

**Amesbury Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Amesbury City Hall Auditorium
Wednesday February 11, 2026**

Board of Trustees member present: Jessica Ducrow, Mak Marstaller, Mary Chatigny, Brenda Rich, Alyson Osgood, Jane Siebecker, Ann Langlois

APL Staff Present: Aimie Westphal- APL Director
Meghan Fahey- APL Head of Archives

Call to order: 7:03 pm by Mak

1. Secretary's Minutes-

- a. Corrections- Brenda was not present at the December 10, 2025 meeting
- b. Jessica made a motion to approve minutes of the January 14th meeting with corrections; Aly seconded. Unanimous by all present at the January meeting.

2. Communications-

Jessica shared a thank you note about the print and the Night Out from past trustee Laurie Cameron

3. Friends of the Library update-

Mak gave an update from 2-10-26 virtual meeting:
Funds raised from the Book Store in January were lower speculated that it was due to higher than normal amount of library closings due to weather
Discussed Annual Appeal and need for more public outreach
Trustees would like to see Friends members at their meetings
A cross-meet between Trustees and Friends was suggested

4. Budget Report-

Aimie presented the budget report for February. Question about how the lower level is doing. In order to curb behaviors on the lower level of the library, it was staffed during after school hours for the first two and a half months of the academic year. This proactive decision set expectations that continue to be followed. Upstairs, the size of the Teen Loft only allows 2 small social groups to coexist; more space would allow more use by more teens

5. Facilities Report

Aimie presented the Facilities Report dated February 11, 2026 (Addendum 1)

Since there is no facilities staff at the library, Aimie is the boots on the ground checking the safety of the staff entrance and ramp during inclement weather and treating when necessary. Jane stressed we need a Facilities Director, a position that has been requested in the last 4-5 budget cycles and still remains unfulfilled.

The library has recently failed the annual Fire Inspection (in addition to other inspections i.e. accessibility) The library repair budget is now part of the DPW budget .Discussion ensued about

the liability of these failed inspections. Jessica suggested the failed Fire Inspection become a Trustees agenda item.

6. Director's Report-

Aimie presented the Director's report dated February 11, 2026 (Addendum 2)

Jane asked for clarification around the Hot Spots and Aimie explained use and usage.

The dramatic increase in America's News was noted and possible and probable reasons discussed.

7. Sub-Committee Updates -

The Fundraising Ad-Hoc meeting was presented by Jessica due to Alex's absence. In attendance were Alex Matthews (chair), Aimie Westphal (Library Director), Jessica Ducrow, Alyson Osgood, Carolyn Jordan, Anna Fletcher, Jen Lawlor.

The BoT looked at results of the Annual Appeal: 750 residents were solicited with a number returned; but only 90 individuals contributed totaling \$15,480.00.

8. Old Business -

- Community Information Board Policy review and vote - The edit of name change to the Public Posting in Library Policy was presented. Motion to accept by Ann, seconded by Jessica. Unanimously approved.
- Museum Pass Policy review and vote There were no changes to the Museum Pass policy. Motion to accept by Brenda, seconded Ann. Unanimously approved.

9. New Business- FY27 budget discussion

Aimie presented the FY27 Budget updated after BOT Finance Subcommittee meeting of 2/3/26 . Numbers reflect maintaining staff at present level plus 2 part time positions- filling the vacant 18 hour Administrative Assistant position (will also be trained in Circulation) and adding an 18 hr Circulation Library Assistant

Packet also included the FY27 level funded budget (staffing maintained at current level), the State Aid Yearly Spending on Facilities Maintenance report, a graph showing decrease in staffing hours since 2021. Aimie stated that staffing has decreased by 53 hours since 2019. The next document highlighted what state certification means for our library and another about the benefits of MVLC membership. Discussion followed about the fact that Aimie is the only Department head without an assistant and therefore has to do all invoices, etc. taking her away from her Director's role.

The FY27 budget was discussed -the directive from the city is to level fund. Aimie dug into the staffing issues that this budget presents. We are at a turning point- the possibility of losing state certification is possible if we lose more staffing hours. If we fall out of compliance it impacts our status for at least a year. Jane asked if we could use volunteers and the answer was that volunteers cannot staff service desks. We currently have volunteers that help with shelving, etc. and their time is valued.

Jessica stated that our predecessors on the BoT were able to save some state funding for library improvements but the current boards have had to use that money for ongoing repairs. Jessica suggested renaming the vacant Administrative Assistant position to Administrative/ Circulation Assistant to better reflect the duties of the position being proposed.

The feeling of all present was that citizens do not realize the impact of loss of certification. There are only 4 decertified libraries in the state. Aimie included a visual she created about why certification matters. BoT members felt that if citizens see the impact presented this way, it would have a stronger impression than other. Similarly the value of MVLC membership was reviewed and a visual MVLC created deemed valuable to educating the public.

Mary asked, *Who are we?* Our ultimate goal is to preserve the library; to jeopardize it for \$73,000 is foolhardy. It was agreed that we, as the Board of Trustees, would advocate for the Finance Subcommittee's budget rather than the city directed level funded one because there is so much at stake.

Another question is: *What do we know about the Facilities Budget?* This year's request of \$10,000 was reduced to \$3500; we have traditionally spent around \$6000. Mak wants more transparency around this. BoT directed Aimie to add \$5000 to the Library facility line in the budget, understanding it would be moved to DPW as it had this year. Jane made a motion to approve that addition and Jess seconded. Unanimously approved.

It has been the BoT precedent to have 3 people in the building at all times. That still leaves the bottom level unstaffed. Jessica stated there is no personnel minimum and Jane asked if the BoT should make an Operational Policy as to the number of people in the library.

10. Matters not reasonably anticipated in advance of the meeting -none

11. **Public Comment-** City Counselor Hogg attended the meeting and plans to go before the City Council and drive the fact that we are at risk of losing certification. Can we even apply for state construction grants and work towards becoming ADA compliant? If we lose compliance we nullify any possibility for state construction grants.

12. **Adjourn-** Aly made a motion to adjourn at 8:36; Brenda seconded.

Addendum 1



Facilities Report to the Trustees

February 11, 2026

Custodial Duties Performed by Staff

- In addition to daily tasks, Director has been salting staff entrance as needed, monitoring ramp and parking lot in relation to snow/ice.

Completed Facility Projects Since Last Meeting

- **Building Alarm:** communicator needed to be replaced, LW Bills performed work and discovered 2 motion sensors are dead and need to be replaced. Have quote, need to schedule.
- **Water in the Tech Service Office / Gutter Repair:** continue to see no water. It has now been a little over a year. The carpet was soaked twice and never cleaned therefore we are moving to have it replaced. Work completed 2/10/26.
- **Quarterly Pest Inspection:** completed 1/28/26 nothing of note discovered.

Facilities Projects Actively Working On

- **Granite Threshold to Office:** the threshold between door connecting the circ office and reference room came partially detached. The door is closed until we can get it resolved. Vendor came out to review and we are waiting on quote.

Facilities Projects Actively Working On – No Update Since Last Meeting

- **Lightbulbs out:** handful of bulbs out in building. DPW replaced some on November 4, have a few more need to do.

Facilities Projects – Stalled for 1 Year

- **Stone Wall by Ramp:** volunteer saw large stone fall out of it and noticed general disrepair. DPW and Inspections are aware. A mason reviewed it but never sent quote. Many other department staff reviewed and say they have ideas, no work yet completed.
- **Ramp Replacement:** directive from the Mayor to get quote on replacing the ramp with a new metal ramp that would resolve current known issues. AmRamp came out on 12/3/24, have quote. Waiting to hear from DPW on next steps based on required procurement level. Was submitted as capital request, Mayor indicated revenue from School Street properties sale should be used.
- **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.
- **Shed Move / Fence Replacement:** Additional work that is needed to complete this project are new roof to be installed, a ramp built into the shed and for the shed to be painted.

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. Have a quote, need a handyman/carpenter to interface with vendor for measurements and installation. Working with procurement office to do so.
- **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 and we are waiting on the quote.

Addendum 2



Library Director's Report to the Trustees

February 11, 2026

Visitors in January = 4,061

Staffing (FTE level = 10.50 / 10.56)

General Library News

- **Collections:**
 - As of January 2, we reduced the borrowing limit in hoopla digital from 7 items/month to 4 items/month to attempt to control costs without reducing the catalog of items that patrons can choose to borrow
 - We've changed our hotspot borrowing procedure so that all hotspots are neither holdable nor renewable but have a loan period of 14 days. Previously we had some hotspots that were holdable/renewable and others that weren't, and the loan period was 7 days, with some being eligible for a single 7 day renewal. We hope these changes will make hotspots more available (by eliminating time spent on the hold shelf) and simplify things for patrons and staff.
 - Our online resource America's News (which includes online access to hundred of newspapers, including the Daily News of Newburyport, the Lawrence Eagle Tribune, and the Boston Herald) saw a significant increase in articles viewed in January. In January, APL cardholders viewed 2,222 articles, while the average number of articles viewed July-December was 1,299.
- **Programming:**
 - As part of WinterFest created by the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce, YS department created a StoryWalk (tm) that is hung in the windows of downtown businesses. The library also hosted 'snow painting' offering spray bottles of colored water to patrons to 'paint' in the snow outside.
- **Outreach:**
 - Submitted a free ad for the library to be displayed in MeVa buses. The ad includes a photo of the library, our logo, some of our core values in English and in Spanish, and the route numbers of the two MeVa bus lines from which the library is accessible.
- **Professional Development:**
 - One of our reference librarians attended a free collection development webinar on recognizing books written by AI (so we can avoid adding them to the collection).

Library Closings/Delays

- January 15 – closed for professional development day
- January 17 – closed early at 3:30pm due to snow
- January 19 – closed for holiday
- January 24 – closed early at 1pm due to lack of staff
- January 26 – closed due to snow
- January 27 – closed due to snow