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Amesbury Public Library Board of Trustee Meeting
Location: Cultural Center, 37 Millyard, Gallery Unit, Amesbury, MA 01913
Wednesday, June 10, 2026
7:00 PM

In attendance: Makeighlee Marstaller, Mary Chatigny, Alex Matthews, Alyson Osgood, Brenda Rich, Jane Siebecker, Marsha Pease, Emily Atkins, Ann Langlois

Absent: none

APL staff present: Aimie Westphal - APL Director

Call to Order - 7:03 pm by Mak

1. Roll call
2. We welcomed our new board member, Emily Atkins.
3. **Secretary's Minutes** - Alex made a motion to accept the May 13th minutes as amended; Marsha seconded.
4. **Communications** - Aimie wrote to the city councilors after her budget hearing to provide more information on the Head of Archives position. Many councilors responded thanking her for the information.
5. **Friends of the Library update**-
    a. Holding a book sale event called Beach Reads and Beer on Saturday July 13th at BareWolf Brewery.
    b. A fundraising event is being held Tuesday, July 28th at Flatbread.
    c. The Friends discussed at their meeting a key takeaway from the Strategic Planning meetings for them was the sentiment that the Friends were not meeting people where they were at. They discussed whether satellite locations were overshadowing the library building.
6. **Budget Report** -
    a. Aimie explained a few minor adjustments between line items to cover overages.
    b. There were no extra hours in May.
    c. Alex asked about coverage numbers and Aimie explained we had staff medical leaves this year; a monthly average of 16 hours is the expected for administrative staff to cover public desks at the current staffing level.
    d. ARSL grant was accepted at council and the check for $15,000 was deposited. Money will go towards the ramp.

7. **Facilities Report and Capital Projects Update –** Aimie presented her monthly Facilities Report for June. This document is included in the addendum. (Addendum 1)
    a. Aimie expressed concerns around the cleaning company's performance, in particular that they had not cleaned for the two days prior to this meeting. She has been working with the city's procurement officer to document it and communication dissatisfaction to the vendor. The Board discuss subsequent

advocacy efforts deciding to submit a letter to City administration noting the Board's concern around this matter.

b. A new DPW assistant director was hired. Aimie reached out to invite for a tour of the building.

8. **Director's Report** – Aimie presented her monthly Director's Report to the Trustees for June. This document is included in the addendum. (Addendum 2)

a. Aimie is implementing cost saving measures to Hoopla starting July 1. Borrows will be capped at $800.00 monthly. Bonus Borrows during the last week of the month continue to be free.

b. Aimie is using some funds from Friends to hire a social media consultant, local artist Bailey Campbell for 6 months. The goal is to make what we already do more visible and show how vibrant the library is.

c. Aimie recommended filling the Board's vacant Vice-chair position. Discussion followed.

9. Sub-Committee Updates -

a. We updated Sub-Committee assignments

i. Emily Atkins will chair Preservation Sub-Committee

ii. Alyson Osgood will chair Director Review Sub-Committee

iii. Emily Atkins will join the Director Review Sub-Committee

b. Brenda presented minutes of Long Range Planning Sub-Committee; Mary motioned to accept, Mak seconded, all in attendance approved. Mary added that accessibility is the goal of the future building project and Trustees need to be advocates.

c. We accepted the minutes of the Communication Sub-Committee with changes; Ann motioned to accept, Mak seconded.

10. Old Business -

a. **FY27 capital update** - All capital project requests submitted for FY27 were approved at city council, total award about $75K

i. Recarpeting main stairs leading up to Children's Room

ii. Carpeting over asbestos tiles in 2nd floor Stacks

iii. Resurfacing of front steps

iv. Portion of funds needed for the ramp replacement

v. Mortar repair, cleaning and repointing

b. **FY27 budget update** - FY27 budget as submitted by the Mayor in the budget book was approved at the June 9th City Council meeting without changes

11. New Business -

a. **Storm policy review**- Reviewed the Weather & Climate policy. Major updates were made to reflect current practice and add section about outdoor programming.
    i. Emily suggested the name could be clearer not just about weather
    ii. Emily suggested that biohazard incidents be added in light of the current issues with the cleaning vendor
b. **Ingram price increases impact and vote on solution -** Ingram is the main book vendor for the library. When staff purchase an item we opt to pay a small additional charge per item to have it processed (this means certain physical things are done to the item to prepare it for check out like adding a spine label, etc.). The library gets a discount on these services as Ingram is part of the MHEC contract but they recently updated their contract terms for the next year and Aimie learned last week that the cost of the processing per item was going to double in most cases if not triple. Aimie predicts this will cost the library about $10,000 additional if we make no change to our procedure. Therefore Aimie approached the Mayor requesting permission to instead use those funds to hire an administrative assistant who could perform this work and additional useful duties. This was approved. Therefore Aimie is now requesting approval from the Board to use State Aid to cover these costs since this additional unexpected cost was not budgeted for. Aimie is requesting the Boards approval to use $12,400 to hire an Admin assistant for 10 hours per week. She presented the current balance of State Aid and impact this expenditure would in relation to anticipated additional funds coming in FY27 according to the most recent cherry sheet. Mary made a motion to approve the use of $12,400 in state aid funds to hire staff to perform this additional processing work, Brenda seconded. Unanimously approved.

12. Matters not reasonably anticipated in advance of the meeting -

a. The July Trustee meeting was scheduled for July 8th which is 2 days after the 4th of July holiday. Aime asked us to think about changing it to the 15th either virtual or in person. We voted then to change it to the 15th.

13. **Public Comment** - none

Adjourn – Marsha made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 pm and Mary seconded.

Addendum 1

AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Facilities Report to the Trustees

June 10, 2026

Custodial Duties Performed by Staff

- Normal daily duties.
- Director cleaned AC filters before installed.
- Director and Assistant Director installed stack wing AC units in advance of early heat wave.

Completed Facility Projects Since Last Meeting

- DPW installed the rest of the AC units in advance of the early heat wave.
- Dead rodent (likely a rat) found Tuesday night during program outside on pavement adjacent to ramp. Next morning Director tried multiple avenues to get it removed, after several hours the pest company was able to come.
- 4/13/26 hot water heater had puddle of water, Jay reviewed. No discernable issues at this time. Continue to check it every few days, no water since that instance to date, considering this was a weird one off issue.
- **Water Spigot Driveway Side:** there is a water spigot on the building facing the driveway side that the EcoGardners has been reactivated by plumber.

Facilities Projects Actively Working On

Facilities Projects Actively Working On – No Update Since Last Meeting

- **Ramp Replacement:** Received $21,000 in FY27 capital and a grant of $15,000. State earmark request was also made by Mayor's Office, predicted to hear later this year. Need to work on procurement. Asphalt and concrete under base need to be addressed in this project, have discussed with Jay. Bookdrop also needs to be addressed related to these foundational pieces as frost heaves from winter caused major issues with staff access door to book drop.
- **Front Steps:** small chip in new repair area, mason waiting on weather to permit fix.
- **Lightbulbs out:** handful of bulbs out in building. DPW replaced some on November 2025, have a few more need to do. Additional lights have gone out while waiting for them to return.
- **Smell in Lower Level:** Smell has not reappeared since he put in the temporary fix. Unknown if permanent fix put in. Mentioned to Energy Mngr recently and he plans to review.

Facilities Projects – Stalled

- Fountain not running
- Shed work (new roof installed, ramp into it, minor carpentry repairs, paint) since summer 2025
- Stone wall by ramp compromised since summer 2024

Capital Projects

- **Window Restoration ($37,375 awarded in FY21; current balance $10,184):** front six windows on south elevation have been completed with the exception of UV film and storm windows. Storms have been ordered, multi-week lead time.
- **Emergency Lighting ($25,000 awarded in FY24; current balance $22,760):** exterior lights were installed on 6/6/24. Interior have been on hold due to lack of staffing capacity but were a main area of focus for the building inspection. The building inspector walked an electrician through January 21, waiting on quote.

AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Director's Report to the Trustees

June 10, 2026

Visitors in May = 4,910

- Quote from a visitor: "I never thought as a queer kid growing up in Amesbury that some day I'd come back here and see all these wonderful books and displays about other people like me."

Staffing (FTE level = 10.50 / 10.56)

- Non-admin staff time spent working outside department in May = 29.5 hours

General Library News

- **Collections:**
  - 493 new items added to the library in May
  - We have reduced the size of our Staff Picks display to make room for our world language books for adults. We get these for free on a rotating basis from Boston Public Library, and their previous location was hard to see and find. This gives this small collection more visibility.
  - Hoopla continues to be popular averaging about 100 users per month and about 250 checkouts. It uses a cost-per-borrow pricing model to offer ebooks/eaudiobooks, etc. on demand. The average cost per circulation for our library is $2.50 per checkout. To remain within budget while continuing to offer Hoopla to our patrons, we must enact cost saving measures. Therefore, starting, July 1, we will be implementing a monthly spending cap for Hoopla borrows of $800 in addition to the cap on number of monthly borrows implemented in January 2026 of 4 items. Once we have reached that dollar cap, no one will be able to borrow in Hoopla until the beginning of the next month, aside from Bonus Borrows in the last week of the month, which are free. This will ensure that our Hoopla expenses remain sustainable for our library budget. This practice is in line with what other libraries do to remain within budget.
  - Ingram, our main book vendor, updated their terms of the group contract (MHEC) that we take advantage of to get a roughly 44% discount on items. The new terms lower percentage discounts across the board on materials by type and raise processing fees. Therefore we are evaluating whether we can bring any processing in-house.
- **Programs:**
  - First Art on the Lawn program was in May; 17 attended and provided positive feedback.
  - Had of Youth Services, Clare, started school visits to promote the Summer Reading Program including meeting with all school librarians
- **Professional Development:**
  - Three staff attended the Massachusetts Library Association's annual conference in Danvers in May.
  - Director and department heads received training from Fire LT. Allender on dehydration and heat exhaustion prevention in preparation for outdoor programming this summer
- **Interesting reference questions:**
  - Someone who had the Nintendo Switch and Joycons checked out called to ask how to charge the Joycons
  - Handful of patrons looking for items no libraries in MVLC owns and made recommendations to purchase
  - Someone asked how to get vinyl records from other libraries since can't be sent in delivery learned about using their card at other MA libraries

Behind the Scenes

Snapshot of regular circulation assistant staff work most completed while on desk:

- **Core daily work:** check average of 264 items/day, check out average of 347 items/day, register library cards, process delivery (unpacking bins, check in all items, sort, call holds), answer patron questions in-person and phone,
- **Patron account management:** notes on e-renewals/e-registrations, outreach for overdue items (large bills & Library of Things)
- **Physical processing of most newly cataloged library materials:** adding barcodes, spine labels, stamps, tape, laminate as needed
- **Three staff each have a specific extra task they manage, those are:**
    - Copyediting adult e-newsletter
    - Museum pass management (keeping up with renewals, monthly stats input, suggestions to add/drop based on usage trends)
    - Once a month outreach with the Amesbury Housing Authority hosting a Popup Library at Heritage Towers

Library Closings/Delays

- May 7 – delayed opening of 10am for staff meeting
- May 8 – closed early at 3pm for AHS Promenade
- May 23-25 – closed for holiday