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Amesbury Public Library Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
Location: Virtual
Date and Time: August 27, 2026 at 7:00 pm

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

Absent: none

APL staff present: Aimie Westphal - APL Director
Meghan Fahey- APL Head of Archives

Call to Order - 7:04 pm by Mak
Roll call

1. **Secretary's Minutes** - Mary made a motion to accept the July 15th minutes; Emily seconded.
2.
    a. Mak contacted the City Clerk to request emails for Trustees (all other elected officials have city email addresses). She was referred to the IT Director who told her he talked to the Mayor whose answer was simply no. We would like an explanation as to why not so Mak will send a letter requesting that.
    b. Brief discussion of making gmail addresses for immediate solution but point raised that would not have specific domain
    c. Meghan emphasized we need to provide reasoning/ educate as to why this is important
    d. Aimie shared that a number of community members commented on a post made in a Facebook community group about the book read at Heron Pond storytime, *Sandor Katz and the Tiny Wild* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin. The book is a biography and references that Katz lived in a queer community. This was the focus of the post.
3. **Friends of the Library update**-
    a. Friends are meeting bimonthly so no August meeting to report on

4. **Budget Report** - Aimie presented her monthly Budget Report with numbers pulled through August 1.
    a. A one time payment was made for our Consortium membership; a private citizen donated to the Friends specifying that a portion of the gift be used to cover an increase to the membership fee this fiscal year that the city budget didn't cover.
    b. Expenditure in the Books and Materials line item reflects the renewal of all subscriptions to electronic resources.

5. **Facilities Report and Capital Projects Update** – Aimie presented her monthly Facilities Report for August . This document is included in the addendum. (Addendum 1)
    a. The lighting project is due to start in September and be completed by October 1. We discussed whether any changes needed to be made to the plan because of 1st floor chandeliers. The benefit of this project is that the light quality will be better, the number of lights less. Aly asked if this lighting will address the issue of current LED lights in the Children' s room. The lights are good quality so they should.
    b. The library will remain open during this project but the Children's room will close for work there.
    c. Meghan explained the School Street project and reported the School Street sale is closing this week or next; Spending Action plan to be created in spring.
    d. Jane asked for an update on our cleaning problem. The same company continues to work for us as the city procurement officer works on the package to re-bid the contract. Other projects have been taking priority in the city. We are reducing their invoice by each day they don't clean according to contract; their work continues to be sub-par and reason for concern.

6. **Capitol Report-** Meghan presented The Capitol Report (Addendum 2)
    a. The Emergency Lighting plans are at a stand still waiting on response to clarifying questions to the quote based on 1/26/26 of an electrician walkthrough by Building Inspector
    b. The carpet project is on schedule to be completed during October.
    c. State earmark request for funds to replace the temporary Ramp was denied; waiting to hear from city administration on next steps for funding

7. **Director's Report** – Aimie presented her monthly Director's Report to the Trustees for August. This document is included in the addendum. (Addendum 3)
    a. New hours became effective July 7th and community members are very positive about the 9am opening.
    b. July and August are historically the busiest months of the year and this year's numbers are substantially more than last year's for July. Aly wondered if our rigorous social media posts are driving them.
    c. Aimie is returning to the pursuit of hiring a part time Admin. Assistant for which the Board previously approved state aid funds to pay their salary**.**

8. Sub-Committee Updates -
    a. Preservation Committee is scheduled for a building walk through on September 15th
    b. The Fundraising Committee is focused on the Annual appeal; 2000 households is the plan. Alex asked for names of community members, such as book group

members, to appeal to. The Appeal will be reviewed in September and out to the public in November.

9. Old Business -

a. We discussed the draft Strategic Plan draft document submitted by Paper Crane Associates. The building project is now called the Accessibility Project. Suggested changes and additions from the library admin and staff will be submitted to Paper Crane.
b. Ann made a motion to accept The Building Closure and Program Cancellation Policy (formally named the Storm Policy) as written and Mary seconded; unanimously accepted by Board.

10. New Business -

a. The MBLC Construction Grant will be available sooner than anticipated. The application will open in March with a letter of intent due in May 2027.
b. A Building Committee composed of Trustees and community volunteers will be formed. Aimie will share the MBLC materials about the grant to help educate the board on what process to expect.
c. First round acceptance in the program would mean shovels in the ground in 2031.

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

12. **Public Comment** - none

Adjourn – Brenda made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm and Jane seconded.

Addendum 1

AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Facilities Report to the Trustees

August 27, 2026

Custodial Duties Performed by Staff

- Normal daily duties.
- Director continues to work closely monitoring cleaning issues and documenting each instance with city procurement officer. No movement to report on re-procurement measures.
- Bird was trapped in exterior emergency exit stairwell for multiple days. Director worked with Animal Control Officer and Jay from DPW to troubleshoot over the course of two days with no ultimate solution. Presume bird passed away or somehow escaped after weekend as we no longer see it. During the process of trying to get it out, a large hole was discovered in the bottom step, Jay thinks it is manmade acting as a secondary drain but it is large enough the ACO was concerned about animals inhabiting it. Jay says he will install something to prevent that but keep it open for water.

Completed Facility Projects Since Last Meeting

- **Historic front doors:** received their annual maintenance visit from conservationist, no issues to report he said they are wearing well.
- **Restroom hardware:** safety bar installed in staff restroom at request of staff and new toilet paper holders installed in adult public restrooms. Jay completed both projects on same day.
- **Sycamore tree:** receiving it's annual treatments for lace bugs and anthracnose on time.

Facilities Projects Actively Working On

- **Facilities Front Steps:** small chip in new repair area, mason is due to repair with larger capital project work in September.
- **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.
    - As of June, instead of replacing dead bulbs we are going to try waiting for results of a large lighting project being managed by the City Energy Manager, DJ. His goal is to have the project completed by October 1, 2026. We walked through with him with the plan for the library and it is to replace almost every fixture except; the chandelier lights on the main level and main stairwell, two wall sconces in main stairwell, and 4 decorative fixtures on main level between director and circ offices.
- **Shed:** work waiting to be completed (new roof installed, ramp into it, minor carpentry repairs, paint) since summer 2025. July 9 Head of Facilities, Jay started work on roof putting in new plywood and something that makes it waterproof. No work completed sense then.

Projects Actively Working On – No Update Since Last Meeting

- **Bookdrop**: this will be addressed in ramp project presumably. Frost heaves from winter prevent the staff access door from opening. Jay put in temporary fix boosting it up on plywood but doesn't solve issue of getting cart out over the frost heave.
- **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

- Stone wall by ramp compromised since summer 2024

Addendum 2

AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Capital Report to the Trustees – August 27, 2026

Submitted by Meghan Fahey, Head of Archives

Green = complete Orange = waiting on third party Yellow = in-process Grey = not initiated

Project	Description	Funding Source	Funds	Status
Window Restoration – 6 South Facing First Floor	Front six windows on south elevation have been completed. Custom storm windows with UV film installed 7/6/26	City funds awarded FY21	$37,375 (initial award) current balance $0	All other windows need this level of restoration
Emergency Lighting	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.	City funds awarded in FY24	$25,000 (initial award); current balance $22,760	Building inspector walked electrician through 1/21/26, have quote waiting on response to clarifying questions
Carpet replacement – front stairs	Remove existing carpet on the spiral stairs going from main level to kids room and install new carpet on the stairs. Carpet acts to both protect original wood stairs and makes it safer for children to traverse.	City funds awarded in FY27	$8,483	Vendor awarded working on scheduling
Carpet Installation – second floor stack wing	Current tiled floor is 6x6 tiles suspected to be asbestos, currently undamaged but multiple facility experts have recommended covering it to ensure no exposure risks occur. Carpet would also provide some small improvement in temperature in the winter in that room where the average temp is 63 degrees	City funds awarded in FY27	$6,519	Vendor awarded working on scheduling
Resurface Front Stairs	Mason doing repairs in FY26 to fix most pressing issues on broken steps and to protect repairs need to be resurfaced to stabilize the steps until a building project can be realized.	City funds awarded in FY27	$10,000	Working on scheduling which is weather dependent
Repair, Repoint, and Clean Mortar	Mortar is degraded. Moss and mold are visible in many areas. Repoint areas of damaged mortar and fill open mortar joints. Secure building envelope and prevent further degradation. Multi-phase project starting with front façade.	City funds awarded in FY27	$25,000	
Replace Temporary Ramp	Remove existing ramp and install a new temporary ramp that meets code compliant temporary ramp. Current accessible ramp installed as temp solution in 2007 and is beyond its useful life showing visible areas of rust. It is also not code compliant. It is the only accessible entrance for the building.	City funds awarded in FY27 ARSL Grant awarded in FY27 *State earmark request – TBD*	$21,000 $15,000 *$25,000*	State earmark request denied, waiting to hear from administration on next steps for funding
Roof repairs and gutter replacement	Over the years the gutters have been repaired when urgent needs have arisen such as detachment and ice dams have compromised the gutters and led to leaks. The detachment of the gutters and their improper functioning are also a safety issue. Not only for the possibility of gutters or drain spouts falling and potentially hitting a staff member or patron but also in the situation where water is pooling due to gaps or leaks in the copper which can leak to freezing and ultimately cause slips and falls. The copper work was an original design element of the building. As such it contributes to the historic impact of the building and should be maintained. Various work necessary to maintain the integrity the roof was identified in the Facilities Master Plan, all projects to be addressed with these funds.	payout from insurance company received in May 2024 Anticipated School Street proceeds	$19,459.25 Estimated project total cost $250,000 with additional $72,000 anticipated in architectural services cost (required general contractor cost is unknown)	Pending School Street sale

Addendum 3

AMESBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Director's Report to the Trustees

August 27, 2026

Visitors in July = 6,420 (up about 500 visits from July 2025)

Staffing (FTE level = 10.50 / 10.50)

- Non-admin staff time spent working outside department in July = 14 hours

July was another recording breaking month in many ways:

- 3,065 holds placed – that's 700 more than July 2025
- 10,360 items checked in by staff – that's almost 1,000 more than July 2025
- 14,362 items checked out – that's almost 1,800 more than July 2025
- 5,490 active cardholders as of end of July – that's 100 more than July 2025

Library Open Hours Change

- Library hours changed July 7 to new schedule (open at 9am daily and Monday nights now closing at 5pm instead of 8pm)
- Put out comment cards to gather patron feedback, only a handful have been filled out
- No major reactions to report from patrons
- The 9am opening is very popular just by observation we always have a handful of people coming in right at the new opening time
- The Monday night closure is seeming to cause some challenges in reshelving of adult collections. Our volunteer shelver used to come in that evening and clear off the carts. Now he comes in Wednesday so we often have full carts and staff are pitching in to do discreet shelving to make some space.

Processing Change this Fiscal Year

Assessment and update coming for September meeting

Summer Reading Program

Summary coming for September meeting

Library Closings/Delays

- July 3-4 – closed for holiday
- July 30 – delayed opening of 10am for staff meeting