

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 7 pm, Historical Room

Approved, 12/9/2025

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Heidi Robes, Kristen von Campe, and David Zeiler. Library Director Vanessa Abraham was also in attendance.

Absent: Assistant Director Sarah Breen.

Call to Order

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

Vote Summary of Tonight's Meeting

- Approval of September 23, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Kristen, seconded by Heidi. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of October 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Kristen, seconded by Heidi. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approved request for up to \$6,000 from State Aid to send Sarah Breen and Deb Dowson to the Public Library Association Biennial National Conference in Minneapolis, MN in April of 2026. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Mark. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approved sending an acceptance and thank you letter to the Endowment Chair. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Mark. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Mark. 6 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items from Tonight's Meeting

- Vanessa will clarify the situation involving the school year internship position.
- Vanessa will complete the removal of any remnants of the electronic device policy.
- Dave will discuss the possibility of refurbishing the old library sign and making changes to the design with the sign maker.
- Vanessa will reach out to the person who created the original sign about making an updated library sign.
- Budget and Finance Subcommittee members will meet with the Town Manager and his finance team on Monday, December 8, at 9 a.m.
- Vanessa will reach out to Town Hall regarding repairing or replacing the copier damaged during the electrical upgrade.

Monthly Report from the Director and Assistant Director

- The Signed and Sealed Proclamation of "Debbie Ladue Day" on Nov. 2, 2025, was obtained and presented to her.
- Broadmeadow Road is being considered again for a grant to remediate the flooding problem.
- The town manager indicated that staffing levels at several Groton town departments are going to be studied and compared to one another and to other towns, but the library will not be included in the study since it has been reviewed and discussed many times with the Town Manager, Finance Committee, and Select Board.

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- A postpartum mothers' support group has been formed and will meet on the first Wednesday of each month after storytime.
- Circulation went up 4% and visitors 12% last month compared to the previous October.
- Last week the authorities were called to assist with a wellness check on a patron library staff were concerned about.

Action Items

- Approval of the Minutes from the September 23, 2025 Meeting
 - Completed, see vote summary.
- Approval of the Minutes from the October 14, 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
 - Budget Report reviewed.
- Other Budget & Finance
 - Vanessa is preparing a budget request for the next fiscal year.
 - The next fiscal year's action plan is also being prepared.
 - Budget and Finance Subcommittee members will meet with the Town Manager and his finance team on Monday, December 8, at 9:00 a.m. at Town Hall.
 - Approved request for up to \$6,000 from State Aid to send Assistant Director Sarah Breen and Teen Services Librarian Deb Dowson to the Public Library Association Biennial National Conference in Minneapolis, MN in April of 2026. See voting summary above.

Building & Equipment

- Front Sign Project
 - The proposed new sign design was reviewed and discussed.
 - The Trustees took another look at the old sign to decide if they wished to pursue refurbishment of the old sign or creating the new one.
 - Dave will discuss the possibility of refurbishing the old sign and making changes to the design with the sign maker.

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- Vanessa will reach out to the person who created the original sign about making an updated sign with her or a recommended business in the area.
- Reserve Fund Transfer
 - A \$25,000 Reserve Fund Transfer (RFT) Request for new main doors and the automatic door openers was sent to and supported by the Town Manager, who volunteered to present it to the Finance Committee (FinCom) for their approval. FinCom voted to approve the request at the end of October.
 - Vanessa has already ordered both through our selected vendor.
- Updated Capital Plan & HVAC Evaluation
 - Vanessa will attend the meeting next week with the Capital Planning Advisory Committee, which will be on Wed. Nov. 19 at 5 pm on Zoom, which Trustees are welcome to attend. She will provide the committee members with a brief overview of our capital requests for the next five fiscal years and answer any questions.
 - Vanessa would like to bring in a consultant in the next year to evaluate the size and load of all eight HVAC units and ideally lower the number of units or at least lower the tonnage of the rooftops unit and make sure they are right-sized and optimized for the building and not more than is needed.
 - There is a three-year, multi-town-funded energy consultant, Andres Correa, working in Groton who may be do the work or point us in the right direction.
- Other Building & Equipment
 - GELD upgraded the library's electrical system. There was a tree in front of the transformer that was too close to the doors, so it was taken down. Vanessa asked for guidance on landscaping near a transformer, and shrubbery current around the transformer needs to be cut back and there can't be anything in front of the doors for 10 feet.
 - Regrettably, one casualty of the electrical upgrade as that it fried the 11-year-old copier's motherboard. Rather than paying a substantial sum to try to repair an older piece of equipment, the company recommended considering purchase or lease of a newer machine instead.
 - Vanessa will consider all options for the office copier before deciding next steps.
 - Vanessa will reach out to Town Hall regarding covering the cost of the repair or replacement of the copier.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- Clothing Shed Proposal
 - The Trustees agreed that the library does not have sufficient space to accommodate a clothing shed.
 - Vanessa will inform the person who made the proposal.

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- Legislative Breakfast
 - Vanessa pointed out that Lancaster is hosting a Legislative Breakfast on Friday, December 12. State Senator John Cronin has confirmed and State Representatives Margaret Scarsdale and Dan Sena have both been invited.
- Roan DeMeis-Dullea High School Senior Project Proposal
 - Roan addressed the Trustees to discuss working with the library as part of his high school senior project regarding Freedom to Read.
 - He would like the library to help the library organize a legislative breakfast or advocacy event at the library in January to encourage people to reach out to their representatives to support Freedom to Read legislation.
 - The Trustees were enthusiastic about the project, and although it was decided that a legislative breakfast was not workable at this time, they indicated they would support an alternative event involving the Freedom to Read advocacy project.

GPL Endowment Trust

- Annual Endowment Trust Letter
 - The Trustees approved sending an acceptance and thank you letter to the Endowment Chair. See voting summary above.
- Accountant Financial Review
 - The accountant reported that the account was balanced and could withstand fluctuations in the stock market going forward.
 - The Endowment will stay between 70-90% in equities, per its investment policy. It has been at 80% for a while now, but there was agreement to realize some capital gains by bringing total equities down to 75%.
- Annual Meeting
 - There is currently—and amazingly—\$4.95 million in the GPL Endowment Trust.
 - The money is invested in such a way and is expended so conservatively that it will be able to withstand market fluctuations for many years and still accommodate the library's annual requests.
 - There was discussion of the “magnificent seven” companies driving much of the stock market increases and the realization that, between heavily favoring large cap funds, a pretty high percentage of the GPL Endowment is in those 7-9 large company stocks driving the market.
- Other Endowment Topics
 - The possibility of having the Assistant Director be deputized to handle GPL Endowment Trust business if the Library Director is unavailable for an extended period of time was discussed. It will require a lawyer to incorporate changes into

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the trust instrument, which the GPL Endowment Trust will need to address.

- GPL Endowment Events, Inc., entity was created as the fundraising “arm” of the GPL Endowment Trust for annual fundraisers in the 2000’s. has not been used for 15 years. The GPL Endowment Trust Board would make the final decision regarding whether to work to reinstate its full status, but after discussion, the Library Trustees do believe disbanding is likely the best way forward at this time.

Other Business

- None.

Next Steps

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

Adjournment at 8:59 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary