

Topsham Public Library Board of Trustees
Business Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2025

Present: Philip Dostie, James Doyle, Barbara Swiderski, Erin Arneson, Stephen Diamond, Laura Miller, Pamela Mott, Michael Snow, Brian Alexander, Heather Helenora, Miles Dailey, Director Katherine Webber

Absent: Don Stein

Members of the Public Present: None

1. **Call to Order:** 7:01 PM by President Philip Dostie
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Pam moved to accept the Agenda as presented, seconded by Jim. Motion carried by unanimous consent.
3. **Consent Agenda:** Steve moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Heather. Motion carried by unanimous consent.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** A review of the November Budget vs Actual Report shows a significant increase in designated restricted funds received made by several individual donors. The Finance Committee reviewed the monthly Profit and Loss Report and the first draft of the FY27 budget proposal. It has yet to be decided whether to move the CD funds to Androscoggin Bank now or wait until the next 6-month maturity date.
5. **Preliminary Budget Review:** There is an increase to line 502010 Insurance Benefits. This is due to two former eligible employees who were covered by outside insurance and therefore did not use the Library's benefits, which the new employees are using. Ingram, the new book supplier, is comparable in cost to the previous supplier. Line 502070 Unemployment is a new line item this year due to the move to a payroll company. Budget figures for Phone/internet and Electricity lines will be supplied by the Town as they pay for these services. The Town portion of the proposed budget reflects a 6.5% increase over FY26, which may be a hard sell. Reminder that this is the first draft and there may be additional changes before the final proposal to the Select Board is submitted.
6. **Library Benchmarks of Excellence:** This document is an assessment tool to ensure public libraries are meeting at least the minimum professional standards and providing services and resources for their communities. It is slated to be voted on by the Maine Library Commission in January, at which time libraries in the state will be expected to meet the basic requirements and encouraged to do more. Katherine provided her completed copy with notes that shows TPL exceeds the Emerging and Enhanced Levels but has a good deal of work left to achieve the Exemplary Level. Opportunities for improvement include Trustee self-evaluations and increased library partnerships.
7. **Director's Report:**
 - a. The Friends: Reviewed their monthly financials and options for presenters at their annual meeting.
 - b. Maine Women's Giving Tree Grant: The Library submitted a letter of intent for money to support babies and their caregivers through the purchase of play and functional

- products. The Group has requested that the Library apply for a \$2,735 grant before the February 27, 2026, deadline.
- c. **State of Libraries:** Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has reinstated all the agency's grants as a direct result of a federal court decision in a lawsuit against the Trump Administration filed by 21 states. It is uncertain whether Congress will continue to fund this in future budgets. The Right to Read Act, designed to ensure all students have access to an effective school library staffed by a certified school librarian, has been introduced in the House and Senate. It would increase money for critical literary resources in communities with significant needs and offer greater liability protection to teachers and school librarians.
 - d. **Staff/General:** 53 pieces of artwork are currently displayed in the Gallery by 14 staff, trustees, and volunteers as well as a display in the Community Room by artist Shanna McNair. Santa Reads has begun, with a Priority Real Estate donation of \$1,000 to provide free books for kids. Heather Rogers has been hired as the new bookkeeper and has begun training with Irene Martin. The internet outage on December 10th caused by the bridge construction was rectified later the same day. The "Wicked" sing-along on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving was a success. Cookie decorating on December 20 at 12:15 is open to all ages. Movie screening on December 23 at 6:00 pm will be "Rudolph", pajamas optional. The Library will close at 3:00 pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The reorganization of the teen graphic novel section has been completed.
 - e. **October/November staff Check-ins:** Many of the topics are the same as in previous months with the addition of cleaning and organizing the kitchen, have printed spine labels instead of handwritten ones, relabeling the music collection, technology for teens, Mariah is planning for Pre-K Storytime at Williams Cone School in January, Mariah and Lindsey will be involved with Battle of the Books at Mt. Ararat, new/upgraded computers for staff, and HVAC company coming Friday to fix the leak in the foyer and will check for cold spots around the building.
8. **Unfinished Business:** Governance has not yet worked on the role of the elected officers as they have been busy working on the personnel policy but will take this issue up soon. The political candidate for state office who requested use of the Community Room back in October cancelled as they decided to run for Jared Golden's seat in the US Congress.
9. **Public Comment:** none
10. **Adjournment:** Laura moved to adjourn the regular business meeting and move into executive session, seconded by Heather. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Swiderski, Board Secretary