

Board of Trustees
Winthrop Public Library and Museum
Meeting Minutes: September 10, 2026

In Attendance:

In Person:

Trustees: Gillian Teixeira, Cynthia Hastings, Gary Skomro, Annie Ferreira, Grace Kingsbery
Library Director – Greg McClay; Executive Assistant – Alana Locke

Via Zoom:

Trustee Alyson Casey Dewar

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **6:03 p.m.**

Minutes

Minutes from the August meeting were submitted for approval.

- Motion to approve by Trustee Hastings
- Seconded by Trustee Skomro
- No questions, comments, or discussion
- Trustees present voted in favor; Trustee Dewar abstained
- Motion passed

Chair Report

The Chair had nothing to report.

Director's Report

HVAC

Physical installation of the new HVAC units was completed throughout August. The units are now awaiting electrical connections before becoming operational. Electrical work is scheduled to begin next week, it is expected to take a couple of days.

During installation, drilling created dust in an area where a patron was using the copy machine. The patron expressed concern, and work was temporarily stopped until the patron completed his copying and left the area. Director McClay notified the Town Manager of the incident. No further issues were reported.

Study Rooms

Individual fans have been purchased for the study rooms to improve air circulation. Director McClay discussed additional options with Rich (Cifuni), including cutting vents into the rooms. Altering the doors is not preferred due to their expense.

Another option would be installing Energy Recovery Ventilators (ERVs), which would provide continuous fresh-air circulation. ERVs were estimated at approximately **\$1,500 per room** and were considered cost-prohibitive at this time.

The Library will first determine whether the individual fans adequately address the airflow issue before considering additional work.

Basement Craft Room

The main basement room has been cleaned out and is being considered for renovation into a dedicated craft and activity space. The room is currently in rough condition, particularly the flooring. Existing floor tiles have asbestos underneath them, meaning the tiles should be covered rather than removed.

Correale Construction provided an estimate of **\$19,740** for improvements to the room. The proposed work includes framing and insulating walls, electrical work, ceiling repairs, painting, replacement of three sliding windows, floor preparation, and installation of VCT flooring.

Trustees discussed the intended use of the room for crafts and other activities involving significant foot traffic and the possibility of spills or dropped materials. The Board agreed that addressing the flooring is necessary, while some other improvements could be considered optional depending on cost.

The Board also discussed the benefit of developing a more cohesive long-term plan for improvements to the Library building rather than continuing to address spaces individually. The Library has historically been renovated floor by floor or section by section as needs and funding have arisen.

Trustee Skomro raised concern about insulation wrapping around a pipe in the basement and requested that it be inspected for asbestos or other hazardous material before renovation proceeds.

Motion: Trustee Teixeira moved to allocate **up to \$25,000 from State Aid** for the new Library craft room in the basement, in conjunction with the Correale estimate, contingent upon inspection of the pipe and wrapping confirming that there is no hazardous material requiring remediation. If hazardous material is identified, the project will pause until the Board receives a cost analysis for remediation.

Trustee Kingsbery seconded the motion.

During discussion, trustees clarified that the \$25,000 allocation would allow Director McClay to move the project forward once the environmental concern was resolved. Director McClay reported that approximately **\$200,000 is currently available in State Aid** and explained that the Library generally uses incoming State Aid rather than drawing substantially from the existing balance.

Vote: All trustees voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Skomro requested that the Board be informed as soon as the results of the pipe inspection are known.

Craft Room Follow-Up

The Board discussed future planning for the craft room, including capacity, furniture, storage and cabinet space. Final room capacity will depend upon the furniture layout and available unobstructed floor space. Director McClay is exploring durable, movable furniture appropriate for library programming and craft activities.

Trustee Communications

Trustees discussed appropriate communication between meetings, particularly when responding to emails concerning Board business.

To avoid potential Open Meeting Law issues, trustees were reminded to communicate individually with the Director or Chair rather than engaging in substantive Board discussion through group email or “reply all.” Matters requiring Board deliberation should be discussed at a properly posted public meeting.

Financial Report

The Library’s annual financial report to the state is due **October 2**. Director McClay does not anticipate any issues and will provide additional details at the next meeting.

Director McClay reviewed state requirements related to Library funding, including the municipality’s obligation to provide a required level of funding and the Library’s requirement to spend a designated portion of its budget on library materials.

TIME Magazine Archive

The Library has added the **TIME Magazine Archive** to its database offerings. The archive provides online access to TIME issues from **1923 through 2000**. More recent magazine and newspaper content is available through another Library database.

The resource is available through the Library website and can be accessed with a library card. The Library plans to continue publicizing the archive, including highlighting interesting historical articles and content.

Schools and Library Resources

Trustees discussed the Library's relationship with the Winthrop Public Schools, particularly at the middle and high school levels.

The Children's Department has established relationships with individual teachers, but there is currently no formal Library-wide connection with the school district regarding databases and other resources.

Trustees discussed whether there may be overlap between databases paid for by the schools and those provided by the Library and whether greater coordination could benefit students and teachers.

The Board also discussed cursive writing as a potential Library activity and the recent cursive related programming/display developed by the Children's Department.

Alana will connect with Liz Telemosse regarding the appropriate person to contact within the school district to better understand which databases and resources are currently available through the schools. Assistant Superintendent **Brian Curley** was suggested as a possible contact.

Library Usage Data

Trustee Kingsbery asked how the Library uses the statistical data included in the Director's reports.

Director McClay explained that the data confirms usage trends he observes operationally and can help support decisions such as staffing levels and scheduling. Trustees discussed door counters, patron activity and tracking the number of programs offered each month and attendance at those programs.

Education Incentive Program

The Board discussed possible education incentive or tuition reimbursement opportunity for current Library employees.

Trustees discussed whether such a benefit would first need to be negotiated through the union contract or whether the Library could establish a separate program funded through State Aid and available to both union and non-union employees.

Trustee Skomro expressed concern about offering a benefit outside of the collective bargaining process and stated that any benefit for union employees should be addressed through the union contract. Trustees Kingsbery and Hastings expressed support for exploring whether a Library funded program could be established with consistent parameters for eligible employees, provided it is legally permissible.

Trustees also discussed the administrative requirements of a potential program, including who

would review applications, determine eligibility and process reimbursements. There was general agreement that administration of an employee benefit would be more appropriately handled through the Town's Human Resources Department rather than by the Trustees.

Director McClay indicated that he could speak with Town Manager **Tony Marino** to determine what options are legally and administratively available.

Motion: Trustee Ferreira moved to ask Director McClay to have a conversation with Town Manager Tony Marino regarding the process for creating an education incentive program for current Library employees, beginning with union employees, that would be funded through State Aid up to a maximum annual amount to be determined. The conversation should also determine whether the program would need to be negotiated into the union contract or could otherwise be established, and whether the Town's Human Resources Department could administer the program if created.

Trustee Hastings seconded the motion.

The Board identified several questions for the Town Manager, including:

1. Whether an education incentive must be negotiated into the union contract, could be addressed through an addendum or other process, or must wait until the next contract negotiations;
2. Whether there are any concerns with ultimately making an approved program available to both union and non-union Library employees; and
3. Whether the Town and its Human Resources Department could administer a Library specific education reimbursement program funded through State Aid.

Trustees noted that contract addendums have been used previously when the Town, union and Library were in agreement on a contractual change.

Vote: All trustees voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Director McClay will discuss the matter with the Town Manager and report back to the Board.

Bulletin Board Policy

Trustee Skomro requested an electronic copy of the current Bulletin Board Policy. Trustee Ferreira will send him a copy.

The Board will continue its review of the Bulletin Board Policy at the October meeting.

New Items

No new items were discussed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Future Meetings

The next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for **Thursday, October 8, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.**

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn by Trustee Ferreira
- Seconded by Trustees Hastings and Kingsbery
- All trustees voted in favor
- Motion passed unanimously
- Meeting adjourned at **7:23 p.m.**