Library Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting
October 19, 2026 – 7:00 P.M
Simsbury Public Library – Weatogue Room
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER- Madam Chair McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Present: Chair, Holly McGrath; Vice Chair, Polly Rice; Co-Chair of Strategic Plan Committee, Don Heymann; Board of Trustees: Heather Czuchta, Anne Erickson, Marianne O'Neil, Susan Ray, and Laurie Shinaman; Simsbury Public Library Director, Lisa Miceli; Liaison to the Board of Selectmen, Diana Yeisley and Guest Frannie Doherty.

Absent: President of the Friends of the Library, Greg Golinski; and Secretary, Mary Glassman.

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 14, 2026, Regular Meeting
Madam Chair McGrath amended line 54 to correct the spelling of "invoiced" to "invoices."

MOTION: Trustee O'Neil made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Rice, to approve the Minutes of the September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting as amended. The motion carried unanimously. (8-0-0)

III. PUBLIC AUDIENCE

No public audience.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Madam Chair McGrath shared a *New York Times* article dated October 5 concerning librarians and the experiences of library professionals nationwide. A printed copy was made available to attendees.

Trustee O'Neil shared positive feedback from a new town resident who expressed enthusiasm about the library.

V. FRIENDS' REPORT

No report.

VI. BOARD OF SELECTMEN LIAISON REPORT

Selectman Yeisley provided updates on municipal activities.

Early voting: Early voting began October 19 at the library and will continue through November 1, with varying hours and scheduled exceptions. Residents were encouraged to consult the published schedule. Election Day is November 3, with regular polling locations in effect.

Veterans' property tax exemption: The Board of Selectmen approved a full property tax exemption for an eligible classification of totally disabled veterans who are unable to work. The town elected to provide the maximum available benefit rather than impose additional income or property-based limitations. The implementation date was established to allow eligible individuals and surviving spouses to receive benefits prospectively, without retroactive payments.

Year-end surplus and budget transfers: The Board of Selectmen reported an approximately $3.5 million year-end surplus, consisting of approximately $2.3 million in additional revenue and $1.2 million in expenditure savings. Revenue increases included tax collections, building permit fees, investment interest, and conveyance taxes. Expenditure savings included police staffing vacancies, employee benefits, and debt service.

The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to restore the $23,000 previously cut from the library's materials budget. The restoration was scheduled for consideration by the Board of Finance on October 20, 2026.

Additional funding was also approved to support planning and infrastructure work associated with the Apple Barn renovation. Selectman Yeisley emphasized the importance of accounting for the durable medical equipment loan program currently housed at the Apple Barn when considering future renovations.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT

Madam Chair McGrath presented a summary of the Board's activities over the past year.

Policy development: The Board revised 11 library policies through the work of the policy subcommittee and collaboration with library staff.

Strategic planning: The strategic planning committee conducted extensive community outreach, including more than 10 listening sessions, drop-in sessions at the senior center, and surveys. The information gathered is informing the library's next five-year strategic plan.

Advocacy and community initiatives: The Chair thanked trustees who supported advocacy efforts to restore the library's materials funding. Other initiatives included accepting gifts, approving the Sensory Land Trust's golden anniversary tree planting, installing a little free food pantry, and developing and launching the library's website.

The Chair also recognized a visit from Dr. Maria McCauley, co-president of the American Library Association, who grew up in the community and spoke with staff and Board members.

The Chair commended local teenagers who spoke at a recent Board of Selectmen meeting in support of the grant and renovation of the teen space.

Public participation and meeting procedures: Trustee Ray asked about changes to public audience procedures and Zoom access. The Chair explained that the town manager's office had directed greater standardization of procedures across municipal boards. The Board will continue following direction from the Town Manager's Office.

VIII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Miceli provided updates on staffing, services, technology, and library operations.

Technology and equipment: The library received twelve requests for laptops through the state's laptop program and requested eight additional laptops. The additional devices were expected to arrive, bringing the anticipated total to 18.

Staffing: Three new part-time library services assistants—Elliot, Briana, and Caitlin—were hired for the Children's Department. An adult services librarian is expected to leave for Australia, creating a vacancy. Interviews for the position are

anticipated to begin the following week.

Programming and strategic plan implementation: In response to community feedback, the Children's Department is offering programs at varied times, including Monday evenings and weekends. The library has new partnerships with Real Art Ways and multiple community land trust partners on programming.

The Board discussed the importance of offering programs at times that accommodate different schedules, particularly for families, students, and teenagers. The Chair noted that a recent half-day program featuring a Super Smash Bros. tournament attracted 43 teenagers.

Library activity and engagement: The Director reported approximately 27,500 visitors in September, representing an increase of more than 3% compared with September 2025. The library issued 138 new library cards, exceeding the approximately 110 issued during the previous year.

The Board discussed the value of tracking attendance and new library cards as measures of community engagement.

Discretionary fund and reimbursements: The Director reviewed the library's discretionary fund, which receives gifts and memorial donations and is used for special projects. The Director also explained that the library receives approximately $17,000–$19,000 annually as part of the CT State Library BorrowIT reimbursement program. The discretionary fund also serves as a pass-through for grant funding. Holding library grant funds in the discretionary fund keeps them separate from the town’s general fund. The Director offered to provide quarterly updates on the fund and related financial activity.

Elevator: The elevator is awaiting replacement of its circuit board. It has experienced intermittent problems but was determined to be safe for use following review by Public Works.

IX. SEPTEMBER FINANCE REPORT

The Board reviewed the September financial report.

A potential accounting issue was identified involving transportation and travel expenses in the library administration section that may have been charged to the wrong funding source. The Director indicated that the charges should be reviewed and corrected as necessary.

X. LEGISLATIVE DIRECTED FUNDS UPDATE

Library Director Miceli reported that documentation for the $350,000 legislative directed grant for the teen space had arrived that morning. The Director and Tom Fitzgerald began working on the documentation.

Unlike the other two projects discussed, the library's legislative directed funding can span fiscal years and is not required to be spent by the end of the current fiscal year. The documentation will be reviewed as the process moves forward.

XI. ACCEPTANCE OF FRIENDS OF THE SIMSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY 2025-2026 GIFT - $101,566

The Board reviewed the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library's annual gift totaling **$101,566**. Supporting documentation detailed the Friends' contributions and expenditures for library materials, programming, memberships, and other departmental needs.

The Director explained that the Friends pay many invoices directly, so their complete contribution is not reflected solely in the library's own financial records. The Board acknowledged the importance of transparent reporting and coordination between the Friends, the Director, and department heads.

MOTION: Co-Chair Rice made a motion, seconded by Trustee O'Neil, to accept the $101,566 gift from the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library for fiscal year 2025–2026. The motion carried, with one abstention. (7-0-1)

The Board expressed its appreciation to the Friends for their substantial fundraising efforts and continued support of library services.

XII. PUBLIC, EDUCATIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMMING AND EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT ACCOUNT (PEGPETIA) GRANT PROJECTS

Library Director Miceli reviewed potential projects for the upcoming PEGPETIA grant cycle. The program operates on an every-other-year basis, and the library intends to apply during the current cycle.

Potential projects include:

- Replacing microphones in both program rooms.
- Installing audiovisual equipment in the Tariffville Room so it may be oriented in an alternate view.

- Replacing the television in the teen space.
- Replacing public computers according to the library's regular technology replacement schedule.

The Director is obtaining vendor quotes, expected by the end of the week. The application requires approval by the Board of Selectmen at its November 9 meeting and must be submitted by November 20, 2026.

The Board discussed the competitive nature of the grant and the decreasing award amounts in recent years. The Director noted that the grant is available to municipalities, community media organizations, and schools, in addition to libraries.

In response to questions about public computers, the Director reported that the library has 42 public computers and maintains a four-year replacement schedule. The current number was considered adequate. The library currently uses PCs rather than Macs due to management and IT support considerations.

XIII. LIBRARY CARD DESIGN CONTEST

Library Director Miceli introduced a proposed library card design contest intended to engage community members of different ages and increase interest in library card ownership.

The proposed process would solicit designs from the community, narrow submissions to finalists, and allow the public to participate in selecting a design. The initiative is expected to be implemented without increasing the cost of library cards.

The Director also presented a sample cover memo for Board agenda items. The memo would provide background information and context with future Board packets to support informed discussion.

XIV. STAFF DEVELOPMENT MORNING – NOVEMBER 12, 2026

Library Director Miceli requested approval to open the library at 11:00 A.M. on Thursday, November 12, 2026, to allow all staff members to participate in professional development beginning at 9:00 A.M.

The training will focus on artificial intelligence and serve as an initial step toward developing the library’s approach and policies regarding AI. A part-time Adult Services Librarian who recently completed her MLIS will lead the session.

MOTION: Trustee Czuchta made a motion, seconded by Trustee Heymann, to approve the delayed opening at 11:00 A.M. The motion carried unanimously. (8-0-0)

XV. STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Co-Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee Heymann reported that the plan is nearing completion and is entering the design and formatting stage. Trustees will have another opportunity to review the document and provide comments.

The committee anticipates presenting a finalized document for Board approval in December 2026, allowing implementation to begin in January 2027.

The committee is also developing a community communication and rollout plan to share the completed strategic plan with residents and library stakeholders.

The committee will not be holding a meeting in October while it focuses on design and layout.

XVI. TOUR OF THE TEEN SPACE

The Board proceeded to tour the teen space following the meeting's discussion items.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Vice Chair Rice made a motion, seconded by Trustee Erickson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. (8-0-0)

Madam Chair McGrath adjourned the meeting at 7:57 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cameron DiSanto
Administrative Secretary