

Hall Memorial Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, September 8, 2026
7:00 p.m.
93 Main Street and ZOOM

RECEIVED

26 SEP 15 PM 12:03

ELLINGTON
TOWN CLERK

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Peg Busse. In attendance: Peg Busse, Mary Blanchette, John Halloran, Anna Michalak, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Christina Keune, Library Director Susan Phillips, and Recording Secretary/Bookkeeper Rhonda Villanova; Citizen/FOL Book Cellar: Ellen Bonanno. Children's Librarian Trish Brudz joined at the end for the Summer Reading Program Recap; Guest: new Finance Director, Matt Evans; via ZOOM: YA Librarian and Assistant Director Ashley Dabbondanza and BOF Liaison Gomathi Ramachandran

II. Citizen's Forum

No citizens spoke

III. Chairman's Report

Chair Peg Busse introduced Finance Director Matt Evans. Everyone introduced themselves to Matt.

Peg expressed her appreciation for the condolences she received from the staff on the passing of her father.

IV. Approval of Minutes: June 9, 2026

Motion (Keune), Seconded (Halloran), to approve the meeting minutes from June 9, 2026; all in favor, with corrections, motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: June 16, 2026

Motion (Blanchette), Seconded (Keune), to approve the meeting minutes from June 16, 2026; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: July 23, 2026

Motion (Blanchette), Seconded (Wambolt-Gulick), to approve the meeting minutes from July 23, 2026; all in favor, with correction, motion passed unanimously.

V. Income Report

The Board reviewed the report and discussed donation amounts and categories.

VI. Current Year Budget Report

The Board reviewed last year's budget report. They discussed overspending on books and where funds were moved to cover. The Board then reviewed this year's budget report. The Salary and Contracted Services budget lines were discussed. A Bibliomation bill was recorded twice accidentally. Peg Busse noted that everything else was where it should be. The Board also reviewed the Fund Balance report.

VII. Library Director's Report

Director Sue Phillips reviewed the highlights of the report. "Summer was wonderful and amazing." Gilbert the Pig was a big hit. The staff did a superb job. Thanks again to the Friends for funding the entire program. Laurie Wormstedt is out on medical leave. Sue's trip to Kenya is postponed until February 2027. Sue has reviewed processing of timecards/payroll with Ashley Dabbondanza as

directed; training for other topics is planned. Gary Berube, the library custodian, is retiring with effective date September 16.

Sue reported that the basement water-proofing efforts proved to be effective, as there was no water in the basement despite the heavy rains experienced over the summer. The plants in the front plant are beautiful thanks to the Friends of the Library. The outdoor seating area and story walk were enjoyed by many patrons. Town and State annual reports were completed.

VIII. Friends of the Library Report

The Annual FOL meeting will be September 17th. Peg has agreed to stay on as President, in name only, so the FOL can continue. The FOL By-Laws require each position to be filled: President, a maximum of two Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer in order to continue. Ellen Bonanno, who runs the Book Cellar, and is a possible Vice President of the Friends, clarified a situation regarding donations. She has updated membership forms and pamphlets that define what the Book Cellar does not accept.

IX. New Business

a. Closeout library budget 2025-26

The end of year budget reimbursement was tallied and validated by Sue and the Finance Department, for \$27,045. The amount comes out of account ending in *5014.

Motion (Halloran), Seconded (Michalak), to transfer \$27,045 to the town account as reimbursement; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

b. Update policies

Patron Conduct – a few changes were made: *no soliciting, no distributing unsolicited items to other patrons, and Patrons may be liable for cleaning costs caused by spills.*

After Hours Patrons – change added: *If police transport a child, fill out an incident report.*

Motion (Blanchette), Seconded (Keune), to accept changes to these two policies; all in favor, motion passed unanimously.

c. Kenya Trip

Sue's volunteer trip to Kenya, originally scheduled for October 2026, has been postponed until February 2027.

d. Budget Guidelines for 2027 – 2028

Peg spoke about a trend she was seeing in the budget voting. She wants to guard against creating a buffer to cut and just create a budget that includes what the library really needs. As it stands, the library is responsible for paying \$75,000 for specific security updates, \$30,000 (apx) for normal reimbursement to the town, the FOL agreed to cover \$3000 for programming, and the book budget is reduced by \$14,000.

e. Sunday Hours Study

The Board needs to determine whether Sunday hours remain viable. Data needs to be collected. Sunday hours are usually 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. What patrons actually do when they come in to the library needs to be surveyed, how many organizations use the space and is it on a regular basis. If data shows that Sundays are no longer cost-effective, then it will close.

X. Old Business

a. Summer Reading Recap

Trish Brudz joined the meeting to give the Board a recap of the Summer Reading program which included stats of participation including demographics per program, number of programs, and the decorations that children are still talking about. The program was fully funded by the FOL. Participation, for both Adult and children, was up 17.6% over last year. YA participation almost doubled. The staff promoting across the desk to patrons seemed to make a big difference. There were 57 programs and 1531 participants. Trish gave praise to Victoria Sierra and Ryan Young for their work on the dinosaur themed decorations.

XI. Trustee Concerns

No concerns at this time.

XII. Adjournment

Motion (Keune), Seconded (Wambolt-Gulick), to adjourn at 8:27 p.m.; all in favor; motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by: Rhonda Villanova
Recording Secretary

