

City of Beverly, Massachusetts

Public Meeting Minutes

Board: Library Trustees

Date: January 27, 2026, 6:00 PM

Place: 32 Essex St.

Board members present: Margaret Altman, Mary Behrle, Dominic Copeland, Marshall Handly, Colleen Michaels, Kevin O'Reilly, Joanne Panunzio

Board members absent: Cathryn Keefe O'Hare, Ivy Mahan

Others present: Allison Babin, Meghan Karasin

Recorder: Meghan Karasin

Kevin O'Reilly presided. Meghan Karasin stated that the meeting was being recorded.

Colleen Michaels made a motion, seconded by Margaret Altman, to accept the minutes of the meeting of December 16, 2026, as amended. Motion passed 6-0 with Altman, Behrle, Handly, Michaels, O'Reilly, and Panunzio voting in favor.

Dominic Copeland joined at 6:04 PM.

Public Presentation

none

Committee Reports

Personnel: No report.

Administration: No report.

Finance: No report.

Long Range Planning: No report.

Report of the Library Director

1. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget: The budget is on track. Several transfers have been made from the full-time staff line to the repair line. The repair line has about \$1000 but we have some funds in the full-time we could transfer if needed. Overtime is a little more spent than usual this time of year. The part-time line is a little underspent at the moment. Overall the budget is in good shape. Kevin O'Reilly asked how heating fuel compares to last year. Allison Babin stated that last year we were 41% used at this time vs 67.7%. This could be related to the timing of the bills. Right now with it being so cold we can't allow the building to go to unoccupied mode overnight as we normally would. Dominic Copeland asked if we expect repair needs due to cold or snow. Allison Babin doesn't expect any at this point. The Winter St. entrance is currently closed but will be repaired during the HVAC project.

2. Building/Vehicle Issues: The HVAC project started on Jan 20. The Consigli Assistant Superintendent has moved into the staff conference room. We are expecting a delayed opening on Monday Feb 2 to accommodate a crane. The north elevator has been repaired, with a cost of \$21,000. On Monday January

12, the Bookmobile garage door would not open. Technicians and specialists came out. They were able to jack open the door to free the Bookmobile. There is nowhere to park it here, so it's at the DPS lot. Due to the cold and snow, and the bookmobile being parked outside, the generator has been having issues again. DPS had to replace the trickle charger and is working on getting quotes for the garage door repair. It's possible the door will need to be fully replaced, which may need to go out to bid.

3. Collections/Services: We had been experiencing serious delays with books from Ingram, our primary book supplier. It seems that they are in much better shape now and they are getting back to more normal delivery times. We delayed our reservable study room launch (initially scheduled for January 6) to reevaluate our initial plan. We rolled out our new plan today and it's going very well. Patrons can reserve rooms online which makes it easier for both the public and staff. Joanne Panunzio asked if we need to change the meeting room policy. Allison Babin stated that the board approved the trial language in the policy in May but we should revise the policy when we make a final decision.

The children's department has finished purchasing books for the decodable collection. We are hoping to launch it in March. Janice Shaw, Head of Circulation, has signed up to be an Evergreen software tester with the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE). Janice is the perfect person to test the new interface before rollout.

The Digital Equity Implementation Grant is funding a study pod, braille printer, hotspots, and translation devices. After gathering four quotes for the pod, we are almost ready to make a decision. This pod will be, in effect, a 3rd study room. Kerri MacLaury is researching braille printers and we are looking at two options for translation devices. Meghan Karasin has already added and deployed the 10 new hotspots. Colleen asked if the braille printer will be open to the general public and Allison Babin replied that, due to potential sound issues with the printer, we are still working out how and where to best use it.

4. Community Engagement:

The 30th Annual Teen Poetry Contest is accepting submissions now, with a ceremony on Thursday April 30. Take Your Child to the Library Day is on February 7. This year there are two special story times, featuring *Mother Bruce* by Ryan T. Higgins. The NOBLE Legislative Breakfast is on Friday February 27 at 8am in Melrose. Allison Babin and Meghan Karasin will attend. The library was invited to present on library services at the Beverly Public School's English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) meeting. We'll talk about summer reading and other library services. The schools can provide translation services at that meeting. The children's room is collaborating with Salem Sound Coastwatch for 5 months of programs, including Saturday programming

5. Personnel: At the November meeting we shared that we promoted Myra Pueschel to a full-time position in Technical Services. Myra was responsible for paying all the bills in the library. We were told that we are not able to fill this open position as the city has a soft hiring freeze due to the projected deficit. Not paying the bills is not an option. Allison Babin and Meghan Karasin are now doing this task. We have identified some efficiencies and changed some processes, but we estimate that it still takes 10-12 hours per week. Allison Babin has been thinking about options and talking with Bryant Ayles. Fortunately we are able to fill the Senior Building Custodian position. We have conducted the interviews and are hopeful that the new custodian can start as early as the end of the week.

6. Trustee Terms: All three appointments (Mary Behrle, Colleen Michaels, Joanne Panunzio) were approved at the City Council meeting on January 20.

7. Programs: Adults have mug decorating, German chat group, and a presentation on Sally Snowman, the Last USCG Keeper of Boston Light. Teens have an Anti-Boredom Art Club, Creative Writing Club, and a Crafternoon on Chocolate-Covered Strawberries. Children's has Lego Club, Science Squad, and Take Your Child to the Library Day.

Communications

None at this time.

Unfinished Business

None at this time.

New Business

None at this time.

List of Documents/Exhibits

- Draft minutes of the December 16, 2025 meeting
- FY 2026 Budget report as of January 27, 2026

The next regular meeting of the board is Tuesday, February 24 at 6 PM in person at the main library.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 PM.