



Date: February 12th, 2025

To: David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees

Prepared by: Angela Zimmermann, Library Director

Administrative and Staff Reports for February 12th Board Meeting

Library Director, Angela Zimmermann

As you all know, one of the highlights of the past month has been navigating our heating situation, which I know will be a topic of discussion at this month's trustees meeting. We were closed for roughly a day and a half due to the heating issues. I would like to give a huge shoutout to our Town's DPW and Alex, our Building & Grounds Supervisor, for their swift and efficient work in setting up our temporary heating. I also want to acknowledge the incredible adaptability of our staff and their unwavering dedication to providing exceptional service to the community throughout all of the changes.

Personnel

Our in-house committee, consisting of Children's Librarian Debbie Baker, Adult Services Librarian Kira Williams, Library Service Specialist Sam White, and myself, is currently planning our next all-day in-service staff training. We're aiming to hold this session in May - the library would be closed the entire day again. I'll notify the Board once we have the date solidified.

All the staff have now been equipped with name tags! Wearing a name tag helps create such a welcoming atmosphere and makes it easier for patrons to connect with us and feel comfortable asking for assistance.

Our winter study interns wrapped up their time with us on January 31st. Shirel Quintanilla Raymond played a key role in developing our upcoming new library website under Brianna's guidance, while Aunonto Rahman led the way with Tech Times and Digital Literacy Classes. Both made a remarkable impact during their short time with us.

Douglas Piñeda Gutierrez will be returning on Tuesday, February 11th, to continue Tech Times at the library, given its great success.

Additionally, Valen Freitas, our Community Resource Services Intern, has returned for the semester to support Community Resource Service hours for patrons and co-lead community social justice conversations.

FY26 Budget

The finalized budget has been submitted to the Finance Director and Town Manager. I also provided them with a summary of key changes in the budget request, including a request for funding for a part-time MakerSpace Coordinator.

In regards to next steps and key dates, I know the Finance Director and the Town Manager were discussing all Town Department budgets on January 31st until they will introduce a summarized version of the entire budget to the Select Board by February 14th (I believe).

In terms of presenting the FY26 budget request before the Finance Committee and the Select Board, I don't have the exact date yet (at this point) but will let everyone on the board know.

Building and Grounds

After meeting with [Green Collar](#), various members of the B&G, and Nancy Nylen from the Cool Committee on Wednesday, February 5th, it does indeed look like we will be purchasing new boilers - at least that's what the recommendation was. However, Town Manager Bob will be joining us for our board meeting this month and I'm hoping he will provide further clarification on this and next steps.

Regarding the windows and doors mentioned in the Centerline report, we have received three quotes; however, they exceed the \$50,000 threshold and must go out for bid. Going forward, DPW will lead this initiative and oversee the project's completion.

Various

2024 Annual Report

Attached separately is the 2024 Annual Report, highlighting key points and statistics from last year. (Please note that this is not the state annual report which is submitted each August, but rather a summary of accomplishments throughout the year.) The annual report was truly a collaborative effort by many who care deeply about the library with contributions from myself, Pam Art (former Chair of the Friends of the Library), Judy Ensign (150th Committee Chair), Board of Trustees Chair Micah, and our Adult Services Librarian and Volunteer Coordinator, Kira, who all wrote such thoughtful and beautiful remarks.

As for the thoughtful layout and graphics - that credit goes *entirely* to Brianna, our Marketing & Communications Strategist. The moment I mentioned the idea; she jumped on it and did a fantastic job bringing the content provided to life.

(I've wanted to create an annual report for a library for TEN years, and the timing just never worked out well, so I'm so happy it was able to come to fruition here!)

MBLC - Empowered by Libraries Campaign

This year, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is encouraging libraries across the state to invite patrons to share how the library has made a difference in their lives. Aligned with the FY2026 Legislative Agenda theme, [Empowered by Libraries](#), these stories will be shared with state representatives and legislators to highlight the vital role and impact of libraries throughout the Commonwealth, both during the legislative budget season and beyond.

We currently have designated spaces throughout the library where patrons can share their stories.

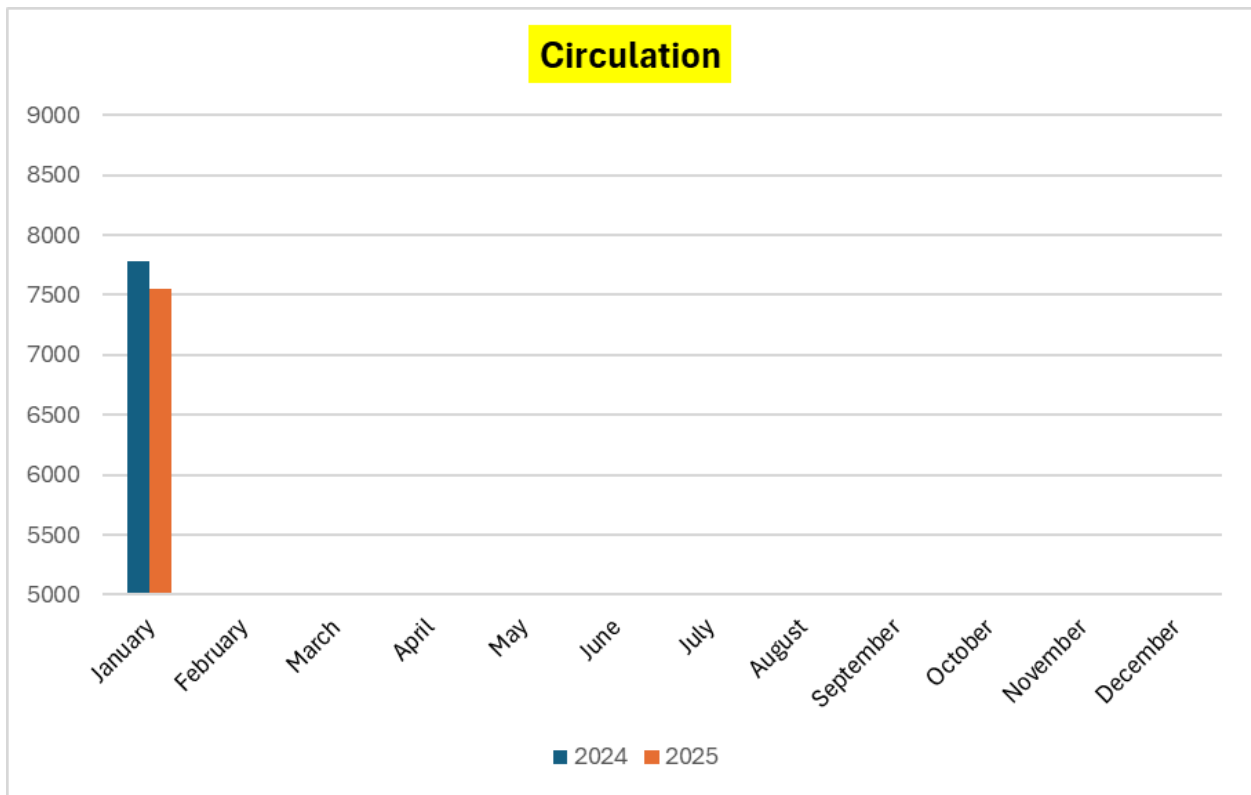
Logo and Website

We will be launching our new logo and website by March 3rd. I'm happy to answer any questions about this at the trustees meeting!

Requests for the Board

- You'll see included in the packet a proposal this month to consider some funding towards improvement of the staff room.

Milne By the Numbers



| | December 2024 | January 2025 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Circulation | 7785 | 7555 |
| New Library Card Registrations | 32 | 37 |
| Monthly Door Count | 11,829 | 12,844 |
| Comics Plus checkouts | 63 | 50 |
| Creativebug (sessions) | 5 | 4 |

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Hoopla checkouts | 213 | 231 |
| Kanopy checkouts | 228 | 285 |
| Libby checkouts | 2,418 | 2,588 |
| Mango Language total sessions | 21 | 60 |
| Meeting room usage total | 112 | 115 |
| Newsletter total subscribers | 2,697 | 2,833 |
| Newsletter unique opens | 5,698 | 6,291 |
| New York Times activations | 49 | 55 |
| New York Times sessions | 282 | 295 |
| Wall Street Journal active users | 7 | 5 |
| Wall Street Journal page views | 56 | 45 |
| Website unique visitors | 1,755 | 1,859 |
| Website site sessions | 2,945 | 3,454 |
| Second Chance Composting **new statistic | 15 | 21 |

Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose

January has brought a lot of scheduling challenges, with several staff members out sick for an extended period of time, so I spent a lot of time dealing with that.

I also did a lot of cataloging, as our Ingram orders have started coming in more regularly after some major shipping delays in the fall.

Otherwise, it has mostly been business as usual.

Circulation Manager, Jenna English

A huge thanks to all the desk staff for enduring the deep freeze this past month! It's not easy or pleasant to work under such conditions, & your patience is greatly appreciated.

Another big thank you to everyone who helped cover the desk these last couple of weeks while we were short-staffed.

New patron goodie bags are now available! These are filled with helpful brochures & misc goodies to welcome new patrons to the library. Thanks to the Friends for donating the small bags we are using for these!

Thingdom: Health & Music items have been added to the Thingdom. Not much else new going on here, but I've noticed that the board games have been very popular items recently. Not surprising, given that they're a perfect indoor activity for cold winter days.

The puzzle swap has proven to be very popular with patrons. Here's hoping this will become a regular event!

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

Programs this month included the same recurring programs that have been taking place, and also two unique events. Mike Ivankovich provided a Home Downsizing webinar which was well-attended. He spoke about how to approach selling or disposing of unwanted items in your home. Also, Rebecca Guanzon of Wild Soul River (a shop in Williamstown) gave a workshop about three herbs - thyme, yarrow and lemon balm - that support the immune system. Attendees tried samples of the herbal teas and also brought some home. We also showed *Hearts Beat Loud*, a feel-good movie about a dad and teen daughter who decide to make an album together.

Monday Mahjong continues to be popular, and Thursday Mahjong (twice a month) is gaining traction. Also, Tech Times, this time with Intern Aunonto, were much-loved. While Digital Literacy sessions were not highly attended, Aunonto's prepared slideshows/talks created a basis on which staff could work to possibly provide workshops in the future.

Also - a few staff members (myself, Brianna, Rocío, & Angie, as well as Val, our Community Resource Services Intern) got together for a preliminary library sustainability meeting, which was mainly a discussion about what our focus will be and what we'd like to achieve. For example, we hope to purchase only recycled office supplies, provide instant coffee or compostable coffee pods, and to start material swaps and specialized recycling services. Since this meeting, we already requested and received reusable coffee mugs as an alternative to paper cups at the coffee stand. Since we are not funded, most of our initiatives will be free or low-cost, but we may also make recommendations to the Buildings and Grounds Committee about possible larger initiatives.

Most importantly, this is not just a staff committee! Three community members (Amy Johns, Wendy Leffel, and David McGowan) and one board member (Robin Lenz) have also joined and we hope to have our first *official* meeting in the next few weeks!

Adult Program Attendance Numbers:

| Program | # of attendees |
|---|-----------------------|
| Dementia-Friendly Caregivers Support Group (1 session monthly) | 3 |
| Mahjong at the Milne (3 sessions weekly) | 37 |
| (More) Mahjong at the Milne (bi-monthly...usually) | 17 |
| Berkshire Gamers Board Game Group (1 session monthly) | 0 |
| Webinar: Home Downsizing with Mike Ivankovich | 16 |
| Friday Film: <i>Hearts Beat Loud</i> (1 film monthly) | 6 |
| Herbal Tea Blending with Rebecca Guanzon | 13 |
| Tech 1:1 times with Winter Study Intern Aunonto Rahman (individual 1 hour sessions) | 29 |
| Digital Literacy Week with Aunonto Rahman (2 sessions for 5 days) | 10 |
| Total attendance | 131 |

Marketing & Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie

Regarding the Marketing and Communication side of the Milne, a lot of exciting things have happened during the month of January! First, new marketing was rolled out the first week of the month, this included new programming flyers, social media graphics, brochures, and more.

Additionally, with provided stats and data of 2024, I developed the library's 2024 annual report which is live on the website. We are waiting to get print versions of the report to have in the library and sent to organizations around Williamstown.

Much of January was dedicated to the new website. The website survey was given to staff and patrons to fill out regarding their opinions on the current site. Specifically, accessibility, resources, and what they'd like to see on the new website. The survey closed January 24 with a total of 40 patrons taking the survey providing rich data and demographic information. With help from Shirel, our Web Technologies Intern for January, we were able to put more focus on the website where it is around 90% done (or more).

Shirel and I analyzed the survey data allowing for us to see if anything else needed to be included. I have developed an anticipated timeline for the new website to go live. During the February 2025 staff meeting, I plan to present the survey responses, my reasoning for the new

website changes, and give a quick run-through of the site. I anticipate the new site will be live March 3 along with the new library logo.

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

January is always a slow-down month, as our lower numbers across the board attest. We took advantage of the lull to weed the collections, culling around 400 middle-grade fiction books (out of almost 4,000), along with picture books and some spoken-word. We also took a look at some non-fiction categories that can go out of date easily, and replaced books on sports like soccer, gymnastics, and basketball with more current information. Sometimes we notice a "hole" in the collection when we do this, and now we have a bunch of new joke books available! (Well, the books are new; I don't guarantee the jokes are.)

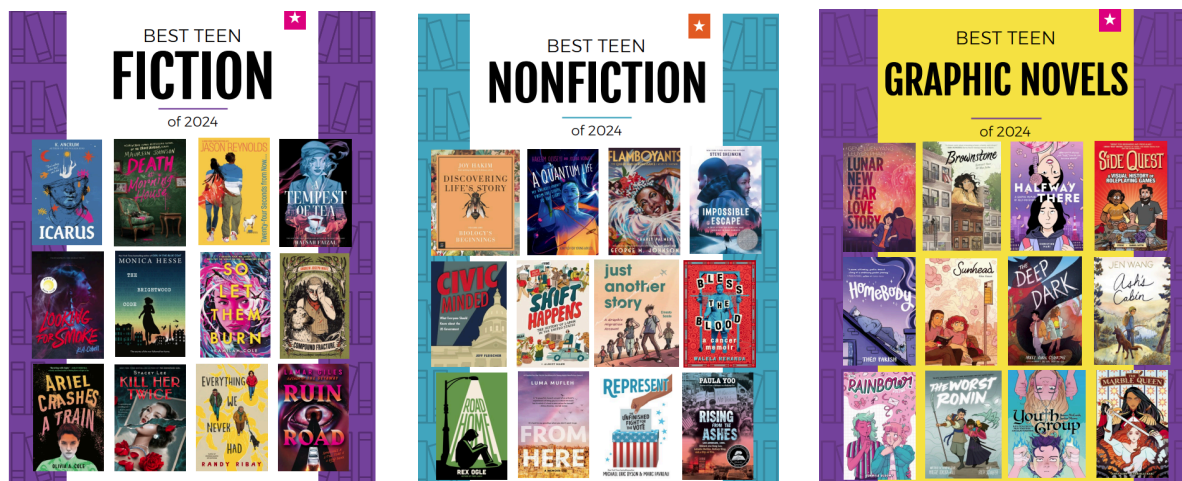
In terms of programming, we invited One-Up Games for two gaming sessions. They brought all the hardware needed and access to a huge number of games on Xbox, PlayStation, and Switch. They also had a Virtual Reality setup that looked like a lot of fun. They'll be back in a couple of weeks for two more sessions that I hope will draw in some new faces. We also had a well-attended movie at the end of the month, Fantastic Mr. Fox is a favorite of many.

Looking forward to what February brings!

Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera

Happy Lunar New Year, Year of the Snake!

Our January Teen Room displays were books that have been honored with "Best of 2024", there were many great books to choose from, and surprisingly, Non-fiction were the most popular of the bunch!



In January we also added over **60** new books to our Young Adult collection including several new series to our ever-popular manga collection.



At the tail end of winter break I ran a Clay Drop-In day. We had **18** children, **12** adults and **4** teens for a total of **34** in attendance. Here are a few pics of the cool creations...



[One Up Games](#) ended the winter break with two gaming sessions for tweens and teens. The community room was gaming central with high tech video games and virtual reality sets for the teens to try out. Debbie B. will share the final stats for this event.

We had around **56** teens stop by for Afterschool Snacks in January. An additional **16** cards were decorated in our Teen Room Art Corner and then we switched over to Foam Clay mini sculptures, to take home or leave with us so that we could add them to the Children's Room Wee World play area. **6** very cute little critters will be added thanks to our artistic teen patrons!

A teen patron offered to lead a Dungeons & Dragons campaign here at the library and their preliminary session filled quickly with around 10 attendees. We hope to continue hosting this group in the future.

Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:

| Program | # of kids | # of teens | # of families | # of programs |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| Storytimes | | | | |
| Drop-In Clay Day | 18 | 4 | 12 | |
| Event: One-Up Games | | 12 | 3 | 2 |
| Kids Movie - Fantastic Mr. Fox | 8 | 4 | 6 | |
| Total Attendance: | | | | |

Building & Grounds Supervisor, Alex Charron

This has been a relatively quiet month for projects aside from the everyday cleaning and care for the building, and various setups for our diverse programs that we offer. We have had a few snow events that required attention past my usual schedule, along with trying to get efforts under way to remedy the failure of Boiler #2 (with Boiler #1 already down). We were however able to remove some windows and build intake plates in the children's room, nonfiction area and the west wing to accommodate 2 500k BTU propane heaters to blow heat into the building because the new heat pumps were unable to operate in the frigid cold. To prevent damage then from the heat blowing directly onto some of the books in the west wing, we had to purchase and install a humidifier to help monitor proper humidity levels and counteract the drying effects of the heat.