Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025, at 7 pm, in Sibley Hall
Approved, 10/14/2025

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Heidi Robes, and David Zeiler.

Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen also in attendance.

Absent: Kristen von Campe

Call to Order

Chair David Zeiler called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Vote Summary of Tonight's Meeting

- Approval of August 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Mark, seconded by Helena. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Motion to appoint Heidi as endowment trustee as of January 1, 2026. Moved by Mark, seconded by Helena. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn. Moved by Mark, seconded by Helena. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items from Tonight's Meeting

- All Trustees will review bylaws.
- Trustees will meet on 9/23 regarding the Library Director Evaluation.
- Vanessa will post the 9/23 meeting.
- Vanessa will send out an email to Trustees for Groton Fest signups.

Monthly Report from the Director and Assistant Director

- Vanessa has been back from medical leave for a week.
- Water fountains and walls have been completed, the doors and alarms are in process.
- The Summer Reading program was a success and ended with a picnic; the picnic was well attended.
- Over 500 kids were signed up for Summer Reading, and over 150 teens.
- ARIS statistics showed a significant increase in adult audio book check outs.
- Audio books check outs were 9,000 last year, and over 25,000 this year.
- Total circulation went from 185,000 last year to 209,000 this year including e-circulation.
- Total circulation for print was 134,000 and 15,000 for e-books.
- Recorded views increased from 5,000 to 10,000.
- The "Carving Spoons" program was very popular with men and had a huge waitlist.
- The August "Flower Bar" program was also very popular.
- The fall newsletter came out.
- Groton Reads picks for next spring are being discussed.
- The library is open on Sundays beginning this weekend.
- Tom Delaney is retiring from the DPW in November and there will be a surprise party for him at the DPW, followed by the Country Club on 10/23.

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Action Items

- Approval of the Minutes from August 12, 2025 Meeting
  - Completed, see vote summary.
- 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.

Budget & Finance

- Review Monthly Bills
  - All library bills were reviewed.

- Review Monthly Budget Report
  - 20% of the annual budget was spent by the end of August (standard).

- Other Budget & Finance
  - Mark Haddad sent the Trustees his thanks and appreciation for paying for the contractor work to install the new water bubblers with State Aid (versus the town), because the work already has tallied over $11,000 due to the difficulty of the job removing the old built-in fountains.
  - The quote for the new automatic door openers is $21,000; another quote is being prepared.
  - The hardware on the downstairs door is failing, and the repair price quoted to replace it is $13,000; another quote is being prepared.

Building & Equipment

- Carpeting Project Updates
  - Major progress on the first floor and Children's Room after only 2 days.
  - The overall project is a day ahead of schedule.
  - Atkinson has been wonderful to deal with on the project.

- Lower Level Door Updates
  - The lower level door still needs to be repaired.

- Review Monthly Project Tracker
  - Water fountain completed

- Other Building & Equipment
  - Capital Planning

- The Town's Capital Planning Committee was reported in the Groton Herald as perhaps taking on more responsibility in Town, but Mark Haddad didn't think that was the case.
- Priorities for the library in upcoming years: repainting the library (or doors if necessary), HVAC, and the elevator.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- Updates on Reclassification Requests for Two Library Positions
  - The Head of Circulation Services was regraded from 6 to 7 with the other librarians, per Collins Recommendations. Their rate remained the same because the current HOCS was already at mid-point of the new pay range.
  - The Adult Programs Coordinator was determined by HR to be a new position, which has been created and graded at Grade 4, per Collins' Recommendations. The current APC was also approved for a higher rate of pay, as warranted by the position's level of responsibility and autonomy.

- Updates on Prioritized Library Staff Compensation Requests
  - We requested a few other pay increases for staff, but no other staff increase requests were considered at this time.
  - We will bring back staff pay corrections with our FY2027 budget request.

- Discuss Criteria, Methodologies, and Priorities for Reviewing Staff Pay
  - Staff compensation reviewed and discussed.

- Updates to Library Policies and Trustees Bylaws
  - Bylaws have been reviewed and redlined.
  - Vanessa will make the minor changes.
  - All Trustees will review the bylaws in anticipation of discussing more significant changes at next month's meeting.

- Library Director Evaluation Subcommittee
  - The feedback necessary to complete the evaluation has been obtained.
  - The Trustees will meet on 9/23 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss and finalize the Library Director Evaluation.

- Appreciation for Debbie Ladue for Her Retirement
  - Debbie's last day is October 16.
  - A staff breakfast will take place to celebrate Debbie's retirement.
  - There will be a proclamation of "Debbie Ladue" day from the town Select Board and a Governor's Citation acknowledging her years of service.
  - The Trustees will write notes and donate a Lowe's Gift Card.

- Other Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- On the Groton-Dunstable Parents Facebook page, there was an anonymous post about how we allow dogs in the library from someone whose child is severely allergic to dogs. Sarah responded to the post that we don't allow dogs in the library except service animals and for specific library programs (therapy dogs for our read to a dog program) and to please call us so we can provide specific help to the poster.
- Trustee Help with Grotonfest
  - Vanessa will send out an email for the Trustees to volunteer to help at the Groton Fest library booth
- Reschedule the Tue. November 11 Meeting (holiday) to Wed. Nov. 12
  - The meeting will be rescheduled, as it is Town Policy that no public board or committee meetings can be held on town holidays.

GPL Endowment Trust

- Discuss Trustee Representative to be Appointed for a Four-Year Term to the Endowment Board starting January 1, 2026
  - Motion to appoint Heidi Robes as Endowment Trustee for the next 4-year term that begins January 1, 2026. See voting summary above.
  - The Trustees thanks David Zeiler for serving as the Library Trustees' Representative on the GPL Endowment Board of Trustees for the past 8 years.

Other Business

- Other
  - None

Next Steps

- Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above
- Review Upcoming Meetings & Events

Adjournment at 8:23 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary