

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room  
Approved, 12/12/2023

**Attending in Person:** Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Kate Bettencourt, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Kristen von Campe, and David Zeiler. Also, Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

**Call to Order:**

Kate Bettencourt, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

**Vote Summary**

- Approval of October 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Moved by K. von Campe and seconded by M. Gerath. 5 ayes with J. Petersen abstaining.
- Approval of November 6, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Moved by K. von Campe, seconded by M. Gerath. 3 ayes, with D. Zeiler and K. Bettencourt abstaining.
- K. von Campe moved and M. Gerath seconded to approve the level service FY25 budget presented. Approved unanimously.
- In response to the Town Manager's request to present an 11% cut as a contingency for FY25, K. von Campe moved to present the contingent budget prepared by the Library Director with Budget and Finance. M. Gerath seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Adjourn at 8:15. Moved by K. von Campe, seconded by M. Gerath. Approved unanimously.

**Action Items**

- V. Abraham to follow up on indexing quotes for town diaries
- V. Abraham will present the Q1 report for next month.
- M. Gerath and D. Zeiler to attend the November 15th Trust Commissioner's meeting to request \$75,000 from the Robbins Fund for books and materials.
- Budget and Finance Subcommittee and Library Director to meet on the budget with Town Manager Mark Haddad on 11/27/23.

**New Business**

**Welcome New Library Trustee**

- Jennifer Petersen was officially appointed by a joint vote of the Select Board and GPL Library Trustees and has been sworn in. Welcome to the Board, Jennifer!

**Director Annual Review**

- Helena, Kate, and Mark met with Vanessa to present her annual performance review. The Trustees reiterated what was in the review adding that it was a great year for the library, with a new Assistant Director on board and successful and wonderful programming, and all agreed that the Director deserves high praise for her hard work and many accomplishments this past year.

**Unfinished Business**

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room  
Approved, 12/12/2023

Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 10, 2023 Meeting

- Completed, see vote summary.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 6, 2023 Meeting

- Completed, see vote summary.

Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings

- All action items reviewed.

Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month

- All calendar items reviewed.

Review Monthly Bills

- All library bills reviewed.

**Standing Committee & Liaison Reports:**

**Budget & Finance**

FY 2025 Library Budget

- Mark, Helena, and Vanessa presented the Town Manager Budget Guidelines for FY 2025. The schools need a lot more money than was expected, due in large part to renegotiated union contracts and COVID grant money that has disappeared. A three-year override will most likely be proposed. If said override does not occur, both the schools and the municipal departments will be impacted greatly. The budget request is for two separate budgets: a level service budget and a budget with an 11% cut on the level service budget. The three of them scrutinized the budget to come up with potential cuts and present the best possible scenarios.
- The level service budget includes COLAs, merit increases, and one-time adjustments and longevity payments. Summer hours and Sundays were added back in on the municipal side. M. Haddad endorsed adding those back.
- The 11% cut budget means summer and Sundays hours disappear, with an additional four hours a week cut beyond that, which would probably be the last hour open, four days per week. Additionally, four part-time library assistants would be cut and a few other line items would be impacted to get to the target of an approximate \$113,000 cut.
- Closing early means very limited evening programs, but would probably be the scenario we would opt for should the 11% budget cut happen. Opening later would have too negative an impact on parents with young children and their programs.
- Kristen moved and Mark seconded to approve the level service budget for FY 2025. Approved unanimously.
- Kristen moved and Mark seconded to provide the prepared 11% cut FY 2025 budget as per the Town's Manager's request. Approved unanimously.

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room  
Approved, 12/12/2023

FY2025 Materials Budget Request Town Trust Commissioners

- We are proposing an increase from the \$70,000 we have requested the last few years to \$75,000, which is half of Groton's materials expenditure requirement from the state. Mark, Dave, and Vanessa will attend the November 15th meeting. Kristen moved and Mark seconded to increase this year's request to \$75,000. Approved unanimously.

Budget & Finance Updates

- There is a meeting with the Town Manager on Mon. Nov. 27 at 8:30 am to review the submitted library budgets.

**Building & Equipment**

Project Updates

- Front Door Restoration Work. This was treated.
- Roof Work. Greenwood was here inspecting and fixing the roof. There are still 2 tiles sitting on the roof. Hopefully the Groton Fire Department will come out with the ladder truck and remove them for us.
- Babin Landscaping is coming next week to work on the front drainage.

**Policy, Personnel, & Planning**

Strategic Planning

- Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) Members first meeting is Wed. Nov. 15., there are 15 members, most from 2020, when the Committee was originally formed pre-COVID.
- SOAR is set up for the Library and Endowment Trustees on December 4th.
- Youth Survey for Grades 5-12 is launching tomorrow, Wed. Nov. 15.
- There is an upcoming SOAR Workshops with Staff on December 1st.

Staff Workshop Plans

- Thursday, Dec. 21: 8:30-11:30 AM there will be a staff workshop and the library will be closed that morning from 10:00-12:00. Staff will take a field trip to the new Littleton Public Library and tour it with their Library Director and then return to the GPL mid-morning for food, discussion, and an activity.

PPP Updates:

- New Library Assistant Lisa is doing well in Circulation
- Other new Library Assistant Ellie has expressed high praise for the library staff and how well everyone functions as a team.

**Other Reports:**

**Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 7 pm, Library Community Room  
Approved, 12/12/2023

GPL Endowment Updates:

- Annual Report to Trustees from Endowment Chair, Mike Woods
- Financial Report from Treasurer
- Tax forms from Accountant
- Oct. 18 meeting minutes note the Endowment is down a few hundred thousand dollars from it's all time high in keeping with benchmarks
- Endowment Trustees increased the stipend for Groton Reads and Lifelong Learning.
- Annual Newsletter is out soon with appeal letters to follow
- Mike Woods will continue as Chair and John Konetzny as Treasurer in 2024

Art & Artifacts:

- New exhibit: Central Massachusetts Pastel Society is up now through Dec. 17
- Artists reception will be held 1-3 pm on Sun. Dec. 3

Social Media Report & Other News:

- The Library will be represented at the Community Spelling Bee on Friday night at Prescott. The team name is "I'd Rather BEE Reading!" and they are dressing up as a favorite fiction genre.
- The Groton Reads Selection Committee has chosen *Symphony of Secrets* by Brendan Slocomb as our 2024 title. Vanessa brought copies for the Trustees. Beth is busy working on the programming for March.

**Other Business**

- There will be a small tribute to Roy Johnson on the cover of the next GPL newsletter, honoring his many years spent working at the GPL.

Review of Action Items from Current Meeting – see above

Review Upcoming Meetings & Events

Adjournment at 8:15. Kristen moved and Mark seconded to adjourn. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen von Campe, Secretary pro tem