ADVISORY TO THE PUBLIC:

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 and extended by Chapters 22 and 107 of the Acts of 2022, this Jones Library Board of Trustees meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to access the meeting may do so via Zoom or by telephone. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means.

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.
When: Feb 12, 2024 09:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: The Jones Library, Inc. Board of Trustees

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
https://amherstma.zoom.us/j/81308551101
Or One tap mobile :
+13126266799,,81308551101# US (Chicago)
+16468769923,,81308551101# US (New York)

Or Telephone:
Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Webinar ID: 813 0855 1101
International numbers available: https://amherstma.zoom.us/u/kyg4rAjL1

1. Call to Order/Attendance. (1 minute)
2. Changes/Additions to Agenda.
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s) (1-22-24). (5 minutes) *
4. Public Comment. (5 minutes)
5. President’s Report. (15 minutes) *
   a. Amherst Historical Society Property Easements Negotiations
6. Committee Reports/Questions for Committees.
   a. Library Building Committee (Sarat). (10 minutes)
   [Project Update [Schedule; Budget; Designs; Interim Spaces; Movers RFP]
   b. Buildings and Facilities Committee (Ameen). (5 minutes)
   ()
   c. Development (Edwards). (5 minutes) *
   (Annual Fund Report; Capital Campaign Report)
   d. Personnel, Planning, and Policy (Ely). (5 minutes) *
   ()
   e. Budget (Pam). (10 minutes) *
   (FY24 Budget; FY25 Budget Request)
   f. Investment (Pam). (10 minutes)
   (Vanguard Transition to Mercer)
7. Friends of The Jones Library System Report (Mainzer/Donoghue). (5 minutes)
8. Director’s Report (Sharry). (5 minutes) *

* Indicates Handout(s) May be Made Available.
RED Indicates Vote Required.
Handouts *
1. Budget Committee Minutes  
   a. BCG
2. Building Committee Minutes  
   a. Design Committee Minutes 
   b. Outreach Committee Minutes 
3. Buildings and Facilities Committee Minutes 
4. Development Committee Minutes 
5. Investment Committee Minutes  
   a. Endowment Summary – Foundation Account and Woodbury Fund
6. Personnel, Planning and Policy Committee Minutes  
   a. JEDI Committee Minutes 1-19-24

Upcoming Meeting Dates/Times
1. Trustees – Monday, March 25, 2024; 9am; Zoom
2. Budget Committee – 2nd Tuesday; 1pm (2-13-24)  
   a. BCG - TBD
3. Building Committee - TBD  
   a. Design Committee – TBD 
   b. Outreach Committee – TBD

c. Capital Campaign Event – Friday, April 5, 2024
5. Burnett Gallery – 2nd Wednesday
6. Development – TBD
7. Friends – 2nd Monday; 5pm; Woodbury (3-11-24)
8. Investment Committee – quarterly 
9. PPP – 2nd Tuesday; 9am (2-13-24)  
   a. JEDI – 2-16-24; 11:30am
10. Monthly Town Manager/Library Director Meeting – 2nd Thursday; 11am (3-14-24)
11. Monthly BID Meeting – 4th Friday; 8:30am (2-23-24)
12. Town Leadership/DH Meeting – 1st Tuesday; 8:30am; monthly (3-5-24)
13. Weekly Library Department Heads Meeting – every other Wednesday; 10am; Zoom
15. OTSP Author Event – 2-23-24

* Indicates Handout(s) May be Made Available.
RED Indicates Vote Required.
Proposed Motions

I. Trustee President Motion (proposed):

MOTION: To approve the temporary and permanent easements between the property of the Board of the Amherst Historical Society and the Board of the Jones Library, Inc.

II. Investment Committee Motion (proposed):

MOTION: To continue to invest The Jones Library, Inc.’s funds with Vanguard as Vanguard transitions its institutional Outsourced Chief Investment Officer (OCIO) business to Mercer.
Meeting of the Town’s Library Board of Trustees, and the Jones Library Inc

22 January 2023 - 4pm – meeting conducted online via Zoom Webinar

Members Present: Tamson Ely, Lee Edwards, Farah Ameen, Bob Pam, Eugene Goffredo

Member Not Present: Austin Sarat

Also Present: Sharon Sharry, Elaine Donoghue from Friends of Jones Library, Members of the Public (2 attendees at start of meeting)

1. Meeting called to Order at 4:00 pm (Tamson Ely chaired in Austin Sarat’s absence)
2. Changes/Additions to Agenda. Trustee Ameen added an item about JEDI status, see Item 9 below
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s) (1-4-24). Approved by all - one point added around JEDI
4. Public Comment - None
5. President’s Report.
   a. Trustee Meeting Schedule - dates are as follows, all start at 9am: 12 Feb, 25 Mar, 8 Apr, 13 May, 10 June
   b. Trustee Bylaws - Trustee Pam had some comments, re:
      i. Article III, section 2, questions why the President position is exempted from the process of filling vacancies
      ii. Article 4 section 6 typo correction
      iii. Article 4 section 7 typo correction
6. Committee Reports/Questions for Committees.
   a. Library Building Committee (Director Sharry filled in for Trustee Sarat).
      Project Update [Schedule; Permitting; Budget; Designs; Bid Documents; Interim Spaces]
      i. Bidding process to begin, walkthrough for bidders, bids to be received as per timetable
      ii. Discussions continue for options for interim locations whilst Jones closed
      iii. Discussions continue with abutters of Jones over building project
      iv. Building committee changes will happen in next few weeks
      v. Corrections requested by Trustee Pam, will annotate desired corrections and forward to Director, for PPP to take up next meeting
   b. Buildings and Facilities Committee (Ameen). No meeting this month, next meeting in March
   c. Development (Edwards).
      (Annual Fund Report; Capital Campaign Report)
      i. Trustee Edwards stated funding inputs since last meeting, see meeting attachment
      ii. Director Sharry had indicated some funds from ongoing fundraising campaigns, transferred to the town this month, approx. total $300K
      iii. Trustee Pam indicated Friends will transfer additional funds to the town next month from investment income
      (Library Director Annual Goals; JEDI Subcommittee Report)
      i. Motion to approve, seconded, all voted to approve
   e. Budget (Pam).
      (FY24 Budget; FY25 Budget Request)
      i. Was a Jan meeting, official report pending
   f. Investment (Pam).
      i. Trustee Pam indicated upcoming 25 Jan meeting with Vanguard, who’ve sold the advisory group that we are a member of, to a company called Mercer, all Vanguard Institutional Advisory Service accounts will be transferred in Feb to Mercer, Trustees will need to investigate if we keep our
funds with Mercer this calendar year. If fees do not change, suggest Trustees should stay with Mercer.

   a. Elaine Donoghue from The Friends:
      i. Friends plan to rotate board members from The Friends into Trustee meetings to familiarize all with each other
      ii. Edith Byron painting sales: all but 2 paintings have sold, total rec’d from all paintings about $8500
      iii. Planning a brainstorming date in March around future Friends strategy and direction.
      iv. Potentially look to add some new Friends board members
      v. Some discussions ongoing around children programming room, and another room changes due to building projects

8. Director’s Report (Sharry).
   a. No official report at this time, no specifics mentioned
   b. Trustee Ameen asked about when N. Amherst Library will be open, ‘soft’ opening on 5 February

9. JEDI meeting (additional agenda item)
   a. Trustee Ameen wants to keep existing survey open for longer
   b. Questions around how to act/respond to some critical responses
   c. ~64 responses so far

10. Adjourned at 4:32pm

Respectfully submitted by Eugene Goffredo
Friends of the Jones Library
Annual Fund Report ongoing

Fiscal Year 2024 Comparisons

Feb 1
as of 1/31/24: $88,244.20 with 479 gifts
as of 1/31/23: $81,315.04, with 490 gifts

Jan 1
as of 12/31/23: $79,541.55 with 438 gifts
as of 12/31/22: $72,972.73 with 450 gifts

Dec 1
as of 11/30/23: $46,881.83 with 258 gifts
as of 11/30/22: $41,122.19 with 232 gifts

Nov 1
as of 10/31/23: $29,541.00 with 146 gifts
as of 10/31/22: $14,763.89 with 83 gifts

Oct 1
as of 9/30/23: $11,261.61 with 70 gifts
as of 9/30/22: $13,089.44 with 63 gifts

Sept 1
as of 8/31/23: $7017.34 with 45 gifts
as of 8/31/22: $6,417.90 with 37 gifts

Aug 1
as of 7/31/23: $4,201.70 with 21 gifts
as of 7/31/22: $1,258.44 with 19 gifts

Fiscal Year 2023 Comparisons

July 1
as of 6/30/23: $112,279.87 with 757 gifts
as of 6/30/22: $142,510.03 with 900 gifts

June 1
as of 5/31/23: $101,462.40 with 686 gifts
as of 5/31/22: $137,347.58 with 850 gifts

May 1
as of 4/30/23: $94,896.67 with 627 gifts
as of 4/30/22: $127,928.54 with 798 gifts
Friends of the Jones Library  
Annual Fund Report ongoing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>As of Date</th>
<th>Total Amount</th>
<th>Number of Gifts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>3/31/23</td>
<td>$90,165.08</td>
<td>582</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3/31/22</td>
<td>$119,467.11</td>
<td>728</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2/28/23</td>
<td>$85,752.28</td>
<td>522</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2/28/22</td>
<td>$117,092.66</td>
<td>683</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>1/31/23</td>
<td>$81,315.04</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1/31/22</td>
<td>$106,533.55</td>
<td>576</td>
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<td>Jan 1, 2023</td>
<td>12/31/22</td>
<td>$72,972.73</td>
<td>450</td>
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<td>12/31/21</td>
<td>$102,503.83</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
<td>11/30/22</td>
<td>$41,122.19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11/30/21</td>
<td>$60,714.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>10/31/22</td>
<td>$14,763.89</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/31/21</td>
<td>$31,555.08</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
<td>9/30/22</td>
<td>$13,089.44</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/30/21</td>
<td>$16,264.93</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>Sept</td>
<td>8/31/22</td>
<td>$6,417.89</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/31/21</td>
<td>$9,439.49</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>Aug</td>
<td>7/31/22</td>
<td>$1,258.44</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/31/21</td>
<td>$6,856.65</td>
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### Jones Library Capital Campaign Report
2/1/24

#### Campaign Receipts

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total To Date</th>
<th>Total for Month</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gift Intentions (pledges)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historic Tax Credits</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Grants</td>
<td>5,054,819</td>
<td>5,054,819</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations &amp; Corporate Funding</td>
<td>280,500</td>
<td>71,000</td>
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<td>Community Campaign</td>
<td>2,067,537</td>
<td>1,992,063</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>7,402,856</td>
<td>2,063,063</td>
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#### Campaign Expenses

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total To Date</th>
<th>Jan-24</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel Expenses</td>
<td>$310,931</td>
<td>$14,839</td>
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<td>Other Expenses</td>
<td>$47,926</td>
<td>$641</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$358,858</td>
<td>$15,481</td>
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Remitted to Town

$500,000
## FY24 Actual Summary

**Updated 2-5-24**

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<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>FY19 Actual</th>
<th>FY20 Actual</th>
<th>FY21 Actual</th>
<th>FY22 Actual</th>
<th>FY23 Actual</th>
<th>FY24 Budget</th>
<th>FY24 Actual Spent</th>
<th>FY24 to be Spent</th>
<th>% Spent</th>
<th>FY25 Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries/Work Study</td>
<td>1,678,257</td>
<td>1,723,167</td>
<td>1,693,864</td>
<td>1,724,826</td>
<td>1,810,681</td>
<td>1,938,547</td>
<td>991,125.77</td>
<td>947,421.23</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>$2,013,247</td>
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<td>Benefits</td>
<td>403,385</td>
<td>375,226</td>
<td>364,308</td>
<td>345,583</td>
<td>331,877</td>
<td>376,202</td>
<td>376,202.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>$423,639</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>211,649</td>
<td>186,503</td>
<td>185,425</td>
<td>228,496</td>
<td>250,565</td>
<td>239,000</td>
<td>113,938.65</td>
<td>125,061.35</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>$244,000</td>
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<td>Operations</td>
<td>77,095</td>
<td>156,809</td>
<td>85,971</td>
<td>71,350</td>
<td>87,584</td>
<td>76,383</td>
<td>38,054.08</td>
<td>38,328.92</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>$80,840</td>
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<td>C/W MARS</td>
<td>53,632</td>
<td>56,656</td>
<td>58,498</td>
<td>57,354</td>
<td>54,046</td>
<td>49,408</td>
<td>70,000.00</td>
<td>(20,592.00)</td>
<td>141.7%</td>
<td>$47,256</td>
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<td>Maintenance/Repairs</td>
<td>61,737</td>
<td>66,697</td>
<td>70,224</td>
<td>79,352</td>
<td>128,590</td>
<td>85,600</td>
<td>25,409.71</td>
<td>60,190.29</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>$21,567</td>
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<td>Utilities</td>
<td>107,347</td>
<td>77,506</td>
<td>73,623</td>
<td>96,263</td>
<td>130,624</td>
<td>95,800</td>
<td>49,780.01</td>
<td>46,019.99</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>$21,567</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programming</td>
<td>35,554</td>
<td>25,752</td>
<td>28,656</td>
<td>29,262</td>
<td>60,244</td>
<td>71,787</td>
<td>7,680.26</td>
<td>64,106.74</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>$21,489</td>
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<td>Special Collections</td>
<td>11,097</td>
<td>12,127</td>
<td>6,389</td>
<td>10,673</td>
<td>11,533</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>6,000.00</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>2,639,754</td>
<td>2,680,443</td>
<td>2,566,958</td>
<td>2,643,159</td>
<td>2,865,744</td>
<td>2,938,727</td>
<td>1,672,190.48</td>
<td>1,266,536.52</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td><strong>$2,879,605</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Municipal Appropriation | 1,993,466   | 2,043,302   | 2,043,302   | 2,068,531   | 2,149,058   | 2,213,530   | 2,213,530.00      | 0.00            | 100.0%  | **$2,279,935** |
| Endowment              | 371,862     | 348,194     | 351,263     | 317,653     | 332,543     | 351,501     | 351,501.00        | 0.00            | 100.0%  | **$354,619** |
| State Aid              | 87,880      | 67,864      | 1,623       | 26,487      | 232,483     | 104,719     | 197,431.02        | (92,712.02)     | 188.5%  | **$147,484** |
| Restricted Gifts/Sammys/Grants | 121,827   | 166,488     | 135,108     | 161,111     | 86,797      | 210,852     | 2,487.25          | 208,364.75     | 1.2%    | **$61,567** |
| Friends/Woodbury       | 34,865      | 25,237      | 25,324      | 43,376      | 49,651      | 44,625      | 13,398.00         | 31,227.00      | 30.0%   | **$26,000** |
| Sale of Goods          | 749         | 1,439       | 95          | 105         | 397         | -           | 87.03             | (87.03)        | #DIV/0!  | $0          |
| Fees/Lost Books        | 18,008      | 11,907      | 3,854       | 7,188       | 3,283       | 3,500       | 2,265.31          | 1,234.69       | 64.7%   | **$2,000**  |
| Special Collections    | 11,097      | 11,777      | 6,389       | 10,673      | 11,533      | 6,000       | 0.00              | 6,000.00       | 0.0%    | **$6,000**  |
| Building Expansion and Renovation | 0 | 4,235 | 0 | 8,036 | 0 | 4,000 | 7,301.99 | (3,301.99) | 182.5% | **$2,000** |
| **TOTAL**              | 2,639,754   | 2,680,443   | 2,566,958   | 2,643,159   | 2,865,744   | 2,938,727   | 2,788,001.60      | 150,725.40     | 94.9%   | **$2,879,605** |

$0
## FY24 Balances

### Updated 1-25-24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY24 BEGINNING</th>
<th>FY24 EXPENSES</th>
<th>FY24 INCOME</th>
<th>FY24 BALANCE</th>
<th>FY25 REQUEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. ENDOWMENT DRAW</strong> (PeoplesBank Corporate Checking)</td>
<td>$351,501.00</td>
<td>$105,172.42</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$246,328.58</td>
<td>$354,619</td>
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<td><strong>II. CORPORATE CHECKING</strong> (PeoplesBank Corporate Checking)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Resources</td>
<td>$33,195.73</td>
<td>$107,709.72</td>
<td>$4,752.56</td>
<td>($70,227.03)</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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<td>Library Fundraising</td>
<td>$3,265.01</td>
<td>$81,265.01</td>
<td>$133,573.52</td>
<td>$55,573.52</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends Annual</td>
<td>$12,190.35</td>
<td>$7,540.65</td>
<td>$550.00</td>
<td>$5,286.73</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
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<td>Woodbury</td>
<td>$23,588.35</td>
<td>$11,254.37</td>
<td>$13,398.00</td>
<td>$24,355.98</td>
<td>$26,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL CORPORATE CHECKING</td>
<td>$72,239.44</td>
<td>$207,769.75</td>
<td>$152,274.08</td>
<td>$14,989.20</td>
<td>$128,000</td>
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<td><strong>III. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS</strong> (PeoplesBank SC Money Market)</td>
<td>$64,853.50</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$54,853.50</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IV. SPECIAL COLLECTIONS - ADAMS &amp; WESTCOTT</strong> (PeoplesBank SC MM)</td>
<td>$65,201.03</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$65,201.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V. TD BANK</strong> (Business Convenience Plus Account)</td>
<td>$1,844.45</td>
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<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$1,844.45</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VI. BUILDING EXPANSION &amp; RENOVATION</strong> (PeoplesBank MM)</td>
<td>$8,215.22</td>
<td>$913.23</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$7,301.99</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VII. VANSTEENBERG ESTATE</strong> (PeoplesBank Money Market)</td>
<td>$156,567.33</td>
<td>$160,055.14</td>
<td>$3,487.81</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td><strong>VIII. TOWN-HELD TRUSTS</strong> (Interest; Books)</td>
<td>$2,636.22</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$2,636.22</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IX. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT</strong> (Town)</td>
<td>$1,000,000.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>$1,000,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>X. JCPC &amp; STATE GRANTS</strong> (Town) 9610c-</td>
<td>$46,263,222.09</td>
<td>$1,834,176.65</td>
<td>$78,323.64</td>
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<td><strong>XI. TOWN APPROPRIATION - PERSONNEL</strong> (Town) 1000</td>
<td>$1,825,828.00</td>
<td>$991,125.77</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$834,702.23</td>
<td>$1,844,796</td>
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<td><strong>XII. TOWN APPROPRIATION - OPERATING BUDGET</strong> (Town) 1000</td>
<td>$387,702.00</td>
<td>$376,202.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
<td>$435,139</td>
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<td><strong>XIII. STATE AID</strong> (Town) 211400-500001</td>
<td>$123,504.00</td>
<td>$88,947.99</td>
<td>$73,927.02</td>
<td>$108,483.03</td>
<td>$147,484</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td>$50,323,314.28</td>
<td>$3,774,362.95</td>
<td>$308,012.55</td>
<td>$46,848,709.31</td>
<td>$2,918,038</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I. Statistics
   A. Jones Circulation

   ![Jones Circulation Graph]

   B. North Amherst Circulation

   ![North Amherst Circulation Graph]

   C. Munson Memorial Circulation

   ![Munson Memorial Circulation Graph]

* Indicates Handout(s) May be Made Available.

**RED** Indicates Vote Required.
II. Programming

**LOCAL AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT**
Feb / March 2024

Tem Blessed

Read our interview with Tem!

**On the Same Page 2024**

This Other Eden
by Paul Harding

Learn more...
Read the book, explore themes, and attend the author event!

**College Admissions & the Changing Landscape of Affirmative Action**

Tuesday, February 6
7:00 – 8:00 pm via Zoom

How has the 2023 Supreme Court decision about affirmative action in college admissions processes impacted students and college applicants?
Join us via Zoom for this panel discussion.
Learn more and register...

**On the Same Page 2024**

Thursday, February 8
7:00 - 8:00 pm via Zoom

The Place & People of Malaga Island

Learn more and register...

**Reading the Classics**

Tuesday, February 13
7:00 - 8:30 pm via Zoom

Alice in Wonderland

Learn more and register...

**On the Same Page 2024**

Saturday, February 3
3:00 - 4:00 pm via Zoom

The Evolving New England Orchard

Learn more and register...

* Indicates Handout(s) May be Made Available.
**RED** Indicates Vote Required.
Books and looks: gen Z is ‘rediscovering’ the public library

Young people are using the hallowed institutions at higher rates than older generations. And they’re not just there to read

Alaina Demopoulos
Fri 26 Jan 2024 09.00 EST Last modified on Tue 30 Jan 2024 12.42 EST

Henry Earls dresses up to go to the library. He’ll plan outfits after searching “dark academic” on Pinterest, taking inspiration from the internet subculture obsessed with higher education and literature. He picks out cozy knitted sweaters and accessorizes with well-worn copies of classic books. Earls looks like an adjunct English professor – or an extra in Saltburn.

“I want to cultivate an aesthetic when I go to the library,” the 20-year-old Cooper Union art student said. “And, honestly, I dress up to see if someone will come up to me and say hi.”

When Earls isn’t studying at the New York Public Library, he cruises the reading room for friends – or more than friends. Last week, he (respectfully) slipped his number to a young woman sitting near him, which led to a flirty text exchange. A few days ago, he made a friend on the library steps, a law student prepping for an exam.

“We met in an environment that supports focus and growth, so we hit it off,” Earls said. “He might come hang out with my friends and me sometime.”

Gen Z seems to love public libraries. A November report from the American Library Association (ALA) drawing from ethnographic research and a 2022 survey found that gen Z and millennials are using public libraries, both in person and digitally, at higher rates than older generations.

More than half of the survey’s 2,075 respondents had visited a physical library within the past 12 months. Not all of them were bookworms: according to the report, 43% of gen Z and millennials don’t identify as readers – but about half of those non-readers still visited their local library in the past year. Black gen Zers and millennials visit libraries at particularly high rates.

Libraries have never been just about books. These are community hubs, places to connect and discover. For an extremely online generation that’s nearly synonymous with the so-called “loneliness epidemic”, libraries are increasingly social spaces, too.

“We traditionally think of libraries as very quiet, and parts of them are, but what we observed watching gen Z in libraries is that there are some really great spaces for teens, big rooms where they can do things like gaming or making their own music,” said Rachel Noorda, a co-author of the ALA report. “It’s a place to be solitary, but also a place to build community.”
And a place to flex. On TikTok, Earls posts selfie videos showing him studying, journaling or reading in front of the Bryant Park library’s breathtaking beaux-arts backdrop. The clips get millions of views. “I think people my age are craving something more authentic, and looking for something that’s real,” Earls said. “What’s more real than books and physical material?”

Library-related content does well on #booktok, where young literary influencers – many of them still in high school – drive sales by recommending and reviewing stories. (Colleen Hoover, #booktok’s favorite author, shot to the top of bestseller lists due to viral endorsements; other recommended books often fall into the “romantasy” young adult category.)

“A lot of my followers find libraries appealing in an aesthetic way,” said Marwa Medjahed, an 18-year-old TikToker who posts about life as a George Washington University freshman to her 115,000 followers. “They feel like I’m enjoying studying, rather than being in a bleak dorm room with harsh lighting.”

While many young people read digitally, downloading (or pirating) titles, hard copies of books are fetishized on social media. “Ebooks don’t make good props on TikTok,” Kathi Inman Berens, co-author of the ALA report, said. “You need book materiality, a printed book, something that helps visually.” Why buy the title when you can just borrow it at the library?

Tom Worcester, 28, is one of the co-founders of Reading Rhythms, a New York-based “reading party” held at bars. Attendees pay $20 to cozy up with their books while DJs play ambient tracks in the background. Guests can mingle in between sets. The events are held twice weekly, but that doesn’t stop Worcester from going to real libraries, too. “If I know I have a good four-hour block of time to myself, I’ll ask a bunch of friends, ‘Do you want to go to the library today?’” he said. “I make it a social event.”

At the end of last year, Worcester and a friend took a trip to Amsterdam, where they visited the Openbare Bibliotheek. Inside the second-largest library in Europe, the pair conducted personal “annual reviews”, spending hours reflecting on the highs and lows of their year. “When you’re at the library, there’s an unspoken agreement that you will focus on what you have to do,” he said.

Talk to any young and online person long enough about libraries and they’ll inevitably bring up the “third place”, a term coined in 1989 by the urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg. Like attachment styles or imposter syndrome, the third place is an academic term turned social media discourse point. Separate from home and work, it is a space for gathering and socialization. Bars, coffee shops, churches and libraries are the usual examples.

Gen Z’s well aware that they lack many of the third places their parents had, especially as the lines between work and home blurred during Covid. Libraries are the last place they feel exists that asks nothing of them. You can truly come as you are.

“Coffee shops get so crowded, and you have to spend money to be there, but libraries are open for everyone,” said Anika Neumeyer, a 19-year-old English student who volunteers at the Seattle Public Library. “There’s a lot less pressure to be doing something in the public library. No one’s going to judge you.”
In 2018, the librarian and academic Fobazi Ettarh coined the term “vocational awe”. It describes the idea that libraries are “inherently good” and “beyond critique”, which can lead to the exploitation of their workers. Abby Hargreaves, a librarian in the Washington DC area who posts about her job to 48,000 TikTok followers, believes gen Z has a tendency to romanticize the position.

“There’s this idea of ‘I’ll go to my library and have some great adventure while I’m there,’” Hargreaves said. “But then we also see people who are looking to tear libraries down, whether that’s through budget cuts or legislated book bans.”

If gen Z is going to save libraries, they couldn’t pick a better time to advocate for them: across the country, these institutions and their workers are under attack. Last year, Mayor Eric Adams of New York City slashed funding to public libraries, cutting Sunday service in the five boroughs – and drawing the ire of Cardi B, who went on an Instagram Live tirade over the news.

A series of library-related bills are making their way through Idaho’s legislature that would restrict material it deems inappropriate for minors and allow family members to file $2,500 lawsuits against libraries that violate the law. Last year, Missouri Republicans attempted to strip all state funding from public libraries. This week, Chaya Raichik, the rightwing influencer behind Libs of Tiktok, was appointed to a library advisory position for Oklahoma’s schools, which means she could help determine what books are “appropriate” for students.

Meanwhile, school librarians in states across the country report enduring harassment – and for some, death threats – by rightwing trolls just for doing their jobs.

“It’s so strange when you hear ‘Oh, gen Z loves libraries,’ or when the algorithm keeps feeding you videos of beautiful libraries, but then there’s no more Sunday service and you have to wait weeks for your book to come,” said Anna Murphy, an upper school librarian at the Berkeley Carroll School in Brooklyn. “The library love and hate seems to exist in two different universes.”

Emily Drabinski, president of the ALA, reminds us that the vast majority of US voters oppose book bans and hold librarians in “high regard”. “Most people love the library, especially after 50 years of systematic disinvestment of public institutions, since it’s the only one left standing,” she said.

Arlo Platt Zolov is a 15-year-old who lives in Brooklyn and has what must be one of the all-time-best after-school jobs: running the information desk at the central branch of the public library, steps away from Prospect Park. “A lot of people my age are surrounded by tech and everything’s moving so quickly,” he said. “Part of me thinks we’re rediscovering libraries not as something new, but for what they’ve always been: a shared space of comfort.”
Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order at 11:04am
II. Minutes of 10-20-23 approved as amended
III. Approved Patron Behavior Policy - Policy is on the website—where else should it be visible in the Library? Posted on a bulletin board, visible at service points? Sharon notes that publicly posted policies were taken down when we reorganized around COVID safety precautions.
IV. JEDI Survey
   A. Survey results analysis: Get one PDF that has all responses, one more push to get responses until March (or when the current Jones Library closes and moves to a temporary location).
   B. Following the gathering of information, we can draw our own conclusions, share with staff and the public, and formulate next steps based on what we discovered about belonging in this Library. How does this inform our actions moving forward?
   C. Progress report at this point: Mia will collect data and include an overview of that information with the meeting minutes.
   D. In our next push for responses, re-share through the same outlets, consider other strategies-- more quarter-page sheets with QR code, flyers posted in new outlets such as the BID office, college campus, senior center etc.
V. Public Comment – none
VI. Adjourn at 12pm

Survey Analytics To Date:

1. How consistently do you and your family feel that you belong (you are safe, considered, represented, included and empowered) at the Amherst Public Libraries?
   a. 64 of 64 Answered (100.0%)
   b. Always (42 responses, 65.6%)
   c. Never (1 response, 1.6%)
   d. Often (8 responses, 12.5%)
   e. Rarely (5 responses, 7.8%)
   f. Sometimes (8 responses, 12.5%)
2. What are the experiences and elements, specifically, that make you feel you do or do not belong at the Library?
   a. 56 of 64 Answered (87.5%)
   b. 56 of 64 Answered (87.5%)

3. Do our Library collections represent your interests, cultures, identities, experience?
   a. 64 of 64 Answered (100.0%)
   b. Not at all (1 response, 1.6%)
   c. Somewhat (19 responses, 29.7%)
   d. Yes (44 responses, 68.8%)

4. What would you like to see more of in our collections?
   a. 44 of 64 Answered (68.8%)
   b. 44 of 64 Answered (68.8%)

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joneslibrary.org