

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, Oct. 14 2025, at 7 pm, Community Room

Approved, 11/12/2025

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

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

Absent: None.

Call to Order

Chair David Zeiler called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Vote Summary of Tonight's Meeting

- Approval of September 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Mark, seconded by Heidi. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention.
- Approval of changes to bylaws. Moved by Mark, seconded by Heidi. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of Motion to rescind e-devices policy. Moved by Mark, seconded by Heidi. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn. Moved by Mark, seconded by Kristen. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items from Tonight's Meeting

- Vanessa will schedule the fall meeting with the Trust Commissioners.
- Vanessa will try to get a Children's Room Space Redesign general budget together in time for the Trust Commissioners meeting.
- Trustees may raise the issue of accessibility services costs with the Trust Commissioners.
- Vanessa will clarify which positions are considered as being internships.
- Vanessa will remove the electronic device policy.

Monthly Report from the Director and Assistant Director

- Carpet installation went well and wrapped up a day early.
- *North Woods* by Daniel Mason will be the Groton Reads book for March 2026.
- For Grotonfest Winter this December 6 the library will host a Local Author Fair.
- Phil Aiello was hired to take over the open weekday custodian position.
- Vanessa is going to post the open part-time weekend custodian position.
- Kathy Reiff is going to retire next month after 10 years of working at the library but will remain as an intermittent "fill-in" circulation library assistant.
- The annual kids' bookmark competition is underway.
- There are a couple new daytime book clubs that have recently started.
- The teen baking club: envisioned a teen, run by a teen, is very popular and fully booked
- Offered a public poll and there is a lot of interest in various language groups and the French group is coming back and starting up tomorrow.
- Major 100+year Library Book Vendor Baker & Taylor is closing, shocking and profoundly impacting libraries. GPL primarily uses Ingram, but other libraries are scrambling!
- Baker & Taylor also provided software for our state reports, so that's another big change.

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Action Items

- Approval of the Minutes from September 9, 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 reviewed.
- Review Monthly Budget Report
 - Monthly expenditure column was added to the Monthly Budget Report.
 - Going forward, Microsoft Office Desktop licenses will have to be purchased for new desktop computers because they decided MVLC is not a non-profit.
- Other Budget & Finance
 - Grants to help fund accessibility services for ASL interpreters for an out-of-state patron need to be researched, as requests for access to a number of programs have been made and the cost has not been included in the budget.
 - Raise the issue of funds for accessibility services with the Trust Commissioner.

Building & Equipment

- Lower Level Door Updates
 - Mark Haddad encouraged and has verbally supported the library's request for a reserve fund transfer for \$25,000 to replace the main doors and auto. openers.
 - Mark Haddad said that he would present our request to the Finance Committee.
- Review Monthly Project Tracker
 - Dave has called about signage and is awaiting a return call.
- Other Building & Equipment
 - None.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- Trustee Bylaws
 - The Trustees approved changes to bylaws. See voting summary above.
- Library Director Contract
 - Annual review has been completed and signed.

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- Per her contract's instructions, Vanessa verbally expressed her wish to continue as Director and renew her three-year contract starting July 1, 2026.
- Vanessa reviewed her current contract and, having overhauled it last time, provided the Board with the only minor updates required.
- Vanessa will ask Mark Haddad when the contract should be signed and report back to the Trustees.
- Staff Pay Corrections for FY2027
 - Vanessa intends to add to the library budget request this year pay corrections for staff of 15 years still paid in the lower half of the pay scale (Dumont, Danti) and 7-year intermittent fill-in staff (Colman, Egan) being paid at the bottom rate because they are not formally reviewed and receive no merit increase.
 - The focus will be on raising pay for long-term intermittent employees stuck at the bottom and long-term staff still in the bottom half of the pay scale.
- Electronic Devices Borrowing Policy
 - The policies and procedures in place for borrowing electronic devices, which are now part of the Library of Things collection, make this policy unnecessary.
 - Motion approved to rescind e-devices policy. See voting summary above.
- Other Policy, Personnel, & Planning
 - Employees vs Contractors
 - Discussion regarding distinguishing employees and contractors from interns.
 - Governor's Citation for Debbie Ladue
 - The citation has been obtained and will be presented to Debbie at her farewell party.
 - Add Collection Bin to Lobby
 - Cannot add another collection bin in the lobby: it is already crowded because we have moved children's books for sale back into the lobby from the Children's Room. Plus, it is Trustees' policy not to allow collection bins at GPL, excepting only the legacy Loaves & Fishes bin.

GPL Endowment Trust

- Heidi is going to Zoom into the upcoming Endowment Trust meeting.
- There have been over 100 donations to the Endowment Trust to post in the newsletter, a nice increase of 15% more names than over recent years, which Vanessa attributes to the library's consistently great programming, increased community outreach, and improved Endowment promotion and visibility.

Other Business

- Other

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- None.

Next Steps

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

Adjournment at 8:42 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary