



Date: December 11th, 2024

To: David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees

Prepared by: Angela Zimmermann, Library Director

Administrative and Staff Reports for December 11th Board Meeting

Library Director, Angela Zimmermann

Since I won't be at the Board meeting this month to address any questions, I've included as much detail as possible in my report!

I want to take a moment to commend our library staff for their unwavering dedication to creating a welcoming atmosphere for everyone who walks through our doors. It's truly heartwarming to hear staff members greet patrons even with a simple "hello", always fostering such a warm, inclusive, and inviting environment for everyone.

I also hope that some of our Board of Trustees have/had the opportunity to attend the final reception for the 150th anniversary art show on the 4th (I know, I will miss that too!) or, at the very least, have taken the time to admire the incredible works currently on display in the library. A special thanks goes to Judy Ensign and everyone involved in organizing the event. Their efforts not only made the art show reception a success but also contributed to an extraordinary yearlong celebration of our library's 150th anniversary.

And a big shoutout to all the staff who contributed to these monthly reports! They gathered all the necessary information by the end of the day on December 1st, allowing me to compile everything before my departure for vacation and so I could send it along for the Board packet.

Personnel

Our new Marketing & Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie, joined us on November 18th and she has quickly settled in, making an impressive start. I'll be bringing Brianna as a guest to the Library Board at the January meeting. Pizza was brought in for the staff to celebrate Brianna's joining us and to welcome her to the team.

On November 15th, we held our monthly staff meeting and covered our usual topics, which includes updates from the Board of Trustees, Building and Grounds updates, general announcements, and an open forum to address library-related issues. Additionally, during two Friday mornings in November, staff had the chance to meet with the two finalists for the Marketing & Communications Strategist position and share input on who they felt would be the best fit for the role.

Our next staff meeting will be Friday, December 13th.

Building and Grounds

We did not hold a December B&G meeting due to the short time interval since the last meeting, so there were very few, if any, updates. I sent a detailed email to the B&G committee members and we will convene again on January 8th.

Boiler #1: Laureyns Plumbing just came out at the end of last week and conducted an assessment of the boiler and is initiating the warranty process. They would be repairing/replacing the boiler if that is the route the DPW/Town chooses to go. Green Collar (as well as members of Williamstown Cool Committee) also came at the last minute to evaluate the feasibility of replacing the boiler with heat pumps. We will wait for further guidance from DPW but I'm fairly certain we'll be going the route of either replacing or repairing the boiler.

Front Bathroom Roof: Vermont Roofing started work on the front bathroom roof on December 2nd (this was delayed two weeks or so because of weather). I truly hope the Board will celebrate by throwing confetti at the meeting, as from what I understand, this project (or at least talking about it) has been in the works for quite some time and it's finally coming to fruition. I'm being told they should finish on December 3rd (December 4th at the latest).

Windows and Doors: We are currently obtaining a third quote, as the initial three quotes we received varied significantly, ranging from \$24,000 to \$116,969, indicating that some details were missing or something was off with the quote that came in so low. We have also compiled all project requirements into a single document and are collaborating with the Town to maintain consistency and transparency throughout the process.

Various

I've been gathering data and refining details to prepare the 2026 budget for presentation to the Board at the January meeting, where I expect it will lead to further questions and revisions. At our November User Council meeting, which includes library directors within CW MARS, we approved the FY2026 Assessments - which are the individual charges for each library. All the necessary budget information was provided, so I now have everything I need to compile our 2026 budget. (I realized it wouldn't make much sense to provide something regarding budget figures for the December board meeting if I won't be there to address any questions.)

Logo update: At the last staff meeting, we talked about and reviewed the latest updates to the new logo, and overall, it was well-received. However, I still have some reservations and don't feel confident that this is the final choice. I've shared all the files and communication up to this point with Brianna. I'd like her to settle in, get far more acquainted with the library, and eventually share her thoughts as well on the logo before we proceed.

The 2025 Berkshire Library Legislative Breakfast will be held on Friday, January 31st, 2025 at 8:00 am at the Taconic High School Library in Pittsfield. (I believe last year it was held here in Williamstown). This is an opportunity to learn about updates to the legislative agenda for 2025, share concerns and ideas directly to legislators, thank legislators for support and increased funding, and network with colleagues. I'm sending along an invite separately for the trustees! I'll also be sure to send a reminder to the trustees as the date gets closer.

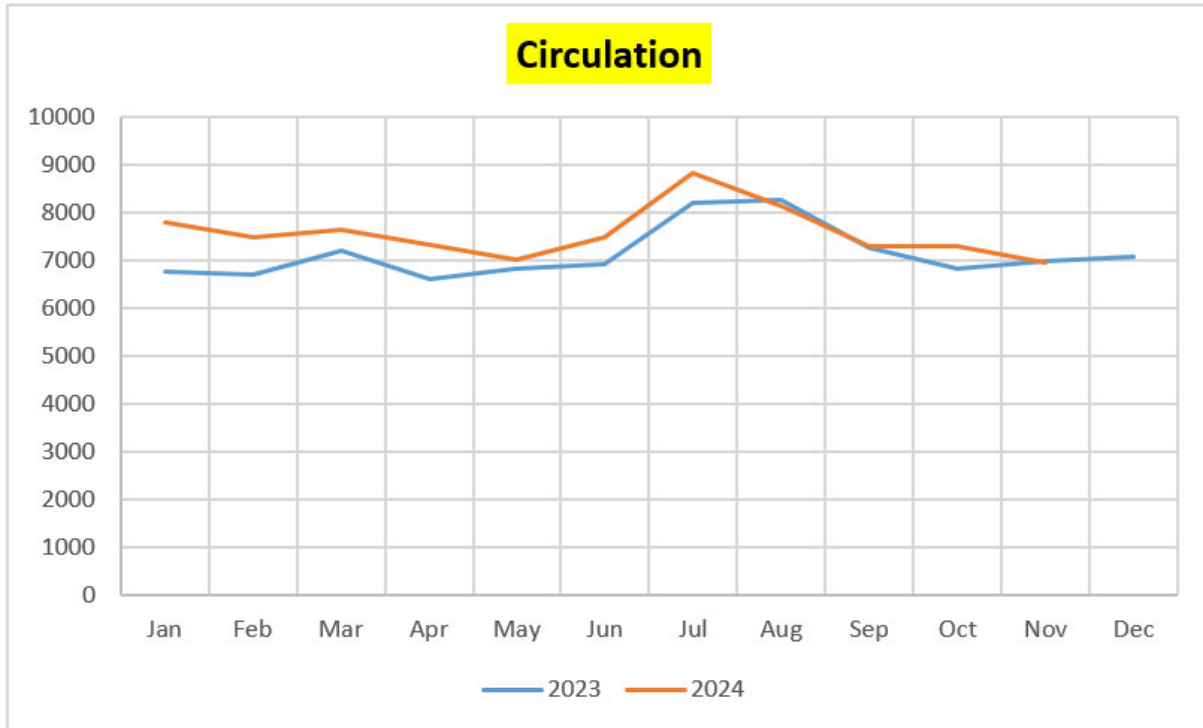
The CW MARS Systems/Networking Manager, the Town Manager, and Renatus Solutions dedicated a productive half day to organizing our IT closet. It's a significant improvement and looks sooooo much better. All the wires are now labeled, making it clear which belong to CW MARS and which are for the Town. Next steps include possibly bringing in an electrician to tidy up the remaining wiring further. CW MARS also installed a new router and reallocated all devices to their dedicated router and switch ports, separating them from the Town's switch. Additionally, they removed unused cables and made essential updates to the printer in the reference area.

You'll also notice in the Circulation Manager's report that we're currently dealing with DVD theft. We're attempting to tackle this in a number of ways (We've added signage, removed all DVD displays, and will be installing a convex mirror. In the worst-case scenario, we would need to break through the wall behind the circulation desk and/or we look into RFID-ing all of the items in our entire collection and installing RFID gates - which this last route is expensive but not impossible. I hope to be able to report back more positively at the January meeting regarding this.

In the past couple of weeks, we also held a productive collection development meeting and outlined ambitious plans for improving our collections and optimizing our use of space. As detailed in the reports below, staff are actively engaged in this work. A major upcoming project involves a comprehensive weeding of the nonfiction collection. Additionally, all audiovisual collections are undergoing thorough assessment and weeding. One specific goal is to relocate CDs and magazines from the Community room to a more suitable space within the library rather than 'hanging out' on their own in the back meeting room. We're also introducing more subgenres to the adult fiction section to enhance discoverability. These efforts reflect our dedication to curating collections that resonate with the community and to creating welcoming displays and spaces that attract and inspire people!

Finally, in the New Year, we're excited to welcome Val back as our Community Resources Services Intern. Douglas will also be returning to continue offering 1:1 Tech Times. Additionally, we'll have two Williams College students joining us during their January winter study term.

Milne By the Numbers



	October	November
New Library Card Registrations	32	27
Monthly Door Count	6889	9902
Comics Plus checkouts	2	0
Creativebug (sessions)	18	8
Hoopla checkouts	178	192
Kanopy checkouts	202	214
Libby checkouts	2188	2277
Mango Language total sessions	59	25
Meeting room usage total	105	103
Newsletter total subscribers	2457	2607
Newsletter unique opens	5007	5179

New York Times sessions	Not available yet	(Argh...We're looking into this...)
Wall Street Journal active users	1	5
Wall Street Journal page views	4	45
Website unique visitors	1763	1755
Website site sessions	2985	2945

Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose

I am taking on more cataloging now - Fiction, Large Print, Spoken Word, Lease books - plus all the magazines (which arrive almost daily).

I have been doing lots of weeding - both on my own and helping run reports for others' efforts. I finished weeding all of the MYSTERY section, which has been ongoing for a while. I also ran a lot of reports, including all of non-fiction and the music CDs, and worked with Debbie M on what she needed in order to make that process go smoothly. Because non-fiction is such a huge project, I took some sections of that for myself.

I am the point person for the December art show. I have been working with the (volunteer) coordinators to make sure they have everything they need (in turn, they are corralling 40 artists, so there are a lot of people and moving parts involved).

I am also laying the groundwork to genrefy the Romance books - I wanted to figure out all the logistics of it before I jump in. I have all my supplies, and a plan in place, and am now ready to begin the process.

Circulation Manager, Jenna English

I did one webinar in November: Emotional Intelligence. The focus of this webinar was using emotional intelligence in a workplace environment. I was not unfamiliar with the concept of emotional intelligence before taking this webinar, so some of the information wasn't new to me. It helped me realize that my emotional intelligence is better than I thought it was.

Thingdom: The kitchenware items have been well-received. Getting those items processed & available just in time for the holiday season was perfect timing. The air fryer & instant pot are both proving to be popular thus far. Also, the STEAM Kits are continuing to see heavy circulation.

- The biggest Thingdom issue that's come up recently is cords not being returned. This has happened numerous times, including one instance where the wrong cord was returned. To solve this problem, I will be adding tags with a Milne Public Library sticker on them to every cord. Hopefully this will help patrons identify which cords go with Thingdom items.

There have been ongoing issues with DVD theft. This latest surge seems to have started with the creation of the greatest films display. Many of those that have gone missing were either part of that display or were out-facing on the shelves. The thief has been pocketing the discs & leaving the cases behind. It's a shame that a popular display had to be ruined because of this. We're looking at options to hopefully catch the perpetrator in the act.

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

Somewhat predictably, the month reflected typical numbers for recurring events and types of events. The two art workshops were well-attended and had waitlists. Tango and yoga attracted many regular fans, and the new weekly, Monday mahjong group is quickly becoming popular. The book talk with a local author attracted a modest audience. Even though we changed the times for the board game group in hopes of attracting more students and people who work, only one person was in attendance in November.

Adult Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of attendees
Art Workshop: Copper Keychain-Making, Heather Beck	13
Art Workshop: Collage as Consolation, Melanie Mowinski	12
Book Talk: <i>A Soldier's Letters</i> , Carol Ethier-Kipp	6
Dementia-Friendly Caregivers Support Group (monthly)	6
50+ Jobseekers Virtual Series (monthly)	1
Berkshire Gamers Board Game Group (monthly)	1
Friday Film (monthly): <i>Dog</i>	7
Tango Lessons, Dave Gorson (weekly - 2 sessions)	22
Mahjong at the Milne (weekly - 2 sessions)	17
Gentle Yoga (weekly - 3 sessions)	44
Tech 1:1 Times with Intern Douglas Piñeda Guterrez	14

(individual 30 minute sessions)	
Total attendance =	143

I also spent time planning December's volunteer appreciation party and several programs taking place in December. Since planning and executing events takes time, I am excited to have our new Marketing and Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie, on our staff to help us get the word out about events and other goings-on here. I can only imagine this will help everyone who puts events together to have more time to plan and come up with new programs and less time publicizing them.

I also spent time weeding the travel book section and also creating a list of travel destination guides that we have been collecting in an effort to decide which destinations to add, keep or delete. I also put the Oxford English Dictionary volumes, which were given to us by the Friends, on the shelves next to the Higher Education and World Language subsections. The Classics books that were on those shelves previously have been mostly consolidated and moved to the older brown shelf near the end of the non-fiction collection.

Marketing & Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie

Although I have only been working at the Milne Public Library for less than a month, I thought I'd write a blurb on what I have started working on as Milne's new Marketing and Communication Strategist and say a little bit about me!

As you may have heard, I am a Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts alumna, class of 2022. Since graduating, I knew I'd come back to the Berkshires in some capacity, and here I am! At MCLA, I studied English and Communication (and minored in studio art). After my completion of my degree, I headed back home to Maine to attend the University of Maine to receive my Masters of Art in Communication, class of 2024. With this, I am proud to be a first generation college and higher education graduate as well as an immigrant, woman of color.

In the role thus far, I have been assessing the current marketing and communication strategies that are being utilized by Milne at the moment. This includes the website, print material, newsletters, and social media platforms. The work being done by the staff at Milne in regards to marketing and communication is effective! However, I am happy to be on the team to add my expertise to elevate the mission and goals further (through marketing and communication).

Going forward, I am looking to plan focus groups and surveys of staff and patrons to see how the current marketing and communication is being utilized, what works, and what can be improved. Additionally, I will begin streamlining the marketing and communication from each department so branding is cohesive. This will also ease some workload from staff!

I am happy to be joining the Milne staff and the Williamstown community.

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

We didn't have many scheduled events for November in the Children's Room but I'm sure that even if we'd had something every single day, Carrie Ferguson's "Songs from the Grumpytime Club" would still have been the stand-out. A small but enthusiastic crowd joined Carrie for a very enjoyable series of songs which included a lot of audience participation. My hope is to bring both Carrie and the Grumpytime Band back this summer so more people can enjoy their music.

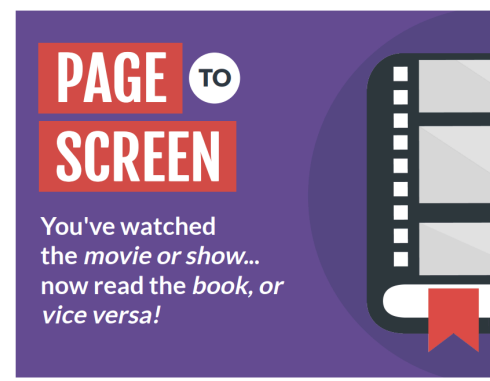
Aside from that, we showed a couple of kids' movies, hosted seven storytimes (total attendance 48 kids), and put out a new Stick Together mystery poster (it's already about a third done!). I took the opportunity of some slower days to weed out some of the older books in the collection in an effort to make sure all the fabulous new books can have room to fit (an ongoing process) and also managed to catalog some puzzles for older kids who don't find floor puzzles challenging enough.

Looking ahead to a fun December!

Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera

November is Native American Heritage Month. This month Kira and I updated our [Native American blog post](#) with links to relevant websites and catalog access to a wide range of books in our General, Teen, and Children's collection.

In the first half of November, my smaller display area featured books that highlighted voting rights, *Represent for Teens* and then a selection of books on self-care and mental health. I also created two displays in the General Collection that featured adult and teen fiction and graphic novels, *Comestibles: Food & Drink in Graphic Novels* and *Page to Screen*.



I showed the newest Pixar movie: *Inside Out 2* in early November for election day (**18** total: **5** teens, **10** children, **3** adults) and a Tween & Teen film on the Saturday after Thanksgiving in celebration of the holidays with Buddy the Elf and holiday treats, *ELF*. We had 8 participants for this film (**4** teens, **2** children, **2** adults)

This month I represented the library for an Outreach event, *Milne Out & About: Printmaking Shindig* hosted by Williams College. This well attended event included many of our Milne families and Williams College students. I led a styrofoam printmaking and stamp pad craft. Over **41** cards were created!



We invited jewelry artist Heather Beck back this year to lead two *Copper Keychain Workshops*, one for teens and another for adults. 9 teens participated and seemed very happy with the special keychains they created with Heather. Here are some shots I took.



The **afternoon snacks** have really taken off! As a reminder, we offer snacks in the Teen Room on school days from 2:30 p.m. -5:00 p.m. In the month of November we had an estimate of **80** tweens and teens stop by for a healthy snack (and our cold weather addition-hot chocolate!) after a long day of school. We are also seeing more teens take advantage of the space, either staying to work on an art project, chatting with friends or getting homework done. I also overheard an adult patron at the poster board say, "What a nice way to get kids to come to the library!"

Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:

Program	# of kids	# of teens	# of families	# of programs
Storytimes	48			7
Movie: <i>Inside Out 2</i>	10	5	3	1

Movie: <i>IF</i>	3		3	1
Concert - Carrie Ferguson	8	1	5	1
Williams Outreach - prints			41	1
Copper Keychain Making Workshop - Heather Beck		9		1
Teen Movie: <i>Elf</i>	2	4	2	1
Total attendance = 144	71	19	54	13

Building & Grounds Supervisor, Alex Charron

- The gutters have all been cleaned in preparations for winter.
- All outdoor water spigots have been turned off to prevent freezing.
- The snowblower has had the oil change, and been checked over and also prepared for winter.
- The new holiday lights have been put up on the gazebo, as well as a gutter over the entrance.
- I hung the last section of the art rail in the community room along the red wall.
- The basement cleanout project is also progressing well.
- We had Laureyns Plumbing come and make an assessment on the boiler and are beginning the warranty process and they would be repairing/ replacing the boiler forthwith, as decided by the DPW.
- Ames Builders is compiling a quote on the window and door project (this is the third quote needed for the project).