

Approved 2/1/2024  
 Peg Bodine, Chair  
 Haston Library Trustees  
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**LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING 8 January 2024**

**Present:** Peg Bodine, Ellen Smith, Amy Vessella  
**Remote:** Harbour Fraser Hodder, Carol Kelley, Tom Skowron  
**Absent:** Dave Maher, Betty Wuelfing  
**Convened at:** 6:00 pm

**Minutes of Dec. 2, 2023 Library Building Maintenance Committee were approved.**  
**Minutes of Dec. 4, 2023 monthly trustees meeting were approved.**

**Librarian's Report** **January 8, 2024**  
**Circulation:**

		2022	2023
December 2023	All Items circulated from this library	1363	1552
	NB Items circulated	1217	1365
	Checkouts Overdrive	387	597

**WIRELESS STATISTICS:**

TOTAL UNIQUE CLIENTS **81**  
 AVERAGE # OF CLIENTS PER DAY **8**  
 AVERAGE USAGE PER CLIENT **1.66** GB  
 NUMBER OF CLIENTS TO REQUEST PAGE **66**  
 NUMBER OF CLIENTS GRANTED ACCESS **57**

**Financial Report:**

<b><u>Account</u></b>	<b>9/30/23</b>	<b>10/31/23</b>	<b>11/30/23</b>	<b>12/31/23</b>
<b><u>Balances as of:</u></b>				
Salary Account	68,551.02	61,975.64	52,138.16	45,753.24
Library Expense Acct.	27,876.62	22,367.63	20,462.31	18,387.31
State Grant	890.19	391.19	4.00	4.00
Gift Account	2,882.78	2,042.69	5,022.69	487.40
	2,073.11 (Salem bequest)	1,981.31 (Salem bequest)	1,859.68 (Salem bequest)	1,630.18 (Salem bequest)
Child Book Gift	625.29	625.29	625.29	625.29
Trust Funds (expendable)	16,720.48	16,720.48	16,720.48	16,720.48

**December Activities and Programming:**

- We offered several fun holiday-themed programs during the month of December.
- On December 11<sup>th</sup> Jeff Belanger presented *The Fright Before Christmas*. This program was a full house with 33 people in attendance!
- Craft Night for Adults featured book page ornaments and had an attendance of 13.
- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, the children's department hosted Gariné Arakelian of Kulina Folk Art for the soap-making program *Feliz Naviduckie*. 14 Patrons attended this program, which received great feedback from

participants.

- Brianna hosted Storytime each week, with a total attendance of 26 children and adults.

#### Other News:

- The library received 4 Cultural Council grants. We are looking forward to hosting some interesting and fun programs for 2024!
- We have set up a shelving unit near the door to feature the Friends of the Library book sale. I am happy to report that we have made several sales during its first week! Gabby will be restocking it as needed.
- I placed an order for tax forms in November but have not heard anything about when we can expect to receive them. In the meanwhile, I will be compiling a binder of tax forms that patrons can photocopy as needed until the forms and instructions arrive from the IRS. There has also been no estimated arrival for the state tax forms.
- I am developing two new policies, a photography/videography policy and a staffing levels policy. I hope to have them ready for an initial review and discussion at our February meeting.
- The new TV has been installed behind the circulation desk and is featuring a slideshow of program flyers and important library news. Feedback has been extremely positive so far!

#### Coming events:

- **Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>:** The Book Club will discuss *The Love Songs of W.E.B. Du Bois* by Honoreé Fanonne Jeffers
- **January 22<sup>nd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>:** Winter Wonderland week. Brianna will be transforming the children's department into a winter wonderland with winter themed decorations, games, and goodies.

#### Building Maintenance:

- The HVAC repairs for the replacement of both temperature pumps took place on December 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> by Renaud. During the pump replacement work it was noted that there is inadequate insulation on the pumps and adjacent piping. Additionally, we still have not been able to gain access to the heating controls to schedule the heating and air conditioning to work during our current operating hours. Renaud has sent us a new proposal in the amount of \$1,625.00 to add/supplement insulation and to continue working on the controls issue.
- Recently, I have been receiving nightly texts from Citizen Security about a low battery alert. Upon speaking with them, I learned that it is the battery unit for the two-way communication system. They advised that I check with the person that replaced the batteries for the system most recently to see which ones were done. I called Troy Brown to see which batteries he replaced and am waiting to hear back. If he did not replace the battery for the communication system, I will need to have that done.
- I am currently researching grants to fund the purchase of a new AED, as our unit is old and we can no longer find parts to service it.
- I have installed a door chime at the front door so that staff is alerted when someone enters the building.
- The Highway Department agreed to shovel the library sidewalks/entrances during snow events. However, they did not do so during the storm this past weekend. I will need to make other arrangements if they are unable to clear our snow. I left a message with Ashley in the Selectmen's office to see if they have any other suggestions or a solution.
- Roger has returned from his leave of absence. We are happy to have him back and are extremely grateful to Tom Minor for stepping in when we needed a custodian.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Vessella

**Old Business:**

- Trustees meeting schedule—Date change needed for April trustees meeting. The Board will meet Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Update on Director's goals—Amy reviewed progress toward achieving her goals of increasing community partnerships; creating consistent branding for the library; seeking a grant(s) to help defray cost of security upgrades for the building; working toward town approval/funding for a part-time circulation assistant position.

**New Business:**

- FY'25 budget proposal—SEE ATTACHMENT BELOW  
Note: the town department heads meeting previously scheduled to discuss budget issues has been postponed due to several participants being ill. The meeting is tentatively rescheduled for late January.
- A committee is being formed to develop a new Strategic Plan for submission to the MBLC. The committee will include representation from the Board of Trustees, staff, and members of the community. A notice will be sent out via Facebook, the library patron email list, etc. seeking volunteers to serve on the committee. Peg and Harbour have volunteered to serve.
- A Director's evaluation subcommittee is also being formed. Peg and Ellen have agreed to serve.

**Adjourned: 6:58 pm**

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday 1 February 2024 at 6:00 pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Smith, Secretary

MEMO TO: North Brookfield Selectmen; Finance Committee  
 FROM: Amy Vessella, Library Director  
 RE: Haston Free Public Library FY2025 Budget Request  
 DATE: January 1, 2024

I have attempted to level-fund this budget request as much as possible. Utility costs continue to increase, and I have increased those lines based on costs and usage over the last 2 years. Additionally, I am requesting an increase in lines 5260, 5512, and 5513, as explained below for each line.

Account 001.610	Descrip- tion	FY24 Budget	FY25 Request	Notes
5110.00 0	Salary	\$85,100	\$87,504.00	The FY24 salary budget has a shortfall of \$688.57 when accounting for the 2% cost of living increase that took effect on 7/1/23. The proposed salaries for FY25 include a 2% cost of living increase. Library Director (Exempt; 30 hrs at \$749.10 wk x 52 = \$38,952.58 Youth Services: \$19.10/hr x 26 hrs x 52 wks= \$25,823.20 Asst. Librarian: \$15.61/hr x 18 hrs x 52 wks= \$14,610.96 Custodian: \$15.61/hr x 10 hrs x 52 wks= \$8,117.20
5200.00 0	Purch. Of Service	\$14,000	\$14,000	This line is used for internet, wireless, security system monitoring, elevator inspection and service, fire systems inspection and monitoring, copier maintenance, landscaping, and—most importantly—our CWMARS system membership. As of Dec. 31, we have used 66% of that budget. Understanding the town’s financial situation for FY25, I will request level funding for this line item.
5210.00 0	Electri- city	\$13,000	\$14,564.00	In FY 2023 we spent \$14,563.69 on electricity, which is \$1,563.69 over budget for this line item. Currently, our FY24 electricity demands have not changed since FY23 and the rate per kWh remains at 0.1177, thus my estimated electricity budget for FY25 has increased slightly. We have taken steps to reduce the amount of electricity we use by turning off any non-essential lights.
5220.00 0	Heat	\$5,400	\$5,500.00	In FY23, it was necessary to take \$137.91 out of our gift fund to make up for a shortfall in this line. So far, our FY24 heating expenses are comparable to last year. Therefore, I am asking for a slight increase for FY25 to cover higher heating costs.
5240.00 0	Water	\$240.00	\$140.00	The current water rate is \$65.00. If this rate remains in effect through FY25, I anticipate we will have water expenses of \$140.00, which will allow me to reduce the budget for this line by 58%.
5250.00 0	Sewer	\$160.00	\$160.00	I do not expect an increase for this line
5260.00 0	Gen. Repair & Maint.	\$8,000.00	\$9,000.00	Our HVAC maintenance contract with Renaud costs \$6750 per year, which uses up most of the budget for this line item. In FY23, we needed an additional \$4,531.00 to pay for repairs and maintenance to our roof, fire

				<p>system, and internet connection, which left us with a significant shortfall in this line and necessitated asking the Finance Committee for additional funds at the end of the fiscal year. In FY24, an additional \$15,755.00 was spent on repairs to the HVAC system, which we were able to fund through ARPA.</p> <p>As of December 1, 2023, there is a balance in this line of \$511.20. The current budget for maintenance and repair of the library building falls short of what we need to maintain the library in good condition for the public. Therefore, I am asking for a 15% increase in this line for anticipated roof and necessary fire alarm repairs in FY25.</p>
5280.00 0	Postage	0	0	We rarely use postage
5400.00 0	Lib. Supplies	\$400.00	\$400.00	We will continue to be careful with spending from these 2 lines.
5410.00 0	Office Supplies	\$400.00	\$400.00	
5420.00 0	Bldg, Maint. Supplies	0	0	I will use 5430 funds to pay for any necessary building maintenance supplies.
5430.00 0	Custodia 1 Supplies	\$300.00	\$300.00	This amount is sufficient. I will ask the Friends for monies for any major expenses, such as when we needed to replace our commercial vacuum in FY24.
5512.00 0	Library Books	\$5,000.00	\$6,000.00	<p>We are required by the state to spend an amount equal to 19.5% of our Municipal Appropriation on library materials. The FY2024 appropriation was \$132,700, <b>making our State required spending for library materials \$25,876.50 for this year. Our materials budget is far lower than what is required by the state to remain certified. If we lose our certification, we will no longer qualify for State Aid, we lose the ability to apply for LSTA grants, and our reciprocal borrowing privileges with other libraries will be revoked.</b></p> <p>Despite being able to negotiate a lower rate for the <i>Worcester Telegram</i> in FY24, the 5513 budget is not enough to cover the cost of our periodicals. However, we will attempt to make up any difference in these lines with funds received through State Aid to Libraries and gifted to us by the Friends of the Library.</p>
5513.00 0	Library Magazines	\$700.00	\$1,000.00	
<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>\$132,700.00</b>	<b>\$138,968.00</b>	

In FY23, the library was gifted \$22,174.00 by the Friends of Library and by generous donations made by community members. This money was used to subsidize the shortfall in our books and magazines budget in order to meet our state-required spending.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this proposal or if there is anything else that you need.