

FRIENDS OF HALL MEMORIAL LIBRARY – OPEN MEETING
Minutes: SEPTEMBER 7, 2026, 6:30 – ANNUAL MEETING
McKNIGHT CONFERENCE ROOM – HALL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Vice President Peg Busse. In attendance: Peg Busse, Vice President; Ellen Bonanno, Book Cellar Manager; Susan Eldridge, Secretary; Sara Roman, Treasurer; Karen Armstrong; Mary Blanchette; Kayla Bonanno; Emily Lorenzet; Anne Morris; Susan Norman; Gail Willett; Sue Phillips, Library Director; Trish Brudz, library staff.

II. Election of Officers:

The following members were proposed for the upcoming year's officers:

- President – Peg Busse
- Vice President – Ellen Bonanno
- Vice President – Open
- Treasurer – Sara Roman
- Secretary – Susan Eldridge

Susan Norman made a motion to accept the proposed slate.

Anne Morris seconded the motion.

The slate was accepted. Congratulations to the new board.

III. Treasurer's Report:

Sara Roman provided a handout for Monthly Treasurer's Report for Period June 1 through August 31, 2026.

Total income: \$3,966.50, which included: both Book Cellar locations, Bookscouter, Book Bundles, membership dues, and various donations.

Total Expenses: \$7,440.06, Summer Reading Program, Museum Passes, outdoor planter, Book Cellar expenses and administrative expenses.

Ending balance: \$80,966.69.

Sara also distributed and reviewed Account Transactions for the previous fiscal year: 6/1/25 – 5/31/26. The checking account balance for close of fiscal year was \$84,290.55. With the transition of the Treasurer role from Patti Wendell to Sara Roman, a new accounting software was implemented. Thanks again to Patti for all your years of service. We look forward to benefiting from Sara's efforts. Once again, there was discussion of our large balance in a non-interest-bearing account. Peg Busse mentioned concerns regarding potential tax impacts. Sara will keep this in mind.

Susan Eldridge raised the question as to whether or not the library had a "wish list" for large-fund items. Peg Busse, through her role in the library Board of Trustees is aware of needed items, such as repair of the fencing around the cemetery near the main entrance.

Susan Eldridge made a motion for Sara Roman to research investment opportunities for the funds.

Ellen Bonanno seconded the motion.

Sara will research interest-bearing opportunities for the organization.

IV. Book Cellar Update:

Ellen Bonanno, Book Cellar Manager, provided an update on the Book Cellar, which is doing well. Ellen received excellent response for the summer volunteer period, with other members wishing to volunteer. There was discussion regarding expanding Book Cellar hours, with one possibility being “pop up” sessions to measure popularity of various time segments throughout the week. Other suggestions were to check with the library staff regarding general flow of library patrons. If you are interested in working in the Book Cellar, please contact Ellen at: BonannoEllen@gmail.com. Come see the renovations and do your part!

Ellen and a few other volunteers participated in the August 29th Farmer’s Market, with the theme of “Meet Your Town Organizations”. They distributed eighteen coupons for \$1.00 off a purchase during the month of September.

The Annual October Sale is fast approaching! This will be located in the Upstairs Meeting Room October 16-18. Ellen has distributed a link to the Signup Genius for Friends members to support this event. Sales will once again be by donation, rather than by itemized purchases.

V. Summer Reading Program – Trish Brudz:

Trish Brudz, Children’s Librarian, once again provided an excellent presentation on the Summer Reading Program, which occurred from June 20 through August 15 and beyond:

- This year there were 407 participants, up from 346 (17%+)
- Adults: 63; Pre-K: 65; K-6: 209; YA: 70
- Decorations were amazing! Dinosaur theme (Thanks Victoria!)
- At home and in-library activities
- Programming: 57 programs with 1,531 participants
- Total expense for Friends to support the Program: \$7,565

VI. Future of the Friends Organization:

For many of the past few meetings, there has been discussion regarding the future of the Friends organization. Peg has served in leadership roles for many years, since 2011, and needs to step back. We do have some new board members with Susan Eldridge as Secretary and Sara Roman as Treasurer. This year, Ellen Bonanno has stepped forward as Vice President. Until recently, overall membership has been decreasing, and is, in general, an aging population.

In the last quarter there were five new members, with three of them present at tonight’s meeting. We asked these new members to introduce themselves and share why they were drawn to the organization. Love of the building, the programs, and reading in general were key reasons.

There is great hope that the new Board, with Friends support will help to invigorate the organization.

VII. Annual Budget Request – Sue Phillips, Library Director:

Sue Phillips distributed the annual “FOL FY2026-27 Budget Request” for a total of \$14,475, which includes an already-approved increase of \$300 for programming funds which the Town can no longer support. In addition, the library wishes to once

again provide the “Letters to Santa” for a cost of \$200, which the team unanimously approved.

VIII. Adjournment:

Peg Busse proposed to close the meeting at 7:29.

Ellen Bonanno made a motion close.

Susan Norman seconded the motion.

Submitted by: Susan Eldridge, Secretary, FoHML