

Director's Report to the Library Commission

Discussing March 2026 | Presented April 2026

Budget:

- Jessa presented the budget to the council on March 12 and it went well. The council asked a lot of questions, specifically about LION, ebooks, personnel/pages, and the operating line. Jessa did a fantastic job of answering all of their questions. What was supposed to be a 15-minute conversation turned into 40 minutes. We're very lucky to have Jessa at the helm, and we're hopeful that the council will not change what the mayor put forth in his budget.

Director Information:

- Jessa is home on maternity leave and doing well. She and Dominic are happy and healthy, and she's been logging in occasionally to catch up on and respond to emails as needed. Stacey, Lyndsey, and Matt are handling everything in the meantime, and we're happy to say that things are going very smoothly with library staff and patrons.

Library News:

- March was a very busy month for the library and it was a rousing success! The Friends held a pie sale and the pies sold out in under an hour! FOLL raised over \$900 between the pies and the raffle. Kudos to Jackie Bacon for all of her dedication and hard work, and FOLL is excited to do it again next year.
- The Seed Library opened on March 18 and it's been going well so far. We have already given out over 600 seed packets between the two libraries! This was also the day Lyndsey had her Etiquette & Elegance program with the Barnes Museum. There was a turnout of 20 people, and all attendees said that they really enjoyed it. She's hoping to have them back again sometime in the future.
- Fly Tying is a weekly series organized by Matt started on March 11. It continues to be an ongoing success. There are between 10 – 13 people who attend that each week.
- Stacey had two big programs on back-to-back Saturdays that were a huge hit! First was the whale program that was made possible with help from a grant from the Janet Barnett Legacy Project. There were around 100 people who were able to see the whale, interact with the educators from the Mystic Seaport, and visit all of the other stations we had for the event. It took a lot of work from library staff to make this event successful, and we're really pleased with how it went. The other event was an Inside Petting Zoo with lots of bunnies, a goat, and a tortoise. There were 131 people who attended and once again staff help was invaluable in making the event go well. These programs along with our very popular storytimes and other events means that youth programming is going like gangbusters!
- We are once again participating in the Passport to CT Libraries program. Passport to CT Libraries is a month-long program that encourages patrons to visit as many participating public libraries as possible. This year, there are 171 participating libraries! Patrons who visit the library will have a "passport" that each library will stamp (or sticker! We're stamping). Patrons are eligible to

enter a raffle to win a prize as long as they get stamps from 5 libraries. The patrons who visit the most libraries are also entered under their own category.

- Erica, our amazing head of tech services, is doing a fantastic job getting books cataloged quickly while also handling administrative tasks like putting together our monthly newsletter. One weekend the Laura and Beth got 75 items ready for the shelves! We were scrambling to find room and shift collections. Erica also cataloged the new switch games and the youth classics collections that are now available at each library.
- And I just have to highlight the audiobook statistics. I know we've told you that the Yoto players and cards were recently added and they have been a huge hit. They are cataloged as audiobooks. Our Youth audiobook stats are as follows:
 - December 2025: 8 Circulations
 - January 2026: 6 Circulations
 - February 2026 (including Yoto Beta-testing): 20 Circulations
 - March 2026: 229 Circulations! This is a **1045% increase** over February, and a **3717% increase** from January before Yoto beta-testing!
- Overall, March has been our busiest months in a while! A huge thank you to our staff for all of their hard work and dedication!

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