

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 7 pm, Library Community Room
Approved, 1/14/2025

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Heidi Robes, and David Zeiler. Also, Library Director Vanessa Abraham and Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

Absent: Kristen von Campe

Call to Order

Chair Helena Altsman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

New Library Trustee

Everyone welcomed new Library Trustee, Heidi Robes, to the Board.

Vote Summary

- Approval of November 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions
- Approval of November 14, 2024, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions
- Approval of December 9, 2024, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of motion regarding the distribution of signatory responsibilities, holding that the Chair will continue to ensure that payroll warrants are timely reviewed and signed. Henceforth, the Vice Chair will assume responsibility for ensuring that bills are reviewed promptly and payments are signed. Moved by Mark and seconded by Dave. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of motion for up to \$1,000 for acoustic tiles for the Teen Room. Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn. Moved by Mark, seconded by Dave. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items

- Vanessa will track the shed repair by DPW and release the insurance claim once the repair is paid.
- Vanessa will explore various methods to ensure that outdoor outlets can be used safely and in a manner that minimizes liability.
- Vanessa will review the draft document for the deed of gift.
- Vanessa will apply for additional grants and look into the details of the Mass Leads Bill.

Monthly Report from the Director and Assistant Director

- GrotonFest Winter was a success here in the library.
- Llama Lounge was very busy this week, with more kids inside because of the cold weather.
- The Leadership Retreat Vanessa attended was excellent, and attendees will continue to meet monthly in the future.
- The Library Spelling Bee Team did very well, advancing to the semifinals and garnering goodwill for the library.
- The Endowment Newsletter was updated and went out.
- A new Broadmeadow Road sign indicating that the road is closed to through traffic but open to the library has been well-received and used for the first time.
- A Children's Library Assistant will be out for three months.

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- A surprise celebration will be held for Lauren during the staff workshop, as she completed her graduate degree and now has her Master's in Library Science.
- Compensation and classification update: Interviews scheduled for January
- Town Field improvement project updates were shared.

Action Items

- Approve Minutes from November 12, November 14, and December 9, 2024 Meetings
 - Completed, see vote summary.
- Review Trustees' Calendar for Current Month
 - All calendar items reviewed.
- Report on Action Items from Previous Meetings
 - All action items reviewed.

Trustee Topics

- Discuss Trustee Weekly Payroll and Bill Signing Responsibilities
 - Chair will assume responsibility for reviewing and signing payroll warrants.
 - Vice Chair will assume responsibility for reviewing and signing bills.
 - Motion made by Mark and seconded by Dave to change signatory responsibilities. See vote summary.
- Discuss Trustee Committee Assignments
 - Chair appointed Heidi to the Policy, Personnel, and Planning Committee.
- Updates to 2025 Annual Trustees Calendar. Edited calendar shared.
 - The chair proposed adding a mid-year check-in on the status of trustee goals in January.

Budget & Finance

- Review Monthly Bills
 - All library bills reviewed.
- Review Monthly Budget Report
 - Monthly budget report reviewed.
- Other Budget & Finance
 - FY2026 Budget Meeting with the Town Manager
 - Mark Haddad removed the Adult Program Coordinator pay raise from the budget request.
 - But in all other respects, he will present the rest of the library budget as it is.
 - He stated he does not wish to have any more discussions of eliminating Sunday and/or summer hours for the upcoming year.
 - \$1,000 Budget Request for noise-dampening acoustic felt tiles for the Teen Room was made.
 - Motion approving up to \$1,000 for acoustic tiles. See summary above.
 - Other
 - The Town Manager indicated that the minor capital request for roughly \$15,000 to be used to update three 25-year-old water fountains he would work to fund in part from FY25 town budget.

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Building & Equipment

- Monthly Project Tracker
 - All outstanding capital projects have been completed, except for the security project (building alarm system), which is nearly done.
 - Fire alarm is nearly all set; needed fixes done
 - The emergency exit doors replacement in Children's is done and repainted
- Other Building & Equipment
 - Weekend HVAC Gas Leak
 - On Saturday, staff members detected a gas odor, and the Fire Department was notified. The building was evacuated, and a loose connection was discovered on a rooftop unit. Although the connection was tightened, the unit was turned off until an HVAC technician could inspect it.
 - On Monday, there was a smell of gas again before the HVAC technicians arrived, so the Fire Department was called. They investigated but were unable to determine the source.
 - Nashoba Air & Boilerworks arrived shortly thereafter, checked the original concern, and then also determined that a different unit had a faulty ignitor. The original unit was turned on, and the second unit was turned off; the part was then ordered. The repair will be made soon.
 - Shed Update
 - The patron who hit the shed with her vehicle offered to pay the Town directly for the full cost of the repair. We will do that and once cleared, release the insurance claim.
 - Outdoor Outlet Use / Parking
 - Vanessa will investigate various ways to ensure that outdoor outlets can be used safely for both individuals and the library.
 - Trustees agreed that additional parking restrictions are not necessary at this time.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- Deed of Gift
 - Vanessa to review the Deed of Gift policy.
 - Policy will apply to gifts over a predetermined monetary threshold (possibly \$5,000).
- FY2026 Annual Action Plan
 - Was submitted to the state on December 1.
 - Includes goals and objectives.
- Other Policy, Personnel, & Planning
 - Digital Preservation Project Update
 - A recent Community Preservation Act grant request was denied because the proposed assessment project was deemed too maintenance-oriented, rather than being a unique project.
 - Vanessa will investigate other grant sources and the Bruce J Anderson grant for assistance in funding this project.

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- The goal is to obtain grants to cover most, if not all, of the estimated \$17,000 cost of hiring the digital preservation expert for an assessment.

Other Business

- Other
 - A Zoom meeting will be taking place with the new Tarbell Charitable Trust Trustee (Elizabeth), and another is being planned with all of the stakeholders who exhibit Tarbell works.
 - The state recently passed the “Mass Leads” Bill, authorizing \$150,000,000 to be used for Massachusetts public library construction projects for which the library may be eligible.

Next Steps

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

Adjournment at 8:33 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary