Minutes
East Haddam Library System Board of Trustees
Thursday, January 8, 2026

Municipal Office Building
Meeting Room 3
6:30pm

I. Call to order by D Barlow @ 6:31pm
   a. Trustees present: J Bielot, K McRae, L White, S Jezek, J Tyron Ranaudo, D Barlow, B Barney, M Mazur-via phone
   b. Others Present: E Morgen, EHLS Director, T Sevigney, Selectman, Late arrival-T Gelston, 1st Selectman

II Approval of December 11, 2025 minutes accepted as submitted

III **Directors Report-**

a. E Morgen was informed last week that preliminary budget proposals are due Tuesday January 13, 2026. She is planning as flat a budget as possible. Heating, increasing cost of digital content contribute to the line items out of the control of the EHLS.
b. Considering issues of concern to the EHLS lack of handicap access, it was discussed that a log of issues be kept going forward to support the EHLS argument that the new library proposal must be continued. The EHLS is inaccessible to the members of the community with limited mobility.
c. FY 26 Budget is on target, 43.6% has been expended.
d. Many events that partner with local organizations were reported, including Words From the East Haddam Land Trust *Woods Book Circle* and an upcoming program to celebrate the country's semiquincentennial with local musician Joe Flood and the Moodus Fife and Drum organization.
e. The Children's Librarian, Anastasia, has many programs for younger people and continues to find success in these offerings. She has held 15 different programs drawing in about 72 participants for the month of December 2025.
f. E Morgen continues to organize meetings with staff, attends various board meetings and Friends Groups meetings and also ongoing actions to prepare for the new Library Building concepts.

S Jezek makes a motion to invite Selectman T Sevigney to join the meeting to contribute to discussion around the new Library Building. J Tryon Ranaudo 2nd

T Sevigney informs the Trustees that bonding is out until approximately 2028-2030. He suggests the Trustees begin to prepare immediately to make a proposal to the BOS for a Building Committee to be formed. Discussion around how to prepare ensued. D Barlow reminds the Trustees that many steps have already taken place in preparation, like a Strategic Plan that is needed as part of a Grant application process.

B Barney makes a motion to invite 1st Selectman T Gelston to join the meeting to contribute to the discussion of the new Library Building. D Barlow 2nd

T Gelston informs the Trustees that Shady Brook property has a for sale sign up. This property is located very near to both the Elementary School and the High School.

Proximity to the schools is an important facet of the proposal for the new building. He suggests that the Trustees get all preparation in order as quickly as possible so that opportunities like Shady Brook and putting a potential option on the land aren't missed. He suggests that an option on the property can hold it until the building committee is ready. Options are not inexpensive. A lawyer as well as money for deposit must be found. He suggests expediency in forming the Building Committee and this can be accomplished by presenting at the BOS meetings with tremendous support shown by the community. The Trustees must prove that the new library building is needed and wanted by the tax payors. The Trustees and the EHLS must rally the community and come to the BOS meeting ready to show tax payor support.

T Gelston thinks it could take up to 6 months to form the Building Committee and that the Shady Brook option may not be available still, but the work done would make the next option that comes up viable. The decision was to have the Trustees prepare and organize to present at the February 4, 2026 BOS meeting. A special meeting will be scheduled for the Trustees to plan and prepare.

B Barney stated that there are situations where the town has bought land it can hold for other usage, that these types of purchases might make a piece available for the new Library Building.

IV **Reports**-

Finance Committee Report-

FY26 Budget expenses are on target.

FY27 Budget in in preparation-concerns discussed above in Director's Report

An additional sub-employee is needed to cover shortages and will be more cost effective than a full staff person.

The committee continues to prepare for Grant proposals in the spring.

The Trusts for both libraries, Rathbun and The Purple Fund, are held by the town in an obscure way and the Finance Committee and the Selectmen will work out the best way to distribute and recognize these funds.

Governance Committee Report-

The vacancy on the Trustees has been filled by B Barney

The calendar and seat assignments are finalized, excluding one seat. The Recording Secretary was assigned last month as a temporary appointment, the written record does not reflect this. Discussion that a motion be made under New Business to address this.

A Corresponding Secretary motion is made by S Jezek, as she has filled this role until recently. The suggestion is moved to New Business.

Review of orientation process

EHLS Manual is almost complete and is anticipated to be presented at the February meeting

Public Relations Committee Report-

Discussion of several upcoming community organization partnership programs, as discussed above, including the East Haddam Land Trust, the Moodus Fife and Drum Corps, the East Haddam Art League.

Discussion of the extensive list of programs available through the EHLS, please see easthaddamlibrarysystem.org for details and registration if necessary. Many programs fill up fast and there are only limited spaces available as the EHLS building are inadequate to support large groups.

Friends Liasion Reports

i. **Friends of EHFPL-**

Donations from the community continue to come in and these funds are provided to the EHLS for activities.

1000 more books are being ordered for the *1000 Books before Kindergarten* program. 25 children are graduating and a ceremony will be held to honor them.

The Marionettes program is being scheduled in the near future, potentially late February or March.

The Book Nook has a new policy to screen for the quality of books donated. The new policy will be published in the East Haddam News as well on the Library website. Starting on the 2nd Saturday of the month, Friends members will host a book screening for donations. The Friends would also like to add a sign to the outside of the Library stating the Book Nook is available to the public.

Next meeting February 10, 2026, 4pm

ii. **Friends of EHFPL-did not meet**

V. **Unfinished Business**

A. FY26 budget discussed above
B. New Library planning discussed above

VI. **New Business**

B Barney made a motion to ask L White to resign as Recording Secretary. J Bielot 2nd
B Barney made a motion to elect a new Recording Secretary. L White 2nd
B Barney made a motion to elect a Corresponding Secretary. Motion failed as the EHLS Manual does not list a Corresponding Secretary as a role on the Trustees. The manual must be updated to include this role before a vote can take place. B Barney asks if the Corresponding Secretary is a position noted in the EHLS Manual, it is not. Suggestion that Governance address this oversight in the redress of the EHLS Manual

B Barney makes a motion to remove L White as Recording Secretary. K McRae 2nd
J Tryon Ranaudo nominates B Barney as Recording Secretary. L White 2nd, B Barney abstained

VII. Audience of Citizens-none

VIII. Adjournment- 8:01pm

Respectfully submitted L White