

Groton Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 7 pm, Community Room

Approved, 1/13/2026

Attending in Person: Library Trustees Helena Altsman, Mark Gerath, Jennifer Petersen, Heidi Robes, Kristen von Campe (left 7:38 pm), and David Zeiler (arrived 7:55 pm).

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

Call to Order: Vice Chair Mark Gerath called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Vote Summary of Tonight's Meeting

- Approval of plan to request \$10,000 from the Book Fund from the Commissioners of Trust and to use the \$10,000 from the Book Fund along with \$10,000 from State Aid to meet the Town Manager's request for \$20,000 for FY27 to supplement the library's books and materials line item. Moved by Kristen, seconded by Helena. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of November 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Helena, seconded by Heidi. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of November 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes (as amended). Moved by Helena, seconded by Heidi. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Approval of Request for \$500 from state aid for workshop speaker Kim Meninger. Moved by Helena, seconded by Heidi. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.
- Adjourn. Moved by Helena, seconded by Heidi. 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

Action Items from Tonight's Meeting

- Budget and Finance Trustees and Vanessa will meet with the Trust Commissioners and Town Manager on December 16 to discuss the Town Manager's Request for an additional \$20,000 annually for books and materials for FY27-29.
- Vanessa will try to get the Children's Room Space Redesign ideas and general budget together in the next three months.
- Vanessa will complete the removal of any remnants of the electronic device policy.
- Vanessa and Heidi will meet for Endowment onboarding.
- Vanessa will check the estimated date for the door repairs (vendor is awaiting the doors that have been ordered and the automatic door opener part).

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Monthly Report from the Director and Assistant Director

- The Local Author's Fair was successful; about 100 people interacted with the 16 authors, and more people just came through the library.
- Two new jobs were posted: Kathy Reiff's replacement for a part-time Library Assistant and the Sunday Library Assistant.
- The library was in an article regarding Instagram posts.
- Beth has started German, French, and Italian discussion groups.
- The library will transition to Google Workspace for Nonprofits in 2026 because Office 365 has become too expensive for MVLC to provide free licenses to all 36 member libraries.

Action Items

- Approval of the Minutes from the November 12, 2025 Meeting
 - Completed, see vote summary.
- Approval of the Minutes from the November 24, 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.

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- Review Submitted FY 2027 Library Budget and Memo
 - FY 2027 Library Budget and Memo was reviewed.
- Report on the Budget meeting with Mark Haddad
 - At the meeting on December 8, the Town Manager requested that the library use an alternate source of funding to supplement the library's books and material line item by \$20,000 for FY27, FY28, and FY29.
 - After discussion, the Trustees agreed to propose using \$10,000 from State Aid and ask for \$10,000 from the Library Book Fund managed by the Town Trust Commissioners to meet the request of the Town Manager for an additional \$20,000 for FY27 to supplement the library's books and materials line item.
- Other Budget & Finance
 - Our Head of Circulation is negotiating with Verizon regarding a bill for a Hotspot that was taken over the border into Canada for 24 hours resulting in a large, unexpected bill.

Building & Equipment

- Review the Monthly Project Tracker
 - Monthly Project Tracker reviewed.
- Children's Room Redesign
 - Vanessa is working with staff to put together a proposal for the Children's Room redesign.
 - Once the concept is complete, there needs to be a meeting with a consultant on the Art Committee and then Tucker Library Interiors needs to come in and match ideas with their product line so a budget can be put together and a presentation can be prepared to take to the Trustee Commissioners.
 - Vanessa hopes to complete this in about three months.
- Report on Meeting with New DPW Head Brian Callahan
 - The meeting was an opportunity to review the unique nature of the library's relationship with DPW and how much we appreciate their support in several areas.
 - Brian met with Vanessa, Sarah, and Phil, and got a brief tour of the library building.

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- Library Building Keys
 - A discussion was held regarding who has and who should be given keys to the library (discussion temporarily tabled).
- Other Building & Equipment
 - The Capital Planning Advisory Meeting went well.
 - A new copier was leased to replace the one damaged during the electrical update, and the lease payments will be \$239 per month for the next four years.
 - Arrangements have been made to refurbish the old library sign as opposed to having a new one made.

Policy, Personnel, & Planning

- Student Senior Thesis Update
 - Vanessa is assisting Roan with additional ideas for his project.
 - Vanessa has asked him to let her know what he has decided to do and how the library can help.

GPL Endowment Trust & Art Exhibit

- Annual Endowment Trust Newsletter
 - The Endowment newsletter has been sent out to all town residents.
 - Vanessa and Heidi are going to get together to look into the steps for dissolving the Endowment's nonprofit fundraising subdivision and will report back to the Library Trustees in January.
- Tarbell 2030 Art Exhibition
 - Vanessa is working with Elizabeth Tarbell on a project involving painting portraits of the Native American Tarbell's in Edmund Tarbell's Boston School of Light style.
 - Elizabeth has five or six painters in mind to commission work from—who paint in the style of Edmund Tarbell.
 - At Vanessa's suggestion and after she provided follow-up research and guidance, Elizabeth reached out to Mohawk tribal elders who are excited about the project and have selected the Native American elders who will be painted.

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- The money raised by the project will go to the Tarbell Charitable Trust and to a program that helps preserve Native American language and teach it to young Native Americans.
- The first event will take place in Groton and is tentatively scheduled for April-June, 2030.
- Elizabeth hopes to display the Tarbell Trust's Edmund Tarbell paintings (and possibly portraits of various other Tarbell's that are currently in private collections) along with the new Native American Tarbell portraits, with the first exhibition taking place in Groton.
- It was suggested that Elizabeth reach out to area museums to participate in the traveling exhibition.

Other Business

- None.

Next Steps

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

Adjournment at 8:31 pm – see vote summary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Petersen, Secretary