

Director's Report to the Library Commission

Discussing January 2026 | Presented February 2026

Budget:

- The proposed budget for FY27 was presented to the Mayor on January 28th. Our Budget Work Session with Town Council will be Thursday, March 13 at 3 PM. My due date is March 20, which could impact this presentation. I am working with Erica to ensure that she has a full understanding of our budget proposal, should I be unable to attend.

Director Onboarding:

- I have met with half the staff for individual meetings discussing their regular responsibilities, professional goals, and my current and long-term plans (below).
 - Current plans: my focus is stability and consistency. I want to make sure I lay the groundwork for a smooth maternity leave, while also addressing inconsistencies in some of our practices.
 - Long-term: After I return from maternity leave, I want to address larger projects and goals. This would include any ideas the staff have, as well as developing the process for a new strategic plan.
- Leadership meetings continue on a bi-weekly basis, covering topics ranging from policies to budget planning.

Library News:

- The monthly statistic report has been adapted to include e-lending services. There was no way to keep it to one page, so there have been some formatting changes.
- Deliveries are back in full force! Erica has been doing a great job catching up and getting items on the shelves in a timely manner. At one point, she had 10 boxes of books surrounding her desk! Staff is taking note of this pattern for next year so we can adjust our ordering practices for the holiday slow down.
- As I am getting to know our services and practices, I have found some areas that need to be addressed or formalized. This includes our circulation/loan rules, animals in the building, volunteering, and photo permissions. I am working with HR and Parks & Rec to see what the Town expectations are for these practices, as well as digging into past records from the Library to confirm current practices. I will be presenting all new/updated policies to the Commission as they are developed.
- We are in the process of developing a Marketing Team that will ensure consistency across all marketing efforts. This team will be comprised of smaller groups that focus on specific marketing platforms. Our first focus is social media. Raven, Lyndsey, and I have developed a new planning tool that we are implementing in February. Our goals are more consist posting, varying topics for each post, and increased engagement by our followers. We encourage all of our Commission members to follow us if you are on social media and let us know what you think of the upcoming changes.

- Both weeding projects are still underway. We have a tentative timeline to finish them by the end of the fiscal year.
- It is hard to think about gardening after we got 15 inches of snow, but plans for this season's Seed Library are underway! To coordinate such a complex service, we have formed a small team that will be driving force of it: Matt will be our Seed Coordinator, Lyndsey our Volunteer Coordinator, and Laura our Mentor, as well as Marketing Coordinator. Each is tackling their respective roles as we work toward a spring debut.
- From the Children's Department: Registration for the "Whale, Would You Look At That?!" program will be opening on February 17. This is a special program that we are able to provide for the community through the Janet Barnett Grant. A life size inflatable whale named Delilah is coming from Plymouth Mass and families will be able to go inside the whale to learn all about whales. Mystic Seaport will also be coming that day to offer special whale learning activities and information. In addition, we're giving out bags with crafts and activities, there will be a whale listening station, and we're raffling off a 43 in stuffed whale big plush pillow. We're hoping for a full house and lots of fun! The program is on Saturday, March 21 and people who want to register must call either library to be put on the list.
- Our staff are actively involved in regional and state library professional development. Matt has begin co-chairing a Genealogy Roundtable for the Connecticut Library Consortium, allowing him to connect and collaborate with other libraries and organizations. Lyndsey had her proposal accepted to the Connecticut Library Association's Annual Conference. She will be presenting in April about our "Dying to Talk About This" program.

Building News:

- Shawn from Public Works and his team have been very good to us! Bill's heat is fixed and stable, just in time for Children Department at Gales Ferry to falter. Shawn and his crew are checking in to maintain that unit as well. Fortunately, the heat at Gales Ferry is struggling but still supplying some hot air. There is very little risk of pipes freezing. Shawn is hopeful for an easy and quick fix.

Town News:

- As a reminder, FOIA Training is being offered by the Town for staff, commission members, and volunteers on Tuesday, February 10, at 3:30 PM and 6 PM in the Council Chambers. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Training/Presentation will be provided by the Director of Education & Communications, Russell Blair, from the State of Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission. I will be attending on behalf of the Library and encourage any Commission members who are interested to attend as well.

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