

**Date:** March 12th, 2025  
**To:** David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees  
**Prepared by:** Angela Zimmermann, Library Director



## **Administrative and Staff Reports for March 12th Board Meeting**

*Library Director, Angela Zimmermann*

I'm not sure where February went, but it flew by! A big shout-out again to the staff for handling the ups and downs of the heating issues. We now have the outdoor heaters set on timers to warm both the children's and adult areas. This change helps ensure (hopefully) consistent heat, rather than leaving us dependent on propane deliveries. With some warmer days currently and ahead, our reliance on the heaters should decrease. ? Regarding the new boilers, Laureyns United had to submit a revised quote, as the originally proposed units were not the right fit. They identified comparable alternative units which are slightly more expensive than the initial quote, however there are no additional costs to us/the Town for these units. I do not yet have a timeframe in regards to installation as the new signed quote/paperwork just all occurred today (03/06).

Otherwise at the Milne, I feel there are many things to be excited about so just some quick highlights in the past several weeks:

As you'll read further in Kira, Adult Services Librarian's report, the Sustainability Committee met for the first time and has pulled together really great ideas and initiatives to minimize our ecological footprint at the library. Kira is serving as the Chair of the committee. We will also be submitting for a grant opportunity through the Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant Program.

Thanks to the Board of Trustees funds, we've already spruced up the staff room a bit with new paint color, chairs, a new table, a few new appliances, storage, and curtains. On the docket yet is to replace the sink and possibly the door. On behalf of the staff again, thank you to the Board for these funds.

We compiled quite a few responses from the community in regards to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' campaign prompting patrons to share their stories about their libraries to then share with state legislators. We'll be sharing the notes we received on a weekly basis and this week's is: "The library has been such a welcoming place for our family. We were new in town and this library provided us a welcome home base. Plus the Thingdom is amazing!" Thanks to Brianna, Marketing & Communications Strategist, for overseeing this campaign on the Milne's side of things.

We received a \$10,000 grant from the American Library Association for *Libraries Transform Communities (LTC): Accessible Small and Rural Communities* to create a sensory room space

within the library (please don't ask me yet where I'm going to put this area or how this will be pulled off), but either way it's exciting! Val, our Community Services Resource Intern is working on a sensory room project proposal and I'll be reviewing with them shortly. Funds have to be expended by the end of April 2026.

Many conversations started in February as we continued working to enhance the community experience in various ways: Community Convos with Val, ¡Hablemos español! which was led by Kira and Rocio, and English conversation speaking groups led by Dedee from the English as a second language group.

The Friends of the Library have approved to support the library's purchase of a book bike. Immense gratitude to Sam who presented to the Friends of the Library for the book bike. He did a marvelous job. The book bike will help with enhancing our presence in the community and allow us to initiate a home delivery service. Thank you, as always, to the Friends of the Library for their incredible generosity.

The new logo, website, and marketing campaign have officially launched. This fresh, dynamic look reflects our vision for the future and the community we serve. A huge shoutout to Brianna for her incredible work in bringing this to life - her creativity and dedication made it all possible.

The library is clearly thriving with a variety of exciting projects and changes that reflect our commitment to serving the community. We're helping more people with our programs and services that meet their diverse needs. All the hard work and dedication from our team is making the library a great resource for everyone!

### **Personnel**

Staff performance evaluations will commence next week and conclude by the end of March/beginning of April. We will review the goals established last fall and work on setting new ones together.

### **FY26 Budget**

I presented the FY26 budget before the Finance Committee on February 26th which included the larger request to accommodate the part-time MakerSpace Coordinator position. Thanks to Bridget and Robin for being there! Overall, it went really well. Questions were also asked about the \$300,000 capital funds allocated to the library and Bob handled that question. The future of the library was also briefly discussed in regard to how the MBLC Construction grants worked. Otherwise, it sounds like we should really begin planning in earnest for a MakerSpace at the Milne!

Along with this, I submitted the information needed from the library's end which will eventually go in the Town of Williamstown Report (and I believe is handed out at Town Meeting?). The library had four pages the previous year and this time around, I submitted an 11-page Google Doc for last year, so we'll see what gets published!

## **Building and Grounds**

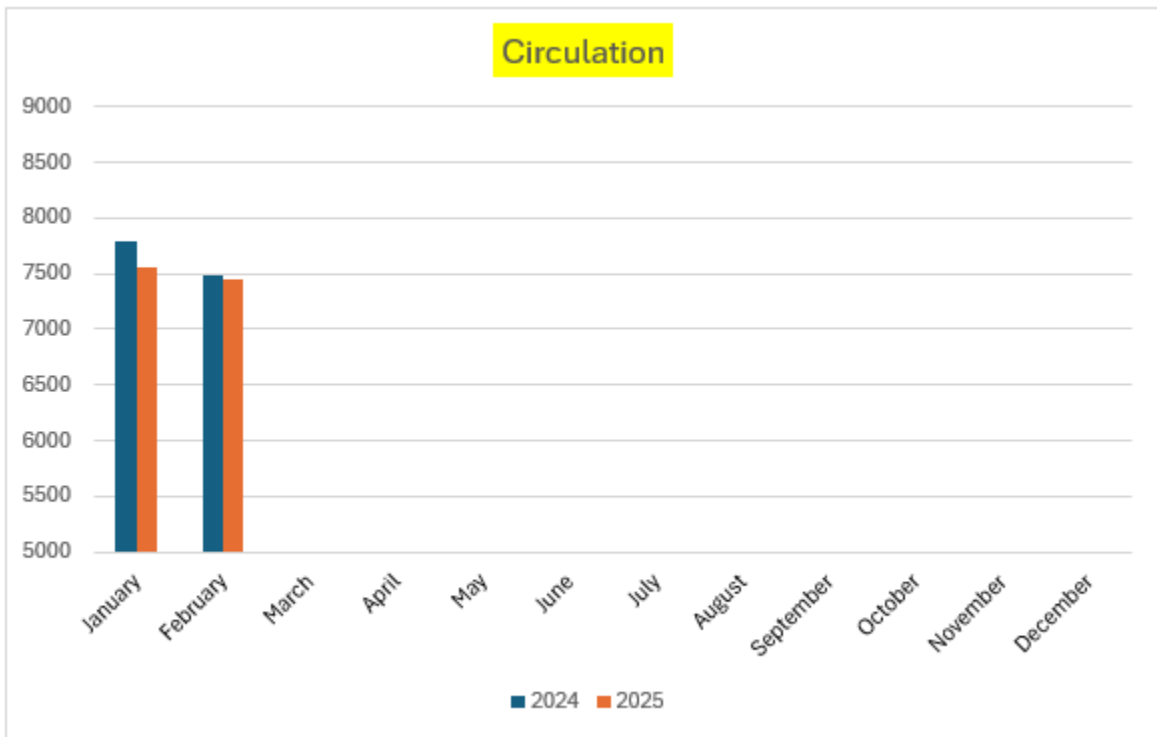
As reported last time, the Department of Public Works will be taking over the project of the windows and doors. I have not heard anything further since last month.

With the new logo now, we will begin designing a new outside sign to replace what was done last spring. From what I've heard we want it larger and there's also some commotion that they were placed on the wrong posts. I'll keep everyone posted on the progress with this project!

The Cool Committee, led by Nancy Nylen, is collaborating with Green Collar and Energy Source to develop a proposal for exterior insulation and weatherization of the library, including projected cost savings. As the Town focuses on selecting projects for the next round of Green Communities funding, they are evaluating whether this initiative is a viable option.

The administrative office desks have switched around a bit to allow Jenna, the Circulation Manager, to have a clearer view of circulation activities, ensuring she can handle all circulation-related questions and issues, while allowing Kirsten to focus on her designated responsibilities.

### *Milne By the Numbers*



	<b>January 2025</b>	<b>February 2025</b>
Circulation	7,555	7,450
New Library Card Registrations	37	28
Monthly Door Count	12,844	14,756
Comics Plus checkouts	50	14
Creativebug (sessions)	5	3
Hoopla checkouts	231	244
Kanopy checkouts	285	250
Libby checkouts	2,588	2,381
Mango Language total sessions	60	34
Meeting room usage total	115	112
Newsletter total subscribers	2,833	2,844
Newsletter unique opens	6,291	6,021
New York Times activations	55	46
New York Times sessions	295	399
Wall Street Journal active users	5	4
Wall Street Journal page views	45	66
Website unique visitors	1,859	1,649
Website site sessions	3,454	3,056
Second Chance Composting Participants	21	23

*Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose*

As winter continues, heating issues and sickness among the staff continue to be pressing issues that have taken up a lot of time. Angie and I have been working hard to thoroughly edit the Best Practices Manual for the staff, as there have been a lot of changes in the past year.

I also spent a lot of time cleaning out various cupboards and my desk to prepare for rearranging the circ office so that we are better able to carry out our various job functions.



## *Circulation Manager, Jenna English*

I am greatly enjoying my new desk. It's really nice to have so much more space & I can see & hear the circ desk much better from this location.

Thingdom: Nothing much new here. Board games continue to be popular. Many of the larger kitchen items (ex: air fryer, waffle makers) continue to be popular as well. Interestingly, a few of the outdoor games have also gone out recently.

The puzzle swap continues to be popular. I'm pleased that it's continuing for the foreseeable future.

Tax forms are now available! They can be found on top of the graphic novel shelves in the Nonfiction Room.

Music & Opera DVDs have been moved out of the Community Room & are now in the A/V Room, shelved between the movies & TV series. The shelving unit where they were previously has been removed & another has been emptied. Thanks to Debbie M for taking this on!

Weeding: I weeded the Fantasy books. This freed up enough space to get most of them off the bottom shelves. The 700s were also weeded, specifically home improvement, crafts, & art.

I did a Romantasy display for February! I had a lot of fun putting this one together & really enjoyed making some Valentine's Day decorations to go w/ the display. I'm looking forward to doing more displays in the future!

## *From the Adult Services Department: Adult Services Librarian, Kira Williams*

This past February flew by in a flash! Our newest program was “¡Hablemos español!”, a conversation group started by Rocio and I for casual conversation in Spanish. We really weren't sure how many people would come, but were pleased that four attended with varying levels of Spanish. We chatted for almost an hour, over tea and cookies, and then played “Lotería,” a Mexican game like bingo where you match words to images. We had a lot of fun and are hopeful that the same people and perhaps more will be there next time.

Blind Date with a Book was popular again, although the numbers of participants decreased slightly compared to last year's. (The frigid weather probably didn't help)! The approach was similar to previous years, except for the addition of a grand prize on top of other smaller prizes! I will soon report on the results and readers' true feelings about their “dates.”

We also showed *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, with Oprah Winfrey, in celebration of Black History Month. Also, Rocio and I created a multi-part book



display that included adult non-fiction, YA non-fiction and YA and Adult graphic novels on the topic.

Monday Mahjong continues to be popular, and Thursday Mahjong is gaining traction. The Berkshire Gamers Group will now meet on Saturdays, which has started off well with five people in attendance on the first Saturday meeting. Tech Times continue to be greatly valued.

Also, the Sustainability Committee met for the first time. We had a great meeting and decided to meet once per month, and there are clearly many things we can do and discuss.

***Adult Program Attendance Numbers:***

<b>Program</b>	<b># of attendees</b>
Dementia-Friendly Caregivers Support Group (1 session monthly)	5
Mahjong at the Milne (3 sessions weekly)	29
(More) Mahjong at the Milne (bi-monthly...usually)	11
Berkshire Gamers Board Game Group (1 session monthly)	5
Tech 1:1 times with Interns Aunonto and Douglas (multiple, individual 1-hour sessions)	9
Gentle Yoga (3 sessions)	41
Spanish Conversation Group, ¡Hablemos español!	4
Blind Date with a Book	26 ratings returned
<b>Total attendance</b>	<b>130</b>

***Marketing & Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie***

February's marketing and communication was not only focused on the finishing touches of the website, but library outreach to the community. As February is Library Lovers' Month, the Massachusetts Libraries Board of Library Commissioners held a campaign prompting patrons to share their stories about their libraries to then share with state legislators. This campaign has garnered a lot of attention from our patrons and they have been eager to share.

In the social media realm and newsletter, we are garnering more subscribers and followers due to the consistency of posts and engagement. Because of this, it seems more patrons of a younger demographic are coming to the library whether for programming or a study space. I am hoping to further my connection with community contacts to maintain outreach efforts.

Lastly, new marketing and communication efforts are being well received. Specifically, patrons are enjoying our new name tags to foster a welcoming environment and have loved reading our 2024 Annual Report (which is now in print, so stop by and grab a copy!)

During this month's DEI committee meeting, we explored the idea of appointing a staff member as chair to facilitate more frequent discussions on DEI initiatives. I was excited and eager to step into this role. We will be meeting every second and third Tuesday of the month for an hour and half. The second meeting will be "as needed" in case there are pressing issues that need to be addressed immediately.

*From the Children's Department:  
Children's Librarian, Debbie Baker*

February goes by so quickly! Which is good because the weather is often terrible. But we did manage to have some fun during vacation week...

Our Felt Friends workshop had 28 participants, including some take-home kits after the fact. Everybody worked very hard on their creations, and were justifiably proud of them.

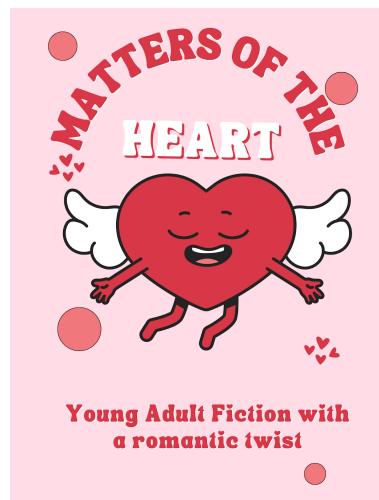
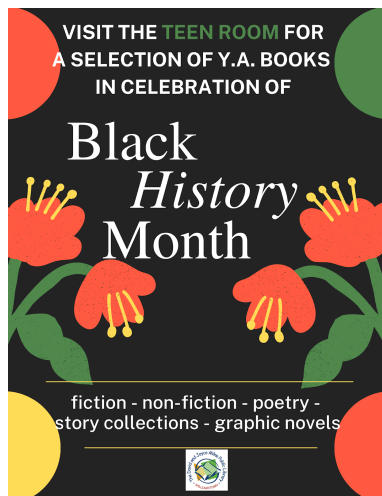
We also had One-Up Games back (part of a package deal) and they brought in 22 teens (and adults) for video games and Virtual Reality fun.



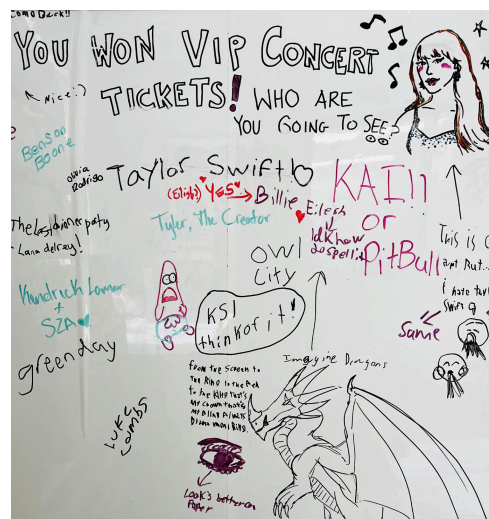
## Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera

In preparation for the premiere of the new website, I revisited, tagged and updated a dozen teen blog posts, such as two previous Black History Month posts, Well-being for Teens, the LatinX Experience, and other relevant posts.

Our Teen Room main display was in honor of Black History Month, we also had a general graphic novel display that included both Teen and Adult graphic novels for Black History Month. The smaller Teen Room Display featured books from our Relationship Genre. In the Art Corner for the month of February, we had supplies and mini-candies on hand for teens to decorate cute Valentine cards for their friends. 32 Valentine cards were made. We had around **80** teens participate in the Afternoon Snack Program this month.



We featured 2 Dry-Erase Board questions this month...*Draw or write down your favorite animal!* (12 responses) and *You won VIP concert tickets! Who are you going to see?!* (16 responses).





This month we hosted a Saturday, *Películas en la Biblioteca: Encanto en Español* (4 kids, 3 Adults, 1 Teen), the first meeting of *Hablemos Español* was held at the end of the month, this was co-hosted with the Adult Librarian, Kira Williams.

Thanks to February Break, we had quite a bit of programming planned this month. Felt Friends; Zine Your Life: Create a Diary Comic (7 Teens); Friendship Bracelets, pictures below (5 Teens, 2 Adults, 2 Kids); and the return of One-Up Games. We also hosted a Teen Movie at the Milne: Freaky Friday, though it was sparsely attended. (2 Teens)



**Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:**

Program	# of kids	# of teens	# of families	# of programs
Storytimes	33			7
Felt-Friends	18	9	1	1
Movie: Encanto (Spanish)	4	1	3	1
Teen Zines		7		1
Beaded Friendship Bracelets	2	5	2	1
One-Up Games	1	16	5	2
<b>Total Attendance: 107</b>				

*Building & Grounds Supervisor, Alex Charron*

This month we saw quite a few snow events which required Weekend attention, also we had to replace a shear pin in the snowblower.

Got the staff room painted and installed new curtains, as well as put together and installed new chairs and a table.

The front administrative office has been switched around and reorganized.

The roof over the back lobby was shoveled, and ice was removed. Multiple punctures caused by falling ice from the west wing's copper roof have been temporarily patched. Vermont Roofing and Wooliver Roofing were contacted for bids on 2/26; so far, only Vermont Roofing has responded and expects to provide a quote within the next week or so.

Also there has been a delay with the boiler replacement and we are waiting on updates from the chosen contractor.