

DIRECTOR
KIMBERLY A. GRAD



TRUSTEES
GARY J. AMBERIK, CHAIR
JOHN WILLIAMS, VICE
CHAIR
KATHY BARKER,
SECRETARY
MARJORIE NORMAN
DAVID ROSS
KATHLEEN WASLOV

Abbot Public Library Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes – November 3, 2025

Attendees:

Trustees: Gary Amberik, Kathy Barker, Marjorie Norman, Kathleen Waslov, John Williams,

Director: Kimberly Grad

Attending by Zoom: David Ross

Absent: None

Meeting was available via zoom

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting location, held by zoom and at the Library was called to order at 6:04 pm. Motion to approve the Minutes for the meeting on 10/6/2025. The Motion was seconded and approved by vote:

Gary Amberik	Yes
Kathy Barker	Yes
Marjorie Norman	Yes
David Ross	Yes
Kathleen Waslov	Yes
John Williams	Yes

As one member is attending by Zoom, roll call voting is required.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This report offers a snapshot of everything we've been working on, from key operational updates and exciting staff additions to our critical safety and training initiatives. Our focus remains on enhancing staff readiness through mandatory safety training, upgrading public and staff technology, and advancing our long-term strategic planning to best serve the community. Financial decisions from Second Century Fund's October meeting are included here, and as always, a few important motions at the end that require your attention. Thanks for your continued support!

Schedule of Service & Operations/ Holiday Closures

1. Veterans Day: The library will be closed on Tuesday, November 11.
2. Thanksgiving: The library will close early at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, November 26, and remain closed through Friday, November 28.
3. After-Hours Meetings: Two after-hours community meetings are scheduled for library staff in November.

Building Updates

1. Front lawn light repairs are tentatively scheduled for November 17–18.
2. Shelving reorganization is ongoing in the Processing Room, Quiet Reading Room, and Scully Salon.
3. New curtains for the Makerspace are in progress.
4. Awaiting news of a Town-wide HVAC maintenance contractor

Staffing & Professional Development

1. Staff Updates
 - a. New Hire: Julia Ricks has been hired for the Technical Services Assistant role and is scheduled to begin on November 10.
 - b. Open Position: We are actively interviewing candidates for the Technical Resource Specialist position.
2. Mandatory Safety and Preparedness Training

Three essential training sessions are scheduled to enhance staff readiness and patron service:

 - a. Thursday, December 18 – Safety/De-escalation Training: MLS Consultant Michele Eberle will lead this critical session on managing patron conflicts, including Intellectual Freedom inquiries.
 - b. Thursday, January 8 – Active Shooter Training: This public safety training, led by Police Chief Dennis King, is mandatory and especially relevant given recent incidents at libraries nationwide.
 - c. Thursday, February 5 – Pathways to Friendship: Dotty Foley from Northeast Arc will lead a session focused on fostering friendships and ensuring our library is a truly inclusive space.
 - d. Fire Drill: A drill will be scheduled soon in coordination with Fire Chief Jason Gilliland. The exact date will be announced one week in advance.

Financial & Planning Reports

Report from Second Century Fund Meeting (October 14, 2025)

The following expenses were proposed and approved for technology and services:

1. Patron-Facing Technology: (\$9,271.00)
 - a. Maintain inventory of 22 Hotspots:
 - b. 10 new Apple iPads (11th Gen, 2025) for programming, periodicals, and tutorials (includes cases and accident plans)
 - c. 2 new public-use computers for the Children's Room
 - d. Dedicated Teen Room Printer
2. Staff Technology Upgrade: (\$4,935.00)

7 new Dell Pro Slim Desktops to replace aging equipment and ensure efficient operations

3. Annual Overdrive expense/ Managed by NOBLE (\$19,049.00)

Strategic Plan 2026: Planning has begun, which includes:

1. A potential 5–6 month User Needs Assessment Survey.
2. Community Listening Sessions with community leaders (MLS Consultant may be called upon to facilitate).
3. Exact timeline to be determined. The current plan is dated 2022-2027.

Other Library Highlights & Updates

1. Art in the Building: Kathy Barker, Dave Hostetter, and Pam Peterson recently met to discuss the newest model ship donation and proposals for additional art acquisitions.
2. Interior Signage: Updates are being made to the Main Service Desk (Circulation/Reference) and A-Frame signage.
3. Policy Update: A minor edit to the Borrowing Policy - Item 1.4 Should read:
“Children and teens 13 or under may obtain a library card with the signature of a parent or legal guardian. The parent or guardian is responsible for materials borrowed on the child’s card.” (not 17).
4. Abbot Public Library Foundation Appeal: Work is ongoing for the Abbot Public Library Foundation Annual Appeal mail and email.

School Outreach in Progress

1. Kimberly Grad is meeting with 9 different 3rd grade classes at Brown and Glover Schools and working with Tower School to observe Mock Caldecott discussions with grades 1-3. This includes a library card drive and invitation for each class to visit the library during the school year.
2. Marcia Cannon is working on an outreach project with Marblehead preschools and is assembling 30 “welcome baby” kits for Marblehead Pediatrics on Atlantic Avenue, courtesy of the Dr. Loudon Donation Fund. They should be completed and delivered this month.
3. Bianca Hezekiah is working with the National Art Honor Society at Marblehead High School on a project in honor of the Mary MacAllister Fine Arts Fund. (See program highlights section for more details).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Teen Room - notes from the Teen Librarian

I recently reached out to the Art Department at Marblehead High School to try and start a new collaboration between Abbot and MHS. I was put in touch with Hunter Proulx, advisor of the Marblehead chapter of the National Art Honor Society. He oversees a group of 36 students and was really receptive to the idea of students installing and showing their art pieces here at the

library. On 10/21 I met with five NAHS student officers to introduce myself, show them around the building, and further discuss the scope of the project. Students talked about how many NAHS members were photographers and painters, and were encouraged to hear that sculpture, illustration, and graphic design are also viable mediums for display. I emphasized that I wanted local teens to feel more welcomed by the library, which is why I sought out the partnership and want to follow their lead. Nothing is worse than a bunch of adults telling teens what they want! The broad deadline for this project is Spring 2026.



I introduced one of my younger visitors to the [Humblewood D&D campaign setting](#) - She and her older sister had attended the Danger Wizard campaign we had here at the beginning of the year. She returned the next day to show me she had made dozens of bookmarks (see pic) and already decided she was going to make a chaotic neutral aligned raccoon artificer. She was having trouble picking out a name for him - Bristle, Cork, Twig, Trunk? I asked her. "What does Maddie (older sister) say, did she help?" "She says nothing! She says 'why are you in my room, get out!' "

"This author looks like a nerd so I trust her. I don't like it when men-- when like a man is 30 years old and having a midlife crisis and thinks he needs to suddenly become a ~SeRiOuS wRiTeR. It's never good."

Screaming Van Morrison lyrics aloud, because October's Question of the Month was "What's your current favorite song?"

"The other day my dad tried to tell me my curfew could be 3 am and my mother had a Nervous. Breakdown. Then he said okay well how about midnight, and then she CRIED."

"I don't like JK Rowling so I don't give her any of my money, but I DO have to say the books were like. Pretty great. I didn't buy them when I read them, the copies of Harry Potter I have are my parents' so they're from the 80s. No? 90s? I don't know! The footage of them with the books is so old so of course it seems like they were from like 80s to the 2000s!"

Children's Room - Notes from the Children's Librarian

We had a gaming program this month-Haunted Mansions with Mine Craft, also a workshop to create Beaded Spiders, and a Halloween party along with our regular programming. The party featured four crafts, snacks and beverages, three simple games, and a read-a-loud of spooky picture books. Parents thanked us, which doesn't always happen, and there were very busy and happy children with our games and crafts. Applause for the reading too- nice group!

Anecdotes:

- Parent overheard speaking to child: "You can either have another Dog Man book or an ice cream."
- Patron: "Your room is so bright and welcoming."
- "You guys are the best;" I always stop here first to narrow down my topic." Spoken by a teacher who is trying to create a new curriculum and borrowed 25 nature and winter season books.

- Mother and daughter are gazing at a tiny, single sandal on our lost & found shelf. Mother says: “I wonder how they left to go home with only one shoe?” Child answered: “They hopped!”

Adult Programs:

Book clubs have been especially popular and well attended. The new Cookbook Club hosted by local cookbook expert Linda Bassett has been a hit. October’s meeting featured Salt Fat Acid Heat by Samrin Nosrat. Our Children’s Room reported that one patron took the day off from work just to attend the cookbook club program. We also offered an array of virtual programs that received a fair amount of attendance and attention.

Requesting the following motions for approval:

1. Override Account Purchase: Hayden Lock Invoice
Approval for an additional \$1,321.89 to cover unforeseen work by Hayden Lock. This brings the total invoice dated 9/24/25 to \$5,252.07, an increase from the \$3,930.18 purchase order approved at the July 14, 2025, board meeting.
2. Acquisition of painting of the “Hannah ship model” - proposed by Pam Peterson, Marblehead Historical Commission. The catalog number for Mr. Hyland’s painting’s catalog number is 2025-041-00001. It measures 58 wide by 51 high.

In summary, the next few months will be critical for investing in our infrastructure and personnel—from technology upgrades funded by the Second Century Fund to essential safety training for our staff. These efforts directly support our mission to provide a welcoming and secure environment while maintaining high service standards. We appreciate your continued support!

Discussion of Director’s Report

The new janitor is working out well. The Director is looking to add a green button for staff to alert each other on issues which would add to the existing panic button. The Director will provide an overview of Noble costs at next meeting. For the upcoming strategic Plan, the Director will be developing a survey and will look at recent town wellness survey. Marjorie will share recent survey work to assist on developing an outline.

The recent Open mic night reading was well attended.

We elected to respectfully decline the offer of the Hannah painting due to lack of space. The Director will research with head of town depts. for interest for the current clock in Marblehead room as it doesn’t fit the décor and is too expensive to repair.

The library staff Holiday 2nd Thursday potluck with white elephant and ugly sweater event. The Director will look into getting an updated Hestia model of Library.

The Director continues to monitor Library stats and will send separately as they are run at the first of month. Work has been completed on ROI analysis incorporating statistics on library usage – examples are 250,000 interactions annually and 80,000 visitors etc.

The Director will look into white noise/air purifier to manage sound projection of staff voices.

There was a Motion for approval of payment made as described in the director's report for Hayden Lock Invoice from the Override Account Purchase for an additional \$1,321.89 to cover unforeseen work by Hayden Lock. This brings the total invoice dated 9/24/25 to \$5,252.07, an increase from the \$3,930.18 purchase order approved at the July 14, 2025, board meeting. The Motion was for seconded and voted as approved.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Gary Amberik	Yes
Kathy Barker	Yes
Marjorie Norman	Yes
David Ross	Yes
Kathleen Waslov	Yes
John Williams	Yes

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Research is ongoing and a proposal will be put together for additional art for the Scully Room and installation ideas of ship models. The Driftwood Garden Club completed installation of new pavers near outdoor sign. The director will look at estimating daily average costs to run library to be able to respond to inquiries/requests that the library be open on Sundays.

FRIENDS REPORT

The board is continuing to work on membership renewal. There will be a POP-UP Book Sale at COA – NOVEMBER 18, 2025 – 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The first meeting of the Cookbook Club was very successful with approximately eighteen people in attendance. The next meeting of the Cookbook Club will be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 12:00 noon – 1:30 pm featuring Ina Garten's Barefoot in Paris: Easy French Food You Can Serve at Home.

APLF

Meetings are ongoing for November annual appeal. A Stewardship letter going out shortly. The group is looking at a Winter event.

There was a Motion to adjourn. Motion seconded. All approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

End of Meeting Minutes