

Jacob Edwards Library Board of Trustees

Minutes Friday August 29, 2025

1. Call to Order

Chair, Jim Dyer called the meeting of August 29, 2025 to order at 12:04 PM.

Present at meeting were Trustees: Mel Blake, Gary Bridgman, James Dyer, Liz Golz, Bernadette Meade and Library Director, Margaret Morrissey. Minutes were recorded by Bernadette Meade.

2. Approval of minutes of July 22, 2025

Minutes were reviewed with no editing. Bernadette Meade motioned to accept the minutes. Gary Bridgman seconded. So voted with Mel Brake abstaining since she did not attend meeting.

3. Chair Report and Old Business

- No word received confirming the moving of funds. Gary Bridgman stated there is as of July, \$247,900 in checking account with no transfer of monies. The Bartholomew Fund current total is \$197,000 with \$ 50,000 added. Clarification will be requested from town treasurer.
- Southbridge Town HR department has posted the Library Director position on website. There have been no updates on applications, hopefully next week. Gary Bridgman will circulate previous questions used to interview applicants to Board members. Margaret Morrissey suggested that the Mass Board of Library Commissioners might have question templates. Liz Golz will outreach to them.

4. Financial Report

Gary Bridgman reported that the Jacob Edwards Library is the beneficiary of three Edwards Family Trusts totaling \$2,331.829. Bank of America is the Trustee for these accounts. The Library Board checking account will receive by December 31, 2025 this year's distribution of \$81,600.

5. Chess Park

- Bernadette Meade continues to meet with the town treasurer. The town website is now able to accept chess park donation under the online pay chess park line. Fundraising will begin in the coming weeks
- Bernadette also met with the town economic development and planning department director who suggested applying for the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant for 2027.
- Chess Park was presented to the Southbridge Business Partnership on August 25, 2025 with a positive response. A negative response was presented to committee member outside of the meeting concerning why a chess park, security issues and ability to be successful.
- Mass Chess Association has endorsed project.

6. Library Director's Report

- Margaret Morrissey discussed that in response to federal cuts there has been increased demand for free library services. Cuts to databases have been made to help relieve the added stress to budget.
- After discussion, it was decided not to pursue the memorandum of understanding with the FoJEL.
- Margaret asked to be aware of the collection development policy to be reviewed in 2026 for ARIS. She shared an article by Al Hayden on topic (handout).
- Highlights from the Directors report were:
 - Two LED lights on the library outside structures were vandalized and then repaired by DPW.
 - The Salle Notre Dame stained glass transom was installed by Gabriel McCarthy et al.
 - Margaret also updated on successful summer children reading programs, Boston Public Library digitizing *Southbridge News*, and awaiting grants.
 - Still awaiting response from town concerning Poet Laureate prize and submitted ICE procedure.
 - There will be staff training by Ockers on September 4th. Staff from town cable TV were invited to attend.
- Margaret Morrissey shared a review of what other local libraries are charging for out of state library card holders (handout). Currently JEL does not have a charge. Board agreed this topic needs continued discussion.

7. New Business

- The Emergency Closing Policy was reviewed. Gary Bridgman suggested to change under Power Outage, line 2 to "If the power remains out for more than 30 minutes and with the approval of the town manager and/or library director the library will close ..." Bernadette Meade made a motion to approve policy with changes, Mel Blake seconded. So, voted.

Next meeting will be Tuesday Sept 23rd.

Margaret Morrissey left meeting and James Dyer called an Executive Session. The session ended at 1:33PM. Gary Bridgman motioned to adjourn meeting at 1:33PM and Mel Blake seconded