



**Report presented to the Board of Trustees
by Margaret Morrissey, Director
presented May 27, 2025**

Budget

- The electricity utility has been removed as a line item from all departments. This change necessitated contacting MA Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) to have the Materials Appropriation Requirement (MAR) recalculated. The new figure provided by the state is \$577,737.00 - The FY2026 operating budget for JEL is \$586,208.00.
- Town Council will meet 5/29 to review the budget.
- A new procedure has been established by the Accounting Department whereby all requisitions need to be entered in the accounting system by 5/16.

Building

- The garden has been planted by Bernadette Meade. A new pollinator garden has been installed at the *Reaching for a Star* sculpture. The Southbridge Garden Club generously provided some Hosta plants to fill in the areas in the flower beds.
- ADA Accessibility Assessment report commissioned from CMRPC and Center for Living and Working has been received. Even though the library was only refurbished in 2000, there are many items that need attention in order to be compliant with the ADA.
- DPW working on the closet in the Craft Room, changing the damaged dry wall and replacing with moisture-resistant material.
- Over the past few months the north entrance has had some work done – locks on the doors replaced, rust removed and doors repainted, floor leveled and ‘walk-on’ rug replaced to improve the optics of the entrance.
- Waiting for a response from Norel Services regarding the audibles on the second floor. They are researching the issue.
- Elevator door stuck in the open position 4/28 and again on 5/22. It self corrects after a short interval. This occurrence highlights the need for the maintenance upgrade on the elevator.

- Sewer Department here to conduct the monthly maintenance on the manhole (near the disable parking area) on 4/29 and returned with a large machine on 5/2.
- Ants were found in the elevator room and the staff bathroom. Jim Wales Pest Control has been engaged to conduct a series of abatements 5/15.
- Met with DPW Operations Manager and discussed the cleaning schedule and specific areas of concern 5/1.
- Requested quote for the restoration and insulation of the windows in the 1914 and 1966 sections of the building. P and P Contractors have conducted a site visit. Researching whether there is a de-leading certificate on file.

Chess Park

- Group met 5/15. New member joined the group. Joe Coan, Landscape Architect has prepared the bid documents but has indicated the fundraising is the first step. Reviewed potential donor list and discussed strategy. Request to Town Manager to have credit card donations for the chess park processed by Town Hall has been made.

Children's Room

- Summer Reading 2025 "Level up at your Library" iREAD materials arrived and decor ready and preparations are completed.
- Programming scheduled through August 8th
- April Vacation programs also funded by the Borgatti fund were:
 - Bob Bloom Drumming 4/23: 12
 - Mad Science Slime 4/24: 53

Circulation

- Staff has been contacting patrons with overdue materials. In some cases, the contact information does not work. Records are updated so that if the person applies for a card again, the issue has to be addressed.
- Hotspots are back circulating again.

Collection Development

- Circulation staff focusing on overdue items and encouraging patrons to return them.
- Displays created by staff to promote the library materials.
 - *2025 Massachusetts Center for the Book Reading Challenge* - monthly theme: Books that begin with eight words or less
 - Books in Bloom (Gardening Theme)
 - Mental Health (fiction and self-help)
 - Sports and Physical Fitness
 - Movie Tree- Movies about Mothers
 - Food Allergy Awareness (½ month)

- Memorial Day (½ month)
- Children's Room staff weeding the nonfiction area.

Digital Commonwealth – Boston Public Library

- In a follow up call to Jake Sadow of the Boston Public Library (BPL) the schedule for digitizing the Southbridge News has been delayed into 2026. Given the state of the economy and changes happening with lightning speed, I have requested that BPL would harvest the copies that have already been digitized by the newspaper, for which we have been given unconditional access. Apparently, they have not done this previously and the staff will need to decide

FOJEL

- Group met on Monday, May 19, in the Pioppi Room
- FoJEL members staffed a table at the Community Baby Shower 5/14 and the Senior Wellness Fair 5/15.
- Update presented on the IRS 501c3 application. Requested additional documents uploaded 5/13. A case manager has been assigned at the IRS and response pending.

Grants and Donations

- The items from the Summer Feeding grant were delivered. Summer Feeding 2025 will start on 6/30 and end 8/8 to coincide with Summer Reading.
- ADA Accessibility Assessment report will be used for the Massachusetts Office of Disability municipal grant round that closes June 13. The library has previously applied unsuccessfully for a grant to modernize the elevator. It is hoped that this report combined with a report from Syska Hennessy, vertical transportation consultants we will have a more compelling submission.
- Submitted final report to the Library of America regarding the Latino Poetry events that were held in January and April.

Local History

- Gift of black and white framed photograph of the south side of Main Street from 1918, presented by Nancy and Donald Vaughan.

Long Range Plan

- Staff continues to promote the databases and streaming services subscribed to by the library. Staff is also working on other promotional materials.

Outreach

- Open Sky Resilience Group are conducting 'office hours' for unhoused community members on the first Monday of the month 1-3pm (5/5, 6/2)
- Attended the West Street School Career Day 5/23. I was in Ms. Welch's Fourth Grade classroom.
- Area Library Directors met on 5/5 to discuss issue of mutual interest.
- Student group from Trinity Catholic Academy have requested a tour of the library and an overview of the research resources 5/30.

Poet Laureate

- *Southbridge: My Triggering Town* by Bill Tremblay was launched at the library on Thursday, April 24th. It is an anthology of the poetry inspired by Southbridge. The *Southbridge News* published a front page article 5/1 and Southbridge Community TV has recorded the event for later upload to YouTube.

Programs

- Reference:
 - 73 transactions
 - 1-on-1 Tech Trainings: 2
- Adult programs:
 - Meditation (3 sessions)
 - Chess Club (2 sessions): 12- Chess is suspended until the fall.
 - Knitting with Friends (2 sessions): 3 – The group has decided to suspend meeting at the library as the attendance has dwindled. Director notified 5/21. This group has been meeting on a weekly basis since February 2007. An end of an era!
 - Artist Meet & Greet (Christina Cirillo Schmidt): 21
 - Aaron Larget-Caplan "Dances, Lullabies and Meditations " Featured a world premier (5/8): 14
 - Ezekiel Wheels Klezmer Band (5/15 cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances)
 - Asteroid Impact (Space Week) presented by Dino Tata (4/22): 6
 - Bill Tremblay "Launch of Southbridge: My Triggering Town" anthology (4/24): 25
Awaiting a response on the request regarding setting up a Scholarship Fund be with the proceeds.
 - AANHPI (Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders) Heritage Month. Presentation with Charles Diaz and P Ketnevong: 5
 - Book Club ("Katinka" by Elizabeth Graver) - Jewish American Heritage Month: 4
 - "Why Local Food Matters" with David Reed, Executive Director of Central Mass Grown.: 6
 - Michelle "Evil Gal" Willson Band (5/29)

Safety and Security

- Four teens pulled books off shelves in the nonfiction area and piled them up on the floor 5/20. Contacted the School Resource Officers through the Police Department.
- Young male opened the library front door about 1pm and screamed (non-distinct) into the library then ran down the stairs and grabbed a bike and took off down the sidewalk. Wearing a black and white graffiti/camo hoodie 4/23
- Police officers have been doing walk-throughs more frequently.
- Patron was in Children's Room with their partner and child. The group was asked to pick up before they left by the Director. Patron responded by directing a vulgar term towards the Director (witnessed by another staff member). His partner was not pleased with their partner's comment. Patron was asked to leave. 5/1.
- Patron created a disturbance this afternoon regarding renewing a Switch game. He was aggressive and abusive toward staff and called them names and use expletives. He threatened a lawsuit for discrimination. Police were called. Sgt. Withersoppon and Officer Daou following up. 5/7.
- One of the LEDs at the "Reaching for a Star" sculpture had the conduit snapped. Fortunately, it was able to be put back 5/15
- Draft procedure on ICE crafted and submitted to Town Manager for review. Waiting for a response.

Service

- Library was closed Monday May 26th to honor Memorial Day.

Staff

- Deb Tatro has submitted her resignation. June 5th is her last day.
- The Circulation Assistant position (30 hours per week) has been advertised.

Technology

- Created the eNewsletter/social media/statistics/promotional materials (museum passes)/collection development
- General site/link maintenance and preparing move from current website provider PiperWebs to CyberOptik and stricter ADA requirements. The new site needs to be in place by October 2025. Senior staff had a meeting with CyberOptik technical staff 4/9 and followed up with more content for the website design.
- Uploaded materials to the reference section of the JEL website
 - Danielle from Ockers Windows updates (May 8)
 - Telephone troubleshooting session with Danielle from Ockers (May 22)

CW MARS tickets

- Library funding message displayed on our catalog and on public computers
 - LPT Print Release issues
 - Summer hours updated in Envisionware/Cloud9

Teen

- April Take & Make (No Sew Sock Bunny): 36
- Space Week: LEGO Challenge: 4 participants

Training

- Adult Service Librarian Attended Mental Health America webinar: “Community-Driven Approach: Programming for Youth by Youth” (May 12)
- Director, Adult Services Librarian and Circulation Supervisor attended public information request training (May 14)