East Haddam Library Systems Board of Trustees
Subcommittee Public Relations Meeting
Wednesday March 4, 2026

Meeting called to order 2:46pm

Members present: M Mazur, L White
Also in attendance: E Morgen, Library Director
Approval of February 4, 2026 minutes accepted with the following amendment: Under Library Program Updates, The Bring Your Child to the Library Day was held on February 6, 2026 not February 7, 2026 as it was noted.
Director's Report

E Morgen reports The Library Trustees and Library Director had success at the 2/18/2026 Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting. The BOS received several inspiring letters in support of the new Library Building project. There were over 50 people in attendance at the BOS meeting in support of the new Library building project and several of them got up to speak in favor as well. The Trustees and Maureen Sullivan, a consultant to the Trustees, all spoke on points of concern in regard to the status of the present library buildings and the reasons and history of the present library situation.

E Morgen reports the next step is to create a charge for the next phase of this project which is to form a New Library Exploratory Committee. A Special meeting of the Trustees held 2/26/2026 directed the Library Director, M Sullivan and Selectman T Sevigny to work together to create this charge. E Morgen states the charge is created now and will be presented to the Trustees at our regular meeting being held 3/12/2026 for approval and then will be presented to the BOS at their 3/18/2026 meeting for acceptance and the appointment of the New Library Exploratory Committee. The theme for presentations on this subject moving forward will be called "A Path Forward". The time frame for this New Library Exploratory Committee will be 6 months to 1 year and will focus on bringing a cost analysis, design concepts and time frame, based on the study done in 2022, into a cohesive presentation to bring to the BOS for approval to form the 2nd phase of this process, which is to form a Building Committee. The Trustees have asked M Sullivan to facilitate this Exploratory Committee with J Bielot, S Jezek and Library Director E Morgen as members with the expectation of 5-7 members completing the team. Consulting liaisons are T Sevigny, Selectman, R Parady, construction, and B Dillon, design. R Parady and B Dillon sat on the 2022 Study committee.

Public Relations (PR) discussed having one of the PR members on the Exploratory Committee as a way to keep the public engaged as the process moves along. It is agreed.

E Morgen reports that there have been several closures of the libraries in recent days as a result of weather and facilities issues. We had a blizzard, there was a half day power outage and Rathbun suffered a plumbing issue that required a service call and a 24 hour closure. Also, one night the library closed a half hour early due to icy street conditions. The staff are paid when the closings are official. Programs are rescheduled as space and time permit.

E Morgen presented the FY 27 Budget to the Board of Finance (BOF) 3/2/2026. The LD feels strongly that it passed through without concern. She has maintained a flat line budget outside of 2.5% COLA staff increases and utilities which are out of the control of the LD. The budget was presented with a less than 3% increase overall.

Library usage continues to increase.

Library Program Updates

Highlights of interesting program offerings other than the routine programs that repeat each week and month were discussed. Reminder to check the library system website for the most current program information eathaddamlibrarysystem.org . Upcoming, is the Arabian Nights puppet performance at the Nathan Hale Ray High School this coming Sunday March 8, 2026. E Morgen states she has reached out to Parks and Rec as well as the Superintendent of Schools to share the flyer through their outreach sources. M Mazur asks if the Historical Museum might also be asked to share. E Morgen sees no reason not to ask.

Also upcoming, is another partnership with the East Haddam Land Trust and Machimoodus Park for Earth Day. Discussion around the Trustees support and the PR committee involvement. E Morgen doesn't feel the Library having a table at such an event is the right approach and perhaps something in the libraries leading up to that event date is more appropriate. One of the actions is to post the flyer for the event at the libraries.

Old Business

Community Invitations/Opportunities and Upcoming Events and participation

As mentioned above, the libraries partner with many community organizations repeatedly. The East Haddam Land Trust, The Arts League, The Fife and Drum program coming up

New Business

The Puppet Show is coming Sunday March 8, 2026 to the Nathan Hale Ray High School auditorium.

The 2/26/2026 Special Meeting of the Trustees directed the LD to meet with M Sullivan and liaison Selectman T Sevigny to develop the charge for the New Library Exploratory Committee.

Yankee Magazine's most recent issue ranked East Haddam #12 in New England. PR will work on an article for the newspaper and social media postings.

Discussion of simple public outreach to the newspaper and social media being streamlined. L White asks that simple draft reminders of upcoming events of public interest can be directed through PR and LD to be published. Greater interest articles and articles of substantive subject matter will be more carefully crafted and run through the Trustees and approved as needed. M Mazur and L White discussed the snacks service for the Semiquincentennial event at the Grange to include cookies and cider.

Meeting Adjourned 3:45pm

Next meeting April 1, 2026 2:30pm at the Rathbun Library

Respectfully Submitted, Laurel White, Secretary