

MINUTES SHERBORN LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES & LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING

Tuesday, April 21st, 2026, 7:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting

Sherborn Library Trustees Participating

- Brian Connolly (Chair)
- Thais Bessa
- Erin Carroll
- Chris Kenney
- Sue Lepard
- Mary McKenna
- Seth Molloy

Library Building Committee

- Mark Brown
- Heather Willis
- Alexis Madison

Other Participating

- Liz Anderson (Library Director)
- Jen Carlson (Assistant Director)
- Margo Powicki (Sherborn Historical Society)

Motion to approve Sherborn Library Trustees' March Minutes

Mary, Sue second. Unanimous vote to approve.

Trustee Chair's report (Brian)

Library Building Committee

- The Chair opened by thanking the Library Building Committee members present (Mark Brown, Heather Willis, Alexis Madison) for their service, noting a remarkable coincidence: the Committee was formed on April 21, 2015, exactly 11 years to the day. What was originally projected as an 18-month project became an 11-year journey through construction, litigation, and resolution. The Chair gave particular recognition to Mark Brown and Richard Littlefield for their sustained involvement through the litigation phase, and to Chris Kenney for serving double duty as both an LBC and Trustee member throughout. The Director noted that the renovated library has seen extraordinary results across all measures, including circulation, foot traffic, and program

attendance. Small tokens of appreciation were presented to the LBC members in attendance, with tokens for members not in attendance to be left at the library's front desk.

Motion to disband the Sherborn Library Building Committee.

- Brian, Chris second. Unanimous vote to approve.

Onboarding New Trustees

- Sue presented the draft Trustee Orientation document, developed with input from Liz and Mary. The document consolidates information on meeting structure, board terms, subcommittee assignments, the annual calendar of recurring agenda items, endowment links, bylaws, and MBLC resources. The goal is a welcoming, practical "quick start" rather than an administrative burden.
- Courtney Williams and Suzanne Gurgenti are confirmed as the potential two incoming Trustees (no other candidates took out papers by the deadline, so it will be an uncontested election). The plan is to share the document with them after the May 12th election, schedule a brief Zoom or in-person session the following week, and have them arrive at the May meeting already oriented.

Committee Assignments

- Assignments will be finalized at the May 19th meeting once incoming Trustees have had a chance to express preferences. Confirmed so far: Sue Lepard moving to Personnel (Erin's seat); Seth Molloy joining the Art Gallery Committee (Thais' seat). Vacancies to backfill include House Subcommittee (Thais' seat) and Community Relations (Erin's seat). The recording Secretary role (currently performed by Thais) will also be assigned in May, likely to one of the new members.

Honor Books

- Liz presented honor books to the two departing Trustees. Both books will include a special bookplate and be placed on hold.
 - For Erin Carroll: "The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups" by Daniel Coyle, chosen in recognition of her six years on the Personnel Subcommittee, including her role in hiring the Director. Erin reflected on her tenure, noting the placement of Liz Anderson as Director as the proudest of her nearly 20-year executive search career.
 - For Thais Bessa: "Outspoken: My Fight for Freedom and Human Rights in Afghanistan" by Seema Samar, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, chosen in recognition of Thais' background as a gender equality specialist and her work on the Teen Art Gallery, the Safety and Security Manual, and staff wellbeing. Thais

reflected on three years of building community in Sherborn, thanking her fellow Trustees and library staff.

Friends of the Sherborn Library Report (Liz on behalf of the Friends)

- Liz reported that the Arts and Crafts Fair will be held on May 9th, with full preparations underway. Trivia Night was a success, raising over \$5,000. The current exhibit in the community room features a mother-and-son show (paintings and photography), with a live bird event planned for late May in connection with the artwork.

House Subcommittee (Liz, Chris, Thais)

Mural Update

- The artist has recommitted to the project, working Saturdays, Sundays, and Monday mornings. The target for completion is end of June; after that, he will be unavailable again. Scaffolding must be removed from the patio before outdoor programming begins, so June remains a firm deadline. Approximately \$5,300 remains unspent on the contract. Alexis Madison's persistent outreach, including photo check-ins, was credited with getting the project back on track.

Teen Art Gallery Update

- Applications for the Teen Art Gallery will open soon.

Signage

- A signage consultant from the Mass Library System is scheduled to visit in April for a signage audit prior to any new materials being printed.

Additional House Updates:

- Exterior window cleaning (including the skylight) is targeted for early May ahead of the Arts and Crafts Fair, with a quote of approximately \$2,000.
- Spring landscape cleanup and mulching with Big Tree Landscaping is scheduled, using operating funds and state aid. Remaining planting funds (~\$7,000 from the upper stairway project) will be used to fill gaps and thin overgrown areas along the Town Hall-to-library stairway. Big Tree will also install a pad for the new Perry memorial bench.
- The Board of Health approved the septic permit, clearing the way for both the library and History Center construction.
- Annual plant health care with Hartney Greymont is budgeted at \$1,837; injections done last year cover the next three years, so no additional treatments are needed. The beech tree, whose canopy looked sparse last year, is showing new growth and a much more

promising outlook. Margo Powicki noted that May 7th is the tree's 150th anniversary; a celebration in conjunction with the Arts and Crafts Fair is being explored.

Finance Subcommittee (Brian and Liz, on behalf of the Subcommittee)

- The Advisory Committee public hearing on March 21st concluded in approximately two hours with no challenges to the library budget. The Chair reported a notably smooth process, crediting Advisory Chair Steve Bonder and liaison Paul Pilotte for working through issues in advance. The Town Meeting budget is expected to pass without controversy on library matters. The Chair flagged a longer-term budget concern: the town is approximately \$71,000 below the Proposition 2.5 override threshold, and continued increases in health insurance and education costs may force an override question onto next year's ballot. While the library represents only about 2% of the town budget, all departments will likely face pressure. The Chair noted that Sherborn ranks in the top 5 among Minuteman Library Network members in library spending as a percentage of the town budget (1.8% gross; approximately 1.56% after the endowment contribution). The FY27 endowment subsidy of \$91,942 was approved as part of the March budget vote and does not require a separate vote; this will be confirmed with Frank at the May meeting.
- The Director flagged an upcoming request to use the Weezie Endowment to support the summer reading program kickoff again this year, which helped to drive a 69% increase in registrations in 2025. The Finance slides showed the endowment down approximately \$4,000-\$5,000 for March, with no other material changes.

Policy Subcommittee (Mary, Sue)

- Town Counsel returned edits to the Patron Behavior and Library Usage Policy this week. Changes were minor: some added legal language at the top, a clarification on the use of "willfully," and a revision to reference fines by statute (MGL Chapter 61) rather than specifying a dollar amount, so the policy will not need to be updated if fine levels change. Trustees reviewed the changes and were comfortable voting.

Motion to approve the Patron Behavior and Library Usage Policy as presented

- Seth, Thais second. Unanimous vote to approve.

History Center Update (Brian, Seth, Chris)

- Construction is underway. The demolition permit was obtained first; the building permit followed. Framing is up, and the wall layout is visible. The contractor and architect are meeting weekly; their collaborative relationship is a positive sign. The Board of Health approved the septic permit, resolving an earlier uncertainty. A \$20,000 state grant was confirmed to be set aside for design work per the required criteria, coordinated by Sean.

The target completion date is mid-to-late June, though no firm date has been committed. Construction noise is primarily in the mornings (contractors typically work 7 AM-3 PM) and has been manageable. The library will coordinate with the contractor around any planned utility shutdowns. The Director noted she is posting project updates online to keep patrons informed.

Library Director and Assistant Director's Reports (Liz, Jen)

- New additions to the children's room: Jackie Fogelman (Friends of the Library) alerted the Director to a yard sale at ECDC, resulting in a checkout counter, a new dollhouse. New rugs were also added to Nora's Treehouse.
- The library is also posting an open Building Attendant position; four applicants so far, after previously receiving zero.
- The Director has joined a new Minuteman Directors subcommittee focused on peer support, budget challenges, and operational issues, meeting off-cycle from the full board.
- Staff Development Day (March 23rd) was a success, featuring an AI session, LibraryIQ training, group work on statistics, and staff massages funded through a town insurance program.
- The Director spoke at the Council on Aging men's lunch, which led directly to the library adding Wall Street Journal and Barron's online.
- The library is being formalized as a warming center (not a cooling center, as AC is not on the generator); staff will not be expected to work beyond regular hours. Volunteers from the COA and trained town employees will staff any warming center needs, with the fire department available to transport residents. The Director met with police, fire, and the Board of Health to work through logistics and was satisfied with the plan.
- The Director is working with the Perry family to honor Ed Perry, a Library Trustee from 2001-2011, who helped bring the library into the digital age and initiated the space study that led to the renovation project. The family has donated a bench to be installed overlooking Town Hall and the beech tree. Big Tree Landscaping will install the pad. A dedication ceremony is planned for June 21st (Father's Day) at noon, with the Perry family coming from out of town. Community members who knew Ed through his work on other town committees are welcome. Margo Powicki and Elizabeth Johnston have provided historical context on his contributions.
- Summer reading kickoff is June 18th, featuring an ice cream truck (registration required) and Veggie Circus performers. The 2025 program saw 501 registrations, up from 346 in 2024, with an 84% increase for teens and over 100% for adults. Bookmarks are printed; 70 are being mailed to incoming kindergartners. Jen Power will attend the whole school assembly again and is exploring outreach to ECDC. Quincy continues coordinating with

the middle/high school librarian, and has connected with the new Dover Library Children's Librarian. A library card sign-up at the middle school last year yielded 50 student cards. Quincy is also running a financial literacy program on April 28th (10-15 registrants) and her graphic novel book club at the middle school continues. Four staff members are attending the MLA Conference on May 18-19. The first History Center program (Black Patriots and the Revolution) drew 25 in-person and 16 on Zoom; the next program, King Philip's War, is May 13th.

Motion to adjourn the meeting

- Mary, Seth seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Adjourned 8:51 pm.