

Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees
Wed. June 4, 2025 at 7 pm
Thornton Room, Brooks Free Library
739 Main St., Harwich MA 02645

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Attendance
2. Public Comment
3. Vote to Approve Regular Session Minutes of May 7, 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting
4. Reports
 - A. Chair
 - B. Library Director
 - C. Review of Staff Reports and Other Information in Meeting Packet
 - D. Building & Grounds Committee
 - E. Personnel Committee
7. Correspondence
 - A. Mass. Board of Library Commissioners Status Update May 20, 2025
8. Old Business
9. New Business
 - A. Vote to Accept Donations
 - B. Annual Evaluation of Library Director
 - C. Reorganization of the Board
10. Trustee Reports and Requests for Next Meeting's Agenda
11. Upcoming Meetings/Events
 - A. Library Board of Trustees - July 2, 2025 – 7 pm
 - B. Library Board of Trustees - August 6, 2025 – 7 pm
12. Executive Session

Pursuant to MGL c.30A section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Town's bargaining or litigating position: Harwich Employees Association (HEA) - discussion and possible votes

Authorized posting officer

Posted by

Virginia A. Hewitt

Brooks Free Library

Town Clerk's Office

Agenda submitted for electronic posting to Town website.

* Per the Attorney General's Office: Boards/Commissions may hold an open session for topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting following "New Business." If you are deaf or hard of hearing or are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation, contact the Library at 508-430-7562 or brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org.

Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees
Wednesday May 7th at 7 pm
739 Main St., Harwich MA 02645

1. Call to order/Attendance - 7:03 pm
Present were J. Brown, L. Cebula, W. Crowell, J. McCarty and J. Wheeler
Also present were Library Director G. Hewitt and a member of the public Lynn Budell
T. Murray and B. Waystack were absent.
2. Public Comment –
May is membership renewal month for the Friends of the Brooks Free Library. Lynn passed out membership forms.
3. Vote to approve Minutes of April 2nd Meeting –
Motion: J. McCarty made the motion to approve the Minutes as corrected.
B. Crowell 2nded and the vote to approve was unanimous.
4. Reports
 - A. Chair – none at this point
 - B. Library Director –
There is still a problem with the bills coming from the correct Trust Funds. Interest is not going into the
correct accounts either
 - C. The Staff Reports are in the meeting packet.
The Board always finds these informative
 - D. Building & Grounds –
The furniture has been ordered from Casual Design and should arrive by May 28th
 - E. Personnel committee – not at this point
5. Correspondence -
None
6. Old Business
None
7. New Business
 - A. Revised job description for Library Director
Trish & Linda met with Ginny about her new job descriptions.
Page 6 of this document 'Some patrons may experience a variety of behavioral issues that may cause them to conduct themselves inappropriately' seems too specific
Page 4 'The Board of Trustees has set following education and experience guidelines'
Page 1 'Trusteesith' changed to 'Trustees with'
Motion by J. McCarty to approve this Position Description with the suggested changes for the Library Director Seconded by Jeannie and the vote to approve was unanimous
 - B. Vote to Accept Monetary Donations –
 - a. None
8. Trustee Reports and Requests for next Meeting's Agenda – none

9. Upcoming Meetings/Events

- A. Library Board of Trustees – Wed June 4, 2025 - 7 pm
- B. Library Board of Trustees – Wed July 2, 2025 – 7 pm
- C. Library Board of Trustees – Wed August 6, 2025 – 7 pm

10. There being no further business Chair L. Cebula called for the meeting to be adjourned at 7:47 pm

Motion: Jeannie made the motion to adjourn the open meeting. J.McCarty 2nded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

JoAnne Brown

JoAnne Brown

Draft

Library Director's Report
for the June 4, 2025 Meeting of the
Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees

Prepared 5.28.25

2025 Mass. Library Association (MLA) Annual Conference

I attended the MLA annual conference in Falmouth on May 19th and 20th, attending some excellent workshops. It was great to learn more about the challenges libraries are facing nationally as well as across the state, and how to prepare and respond to them.

Impact of Loss of Federal Funds on Statewide Library Services

On March 14, 2025 President Trump signed Executive Order 14238 eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) "to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law." IMLS is the single largest source of federal funding for libraries. In the weeks that followed the executive order, IMLS staff were placed on administrative leave and in the President's FY2026 budget, IMLS is eliminated (pg. 39 under Small Agency Eliminations).

In FY25 the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners was allocated \$3.6 million dollars to support statewide library services and grants to local libraries. These funds were used to fund 13 of the 23 positions at the MBLC, in whole or in part, to pay for the Commonwealth Catalog, which enables Mass. residents to search for and borrow items in the catalogs of other library networks in Massachusetts, to pay for LEA, a reciprocal lending platform that allows residents to borrow e-books from other library networks, and to pay for a wide assortment of statewide databases, available to anyone in Massachusetts.

At the annual Massachusetts Library Association conference in Falmouth last week, the Director of the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners, Maureen Amyot, addressed the impact of ongoing uncertainty caused by the executive order and spoke about the MBLC's efforts to preserve as many federally funded statewide services as possible.

The MBLC is already a lean organization, with their staff of 23 already down from a high of 35. Local libraries depend on the consultants at the MBLC for advice and assistance even more in these challenges times, so maintaining staffing levels was a critical concern. To absorb the loss of IMLS funding the following changes in statewide services were announced:

- The MBLC will continue to fund the Commonwealth Catalog, which allows residents to easily search the catalogs of other library networks in Mass. and place inter-library loan requests.
- The MBLC will continue to fund LEA, a reciprocal lending platform that allows patrons to borrow e-Books and downloadable audios from other library networks in Mass.
- MBLC funds to the networks to purchase additional eBooks and downloadable audiobooks to support the reciprocal lending program will be greatly reduced.

(Note: Members of the CLAMS consortium will need to determine if members will be assessed the costs to make up for the loss of funding, and if so, how those costs will be apportioned among member libraries.)

- The number of statewide databases will be greatly reduced, beginning July 1st. The products that remain are primarily used by elementary, middle, high school and college students. A list of the databases to be continued and discontinued as of July 1st is contained in the May 20th press release from the MBLC, which is included in your packet. (Note: the Boston Public Library also provides databases and online resources for all Mass. residents, and those resources are not impacted by the loss of IMLS funding.)
- One of the statewide electronic resources that will be lost is Transparent Languages. (Note: we will be investigating a Brooks Free Library subscription to a language learning program for our patrons, and advocating for a group purchase through the CLAMS consortium, which would be cheaper.)

Friends of Brooks Free Library Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Friends of Brooks Free Library will take place on Thurs., June 19th at 10 am in the Thornton Room at Brooks Free Library. All members of the Friends as well as prospective members are invited to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia A. Hewitt
Library Director

Deputy Director's Report
For the June 2025 meeting of the
Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees

For much of this period I acted as the 'person in charge'.

Budget and admin:

I spent time with our Executive Assistant going over various budget lines to make sure our end of year spending was on track. Only two librarians have materials left to order in this fiscal year and they are on track to have those items ordered by the end of next week. As I am tracking spending I am preparing the Materials Budget allocations for next year based on what we spent this year as well as year end circ stats that will be released soon. There was money left in the budget line for furniture and I ordered replacement of 5 tops to the damaged flip top tables. Together Carey and I got 4 staff members registered for the MLA conference (I attended both days) and we published the new summer schedule which will start the third week of June. I worked with all the staff on this to meet the needs of each department while taking in personal change requests. There is room in this schedule for unexpected absences and some vacation requests as well as most of our 'subs' have good availability.

Friends Meeting:

I went to the Friends of the Library meeting and spoke about my proposed photocopy machine project. I had previously discussed many details with some members of the Friends board and was glad to share those details with the entire group who approved the request unanimously. I am now working on implementing all the details with the current Treasurer of the Friends and we hope to have a working machine in place for the busy summer season.

Facilities:

Custodial help has been very sparse (which does understandably happen this time of year) but there has been no apparent cleaning of the meeting room over the past month. I was told that another department has created a checklist for custodians and I will reach out to them to ask if they could share what they did, but in the past I have tried to intervene with little effect.

We had a big storm last week and I was happy to not find any urgent leaking spots, but the stain on the mezzanine ceiling has reappeared despite Sean's (from DPW) hard work painting fairly recently. The doors to the parking lot continue to drag and not open properly but only on some days and not others. I had to report some really hot and or really cold temperatures over the past month but they seem to have been fixed.

I am looking forward to a smooth end to this budget year, the starting of some new collection development plans, and then I will jump into work on gathering statistics for the ARIS report.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Pickett, Deputy Director

Reference Librarian
June 2025
Report to the Trustees of Brooks Free Library

Meeting Room Upgrade

On Monday May 19th Carlson AV completed the last steps necessary to fully upgrade the Thornton Meeting Room. We have asked for some adjustments but overall it is great to have a fully functioning assistive listening, audio and visual system. Dave Carlson came by on May 27th to train several staff, and I trained more staff members on May 29th. As of this writing almost all staff are up to date.

Setting up the meeting room also took up a lot of my time this month, since the upgrade I found some creative ways to organize our new equipment and run several tests. I also put together training documents for staff and signage for patrons.

Reference

On May 1st I attended a Boston Public Library digital town hall meeting discussing the future of their digitization program, and on May 7th I attended Get to Know Your Government: The Massachusetts Office on Disability for library staff. This was also a way to see what kinds of topics this office will present on the one we will host for town staff in September.

On May 13th I attended a discussion with other Massachusetts librarians about how we are adapting to the changes in federal information sources and services, such as the CDC, medical encyclopedias, and other information. I learned about several sources that will help us answer patron questions.

This month we helped a patron attempt to login to the US Social Security site to verify their identity, and after an hour of assistance unfortunately had to send them to the social security office in Hyannis. Now that the current administration requires verification online or in-person only, I anticipate we will have more requests like this in the near future. I will be reaching out to the COA and Community Center to see if they have other options available for Harwich residents.

At the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) Conference we learned that there will be significant reductions in database offerings planned for FY26, meaning that on July 1st patrons will lose access to several popular resources including HeritageQuest, Transparent Language, the Boston Globe Archive, Gale Career and Test prep, and more. I made some updates to our eLibrary site to reflect these changes, but I do hope that CLAMS can potentially come together as a consortium to purchase some of these resources for patrons or we could potentially take on the cost of HeritageQuest and Transparent language for Brooks Free Library patrons. You can find more information about current cuts to services here:

<https://libraries.state.ma.us/federal-funding-at-risk>

Professional Development

On May 19th and 20th I attended the MLA conference, participating in discussions on safety in public libraries, law for libraries, current US administration changes, database privacy and ebooks. I also met a few other librarians from around the state and spoke to library vendors about their offerings. It was great to be around so many other librarians!

Collection Development

In May, I purchased 103 adult ebooks and 65 adult e-audiobooks. Last month's report on Cost Per Circ revealed that 41 ebooks and 28 e-audiobooks were borrowed in April.

Future Work

Now that my big project of upgrading the meeting room is complete, I will have more time to dedicate to reference services and other technology upgrades. I will be gradually updating all windows computers to WIndows 11 and replacing soon-to-be out of date microsoft office products.

Respectfully submitted,
Jamie Thornton
Reference Librarian

MBLC Maintains some Databases, Support for eBooks, and ComCat

Press Release - May 20, 2025

Celeste
Communications
1-800-952-7403
celeste.bruno@mass.gov

Bruno
Director
x208

On March 14, 2025 President Trump signed Executive Order 14238 eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) "to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law." IMLS is the single largest source of critical federal funding for libraries. Through IMLS' Grants to States Program, for FY2025 the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) was allocated \$3.6 million to support statewide library services and grants to local libraries. In the weeks that followed the executive order, IMLS staff were placed on administrative leave and in the President's FY2026 budget, IMLS is eliminated (pg. 39 under Small Agency Eliminations).

At the annual Massachusetts Library Association conference, MBLC Director Maureen Amyot addressed the impact of ongoing federal uncertainty caused by the executive order and spoke about the MBLC's efforts to preserve as many federally funded statewide services as possible. Director Amyot announced the FY2026 plan for statewide research databases, the statewide eBook program, and the Commonwealth Catalog.

"The federal impact cannot be overstated. In Massachusetts, over 1,600 school, public, academic and special libraries from across the state benefit from federal IMLS funding. Millions of people rely on federally funded library services," she said. "Developing a plan for services in an environment of almost daily federal change has been challenging, but our goal has remained constant: to maintain services that are integral to the functioning of our system and heavily relied on by the people of the Commonwealth."

Starting on July 1, 2025, statewide research database offerings will be significantly reduced. However, the MBLC and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), which jointly fund databases, will maintain several of the most heavily used. The MBLC spends close to \$2.2 million of its federal allocation to fund statewide research databases, an amount that cannot be made up in state funding. For FY2026, the eBook content grant to Networks from MBLC's state line 9506 will likely be funded at \$500,000*, which will allow for \$500,000 funding in that line to go towards databases. MLS will increase its support for databases by \$18,575 to a total of \$670,575. Overall, combined database funding from MBLC and MLS will go from \$2.8 million to \$1.17 million.

"The President has determined that the Institute of Museum and Library Services is 'unnecessary.' But we know the opposite to be true. We know that welcoming ALL, including diverse voices in our collections, and providing free and equitable access to library services make public libraries the cornerstone of a free democratic society," said Director Amyot. "Libraries change people's lives. That's why these reductions in critical library services hurt. But

we're in this for the long game and in the year ahead we'll continue to work with local, state and federal partners to stabilize library funding and services."

Databases provide every Massachusetts resident with trustworthy online content covering topics such as science, health, history, biographies and more. Last year, there were over 9 million full text downloads from research databases, an increase of 12% in just one year. Sixty percent of database usage comes from schools. The chart below details which databases will be available as of July 1, 2025.

FY2026 Discontinued Products

- Boston Globe Article Archive
- Britannica Moderna
- Gale Academic OneFile Select
- Gale General OneFile
- Gale Health and Wellness
- Gale in Context: Biography
- Gale in Context: Elementary
- Gale in Context: Environmental Studies
- Gale in Context: Global Issues
- Gale in Context: Middle School
- Gale in Context: Science
- Gale in Context: US History
- Gale in Context: World History
- Gale Interactive Science
- Gale LegalForms
- Gale Literature Resource Center
- HeritageQuest Online
- Peterson's Career Prep
- Peterson's Test Prep
- Science Database (ProQuest)
- Transparent Language Online

FY2026 Continued Products

- Britannica Escolar
- Britannica Library
- Britannica School
- Gale Academic OneFile + OneFile Collections
- Gale in Context: Opposing Viewpoints
- PebbleGo

Many factors were considered in determining which databases to maintain. The expedited timeline did not allow for direct input from the library community, but database usage was a major consideration. Providing databases that support students at every level of learning:

elementary, middle, high school, and to some extent college, was also a key factor. In addition, the MBLC has a statutory obligation to provide general reference.

Support for the statewide Library eBooks and audiobooks (LEA) program will continue. The Libby eBook platform that allows eBooks to be shared across the state will be fully funded from the state budget. The state funded eBook content grant will likely be funded at \$500,000*. Residents borrowed close to two million eBooks and audiobooks through LEA last year, an increase of 19% in just one year.

Full funding for the Commonwealth Catalog (ComCat) will also continue for FY2026. ComCat gives Massachusetts residents access to millions of items that their own library network doesn't have. More than 103,000 items were borrowed through ComCat last year.

Maintaining these services comes with the elimination of services that were announced in April and the MBLC anticipates announcing further reductions in the coming weeks.

In Massachusetts there were 28 million visits to public libraries last year and people borrowed more than 59 million items. Since 1996, federal funding from IMLS has been essential in ensuring the Commonwealth's residents have equitable access to library services regardless of geographic location, social or economic status, age, level of physical or intellectual ability, or cultural background.

*Commissioners will vote on the eBook content grant in September 2025

About MBLC

The Board of Library Commissioners (mass.gov/mblc) is the agency of state government with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, develop, coordinate and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth. The Board advises municipalities and library trustees on the operation and maintenance of public libraries, including construction and renovation. It administers state and federal grant programs for libraries and promotes cooperation among all types of libraries through regional library systems and automated resource sharing. It also works to ensure that all residents of the Commonwealth, regardless of their geographic location, social or economic status, age, level of physical or intellectual ability or cultural background, have access to essential new electronic information technologies and significant electronic databases.

FY25 Budget Balances

As of 5.30.25

AREA OF EXPENDITURE	Appropriated Amt	Spent	Remaining Balance	Percent Spent
Advertising	\$180.00	\$0.00	\$180.00	0%
Dues, Subs & Travel	\$3,400.00	\$2,664.18	\$735.82	78%
Library Materials	\$185,935.00	\$184,209.80	\$1,725.20	99%
Electric	\$32,000.00	\$37,699.92	-\$5,699.92	118%
Employee Fringe Benefits	\$756.00	\$0.00	\$756.00	0%
Gas	\$10,550.00	\$11,516.63	-\$966.63	109%
Library Supplies	\$13,300.00	\$13,039.53	\$260.47	98%
Other Purchased Services	\$6,500.00	\$6,247.66	\$252.34	96%
Maintenance & Repair	\$5,962.00	\$4,142.59	\$1,819.41	69%
Office Supplies	\$7,850.00	\$6,232.44	\$1,617.56	79%
Professional & Tech	\$51,655.00	\$51,472.69	\$182.31	100%
Water	\$1,170.00	\$1,064.09	\$105.91	91%
Total Library Expenses	\$319,258.00	\$318,289.53	\$968.47	100%
Wages & Salaries	\$853,139.00	\$807,722.51	\$45,416.49	95%
TOTAL	\$1,172,397.00	\$1,126,012.04	\$46,384.96	96%