

City of Beverly, Massachusetts

Public Meeting Minutes

Board: Library Trustees

Date: May 26, 2026, 6:00 PM

Place: 32 Essex St.

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

Board members absent: Mary Behrle, Dominic Copeland, Ivy Mahan, Cathryn Keefe O'Hare,

Others present: Allison Babin, Meghan Karasin

Recorder: Meghan Karasin

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

Marshall Handly made a motion, seconded by Margaret Altman, to accept the minutes of the meeting of April 28, 2026. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Presentation

None

Committee Reports

Personnel: Joanne Panunzio will send out the trustee survey and the results of the staff survey. Please respond by June 15 so she can compile the review for the next meeting. Please email Joanne Panunzio when you've completed your survey.

Report of the Library Director

1. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget: The budget remains on track but there again have been lots of transfers between lines to cover repairs, inspections, and overtime. The Bookmobile has not needed as many repairs as in FY25.

2. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget: On Monday May 4 Allison Babin met again with the Mayor and Finance Director. The proposed budget allocation is \$2,375,585.97. This is \$460.51 over the Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR). This would mean that we are certified, will not need to apply for a waiver, and will keep core services. However, this does not mean level service and there will need to be some cuts. We looked at Sundays, but they are very popular for the community. We looked at the Farms branch, which is valued, but is quieter than the main library. We also looked at closing the Children's room earlier than the rest of the library, which is not uncommon.

We expect to make the following changes for FY27: We will permanently attrit the part-time accounts payable position, but maintain the 3-hour temporary employee covering some of these responsibilities. We are reducing hours at the Farms by 3 hours on Tuesday (10AM-9PM to 1PM-9PM). When the Farms is open on Saturdays (October-Memorial Day) it will be open 10AM-1PM instead of 10AM-5PM. The main library children's room will close at 7PM instead of 9PM on Monday-Thursday.

These are data driven decisions. We feel confident that it does not impact the public as much as closing on Sundays would. This does mean reducing hours for part time staff, which is difficult. All of these decisions are based on the budget the mayor developed that assumed the \$425 trash fee. This fee increase is being discussed at City Council tonight. If the fee is not passed as is, there will be additional cuts on the city side. It's not clear what impact this may have on the library budget. Colleen Michaels asked when the library would know of additional cuts. Allison Babin expects to know within 24 to 48 hours if the library budget will be impacted more. Marshall Handly asked if the procurement office could help? Allison Babin has been working with the new city accountant for efficiencies that have saved time in other areas.

3. Building/Vehicle Issues: The new HVAC system at the main library has not been activated yet. We expect this to happen late this week or early next week. In the meantime the subcontractors have brought in supplemental cooling systems. DPS was having trouble switching the seasons over at the Farms branch. There was also a leak in the system but all has been resolved now. On May 1, a patron drove into the fence at the main library. The solicitor's office worked with the patron's insurance and the new fence panels will be installed in June. The bookmobile garage door has been installed and works well. The bookmobile is now back at the main library. There have been some issues with the door of the South Elevator. The cost to repair is \$5108. We may be able to repair it this year (if we have funds) or wait until July.

4. Community Engagement: Beverly Reads *The Bear* has ended. We had a successful keynote talk with Andrew Krivak. Overall we had 21 programs with 391 attendees. The book was checked out 417 times. A big thanks goes to the Friends for funding the programming, books, and promotional materials. We have had a change in leadership at the Friends. For the past several years, we have enjoyed the leadership of president Beth Murphy, secretary Kathy Penny, and treasurer Andrea Connor. We have a new incoming slate with Meagan Watson as president, secretary Hannah Dendas, and new treasurer John Tamilio. We are grateful for the service of those who are stepping down and for those who are willing to step into these roles for the year(s) ahead. The children's librarians are starting their visits to the elementary schools to talk about summer reading. Margie McClory, Head of Children's, visited Pathways for Children to talk about the summer reading program and 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, making 25 new library cards while she was there. Both the main library and the Farms branch are serving as collection sites for Beverly Bootstrap's backpack drive.

5. Collection/Service Updates: The Children's Department has finalized their story walk with *Bubbie and Rivka's Best-ever Challah (So Far!)* by Sarah Lynne Reul. It will go on the Common for our Kickoff and then to Lynch Park and the Farms branch.

6. Programs: The Summer Reading Kickoff is Tuesday June 9 on the Common. We will have a DJ, lawn games, and snacks. Adults have German Chat Group, a screening of the film Hamnet and a Cookbook Club on Hiding Your Vegetables. Teens have Candy Sushi and Henna. Children's has Story Times, Lego Club, and a Rockabye Beats concert.

Communications

None at this time.

Unfinished Business

None at this time.

New Business

We want to recognize Roger Morency's service to the Beverly Public Library. He was a trustee from 1981-1983. He was a huge library supporter, most recently of the bookmobile. His family has designated the Friends of the Library, particularly the bookmobile, as a charitable donation in his memory.

List of Documents/Exhibits

- Draft minutes of the April 28, 2026 meeting
- FY 2026 Budget report as of May 26, 2026

The next regular meeting of the board is Tuesday, June 23 at 6 PM in person at the Farms branch library.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.