



**Report presented to the Board of Trustees
by Margaret Morrissey, Director
presented March 26, 2024**

Budget

The budget request was presented at a meeting with the Town Manager and Finance team 3/11. Chairman Dyer attended.

Building

- Fire extinguishers were inspected by Colby 2/29
- Power outage at 4 PM, library closed at 4:10 on 3/12 after consultation with the Town Manager.
- Issue with the bike pump at the fix-it station reported, Jamie checking this out 3/25.
- Gas meter changed out 3/26. Changed every 7 years.
- Town Manager is working on an RFP for the ceilings throughout the building. Received an updated technical spec. from Sherwin Williams.
- Since 6/14 we have been experiencing intermittent issues with the elevator that were eventually resolved. We have been advised that the elevator is at 'end of life' and we need to consider a modernization program. TK Elevator has bought US Ascension 2000 elevators and has developed a 'modernization plan'. \$120K is the quoted cost and any upgrades to the electrical service, fire service etc., will be additional costs. The modernization of the elevator was given first priority status in the Capital Requests, submitted 12/8. Attempting to ascertain how much a new elevator would cost for comparison purposes.
- Guardian Energy has been contracted to replace the insulation in the 1966 attic area 12/18. Total cost of the project \$40,494 and will cost the town \$17,220 with the MassSave incentives. The contract was signed January 8, 2024 project is yet to be scheduled.
- Semi-annual fire test conducted by Norel Services on March 5th - passed. Norel came to change two horns that failed the inspection, but found them to be in working order. Further testing found no faults, so the Deficits report will be updated.
- Panel 1 #15-17 upwards lights, near the Reference Desk, are making a humming sound. They were turned off.
- Bay Path Vocational School electrical department are scheduled to do some electrical work at the library. The instructor has indicated that they plan on doing the work at JEL in April.
- Complaint about cleanliness in the library received 3/15, that flies have been on a specific windowsill for multiple weeks, and trash on the ground, in the same places. Contacted DPW Operations Manager to have the cleanliness complaint addressed. Request was reiterated to have the trash around the property picked up. Also requested to schedule the removal of the varnish from the floor of the lower level bathroom

Chess Park

- Education and Human Services recommended to Town Council that the Town would 3/25.
 - "Vote the creation of a Chess Park at the Jacob Edwards Library and to allow the Town Manager to work with the Finance Department to establish and create an account to receive donations."
- Email sent to Finance team 3/26 to ascertain next steps.

Children's Room

- Eastford Road School invitation to have a table at "Story Night" 4/3
- Wiggles and Giggles / Littles and Stem Program return on first week of April
- AmeriCorps program for April vacation and June before school ends
- Working on summer reading program "Read Renew Repeat"
 - Summer Reading 2024 begins June 24th and ends Aug 2nd
 - Decorating ideas are completed
 - Weekly activity stations have been established and are being created
- Weeding and cleaning Fiction
- Preparing for the FOJEL book mark contest for Summer Reading 2024

Collection Development

- Inventory of Biographies
- Displays created by staff to promote the library materials we have to offer with seasonal relevancy: March Madness, St. Patrick's Day and National Women's History month.

Community

- WCAC Fuel Assistance will be hosted here until the end of April, as per discussion

FOJEL

- St. Patrick's Day display and sale
- Next meeting Monday, April 1st, at 2 pm in the Pioppi Room.
- Book Sale April 4 at noon to 7:45 pm, April 5 from 9 am to 4:45 pm and Saturday April 6th from 9 am to 11:30 am.

Grants and Donations

- Participating in a training **Making It Public (MIP) for Massachusetts Municipalities** with Economic Development Director Peg Dean. MIP is a public art training program. At the end of the Municipal Track training, each municipality will apply the skills they've learned to release a Call for Temporary Public Art. Each participating municipality receives a \$15,000 grant from NEFA to fund artists through their Call.
- JEL awarded **Latino Poetry: Places We Call Home** grant for \$1,200 by Library of America in support of free public programming 3/18. Vote needed to accept

Literacy Volunteers

- Office will be closed to in-person visits during the month of March. Online hours will be available, and classes will continue. There may be a delay in opening in April, due to an unforeseen event. We are being kept updated by the Executive Director Emily Farrell.
- Literacy Volunteers will be offering an ESOL Basic Class starting Monday, April 1st for 8 participants.

Local History

- Attended the MOTT (MA Office of Travel and Tourism) grant group meeting to compile a database of historic buildings, as part of a series of walking tours that are being planned.

Long Range Plan

- Staff is promoting the databases and other free information resources. Constant positive feedback is being given to staff on their customer service but in particular the assistance they provide to patrons using the mobile printing.

Outreach

- *MIP (Making It Public)* program that Peg Dean and I are participating in. There is a \$15,000 grant available for public art in the community. Feedback was requested from the Redevelopment Authority. There is a commitment to attend a series of webinars and submit some 'homework' that will work towards a "Call for Art"
- SCTV did a short promo with Dino Tata to promote the Eclipse program 3/28 at 6:30 pm. Special glasses to view the eclipse have been provided by Gereen and Cory Alarie through the Friends of the Jacob Edwards Library and will be distributed to those in attendance at the program (while supply lasts)
- Southbridge Garden Club has provided a basket of seeds for distribution to the community. Patrons are responding positively.
- Toured the new Bridge Of Faith Youth Center 3/20. The group has been using the Pioppi Room on Thursdays to host their program, while the construction is underway.

Poet Laureate

- Town Council approved the proposal to create the position of Poet Laureate for the Town of Southbridge. Bill Tremblay has accepted the inaugural position for a term of one year.

Programs

- Women's Handwork exhibit on view throughout the month of March. The Meet and Greet March 7th, was well attended and SCTV recorded the event. There has been lot of activity on social media commenting and sharing the YouTube footage.
- Crocodile River Music event 3/14 attracted a large attendance and
- JEL Book Club: *Nettle and Bone* by T Kingfisher 3/20
- *Afternoon Author Talk* author Carol Bernadone of *Growing Hope* will present an author talk 3/27
- *Tuesday Knitting* continues to attract participants from area towns and from CT too.
- *Eclipse* presentation by Dino Tata, NASA Solar System Ambassador 3/28

- *Drop In Chess* is facilitated on Saturday mornings

Reference

- During the month many research questions were responded to, mostly on genealogy and vital records.
- Attended the Harrod Lecture at Fitchburg State University presented by Dr Teresa Fava Thomas on the Hamilton Woolen Mill. Although not directly related to the library, except that the library has been assisting with research and documenting the history - part of the Hamilton Woolen Mill was razed on 3/7, the, specifically the Westwood/Artist Development Center section.

Safety and Security

- Central Baptist Church was cordoned off 2/29 for a few days, due to slates slipping off the roof. Patrons had to approach the library from the end of Foster Street. The Foster Street parking lot was still accessible.
- Officer O'Brien came in 3/4 to check the Foster St camera for a window broken at the Central Baptist Church on 2/29
- Foster St reopened 3/4
- Some problem patron behavior during the month and staff is alert to maintaining order. Met with Daniel Wasiuk, Director of Health who will have the inspector do some check-ins at JEL and speak with some of the patrons who are odiferous and causing problems by leaving messes
- 3/15 Daniel Fuentes, the Health Inspector, visited to review the reported nuisances at JEL. He will report back to the Health Director and form a plan. He will check in periodically. We discussed the Visitor Policy, which is only posted by the Town in Employee Rules and Regulations. The Town's Visitor Policy is posted on the official notice board, adjacent to Circ.

Staff

- Two full time staff are registered for the Basic Library Techniques course which has four sections. The staff have one section of the Cataloging course to complete. It is anticipated that they will work through the series.

Tax Abatement

- The Tax Abatement Program has started for 2024. There are five participants Linda DiBonaventura, Cindy Marino, Virginia Rutcho, Ted Bartlett and Holly Christo.

Tax Assistance

- WCAC offered the VITA program at the library with three tax preparers over four sessions. It was a popular program with the community and staff facilitated by making appointments and calling with appointment reminders. It was very easy to work with this group and we conveyed our interest in hosting in future years.

Technology

- CWMARS major change to the catalog. Aspen is now the platform.
- Confirmed 22 machines are supported by the CWMARS PC desktop support program.
- Self-check out machine was down and a ticket generated
- Receipt printer settings in Children's Room had been reset but continued to be problematic. A ticket was generated.
- Ockers completed the Touchview 65" TV and the web camera in the Reading Room. Staff were also provided training. SCTV Director Charles Diaz was invited to attend, as the staff will be interfacing with this technology when recording programs at JEL 3/21.
- Postings were made to social media and website.
- Municipal Fiber Grant FY24 application approved by Town Council. Deadline 4/12. IT Director and Economic Development Director coordinating the efforts.

Teen

- The monthly *Take and Make* craft feature bracelet making from magazines
- Teen Advisory Group (TAG) meeting 3/19 – no show.

Training

- Two staff have signed up to take the catalog training series offered by MA Library System. This course is part of the Basic Library Techniques program and staff will be encouraged to continue with the other three sections, leading to a certificate.
- Ockers provided training on the new equipment in the Pioppi and Reading Rooms.