginning in October.
A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Ms. Benefico made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2026, meeting; Mr. Bellhouse seconded; all in favor.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2026. Ms. Coulter will send out a Doodle poll to establish the date for the October meeting. The Doodle poll will be sent to the current trustees as well as the two newly elected trustees on September 23rd, the day after the election.

Treasurer's Report – Bob Bellhouse

Mr. Bellhouse opened a new account at Citibank with \$25,000 from the Chase Checking account. We are in the process of phasing out Chase and moving to Citibank. Once all the funds are moved to Citibank, a brokerage account will also be opened there to buy CD's and other investment products. Citibank has provided excellent service and are much more responsive. In addition, we will continue to maintain a small account with Key Bank at the Mount Kisco branch.

A copy of the Treasurer's Report was included in the Trustee folder and Google Docs. As of August 30, 2026:

- Chase Checking Account: \$508,117.97; Chase Premier Savings: \$299,778.33; Chase 3 month CD: \$206,244.50
- Key Bank Checking: \$5,000.00; Key Bank Premier Savings: \$172,379.71
- Wood Capital Fund: \$296,964.01; Wood Maintenance Fund: \$288,223.47; General Fund: 235,306.36.
- Account TOTALS: \$2,011,956.45

Balance Sheet, Budget vs. Actuals and Statement of Activity were included in the Trustee Folders, and nothing out of the ordinary was reported by Mr. Bellhouse.

Warrants. Warrants were reviewed. *Ms. Benefico made a motion to approve the warrants in the amount of \$65,038.27; Ms. Wise seconded; all in favor.*

Buildings & Grounds - Bonnie Schwartz

- Ms. Coulter reported that Ms. Schwartz is still waiting for two additional bids to install a curtain drain to prevent flooding in the cottage.
- Ms. Schwartz's full report was in the documents sent to the trustees.

Committee Updates

Finance: Mr. Bellhouse – nothing more to add

Technology/PR. Ms. Wise reported that the new website is coming along nicely and requested that the trustees review the site and provide any final feedback to her or Ms. Coulter. The search bar has been relocated on the home page as suggested by the trustees at a previous board meeting.

Ms. Wise is working with the committee and Gina Federico to incorporate the new logo into both the exterior and interior signage. She is also working on adjusting the logo colors for merchandise, as some colors do not translate well to certain products. For example, white may not be the most suitable background color for shirts or caps.

Ms. Wise also recruited her children to assist with attaching magnets to the chip clips. Ms. Coulter had planned to use the chip clips as a giveaway at the Harvest Festival, but the event has been canceled this year. She noted that the chip clips could instead be used for the WLS Road Trip, which she will discuss further in the Director's Report.

Governance/Legal. Ms. Gallo-Cook – no update

Program Development. Ms. Shiba-Silverman reported that the Summer Reading Challenge was exceptionally successful with approximately 250 children participating. She is looking into new programming ideas for children to fill a Tuesday time slot. In addition, Children's Book Clubs will be divided by age and held on Thursdays 5-6pm, 6-7 pm and 7-8 pm. Ms. Benefico noted that 5pm might be cutting it too close to when knitting ends so adjustments will be made. Ms. Shiba-Silverman is researching new

programs and is looking at what is popular in after-school programs at PRES. Sewing, foreign languages, Pokeman Card game are very popular and well attended. Possibly cursive writing. Ms. Shiba-Silverman noted that if a child is closed out of program at PRES, they would have the opportunity to register for a similar program at the Library.

Human Resources – Ms. Benefico called for an Executive Session and requested that Ms. Coulter join.

Long Range Planning – Mr. Bellhouse and the Committee continue to consider the long-range plans for the cottage. He noted that, because the property is located within the Historic District, no changes can be made to the exterior of the building. Mr. Bellhouse plans to meet with Mr. Emmett O’Keefe, Archivist for the Pound Ridge Historical Society, who indicated that the Society has historic information on the cottage and the people who lived there. Mr. Esman asked if the current tenants have signed the new lease and they have not yet. Ms. Gallo-Cook advised the Board that any future discussions about the cottage and the lease should be discussed in Executive Session.

Parking Improvement. Mr. Bellhouse received a second draft of the revised Concept Plan from Insite Engineering immediately prior to the meeting and had not yet had an opportunity to review it. He noted that the revised plan does incorporate changes he previously requested following the first draft. He will review carefully and report at next month’s meeting. Mr. Bellhouse also noted that the Board previously approved \$5,000.00 in funding for services provided by Insite Engineering, but we should plan additional funds as they will be attending Planning Board meetings when the time comes; Mr. Bellhouse is thinking approximately \$2,500.00 and he will continue to discuss next month.

Director’s Report – Jennifer Coulter

- There are three candidates running for two seats on the Board. The candidates provided CV’s and Bios and Ms. Coulter forwarded them to the Trustees. Election is on Tuesday, September 22, and Heidi Nardelli will be the Election Coordinator.
- Ms. Coulter is pleased with the new website design and said it is visually appealing. She looked at other library websites and noted that Trustee photos are included, and she plans to incorporate that feature into the new website. She found some photos of trustees online through social media and is requesting trustees provide a photo they would want to use.
- The Summer Reading Program was a big success as Ms. Shiba Silverman had previously noted. The number of children who participated tripled from the prior year. The trinkets given along the way proved to be a great reinforcement as it kept momentum going and kept the children reading. Many parents commented that their children were not reading before this and were so pleased with the program. Grand prize winners have been announced, and their photos with their prizes were posted to the Library’s social media sites.
- Fall Programming – Ms. Shiba-Silverman previously reported in Committee Updates.
- Additional programming is going to include an Adult Book Club in the evenings. This was a request in the community survey.
- AED Training and Purchase. Ms. Coulter and Ms. Schwartz reached out to various sources to assist in identifying the correct AED model and also to find someone who could train the staff. They have identified someone who can train the staff and community in CPR and AED usage. The purchase is forthcoming.
- Gingerbread House Workshop. The library is partnering with Breads ‘N Bakes to offer four workshops over two weekends in December. Tickets will be sold.
- Foundation is meeting in September and will discuss the grant we submitted for additional seating: 60 folding chairs (\$2550.60) and 4 café chairs (\$5651.75).
- WLS Road Trip 2026. Beginning September 13, 2026. 30 out of 38 libraries in the Westchester Library System are participating.
This is an opportunity to visit and explore other libraries. We are awaiting maps, and gifts will be given out to participants.
- The library staff and trustees have been invited to the 50th anniversary celebration of the Pound Ridge Landmarks and Historic District Commission. Reception is being held at the Town House on Sept 26, 4-6 pm. RSVP is required.
- Trustee Education reminder – 2 hours annually.
- Ms. Coulter will be attending the NYLA annual conference. Trustees are invited and encouraged to attend also. Takes place in Saratoga, NY Nov 3/4/5.

8:14 PM New Business

Ms. Benefico suggested a get-well gift be sent to a former staff member of the library as she recuperates.

Ms. Benefico and Mr. Bellhouse will be visiting the Wood Mausoleum in October.

8:15 PM Public Remarks – Mr. Rentz will be covering the upcoming Trustee Election in the next few issues of The Recorder. .

8:15 PM Public Meeting Adjourned

8:25 PM Executive Session Commenced

8:41 PM Executive Session Adjourned