

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 7 pm, in Sibley Hall

Approved, 7/8/2025

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Mark Gerath, Heidi Robes, and David Zeiler. Also, Library Director Vanessa Abraham was present, and Assistant Director Sarah Breen attended by phone.

Absent: Jennifer Petersen, Kristen von Campe

Call to Order

Chair Helena Altsman called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Vote Summary of Tonight's Meeting

- Approval of May 13, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Heidi, seconded by David. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions
- Vote to approve slate of officers for coming year: David - Chair, Mark - Vice Chair, Jennifer - Secretary. Moved by Heidi, seconded by David. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Standing committee membership was unchanged - see below.
- Approval of request for Director's Discretionary fund for FY 2026 - see below. Moved by Heidi, seconded by David. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions
- Approval of request to change library hours associated with carpet installation - see below. Moved by Heidi, seconded by David. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions
- Adjourn. Moved by Heidi, seconded by David. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items from Tonight's Meeting

- PPP to review policies.
- Vanessa to address Board changes, including:
 - Set up new signatories and DocuSign with new Trustee Chair (Vice-Chair remains the same)
 - Send Memo of Board Officers to Town Manager, Select Board, and Town Clerk
 - Updating information on website, MBLC, letterhead, etc.
 - Forward the gpltrustees@gpl.org email to the new Vice-Chair (unchanged)

Monthly Report from the Director and Assistant Director

- The narrative and statistical reports were reviewed.
- Of note were:
 - Summer reading programs start the week of June 16.
 - Lauren Sanchez was pleased with the Florence Roche schedule organized by the Assistant Principal to promote Summer Reading to Elementary School Students
 - GrotonFest Spring was a success, and
 - In May, an astonishing 1,000 people viewed the recording of 5 GPL virtual programs!

Action Items

- Approval of the Minutes from May 13, 2025 Meeting
 - Completed, see vote summary.

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- Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month
 - All calendar items reviewed.
- Review Trustees' Action Items for Current Month
 - All action items reviewed.
- Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings
 - All action items reviewed.

Trustees Items

- Vote to Approve New Slate of Officers for the Upcoming Year - see vote summary:
 - **Chair: David Zeiler**
 - **Vice-Chair: Mark Gerath**
 - **Secretary: Jennifer Petersen**
- Review Trustee Committee Assignments, which stayed the same:
 - Policy, Personnel, & Planning: Kristen von Campe and Heidi Robes
 - Building & Equipment: Jennifer Petersen and David Zeiler
 - Budget & Finance: Helena Altzman and Mark Gerath

Budget & Finance

- Review Monthly Bills
 - All library bills reviewed.
 - Salaries will be over-spent by \$2,000 due to a staff member benefit change. Library Wages will come in well underbudget and will cover the overage.
 - The cost of the new water fountains was discussed - see below.
- Review Monthly Budget Report
 - Monthly budget report reviewed.
- FY2025 & FY2026 Budget Updates
 - FY2025 Year-End Projections: Final projections have been provided.
 - FY2026 Budget Updates: The Town Manager has released his proposed budget modifications to address the shortfall in the schools' budget. The library's budget is not included in the proposed changes.
- Other Budget & Finance
 - Director's Discretionary Fund (DDF) spending for FY2025 was reviewed.
 - Funding Requests for FY2026 from LIGMEG (or Gift)
 - \$1,000 for DDF; \$1,000 for Community Events; \$400 for Staff Workshop
 - The request was reviewed and approved - see vote summary.
 - Lecture Fund Updates
 - \$22,700 awarded for FY26; past Lecture Fund awards were reviewed.
 - New Trust Commissioner Mairead Orpen was elected, filling Rachael Bielecki's seat.

Building & Equipment

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- The Monthly Project Tracker was reviewed, and nothing unusual was noted.
- Carpeting Project Updates
 - The contractor has been selected and the schedule established.
 - The Director requested to close the Library on Sunday, Sept. 7 to move furniture before carpeting and to open late on Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 3 pm because the main entrance area may still be under construction until then. The request was approved by the Board - see vote summary.
- Other Building & Equipment
 - Water Fountain (bubbler) Updates
 - The installation of the water fountains is more complicated than anticipated due to the lack of a labeled water shutoff valve, electrical requirements, and because the wall units must be removed and the walls rebuilt before the new equipment can be installed. Vanessa is consulting with DPW staff and the plumber and will update the Board.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- The Collins Center Study of staff grading was discussed, but there were no further updates.
- PPP will begin review of the policy manual.
- Other Policy, Personnel, & Planning
 - Mary Minifie Painting
 - The potential to purchase the painting “Diedre” using funds from the GPL Endowment was discussed. The Board approved the purchase in support of the vote from the Endowment Trustees to reallocate funds in order to purchase this painting.
 - The final purchase contract was reviewed and no changes requested.

GPL Endowment Trust

- Meeting Updates
 - The Endowment’s value is up to \$4.4 million.
- FY2026 Endowment Grant Approved with Pilot: Director’s Strategic Reserve
 - The Endowment Trustees approved the FY2026 grant request.
 - There was one change made in the final grant proposal: the establishment of the “Director’s Strategic Reserve.” This would be a pilot project to consolidate unassigned funds into a single category that the Director could approve expenses from to meet funding needs throughout the fiscal year, without requiring the Endowment Trustees to vote on the reallocation of funds.
 - The idea was to provide greater flexibility to the grant throughout the year to meet larger expenses, such as booking a major Groton Reads author or purchasing a new, more expensive piece of technology or art.
 - As the Library Trustees were unable to meet and discuss this change to the

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Endowment grant before the Endowment meeting, the Director proposed it as a pilot project for the upcoming year, with an assessment at the end to see if the practice should be continued or if any parameters should be established.

Other Business

- No other business

Next Steps

- Action Items from the Current Meeting were reviewed – see above
- Upcoming Meetings & Events were reviewed.
 - Trustees Meetings: July 8, August 12, and September 9
 - Special Town Meeting: Monday, June 23, 7 pm MS PAC
 - Summer Reading Kickoff with Mini-Golf & Gaming on Sunday, June 22, 1-4 pm

Adjournment at 8:03 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Gerath, Secretary pro tem