

**Topsham Public Library Board of Trustees**  
**Business Meeting Minutes**  
**April 15, 2026**

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

**Absent:** Donald Stein, Pamela Mott, Miles Dailey

**Members of the Public Present:** none

1. **Call to Order:** 7:00 PM by President Philip Dostie
2. **Approval of Agenda:** Erin moved to accept the Agenda as presented, seconded by James. Motion carried by unanimous consent.
3. **Consent Agenda:** Stephen moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, seconded by Heather. Motion carried by unanimous consent.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** The monthly profit and loss statement was reviewed and is mostly on track to where it should be at this point in the fiscal year. There remains a supplier issue with books, which accounts for a lower percentage in spending. The committee agreed to allow MCF to use ACH deposits directly into our account rather than sending a check each quarter. The committee is reviewing the bylaws about two signatures on every check over \$2,500 due to high availability and security of ACH payments.
5. **Teen Services Update:** Posting for a new teen librarian went up today through May 4<sup>th</sup> for a 24-hour per week position. Katherine, Emma, and Dale have been filling in when needed until the new hire comes onboard. Volunteens are going strong with Saturday meetings. Snack donations for the teen room are received on a regular basis. There is a contest to design the cover for a mystery novel. Teen Poetry Walk had 14 participants in the library. Three teens read their poetry on the podcast with John Gillespie. There will be a reception for poets on April 25<sup>th</sup> at 12 PM. Margaret Williams has started a drop-in writing workshop on the first Wednesday of the month. Nintendo switch games, monthly crafts, design your own tote bags remain popular. Lindsay ordered raffle prizes for summer reading before she left and designed a skateboard kickoff. We are looking to provide more varied movie events for teens which haven't been very successful so far.
6. **Birch Grove for Connie Bailey:** An anonymous donor gave \$2,200 in December 2024 in Connie Bailey's name for the purchase of birch trees for the Library property. Another anonymous donation of \$1,500 was received in July 2025 to purchase a bench for the birch grove. Library gardener Sarah Walpole has drawn up a 2,500 square foot plan for the birch grove near the gazebo, which will create a new ecosystem and improve the property site. The Facilities Committee recommended scaling back the original plan, which they felt was too close to

the current walkway and eliminating two of the dead hedges from the design. A new design has been proposed. The plan calls for sheet mulching the area for the grove to ecologically kill the grass and plant the trees in the fall. Sarah estimates the cost to be approximately \$6,000. The Development and Outreach Committee has decided to dedicate the donations from the Spring Appeal to go towards the gardens. Erin moved to spend up to \$7,000 for the birch grove, seconded by Heather. Motion passed unanimously.

**7. Director's Report:**

- a. The Friends: hosted their annual meeting on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Emily Biedrzycki was elected Secretary and Lori Boulay was elected Treasurer. Storyteller Dr. Phyllis Blackstone was a guest speaker and shared some of her stories.
- b. State of Libraries: Federal government dropped its appeal of an earlier court ruling that reinstated funding to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. ALA and AFSCME prevailed in their lawsuit to preserve IMLS, signing an agreement with the federal government that protects the agency and its programs. However, the new federal budget proposal recommends eliminating funding for libraries and their services. Governor Mills has proclaimed April to be Maine Library Month, recognizing the role libraries play in their communities. National Library Week is April 19-24, and the theme is Finding Your Joy. We will have social media posts each day, special bookmarks, and poster featuring the new face of Reading Rainbow, Michael Threets, an active librarian, and this year's honorary chair of the event. The Maine Department of Agriculture has agreed to free admittance to state parks to anyone with a library card on April 25.
- c. Staff/General: Job ad for teen services librarian posted the week of April 13. Tech Help on Thursday has been changed to 1PM because of the success of Storytime and Thursday Art programs. The Library will be closed on April 20 for Patriots' Day holiday. School vacation week will include crafts every day, Perler beading and a Pokémon party, culminating with Big Truck Day, model trains, and a stuffie sleepover on Friday. The second Bling Date with a Book is on Friday, April 24 at 5:30 and the theme is Devil Wears Diamonds. There will be a poetry reading on April 25 at 1 PM. People's choice for Joy of the Lens is ongoing until April 17<sup>th</sup>. The move to Library PINs has gone smoothly, and staff is assisting anyone applying for a new library card with setting up their PIN. A new bulletin board will be set up specifically for long-term notices. There has been success at requesting passes and gift cards from Smitty's and Sea Dogs for Summer Reading prizes.
- d. March staff check-ins: Volunteer appreciation is next week, acquiring laptops for teen gaming, Development strategy for fundraising, book ordering, weeding inventory, billing best practices and copier/toner issues.

**8. Unfinished Business:** none

- 9. New Business:** Heather mentioned an organization called the Foreside Club appears to already exist in the Falmouth area. A discussion ensued how the

name of the club came about, due to the Library's address. It was explained that members who make an ongoing monthly donation become members of the Foreside Club.

Barbara stated that all trustees are responsible for donating to the Library as obtaining some grants require 100% board donations. Anyone who has not already made their donation should do so before the fiscal year ends. Becoming a monthly donor ensures the Library has a regular income stream to rely on.

10. **Public Comment:** none

11. **Adjournment:** Barbara moved to adjourn the regular business meeting and enter into executive session, seconded by Laura. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Swiderski, Board Secretary