MEETING LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES

Tuesday, December 16th, 2025, 7:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

Adjourn to Executive Session

Adjourn to Executive Session under the following exemptions: to discuss strategy with respect to the threatened potential litigation if the chair so declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the select board in town, and the chair does so declare to discuss the Town library pursuant to Mgl. Chapter 30, a sections 21, a 3, and 7, and Suffolk construction versus Dcam, 449, Mass. 4, 4.

Roll Call Vote to Enter Executive Session at 7:32 pm.

Roll Call Vote to Adjourn to Executive Session and return to Public Session at 7:34 pm.

- Unanimous Yes

Trustees Participating

- Brian Connolly (Chair)
- Thais Bessa
- Chris Kenney
- Mary McKenna
- Seth Molloy
- Frank Orlando
- Tom VanLangen

Other Participating

- Liz Anderson (Library Director)
- Jen Carlson (Assistant Director)
- Sandra Burke (Friends of the Sherborn Library)
- Paul Pilotte (Advisory Liaison)

Motion to approve November Minutes

- Mary, Frank second. Unanimous vote to approve.

Trustee Chair's report (Brian Connolly)

- The Finance Subcommittee discussion will be a key agenda item as budget season begins. Brian, Liz, and Frank met with Finance Director, Deb Siefring for an initial review of the library budget; Jeremy was unable to attend due to jury duty.
- Advisory liaisons Paul Pilotte and Nora Lynch-Smith were invited to join the meeting today, and we will work with them in January and February to review the budget and provide feedback.

- This will be a challenging budget planning year due to a narrowing gap between the town's tax levy capacity and the proposed 2.5 limit, with the potential risk of an override. Trustees should keep these constraints in mind during budget discussions.

Friends of the Sherborn Library Report (Sandra Burke)

- The Friends thanked the Trustees for collaboration and approval of the gardening committee budget; planters have been installed and are off to a strong start.
- The Friends participated in the Sherborn Holiday Market. Not a revenue-generating event, but an opportunity to raise visibility and engage with the community.
- The annual Friendsgiving fundraiser sold 55 tickets and generated $3,316.85, consistent with prior years. It was a great event, with strong community participation and featuring high school jazz bands.
- The annual appeal mail campaign, which is the main fundraiser of the year, went out and is already generating donations from returning and new donors.
- Upcoming activities include the winter book sale, a children's Winterfest, and a combined art and welcome committee event.
- The Chair encouraged Trustees to support the Friends' annual appeal and thanked the Friends for their continued fundraising support for the library.

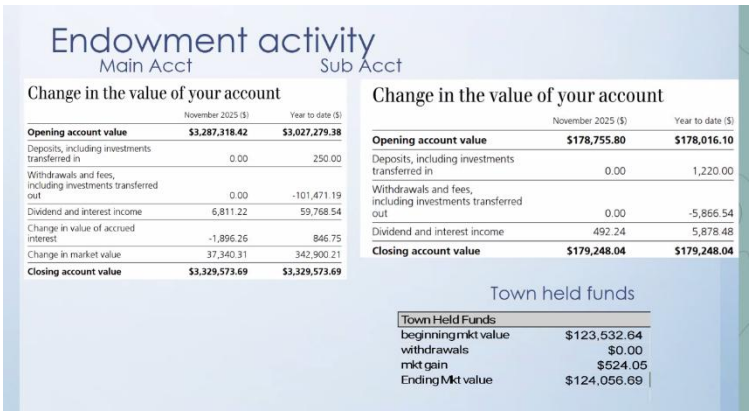
House Subcommittee (Chris Kenney, Thais Bessa)

- We evaluated the septic system after over a year of use, and it is in good condition; no immediate capital replacement is required, regular maintenance and testing will continue.
- Discussed completion of the mural in the children's room and agreed to limit it to the entry area near Nora's Treehouse to preserve flexibility for future use of the space. Photos below. We will reach out to the artist to wrap up the mural. Brian asked if the scope would be narrower than originally contracted; would that reduce the payment due? Chris clarified that this is being analyzed; we still have not paid half of the contracted amount.
- Recent improvements to the children's area include bringing a couch from the basement to create a quiet reading corner for parents and caregivers and the installation of display frames.

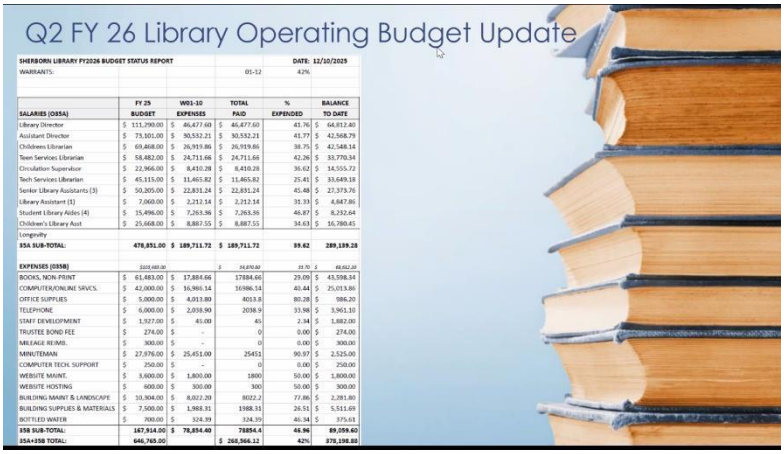
- The Subcommittee noted ongoing work with public safety officials to update the library's Safety & Security Manual, with further updates to be provided at a future meeting.

<u>Finance Subcommittee</u> (Frank Orlando and Tom VanLangen)

- Reviewed account activity for the past month (see slide below). The main UBS endowment account increased in November (dividends and market value) and was up approximately $300K (~10%) year-to-date, after transfers of nearly $100K to the Town to support library expenses. The Town-held Bartholomew account (~$120K) showed a modest increase.
- The Finishing Touches subaccount (primarily fixed income) had minimal change. Brian suggested reviewing the investment approach for the Finishing Touches funds as major projects conclude. Near-term uses remain, including funds for landscaping and the mural.



- Liz provided a Q2 FY 26 operating budget update (slide below). At about 42% of the fiscal year, spending is on target at 42% overall. Personnel is slightly under plan due to the timing of hiring and staff family leave. Student library aid costs continue to track high. Expenses are slightly over due to early-year one-time costs (e.g., the Minuteman Network fee) and timing for landscaping. State aid will be used to offset landscaping after the final invoice.

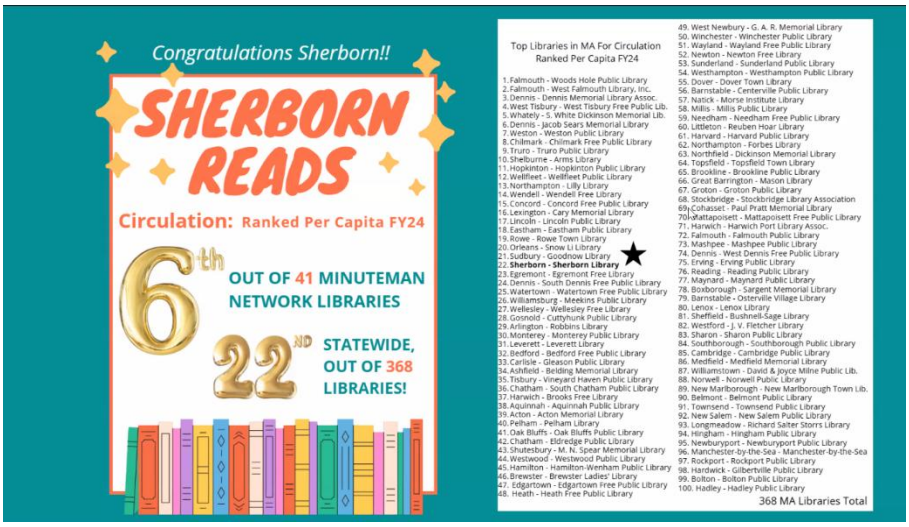


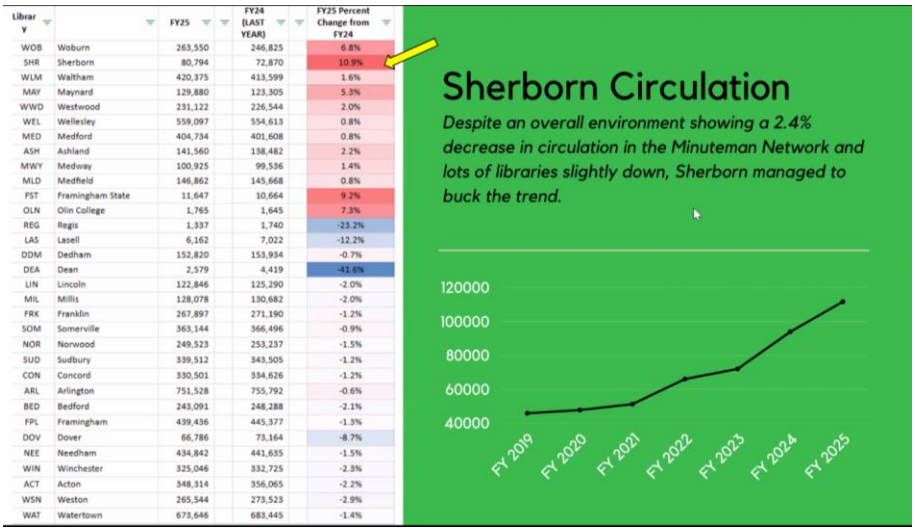
- The FY 27 budget timeline was reviewed: the draft budget is due by the end of January, and the budget presentation to Advisory is scheduled for January 14th, 2026 (public; in-person and Zoom). Traditionally Trustees voted on the budget in the December meeting, for this year vote will happen at the January meeting, as it will happen after the presentation to Advisory on the 14th.

Updates & Upcoming

- FY 27 Library Operating Budget Schedule:
  - Early November: COLA recommendation / budget draft from Deb - Done
  - December 11: 1:30-2:30pm: Budget Meeting with Jeremy, Deb and Diane (Town Hall) - Done
  - **December 16: Trustees Meeting, Budget Vote**
  - December 31: FY 27 Budget Drafts Due to the Town/Advisory
  - January 14: FY 27 Budget Presentation to Advisory
  - March 21: Advisory Committee Public Hearing
  - April 28: Annual Town Meeting:

- Budget presentation and discussion. Liz presented FY 25 service metrics to contextualize budget needs (see slides below), including significant circulation growth since the March 2023 reopening, high children's circulation, and heavy reliance on volunteers (approximately 70 volunteers / ~1,200 hours). Liz summarized FY 26 internal staffing adjustments made within the voted FY 26 appropriation by rebalancing hours and roles to match demand.





Library		FY25	FY24 (LAST YEAR)	FY25 Percent Change from FY24
WOB	Woburn	263,550	246,825	6.8%
SHR	Sherborn	80,794	72,870	10.9%
WLM	Waltham	420,375	413,599	1.6%
MAY	Maynard	129,880	123,305	5.3%
WWD	Westwood	231,122	226,544	2.0%
WEL	Wellesley	559,097	554,613	0.8%
MED	Medford	404,734	401,608	0.8%
ASH	Ashland	141,560	138,482	2.2%
MWY	Medway	100,925	99,536	1.4%
MLD	Medfield	146,862	145,668	0.8%
FST	Framingham State	11,647	10,664	9.2%
OLN	Olin College	1,765	1,645	7.3%
REG	Regis	1,337	1,740	-23.2%
LAS	Lasell	6,162	7,022	-12.2%
DDM	Dedham	152,820	153,934	-0.7%
DEA	Dean	2,579	4,419	-41.6%
LIN	Lincoln	122,846	125,290	-2.0%
MIL	Millis	128,078	130,682	-2.0%
FRK	Franklin	267,897	271,190	-1.2%
SOM	Somerville	363,144	366,496	-0.9%
NOR	Norwood	249,523	253,237	-1.5%
SUD	Sudbury	339,512	343,505	-1.2%
CON	Concord	330,501	334,626	-1.2%
ARL	Arlington	751,528	755,792	-0.6%
BED	Bedford	243,091	248,288	-2.1%
FPL	Framingham	439,436	445,377	-1.3%
DOV	Dover	66,786	73,164	-8.7%
NEE	Needham	434,842	441,635	-1.5%
WIN	Winchester	325,046	332,725	-2.3%
ACT	Acton	348,314	356,065	-2.2%
WSN	Weston	265,544	273,523	-2.9%
WAT	Watertown	673,646	683,445	-1.4%

Sherborn Children's Circulation

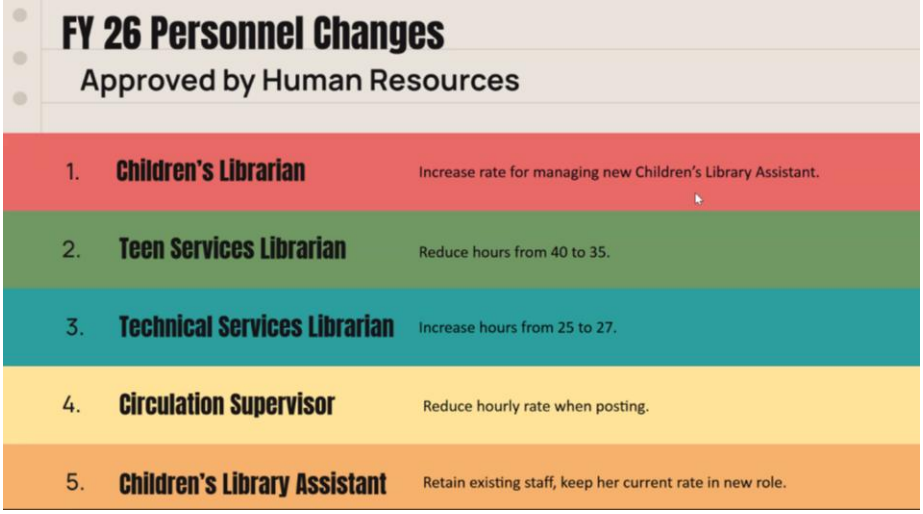
Last year we hit a record high in children's materials checked out with 50,458 total. That is more than double the circulation in the pre-renovated Library, which was 23,395.

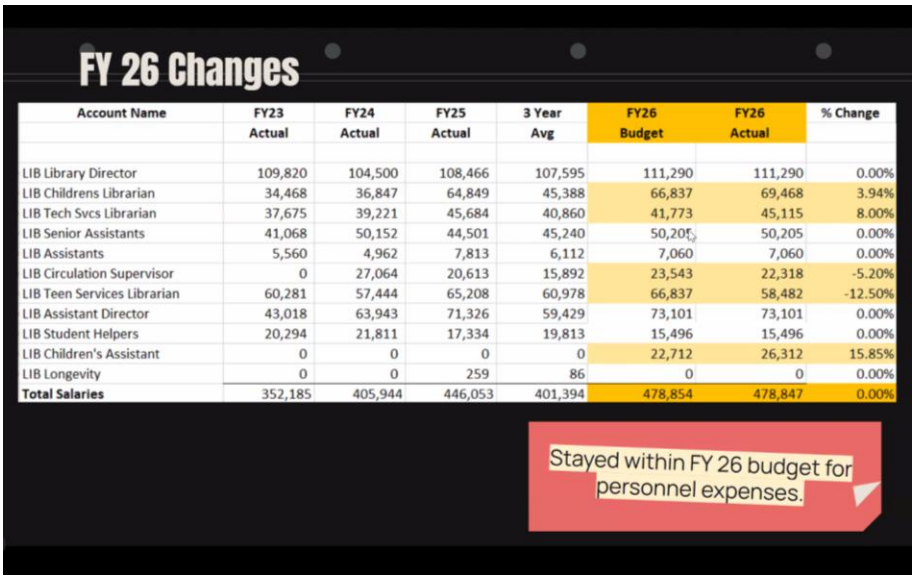
Library Traffic

The last six years have been a rollercoaster of residing in the Community Center, the pandemic and moving back to the renovated Library. FY 2024 provided a better marker moving forward of the Library traffic pattern. This number represents an estimate based on four week samplings throughout the year. With people counters installed in May 2025, next year's number will be actual vs. an estimate.

Volunteer Hours

We continue to rely heavily on volunteers for many aspects of Library operations. This year, we utilized many teen volunteers in need of meeting their community service requirement, and we also saw an uptick in our adult volunteer hours.

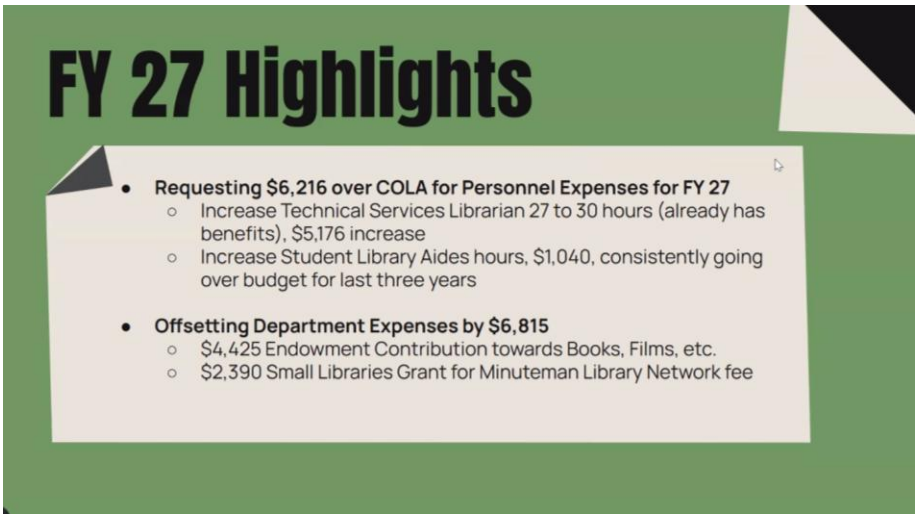




Account Name	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	3 Year Avg	FY26 Budget	FY26 Actual	% Change
LIB Library Director	109,820	104,500	108,466	107,595	111,290	111,290	0.00%
LIB Childrens Librarian	34,468	36,847	64,849	45,388	66,837	69,468	3.94%
LIB Tech Svcs Librarian	37,675	39,221	45,684	40,860	41,773	45,115	8.00%
LIB Senior Assistants	41,068	50,152	44,501	45,240	50,205	50,205	0.00%
LIB Assistants	5,560	4,962	7,813	6,112	7,060	7,060	0.00%
LIB Circulation Supervisor	0	27,064	20,613	15,892	23,543	22,318	-5.20%
LIB Teen Services Librarian	60,281	57,444	65,208	60,978	66,837	58,482	-12.50%
LIB Assistant Director	43,018	63,943	71,326	59,429	73,101	73,101	0.00%
LIB Student Helpers	20,294	21,811	17,334	19,813	15,496	15,496	0.00%
LIB Children's Assistant	0	0	0	0	22,712	26,312	15.85%
LIB Longevity	0	0	259	86	0	0	0.00%
Total Salaries	352,185	405,944	446,053	401,394	478,854	478,847	0.00%

- Frank asked whether the FY 26 operating budget is expected to finish the year on target. Liz indicated the library is currently tracking on budget.
- Liz presented the proposed FY 27 operating budget (see slides below), which is approximately $1,866 above level-funding guidance after offsets. Key drivers and offsets include:
    - Requested personnel increases: Tech Services Librarian hours from 27 to 30 and an adjustment to the Student Library Aides line based on consistent prior-year overages.
    - Offsets: increased endowment support for materials (books/films) and a Small Libraries grant to reduce the Minuteman Network fee.
- Liz reviewed planned use of non-appropriation funds (endowment, state aid, Friends) to support operations and select needs (e.g., landscaping, substitute coverage, staged technology replacement). A preliminary quote of $27,000 for a new library website was noted, with a plan to pursue grants and/or state aid rather than a capital request.

- Brian reiterated that the endowment distribution follows an established spending policy (rolling average approach) and is unable to increase beyond policy. Brian noted that endowment contributions have increased faster than the Town appropriation over recent years and now represent a growing share of overall library operating support.
- Trustees noted the Friends' contributions support programs and other enhancements.
- Mary asked whether being within Advisory guidance implies the Advisory presentation will go smoothly; Trustees noted there are no guarantees.
- Advisory liaison Paul Pilotte recommended meeting with the liaisons in early January to provide feedback and coaching ahead of the Advisory budget presentation.
    - He advised preparing a clear justification for any service-level increases and presenting a multi-year prioritization narrative. Paul noted that while the rationale for adding hours is reasonable, Advisory members may ask whether the additional hours constitute an increase above "level services" and why the request is necessary this year (particularly in the early years following the library's reopening).
    - Paul emphasized the importance of clearly distinguishing funding sources (Town appropriation, endowment, Friends, and grants) and providing a succinct history/context to support transparency.
    - Paul asked whether the endowment spending policy could be changed to increase the draw; the Chair responded that it is not reasonable to change the policy, which aligns with common endowment practices and professional guidance from financial advisors and local fiduciaries.
    - Paul noted that Advisory leadership has asked him and Nora to take a broader look across service-related departments (including the Library and Council on Aging) to assess how budgets collectively serve different populations in town.
- The Trustees thanked the Library Director for her efforts in the budget planning process.



FY 27 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

ENDOWMENT:

- **Increase Endowment contribution by additional $7,848 over FY 26**
  - **An increase of 8.87% for a total of $96,367**

History of Transfers to Offset Library Expenses
Voted at Town Meeting

	From Dowse Memorial Fund	From Saltonstall Operating Fund	From State Aid to Libraries	Landscape Contribution	Book Endowment Contribution		Total	
FY16	4,240	20,680	4,445				29,365	
FY17	4,240	20,990	4,445				29,675	
FY18	4,240	41,856	4,445				50,541	
FY19	4,246	42,693	4,445				51,384	
FY20	4,071	56,946	4,445				65,462	
FY21	2,813	58,695	4,445				65,953	
FY22	1,209	60,883	4,445				66,537	
FY23	3,064	65,950	0			(1)	69,014	Monies transferred to Construction Account
FY24	1,974	69,041	0			(1)	71,015	Monies transferred to Construction Account
FY25	2,309	74,353	9,090				85,752	To reduce operating expenses
FY26	2,367	81,152		5,000			88,519	
FY27	2,478	89,464			4,425		96,367	

FY 27 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

STATE AID:

- **Continue to use State Aid** for Operating Expenses, including:
  - Landscaping ($7,000)
  - Substitute Librarians ($7,000)
  - Replacement of aging technology (in stages)
- **Earmark State Aid** for Capital Expense:
  - Library Website Redesign (first quote $27,000), also look for grants and additional sources of funding

FY 27 ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

FRIENDS OF THE SHERBORN LIBRARY:

- **Friends of the Library** contribute directly to the Library:
  - **$21,500** for programs
  - **$5,000** for museum pass discounts
  - **$1,114** for staff development
  - **$1,000** for Senior Student Awards
  - **TOTAL: $28,614**

FY 27 Library Operating Budget Draft (Personnel)

Account Name	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	3 Year Avg	FY26 Budget	FY27 Bud Request	2027% over 2026	
LIB Library Director	109,820	104,500	108,466	107,595	111,290	114,907	3.25%	
LIB Childrens Librarian	34,468	36,847	64,849	45,388	66,837	71,725	7.31%	
LIB Tech Svcs Librarian	37,675	39,221	45,684	40,860	41,773	51,757	23.90%	$5176 Increase above COLA
LIB Senior Assistants	41,068	50,152	44,501	45,240	50,205	51,838	3.25%	
LIB Assistants	5,560	4,962	7,813	6,112	7,060	7,290	3.25%	
LIB Circulation Supervisor	0	27,064	20,613	15,892	23,543	23,043	-2.12%	
LIB Teen Services Librarian	60,281	57,444	65,208	60,978	66,837	60,383	-9.66%	
LIB Assistant Director	43,018	63,943	71,326	59,429	73,101	75,477	3.25%	
LIB Student Helpers	20,294	21,811	17,334	19,813	15,496	17,040	9.96%	$1040 Increase above COLA
LIB Children's Assistant	0	0	0	0	22,712	27,168	19.62%	
LIB Longevity	0	0	259	86	0	0	0.00%	
Total Salaries	352,185	405,944	446,053	401,394	478,854	500,628	4.55%	Increase of $6,216

FY 27 Library Operating Budget Draft (Dept Expenses)

Account Name	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	3 Year Avg	FY26 Budget	FY27 Bud Request	2027% over 2026	
LIB BLDG Landscape & Maintenance	53,938	19,256	22,586	31,927	10,304	10,304	0.00%	
LIB BLDG Computer Tech Support	560	1,292	0	617	250	250	0.00%	
LIB Telephone	6,879	6,043	5,090	6,004	6,000	6,000	0.00%	
LIB Computer Online Services	40,565	40,611	39,325	40,167	42,000	41,788	-0.51%	Reduced Books & Comp Online by $4,425 Endowment Contribution
LIB BLDG Website Hosting	600	600	600	600	600	600	0.00%	
LIB BLDG Website Maintenance	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.00%	
LIB Minuteman Network	28,886	22,957	24,443	25,429	27,976	27,047	-3.32%	Small Library Grant applied $2,390
LIB Office Supplies	4,535	6,222	6,099	5,619	5,000	5,000	0.00%	
LIB BLDG Supplies & Materials	3,679	10,950	5,114	6,581	7,500	7,500	0.00%	
LIB BLDG Water	520	700	893	704	700	700	0.00%	
LIB Films Books Etc.	53,178	55,762	60,586	56,509	61,483	61,697	0.35%	With Books, needs to be 16% of overall budget, state requirement for Aid
LIB Travel/Lodging/Meals	0	443	456	300	300	300	0.00%	
LIB Meetings/Seminars	0	815	250	355	1,927	1,927	0.00%	
LIB Insurance Bonds	0	274	274	183	274	274	0.00%	
Total Expenses	196,940	169,525	169,315	178,593	167,914	166,986	-0.55%	Decreased by $6815

Account Name	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Actual	3 Year Avg	FY26 Budget	FY27 Bud Request	2027% over 2026	
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LIB Longevity	0	0	259	86	0	0	0.00%	
Total Salaries	352,185	405,944	446,053	401,394	478,854	500,628	4.55%	Increase of $6,217 over COLA
LIB BLDG Landscape & Maintenance	53,938	19,256	22,586	31,927	10,304	10,304	0.00%	
LIB BLDG Computer Tech Support	560	1,292	0	617	250	250	0.00%	
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LIB BLDG Website Hosting	600	600	600	600	600	600	0.00%	
LIB BLDG Website Maintenance	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.00%	
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LIB Meetings/Seminars	0	815	250	355	1,927	1,927	0.00%	
LIB Insurance Bonds	0	274	274	183	274	274	0.00%	
Total Expenses	196,940	169,525	169,315	178,593	167,914	166,986	-0.55%	Decreased by $6815
Total Department Expenses	549,125	575,469	615,367	579,987	646,768	667,614	3.22%	
Endowment Contribution	69,014	71,015	85,752		88,519	91,942	3.87%	Does not include $4,425 Book Endowment Contribution
Net Requested Budget	480,111	504,454	529,615		558,249	575,672	3.12%	

History Center Update (Brian Connolly)

- The project bidding timeline was reviewed: filed sub-bids are due December 23rd, and final bids are due January 8th. A site walkthrough and addendum have been completed. No changes to the schedule are anticipated, and construction is expected to occur over the winter and spring, with completion mid-year.
- Brian reported that the working group meeting was canceled due to no outstanding issues, and coordination with the Historical Society remains on track.
- No new draft of the lease/tenant agreement has been circulated. Trustees agreed to follow up with the Town Administrator regarding next steps. The agreement is expected to take the form of a tenant/sub-tenant arrangement with the Town, addressing shared-building considerations. General alignment has been reached on key terms.
- Library staff reported ongoing coordination to manage potential impacts on programming (including the book sale) during construction. Trustees discussed the coordination of subcontractors and IT/telecommunications needs to ensure continuity with existing building systems. Follow-up with Town IT is planned.

Library Director's and Assistant Director's Report (Liz Anderson, Jen Carlson)

- Discussions are ongoing within the Minuteman Library Network regarding digital collections, including concerns about AI-generated and low-quality content on Hoopla. Sherborn Library has implemented new content filters and is evaluating future investments in e-book platforms (Hoopla, OverDrive/Libby), including exploring The Palace Project as a potential additional service.
- The Library is now fully staffed. Kate Potter has been hired as Senior Library Assistant and has already contributed significantly through her deep knowledge of the Sherborn community and schools.
- Staff updates included the return of Jenn from maternity leave, with recognition of Caelum for successfully covering responsibilities during her leave.
- Liz reported progress on developing a Youth Services vision, engaging youth services staff in a structured process to clarify mission, service priorities, and future planning. This work will inform broader strategic planning. Staff planning and visioning work will be focused on clarifying purpose and services ("why and then what and how").
- The Library is exploring a parenting workshop series, with potential initial topics such as disordered eating awareness, anxiety, and executive function, and is considering hybrid (in-person/virtual) formats to increase accessibility.
- Youth and outreach programming updates included continued success of the Graphic Novel Book Club, strong engagement with schools, and positive developments among youth services staff, including Maureen's upcoming graduation and plans to pursue library science degree.
- The Library continues to collaborate with the Council on Aging and the History Center on joint programming to share costs and broaden audiences, including upcoming January programs and a hybrid historical lecture scheduled for May.

- Ongoing clubs (e.g., knitting, chess, genealogy, film) continue to show strong participation and retention, with plans to explore new offerings to reach additional community members.
- Staff professional development remains active, with recent and upcoming conferences and workshops. Related budget expenditures are expected later in the fiscal year.

Motion to adjourn the meeting

- Frank, Seth seconded. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Adjourned 8:52 pm.