

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

Next meeting: Annual Meeting Thursday, September 17, 2026, McKnight Room

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by President Brenda Gooshaw Samson. In attendance: Peg Busse, Vice President; Stephen Samson, Vice President; Susan Eldridge, Secretary; Sara Roman, Treasurer; Ellen Bonanno; Tom Boscarino; Helen Scherwitzky; Patti Wendell, Susan Phillips, Director Hall Memorial Library.

II. Meeting Minutes:

The meeting minutes from the previous meeting, March 5, 2026, were approved and distributed on March 12, 2026, and are available on the Friends of Hall Memorial Library website: <https://www.fohml.org/about-us>.

III. Treasurer's Report:

Sara Roman provided a handout for Monthly Treasurer's Report for Period March 1 through April 30, 2026.

Total income was \$3853.00, which included: Book Cellar, Adult Book Fair, membership dues, and various donations.

Total Expenses was \$1763.70, including various Book Cellar renovation expenses, filing fee, and other items.

Ending balance: \$86,673.54

IV. Book Cellar Update:

Ellen Bonanno provided an update on the Book Cellar, which is doing well. Ellen needs volunteers for the next signup sheet for June, July and August. With the extended hours, more volunteers are needed. A signup sheet was distributed at the meeting. If you are interested, please contact Ellen at: BonannoEllen@gmail.com. Come see the renovations and do your part!

V. Mini Golf Update:

No volunteers have stepped up to lead this initiative for the 2027 event. This person would be the team lead; yet not working alone. The position entails engaging the vendor; reviewing the previous year's sponsors; contacting them for engagement and ensuring that the funds and paperwork are collected. This person would also manage the setup the night before, the day of, and that evening tear-down. Many of the processes from January 2026 were documented, and forms are available. This person(s) would work with library liaison to ensure a successful event. If you are interested, or have questions, please contact us at the Friends of Hall Memorial Library email address: hallmemorialfriends@gmail.com.

Traditionally, the event has been scheduled for the Take Your Child to the Library day, which will be February 6, 2027. For the success of this event, it is important for this person to get on board and get up to speed, reviewing previous documentation. Vendors should be contacted in early October and committed, with funds collected before Thanksgiving and the holiday season.

VI. Membership update:

Peg Busse reported on Membership, which is dwindling. The membership list is updated and distributed monthly. There were only two new members the last quarter. The discussions from previous meeting continued, regarding what members were looking for when signing up, and paying annual dues. Many just want to support; others are looking for social engagement; a few want to “serve” and have engaged, coming to meetings, volunteering the bookstore, and supporting the “day of” mini golf event. It was noted that often, is the same core people. The team discussed ways to engage existing and future members to make this a more enriching experience. They also recognized that the Friends of Hall Memorial Library is a 501(c)3 organization, a non-profit with the primary purpose “to foster closer relations between the Hall Memorial Library of Ellington and the citizens of Ellington; to promote knowledge of the functions, resources and needs of the library, and to cooperate with the Library Board of Trustees and the Library Director in the development of the resources, facilities, and programs of the library.” (FoHML Bylaws, Article I, September 16, 2021).

Action: the Secretary will contact new members as they join, welcoming them to the organization, describing opportunities for engagement.

Potential areas of service include:

- Mini Golf Coordinator, and Event Team
- Book Cellar staff
- Represent FoHML through state-wide conferences
- Review Bylaws and update as necessary
 - o Open Board member position as President

VII. Communications Guidelines Update:

The Communications Committee conducted their first meeting on March 19, 2026, with five Friends in attendance: Ellen Bonanno, Peg Busse, Susan Eldridge, Akila Rajasekaran, and Brenda Gooshaw Samson. The team shared their individual strengths and discussed what the Committee hoped to accomplish. Peg Busse took the action to provide a “brain dump” of historical and current communication activities, as well as a vision for the organization. Susan Eldridge received Peg’s information and is massaging this into a plan and strategy for going forward. At today’s Open Meeting, there was discussion regarding the desire for an Operations Manual for the Friends, defining roles and responsibilities for each of the Board Members, as well as documentation for the “tribal knowledge”. Peg will continue to write up all she can provide, working with Sue Eldridge to create documentation. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact us at the Friends email: hallmemorialfriends@gmail.com.

Other opportunities for improvement through communications include:

- Welcoming new members
- Emails to all members regarding opportunities for engagement
- Who we are; what we do
- The difference between the Library and the Friends.

VIII. Board of Directors:

Brenda Gooshaw Samson announced that at the end of her term she will be stepping down from the position as President of Friends of Hall Memorial Library. She will continue in her role as webmaster for our website fohml.org, including membership forms that come through this website. Peg Busse reiterated that she will be gradually dis-engaging from her active role in the organization. For anyone who is interested in volunteering for the President position, please contact us at:

hallmemorialfriends@gmail.com. Peg reminded the organization that according to our Bylaws, “[t]he officers of this organization shall be a President, a maximum of two Vice Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.” This position must be filled in order for the organization to continue. As discussed above, Peg will work with Sue Eldridge to come up with a description as to what this position entails. (FoHML Bylaws, Article III, September 16, 2021)

Action: Peg will start to work on articulating all she knows regarding the President’s role in the organization.

IX. Annual Meeting:

The next meeting of the Friends of Hall Memorial Library will be the Annual meeting, traditionally conducted on the second or third Thursday of September. This will be on Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 6:30 in the McKnight Meeting Room. At this meeting, the nomination and election of the Board will be conducted. The current Board is:

- President: Brenda Gooshaw Samson, stepping down
- Vice President: Peg Busse
- Vice President: Stephen Samson
- Treasurer: Sara Roman
- Secretary: Susan Eldridge
- Book Cellar Manager: Ellen Bonanno

X. New Business:

- Ellen Bonanno discussed the Book Boxes that are assembled by Librarian Lauren. This is one of the most popular ongoing programs at the library, distributing approximately 30 boxes per month. The recommendation is for the Friends to put Friends-Friendly items in the boxes, such as Friends cards, bookmarks, Book Cellar hours, etc. She is looking for volunteers to assist with the creative side of this. This would involve working with Canva, templates, etc. Sue Phillips, Director of Library mentioned that the Friends pays for the Canva subscription. This would be another opportunity to become engaged. If you are interested in helping, please contact us at: hallmemorialfriends@gmail.com.
- Ellen Bonanno discussed that last weekend, the Book Cellar had very little traffic, as there was an abundance of activity elsewhere in downtown Ellington: The Farmer’s Market and the Open House and Antique Sale at Ellington Historical Society. Ellen requested to have signs made, to affix to the existing sandwich boards. These would be put out whenever the Book Cellar is open, to attract business.
- Ellen Bonanno discussed that there are significant funds left over from the Book Cellar Renovation Budget. She would like to spend down this money, replacing

the bookshelves and possibly painting the floor in the area just outside the elevator. **Action:** Ellen will study the project requirements and submit a proposal to the Board for review.

XI. Adjournment:

Brenda Gooshaw Samson closed the meeting at 7:34.

Submitted by: Susan Eldridge, Secretary, FOL