

Town of Esopus Library
March Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Agenda

Call to order	Larry Decker
Approval of February Board Meeting Minutes	
Public Comment (2 minutes each)	Public
Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee	Allen Olsen
Director's Report	Jesse Chance
Friends	Elaine Rylance

Committees

1. Buildings and Grounds – Stephen Lewis
2. Governance and Personnel / Trustee Training – Martha Farrell
3. Sustainability, Research and Development – Don Carragher

Adjournment

Resolutions:

- 2025-15 – Payment of February Claims
- 2025-16 – Personnel Actions – A. Adin and S. Thomas
- 2025-17 – Annual Report to NY State Library
- 2025-18 – Annual Report to the Community
- 2025-19 – Exceed Tax Cap in 2026
- 2025-20 – Section 7 and Section 8 of the Personnel Policy Manual Update
- 2025-21 – Stewart's Holiday Match Grant

**TOWN OF ESOPUS LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
February 26, 2025**

Board Members Present: Elaine Rylance, Stephen Lewis, Larry Decker, Martha Farrell, Don Carragher, Sharon Briden, Allen Olsen, Laura Petit
Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
Board Members Absent:
Staff Present: Jesse Chance, Mary Garraty

Public: Suart Auchincloss and Leslie Gerber as Ulster County Representatives from the MHLS Board attended our meeting. Kenneth Goldberg was unable to attend.

The meeting of the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees was called to order by President, Larry Decker at 6:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Written minutes for the January monthly Board Meeting held on January 22, 2025 was submitted and open for review. A motion to accept the minutes of the January monthly Board meeting held on January 22, 2025 was made by Elaine Rylance and seconded by Martha Farrell.

AYE: 8; NO: 0; ABSTAIN: 0

Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe

Board Members Absent:

III. Presidents Word – Larry Decker

Larry said a few words about Advocacy Day in Albany. He said it was a great experience and recommended that everyone attend. The Legislator is really looking for a good number of folks to attend.

IV. Public Comment - Stuart strongly supported what Larry said. It's very important for libraries to lobby with our legislators and our senators as it is very important to have aid. Leslie left a copy of a handout about aid from MHLS. It is key to discuss with legislators and senators during this time of year while they are working on the budget. Make our voices known! Leslie also commented that it was a great experience. Stuart and Leslie asked that we ensure that MHLS has all correct email addresses of the Trustees. A Library is not just about books. It's about so much more; such as, the programs that are offered and a place to go.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT/FINANCE – Allen Olsen

Written report was submitted. Allen Olsen reviewed the committee meeting minutes and presented the resolutions listed below.

- Resolution #09 of 2025 (Payment of January Claims):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts and approves the payment of claims from January 1, 2025 to January 31, 2025 for items in the amount of \$13,985.06. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Don Carragher and seconded by Laura Petit.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
 Board Members Absent:
- Resolution #11 of 2025 (Transfer of Funds to MHVFCU):** The Board of Trustees agrees to open a checking account at the Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union (MHVFCU) in anticipation of beginning work on the Solar Array Upgrade project in the upcoming months. A motion to accept the resolution, as amended, was made by Stephen Lewis and seconded by Laura Petit.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
 Board Members Absent:
- Resolution #12 of 2025 (Amendment to 2024 Budget):** The Board of the Town of Esopus Library authorizes the adjustments to the final 2024 Budget in order to have a balanced budget. A motion to accept the resolution, as amended, was made by Elaine Rylance and seconded by Martha Farrell.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
 Board Members Absent:
- Resolution #13 of 2025 (Amendment to 2025 Budget):** The Board of the Town of Esopus Library authorizes the adjustments to the final 2025 Budget in order to have a balanced budget. A motion to accept the resolution, as amended, was made by Martha Farrell and seconded by Don Carragher.
 AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
 Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
 Board Members Absent

VI. DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Jesse Chance

Written reports were submitted from the Director, the Adult and Teen Programmer and the Children's Programmer. Jesse reviewed the Director’s report. Jesse is waiting for confirmation that the annual report is complete from MHLS. The elevator has been fixed since his report was sent out. Otis also fixed the erroneous bill that was sent. The Community Garden application process has commenced. There is a Tween Book Club with four members.

VII. FRIENDS – Elaine Rylance

Elaine stated that they met last week and are in the process of preparing for the membership drive next week. Jesse is having a set a bookshelves built outside the library basement door for anyone that wants to take a book.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Buildings and Grounds** – Stephen Lewis
Written report was submitted. Stephen Lewis reviewed the meeting minutes. Stephen discussed the mid islands with Bill Meehan regarding replacing them. There was discussion about the building of the outside bookshelves as well. The bookshelves will need to be waterproof.
- **Governance and Personnel** – Martha Farrell
Written report submitted. Martha Farrell reviewed the meeting minutes and presented the following resolutions:
 - **Resolution #10 of 2025 (Personnel Actions - F. North-A.Adin):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library agrees to the personnel action's resolution. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Don Carragher and seconded by Elaine Rylance.
AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
Board Members Absent:
 - **Resolution #14 of 2025 (Update to Section 5, Section 6 Policy and Incident Report Form of the Personnel Policy Manual):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts the changes to Section 5, Section 6 and Incident Report Form of the Personnel Policy Manual. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Elaine Rylance and seconded by Allen Olsen.
AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe
Board Members Absent:
 - **Sustainability, Research and Development** - Don Carragher
Written report was submitted. Don Carragher reviewed the committee meeting minutes. We are fortunate to have Elaine Jaffe and Laura Petit's experience regarding grants. We watched a video on the grant application process. Laura, Don, and Sharon participated in the City of Kingston grant writing project. A vast amount of assistance is available. Getting grants will help us get more for all of our projects, etc. Stuart Auchincloss commented that MHLS encourages libraries to ask for more money.

X. Trustee Training

Trustee Training has been taking place at online sessions.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Don Carragher made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Elaine Rylance. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused: Elaine Jaffe

Board Members Absent:

Prepared by M. Garraty, Secretary to the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees

Director's Report March, 2025

Ongoing and/or Completed Business:

Solar Power Array Upgrade Project: After waiting patiently for estimates from Liberty Solar for almost three weeks it became clear to me the other day that there had been a miscommunication internally in their company. It turns out that Brian, the Sales Rep who is working up the estimate for me, had not been given the R.F.E. (request for estimates) that I sent when I sent all the pertinent documents to Liberty Solar. Somehow he got it in his head that we wanted was for them to plan and install a battery back-up system only. This has been cleared up but I suspect the estimates are going to take a couple more weeks now.

New Custodian: The first candidate that we hired decided after two and a quarter hours that he did not think he would "be able to maintain enthusiasm for the position." He thanked us for the opportunity and quit on the spot. He did not want to be compensated and told us to consider it a donation. Luckily for us, there was a back-up choice who was pleased to hear from me. Stephen has been on the job for almost two weeks and I think he is going to prove to be an asset to the library.

E-Rate: Due to the current uncertainty regarding many kinds of Federal funding, I have decided that Esopus Library will forgo entering into a contract with AT&T for wifi Hotspots. We will follow through on the E-Rate internet contract with Spectrum because with or without that special pricing, Esopus Library is obligated to provide high speed broadband but we are not required to provide wifi hotspots. If E-Rate funding falls through, it would be best not to be stuck paying for that service.

Annual Report to the Community: Now that the Annual Report to NY State is finalized, we are assembling the Annual Report to the Community. This document will feature programming highlights, pertinent statistics from the past year, letters to the public from key library figures, strategic goals for 2025, and of course a big thank you to all of our community partners.

Community Garden Lottery: A small group of interested parties gathered on the deck in back of the library on the afternoon of Friday, March 14th to watch 16 names get drawn from a bucket. There were 22 applicants vying for those 16 plots. Deborah Nickerson and Pat Frank have agreed to be our garden managers

again this year. Participants have been notified and we look forward to a peaceful and productive growing season.

2026 Budget: I presented a preliminary budget for 2026 to the Finance Committee at the most recent meeting. We will discuss it again at the April Finance meeting and submit it for a vote at the April Board Meeting. From 5PM to 6PM on April 23rd, before the Board meeting, the Board President and I will sit for a Budget Hearing with any public who choose to show up.

Upcoming:

Elections/Budget Vote: June 3rd fast approaches and as our Board Secretary will tell you, there is lots to do between now and then. Petitions to run for open Board seats will be available to the public to pick up at the circulation desk on April 1st. We have two members up for election or re-election and one member completing their 2nd term therefore they must take a year off before running again. Signed petitions are due on May 5th.

In-Person Trustee Training: Esopus Library will be hosting an MHLS led Trustee Training session on June 16th at 6PM. The topic is not finalized yet, but will cover either legal issues libraries face or financial stewardship of libraries. It will probably be a popular program that will fill up so I encourage all Board members to sign up as soon as they see it announced in the MHLS Bulletin. If any of you do not receive the Bulletin, please let me know ASAP.

Free Books Shelving Unit: Although we received the money to build this from a private donor in December, the weather hasn't been very outdoor construction friendly. Since that's changing as we speak, this project will be completed in the next few weeks.

Mobile Programming Storage Units: This idea has been kicking around for months but the funding for it was being hard to locate until last week. Thanks to a grant application that Laura Petit put in for us with Stewart's Shops, as of 3/13/25 we have \$750 to put towards building these units.

Continuing Education, Community Outreach & Library Advocacy:

Memorial Day Parade: Once again, Esopus Library is invited to march in the Town's annual Memorial Day Parade. This year that holiday is on Monday, May

26th. It is very difficult to get staff to commit to this one as it is a paid holiday and lots of people tend to have plans that weekend. If I can get a group of Friends and Board members to carry a Library banner with me, I will register to participate.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jesse Chance

Addendum: Ways You Can Help Libraries in these Troubled Times

A message from the MHLS Executive Director:

Last week we saw both the state legislature release their one-house budget bills and the President issued an Executive Order calling for the elimination of the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Both have grave consequences for our small, but mighty library community here in the Hudson Valley. I apologize for asking for your efforts on both the state and federal advocacy fronts, but this is what this moment calls for.

State Advocacy:

With utmost speed, library advocates need to reach out to your State Senator and State Assemblyperson to let them know that neither the Executive budget nor the one-house budget bills go far enough in funding library operating aid and construction aid for libraries in the context of reality. We certainly appreciate their proposed increases, and that appreciation should be expressed, but we also need to bring home the urgency behind our message: don't weaken our library systems by continuing this pattern of underfunding. We have limited time to influence the outcome of the state budget which is due to be complete by April 1.

What underfunding of MHLS means for your library:

MHLS receives 78% of its operating aid through the NYS Budget. State funding has failed to keep up with inflation which means our purchasing power has greatly diminished. Our ability to maintain critical services like delivery, ILS support, consulting, and continuing education as well as critical categorical aid programs like the Central Library Services Program - which funds the OverDrive platform, OverDrive content, including eMagazines, Transparent Language and JobNow are all compromised.

With more than \$34 million in reported construction needs from member libraries, the \$1.2 million our region receives from the State Aid for Library Construction Program is also not keeping pace. Members are contending with issues such as basic accessibility, energy efficiency, and protecting our facilities from the impact of climate hazards.

Please call today. Contact information for your state legislators can be found at <https://midhudson.org/topics/sustainable-libraries/advocacy/mhls-legislators/>

You can also email stakeholders through the New York State Library Association (NYLA) Urgent call to action

https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo_id=23622

Federal Advocacy:

The call to eliminate IMLS marks a dark day in our nation's history. This organization has invested in the future of Americans for 30 years providing funding for library jobs, research, and groundbreaking projects that have influenced everything from the adoption of the internet in libraries to the adoption of makerspaces in libraries to how libraries contribute to social wellbeing and community resilience. In fact, I got my first library job thanks to an IMLS-funded project here at MHLS.

What the executive order means for your library:

IMLS administers the Grants to States program, a congressionally mandated program that completely funds the NYS Division of Library Development's (DLD) operations. While MHLS does not directly receive federal funding through this program, we greatly rely on DLD to facilitate the funding we do get from New York State. Defunding DLD will have a ripple effect that could greatly compromise our ability to access the state aid, described above, that is critical to our operations.

Please call today. Contact information for your federal legislators can be found at <https://midhudson.org/topics/sustainable-libraries/advocacy/mhls-legislators/>

Now is the perfect time to be investing in libraries. Help your legislators understand that libraries are on the front lines of helping residents during this intense era of misinformation/disinformation, division among neighbors, and reduced investment in federal services.

You can also email stakeholders through the New York State Library Association (NYLA) https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/messages/edit?promo_id=23621

Thank you for all you do - every day and in every way - to make the Hudson Valley a wonderful place to live and raise our families. Your work matters and makes a difference to those you serve. -Rebekkah Smith Aldritch

🌸 Hello and Happy Spring! 🌸

February (and Winter) in the Rear View

The second half of February was a bit quieter in children's programming with a focus on our recurring programs. Tuesday storytimes continued to be a fun movement infused time and Wednesdays began to pick-up in terms of attendance! Tween book club met at the end of February and our group of four continues to go strong. Everyone brought exciting opinions to the table and we ended the program with a drawing challenge related to the book. Some tweens then went downstairs to check-out the Open Mic night! February's children's programming concluded with 19 programs and 245 attendees.

March Thus Far

March's children's programming has really hit the ground running! Building off the nice weather and the leap of the clocks, things have been bright and busy here at the library. This month I started two new recurring programs for babies and toddlers. The first is Movement and Music with licensed Music Therapist Terry Watson. This program has met twice this month and has been a huge hit! The kids love getting the opportunity to dance and sing along to Terry's tunes. This program will continue to meet twice a month through June (and perhaps beyond!!). The first meeting had 28 attendees and the second meeting had 42 attendees. The second recurring program is an Outreach storytime at Headstart's Kingston Center. Approximately twice a month I will visit a classroom at Headstart and share stories, songs, and movement with a lively and curious bunch of toddlers! It was a joy to meet such a fun and rambunctious group. Sticking with this age range I would also like to highlight our Toddler Playgroup which meets on Friday mornings at 11:30am. This group has been meeting weekly since January and has grown each week with 10 children in attendance for last week's session. It's been incredibly rewarding to try out new programs and to allow them the time and space to grow. Another fun program this month was an afterschool storytime visit from Texas Roadhouse's mascot Andy Armadillo. The kids were so excited to see Andy and really enjoyed getting to hear stories alongside him. There were 15 people in attendance.

So far in March we have had 15 children's programs with 235 people in attendance.

Looking Ahead

I am excited to try out two new storytime times later this month. On Thursday, March 20th I will have an Afternoon Storytime focusing on the Very Hungry Caterpillar. We'll share a couple of stories and then make a caterpillar craft! Then, on Saturday, March 29th I will have a Saturday Storytime filled with Spring themed stories and a fun craft. To round out the month we will also host a Crafternoon program which will feature lots of craft supplies with unlimited creative potential [for all ages]!

April is already shaping up to be an exciting time here in children's programming! Towards the end of the month we will begin a six-week program of Yoga for Tweens which should be very fun and relaxing. Some big themes for April will be Nature and Poetry. I hope to feature lots of programs focusing on seeds, planting, and being in nature. We will also have two poetry programs for tweens and teens, one at the beginning of the month led by Fox (exciting!) and one at the end of the month with visiting poet Ann Burg. It sure should be a fun time!

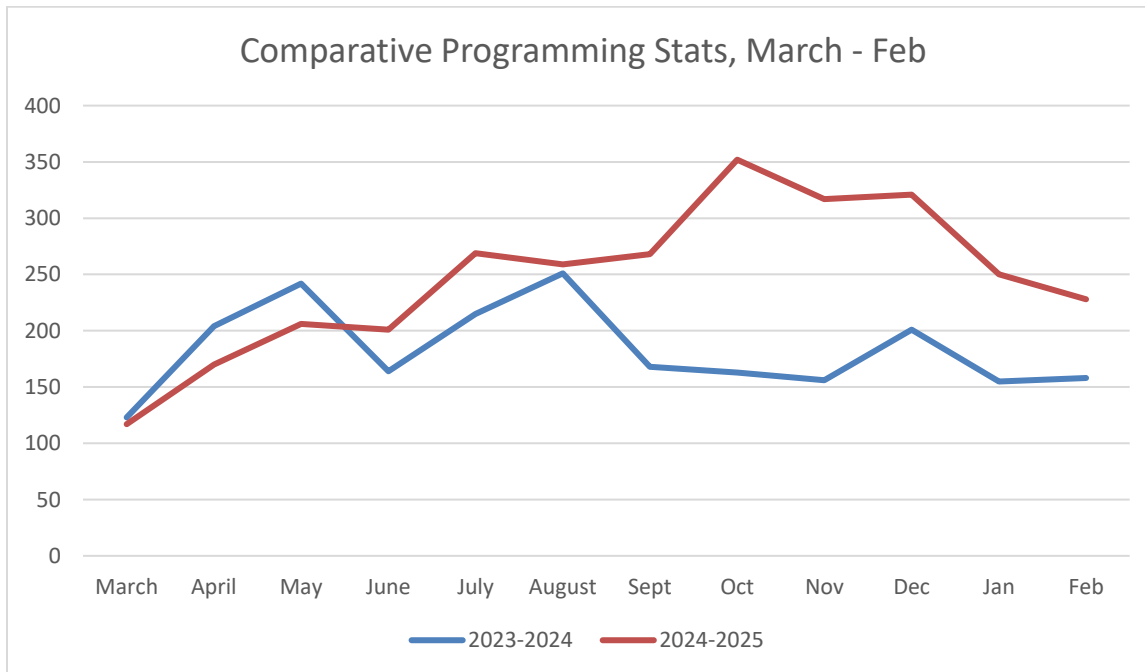
Warm wishes,
Charlotte 🌷



Teen and Adult Programming Report – March

Wrapping up the winter at the Town of Esopus Library

- **Final programming numbers for February**
 - **164 patrons at adult events**
 - **64 patrons at teen events**
 - **228 Patrons Total**
 - **A chart!**



High previous staff turnover in the Teen and Adult Programmer position at our library makes it difficult to draw generalities about seasonal attendance – however, it is clear that we’ve seen a slight dip in January and February for two years in a row, with program attendance increasing in the summer and autumn months. For 2026, the programming team is discussing hosting fewer paid library presenters (with on-going groups and freebies like our book clubs still meeting, of course) in January and February in order to conserve a greater portion of our budget for the remainder of the year.

- **Adult Programming**

- **Ongoing Groups** Winter storms caused cancellations with several ongoing groups, including our long-standing **Thursday night book club**; they held their passionate thoughts on Kristin Hannah's *The Women* for early March, which was well-attended, as usual. Next month we revisit the book club's very first chosen book with *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. Space accommodations continue to be an on-going concern; Jesse has shifted his **ABC Book Club** to after our **Needlework Group** so that they no longer need to meet simultaneously.
- **Duck Pond Gallery** Local photographer **Cameron Williams** presents a small display of photographs, with archival prints of local haunts available for sale. We brought part of the **Burroughs collection** out from storage to fill the remainder of our gallery walls. Cameron generously also donated leftover cheese from his gallery show to hungry library staff – cheese is always worth a mention. John Burroughs unfortunately did not give us cheese. We'll forgive him this time.
- **Body series Erin Reilly** hosted a six-week series of acupressure that was sadly beset by weather delays. In the future, we may host her again during warmer months, when her courses seemed better attended. Meanwhile, **Charlotte Gibbons' QiGong class** had increasing attendance throughout the series. We'll have her back next winter. And **Chair Yoga with Kathy S.** will soon return to the library basement; chair yogis everywhere rejoice.
- **Classes, readings, and workshops Peyton Pleninger and his jazz trio Biotonic** gave a rousing, if repetitious, performance in our community room this month – patron response was warm and several asked if we could have more music and arts programming in the future. **Jessica Williams** also returned for another well-attended gardening workshop. Late March will see a **Spring Songwriter Showcase**, featuring the return to our library of **TheyLoveThem**, with a selection of other local musical acts. Please come down and listen!

- **Teen Programming**

- **On-going groups** If it works, do it again: I've continued to apply the winning formula of "ongoing groups used to create a dedicated programming base" that works so well for our adult programming in our teen sphere. This month **Dungeons & Dragons & Pizza** grew their base with three more programs. Additionally, our parent-led **Rainbow Club** now comprises a solid group of attendees. **Diane Jones Godfrey** provided a lively art workshop for our rainbow kids.

Respectfully submitted,

Fox North

Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: March 10, 2025

In Attendance: Don Carragher, Allen Olsen, Laura Petit and Stephen Lewis

The committee discussed new plans to provide handicap access thru the traffic islands. Stephen will reach out to contractors for bids to provide two sidewalks and curbing around the top island.

Submitted by,

Steve Lewis

The next Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2025 at 4:00 pm

Finance Committee meeting

March 14, 2025 @ 10:00 am

Attending: Allen Olsen, Chair; Elaine Jaffe; Laura Petit; Jesse Chance, Library Director

The February 2025 expenses in the amount of \$19,591.74 were approved.

The February 2025 financials were reviewed.

A 2026 budget draft, prepared by the Director, was reviewed. It will be discussed further and approved at the April meeting. The draft budget includes no contribution from the Library's fund balance.

The Director presented some information on collateralization of account balances, provided by Greene County Bank. The Committee discussed whether to proceed with multiple accounts in light of this information, and decided to proceed with at least Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union for now. A resolution to bank with Ulster Savings Bank has also been approved.

The 2024 financials were reviewed, and a number of Income Statement transfers, as recommended by the Director, were approved (resolution to follow). Subject to a final closing of the books, it appears that the Library finished the year slightly in the black, while not spending the Fund Balance contribution of \$57k which had been budgeted.

The Committee Chair presented some contradictory information on our current Fund Balance, and has reached out to Rose Woodworth at WZ Accountants for hopeful clarification.

Submitted by Allen Olsen

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 18 at 10 am.

Town of Esopus Library
Governance and Personnel Committee

March 11 2025

Present: Martha Farrell, Larry Decker, Jesse Chance, Sharon Briden, Elaine Rylance

Absent: Elaine Jaffe

The committee reviewed and revised sections 9 and 10 of the Personnel Policy Manual.

Submitted,
Martha Farrell

Our next meeting will be April 8, 2025 at 3:00 pm

Town of Esopus Library

Sustainability, Research & Development

3/12/25 at 4:00 pm

Attendees: Don Carragher, Jesse Chance, Sharon Briden and Steve Lewis

The committee reviewed the Town Comprehensive (Master) Plan. Sections of the Plan include infrastructure that affects the Library: sidewalks, intersection safety, etc. Grants could be sought to improve our facilities in coordination with the Town of Esopus. Several governmental and private sources were discussed.

Submitted, Don Carragher, Chair

Next meeting: 4/9/25 at 4:00 pm