

**Date:** April 9th, 2025  
**To:** David & Joyce Milne Public Library Board of Trustees  
**Prepared by:** Angela Zimmermann, Library Director



## **Administrative and Staff Reports for April 9th Board Meeting**

*Library Director, Angela Zimmermann*

I'd say one of the most exciting things this March has been the growth and evolution of our seed library. What started as a small project has turned into a great resource, giving patrons access to a wide variety of seeds for their gardens. All thanks to Kira, Adult Services Librarian for spearheading this initiative and ensuring our seed library was all set to go for the season (as well as all applicable programming). Thank you to Brianna, Marketing & Communications Strategist as well for supporting Kira with the marketing and preparing the seed packages, as well as to all the volunteers who helped out! And thanks to everyone as well who went on a wild goose chase searching for an old card catalog to store/present the seeds - only to discover we had one in the basement all along! 🙄

### **Building and Grounds**

Several building and grounds updates:

- Fiber equipment upgrades were organized through CW MARS, with the Juniper switches updated in the final week of March. New improvements in network switches make things easier to use, and provide faster connections.
- As of April 1st, the boilers should be arriving 'any day now', and then will be scheduled for installation. Until then, the unsightly tanks in our back courtyard will remain in place, just in case we have a few more chilly days. With input from Bob, the Town Manager, and Craig Clough, the Head of DPW, all charges related to the outside boilers are being allocated to the capital accounts (this also includes our electrical bills).
- We will soon have signage for our front pollinator gardens. This signage will have QR codes and then link back to a landing page on our website allowing patrons to learn more about the plants. (I believe this was a 150th anniversary goal? We've finally compiled all of the information and have an excellent marketing staff member to make this come to fruition.)
- DPW has scheduled to bid the windows and doors at the beginning of April.
- The roof near Alex, Building & Grounds Attendant's office and the entrance to the Friends distribution center, needs to be replaced. DPW is awaiting a couple more quotes and this project will then move forward.
- The outdoor library sign will be replaced with a larger blue one, which has increasingly become our signature color (font and verbiage will all stay the same). We opted not to include the new logo, as it felt too crowded and overwhelming. I'd like to discuss at the board meeting which posts the sign should be mounted on, as I know there are differing opinions on this.

### **Personnel**

Due to illness and scheduling conflicts, there were some delays, but I remain on track to complete most staff performance evaluations within the next week.

Our next in-service staff training day will be on Friday, May 16th, and the library will be closed for the entire day. This event was organized by a team that includes Sam, Library Specialist; Kira, Adult Services Librarian; Debbie B., Children's Librarian; and myself. The team was committed to ensuring that customer service and de-escalation are key parts of the day once again. With that, we're excited to welcome Andrew Snaderbeck, an expert presenter, coach, and consultant for libraries and library systems (also a former Library Board President). In addition to his session, we'll have lunch, a Thingdom tour, a review of our Emergency Procedures, and games/crafts for the staff.

### **Current Budget**

I will be including a separate document with the current year-to-date (YTD) budget along with detailed explanations of the status of various line items. I'm happy to address any questions at the Board meeting regarding this.

### **Various Meetings**

Aside from all of the regular meetings and committee meetings in the past month, I was also able to connect with the following organizations or folks:

- Dan Hudson from Images Cinema. We brainstormed ways we can step in and help out Images during their upcoming construction period. We also brainstormed collaborating on outdoor movies later this summer/fall.
- I've been asked to be part of the Community Pride Event planning team. This committee includes members from the library, the DIRE Committee, Select Board, Chamber of Commerce, Wild Soul River, Williams, the Clark, and Provisions. We already have so many great things planned for the month of June and I'm happy to share with the Board further.
- Several meetings over the past month with Garden Club members regarding the front garden as well as the back courtyard.
- I met with Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, Remedy Hall and the Chamber of Commerce to explore whether/how we could partner with NBCC on April 19th since they're holding a scavenger hunt on Spring Street which will be during the same time as the Library/Remedy Hall Spring Chicken Trot.
- Several meetings over the past months with the League of Women Voters concerning the Williamstown Citizens Academy. A Citizens Academy is an educational program designed to engage community members by providing them with an in-depth understanding of how their local government operates. Through a series of interactive sessions, participants gain insight into various departments, policies, and decision-making processes that shape their community. The first session will be Tuesday, April 29th at 6:00 pm with Bob, Town Manager to learn about "Who Does What: A Closer Look into Town Hall".
- I've connected with the Public Health Institute of Western MA, and through the Alliance for Digital Equity, we've requested additional device and hotspot support as an alternative way to obtain these items.
- I attended a Data Security training course through CW MARS.

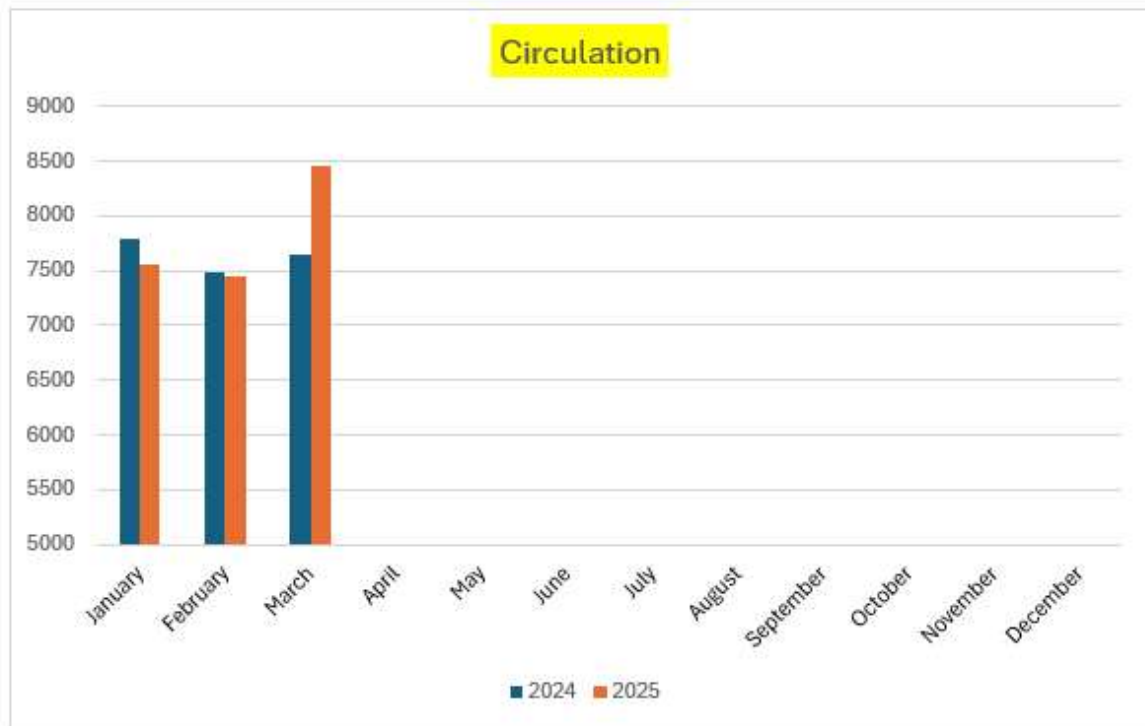
- I also had a meeting with Erin Fragola from the Perkins School for the Blind to understand how we could partner.
- As part of receiving the \$10,000 Libraries Transforming Communities grant through ALA's Accessible Small and Rural Libraries program, I am required to attend five individual training sessions. I have completed four so far, covering topics ranging from general grant information to disability awareness.
- I've also connected with Gina Puc, Special Assistant to the President at Williams College.
- And we had our quarterly User Councils Meeting/Directors Meeting through CW MARS.

**Institute of Museum and Library Services**

Due to the current administration's plan to eliminate the IMLS and its potential impact on libraries and federal funding, the MBLC has assured us that access to statewide databases, ComCat, and statewide eBook sharing will remain available through the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2025), thanks to careful planning by MBLC staff. MBLC Director Maureen Amyot has been providing weekly updates to all MBLC listservs regarding federal-level actions. We learned on April 3rd that services such as the Explore Grants and access to training and continuing education for directors, staff, trustees, Friends of the Library groups, and foundations are being eliminated.

Finally, Happy National Library Week!

*Milne By the Numbers*



	<b>February 2025</b>	<b>March 2025</b>
Circulation	7,450	8,450
New Library Card Registrations	28	31
Monthly Door Count	14,756	16,100
Comics Plus checkouts	14	8
Creativebug (sessions)	3	0
Hoopla checkouts	244	260
Kanopy checkouts	250	238
Libby checkouts	2,381	2500
Mango Language total sessions	34	35
Meeting room usage total	112	138
Newsletter total subscribers	2,844	2,847
Newsletter unique opens	6,021	5,879
New York Times activations	46	81
New York Times sessions	399	438
Wall Street Journal active users	4	3
Wall Street Journal page views	66	109
Website unique visitors	1,649	1,869
Website site sessions	3,056	3,523
Second Chance Composting Participants	23	27

*Assistant Director, Kirsten Rose*

After weeks and months of discussion and preparation, Jenna and I finally rearranged our desks and the rest of the furniture in the circ office. This involved a lot of cleaning out (including some nooks and crannies that had not really been disturbed for about 20 years). The new set-up is working well.

I spent some time clarifying some scheduling procedures and working on the best way to communicate between staff and me, so that payroll can be an accurate reflection of what has happened, and can be a relatively smooth and easy process.

I was on vacation for more than 2 weeks, so I spent some time preparing others to take on a few tasks in my absence - a little cross-training never hurt anyone!

The library has taken in more money in out-of-state fees in this fiscal year (since July 1, 2024) than we did in all of FY24 or FY23. Replacement fees are also up, as are donations. (Of course Ginny Sheldon's death was a part of that.)

### *Circulation Manager, Jenna English*

I did 1 webinar this month, Improv-ing at the Library. The subject of the webinar was using improv comedy techniques to improve the culture at your library. The main focus was on moving from "No" responses to "Yes, and" responses. This is in line with what we've been doing here recently, such as updating the Library Use Policy to have more welcoming & less strict language.

I am very much enjoying my new desk & schedule!

Thingdom: More items have been made 18+. These are items that are potentially dangerous (eg: portable stove, hedge clippers), expensive (eg: WACOM tablet, large kitchen items), or simply inappropriate for children (meditation kit). Patrons must sign an informed consent form to check out these items. 18+ stickers have been added to the Thingdom cards.

New brochures have been added to the new patron goodie bags: Thingdom & Kanopy. I've also restocked the Hoopla & Libby brochures with the updated versions created by Brianna.

Patrons have been enjoying the seed library so far!

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

As months go, March was fairly mellow here in Adult Services. Quite a few programs that took place were monthly series: the Dementia Caregiver group, Mahjong meetings, and Tech Times enjoyed the same or increased participation. In addition to continued Gentle Yoga classes, Devin Raber, previous owner of North Adams Yoga, has begun teaching All Levels Yoga on Saturday mornings, in part to make yoga available to patrons who are occupied on weekdays, but also because Devin Raber, like Mary Edgerton, is an excellent yoga teacher. Both yoga classes have had strong attendance and enthusiasm.

In addition, Heart's Pace Tea and Healing Arts Lounge spent a Saturday afternoon here offering their teas and cacao (for hot chocolate) and sharing their vast knowledge about both. People of all ages stopped by and tried their unique tea blends, and settled into the comfortable chairs in the Community Room, making it truly feel like a lounge. We dimmed the lights and played background music for added effect.

Rocio and I also hosted another Spanish conversation group, and 4 of the 6 people who came along were new, so here's hoping that attendance will grow. We spent over an hour chatting and didn't manage to play the Mexican games that we had ready to go - but expect to play more games in future sessions.

Since March is Women's History Month, most library displays highlighted women. Near the non-fiction stacks we displayed women's history books of all kinds, and in the front of the library the displays covered women's health in general and women's reproductive health.

The sustainability committee met again and made progress on narrowing down what our mission and initiatives will be going forward. Please see the March minutes [here](#). We will meet again in April, and from there decide if meeting monthly or just bimonthly makes the most sense.

Based on feedback from the trustees, the sustainability committee and patrons, we started to pursue the creation of a seed library in March, which is now up and running. Thanks to Brianna for creating labels for the mini envelopes, to volunteers Robin and Cindy for helping to fill them and to Alex for getting the heavy card catalog out of the basement.

Flight of Tea and Cacao:



Blind Date with a Book Grand Prize winner and new yoga instructor, Devin Raber



**Adult Program Attendance Numbers:**

<b>Program</b>	<b># of attendees</b>
Dementia-Friendly Caregivers Support Group (1 session monthly)	11
Mahjong at the Milne (3 sessions weekly)	42
(More) Mahjong at the Milne (bi-monthly...usually)	15
Berkshire Gamers Board Game Group (1 session monthly)	5
Tech 1:1 times with Interns Aunonto and Douglas (multiple, individual 1-hour sessions)	11
Gentle Yoga (3 sessions)	38
All Levels Yoga (5 sessions)	47
Flight of Tea and Cacao (for teens and adults)	21 (number is adults only)
Spanish Conversation Group, ¡Hablemos español!	6
Friday Film: The Woman King	2
Town Planning Board Meeting	5
March Artist Exhibition Reception	35
<b>Total attendance</b>	<b>238</b>

*Marketing & Communications Strategist, Brianna Christie*

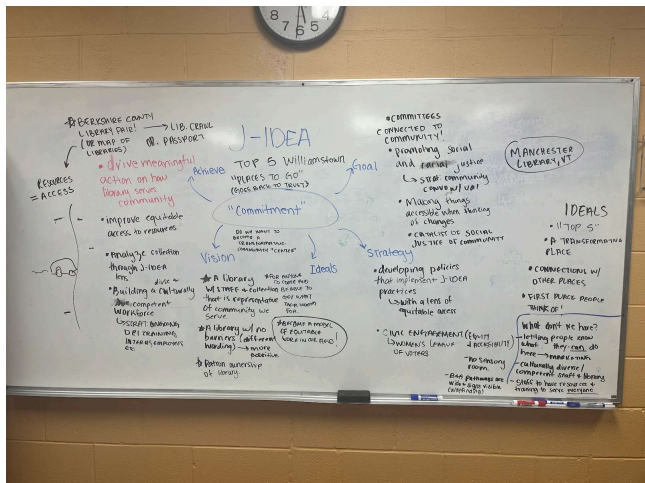
March was an exciting month for marketing and communication at the Milne! On March 3rd, the library went live with our new website and overall branding. The website has gotten nothing but positive feedback from our patrons. It's exciting to see what three months of work has led to! Additionally, all staff emails have been updated to include our new logo, general in-house library flyers have been updated to the new format, new brochures have been created for our online digital resources (Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy) and for the Thingdom! These will be great additions to our outreach materials when tabling begins in the spring.

Now that our new website is live and new marketing/branding is rolling through the library (both online and in-person), outreach and social media have been the current focus. For upcoming outreach events - like farmer's markets - I have finalized the new outreach items that have our new logo on them. These items include: t-shirts, drawstring bags, mugs, tablecloth, and more! Rocio and I are planning to create a giant library card for patrons to take pictures with when they sign up for a card.

Lastly, our social media has been booming with new campaigns. During February, we participated in MBLC's "Empowered by Libraries" campaign. Patron responses were turned into social media posts to highlight the impact and importance of public libraries. Additionally, we have launched "Humans of Milne." At the moment, we have been highlighting staff, but would love to start highlighting patrons and volunteers!

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Brianna Christie

The DEI Committee met on March 4th. During this meeting, committee members discussed recent DEI concerns in and outside of the library like federal DEI conversations and mental health equity for patrons and staff.

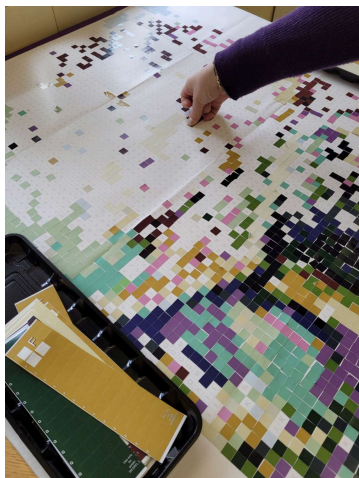


Committee members also did a "Mind Mapping" activity to discuss the committee's goals moving forward which prompted great discussion and ideas for future initiatives at the library. With the results of the Mind Mapping and past committee meeting notes, I compiled the notes into a Strategic Map / Logic Model for the committee.

Our next meeting is scheduled for April 1st where two new library staff members will be joining us and hopefully a community member in the future.

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

What's new in the Childrens' Room? Well, there's another Stick Together poster underway - for those who don't know, it's a community project we've done many iterations of, and kids really love trying to figure out what it's going to be. This one is probably one of the hardest to guess so far (and I am definitely not telling).

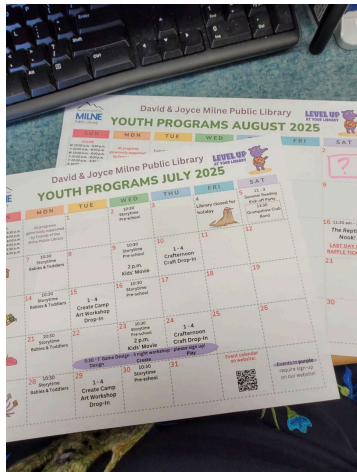


I switched our seasonal/holiday display from winter to spring, which always feels so good (even when it snows the next day), and started buying books about summer. Yes, already.

Because March didn't have a lot of no-school days (and therefore no events for me to run), I was able to focus my energy and brainpower on the next few months of programming. A couple of great opportunities for free-to-us events fell into my lap (one author talk in May and one art workshop in April), and getting those dates and times onto the calendar was quite exciting. I'm



also looking beyond that to the summer reading events, and am now at the "poking the meeting-room calendar to see if more stuff will fit" stage (the answer to that is "Maybe?") and planning what prizes to buy.



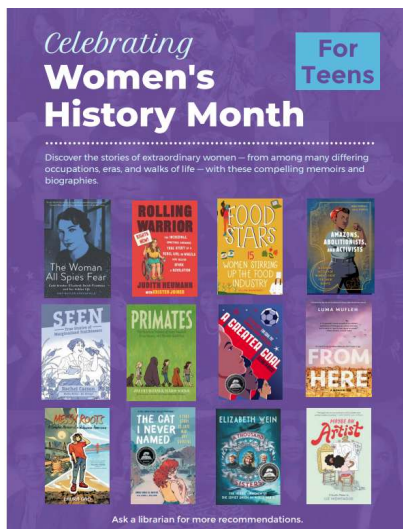
Enjoy the nicer weather!

*Teen Librarian, Rocio Carrera*

It was Women's History Month and we had various displays throughout the Teen Area. In celebration, we created a blog post related to Women's History...

[Explore Women's History with YA Lit.](#)

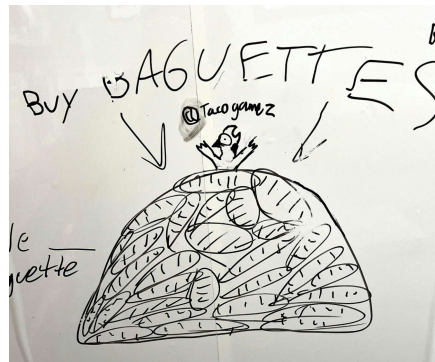
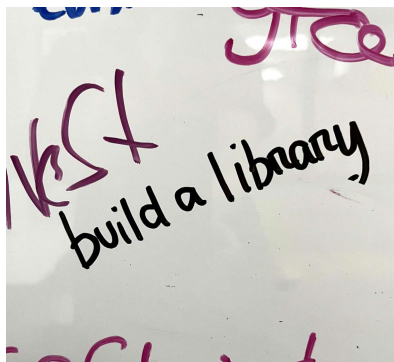
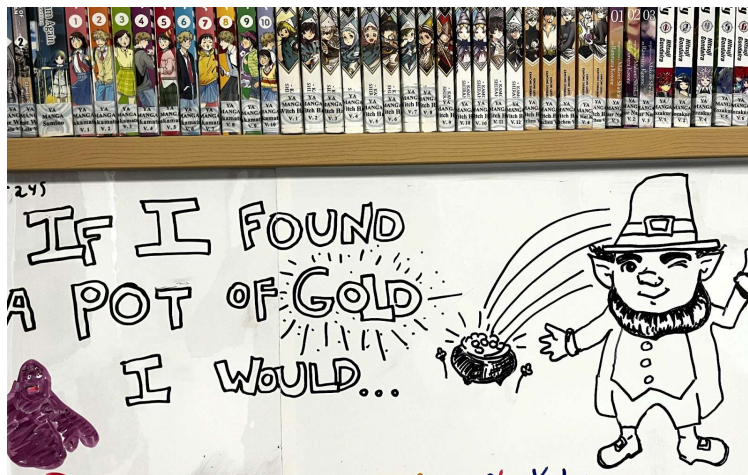
The second smaller display was *Continue to Create Endlessly*, including inspirational art and craft themed books.



We started the month with the blog post featuring great books for younger readers that might be starting to have interest in young adult literature: [Young Adult Books for Tweens](#)

The Art Corner featured a classic Spirograph set and we had nearly 100 spirographs by the end of the month!

The Dry-Erase board fill in question was "If I found a pot of gold I would... and we received 16 responses, two favorites are below...



We showed a Teen Movie this month: *Night at the Museum* with 4 participants.

*Afternoon Snacks* were incredibly popular thanks to a break between winter and spring sports. On average 10 kids stopped by on a daily basis for a snack or two for upwards of 120 attendees for the month of March!

In preparation for Summer Reading and our returning Create Camp programs, I attended a virtual workshop on PROCESS ART by The Creativity Project entitled, *Professional Learning Workshop Series #1: Set it up and see what happens*. Process art is an open ended art that builds creative confidence in the child through experimental problem solving. It is not a moment to teach creativity because all children already possess creativity. Our goal is to offer the simplest of materials and let the creativity flow!

For the half day Friday of March 28 I held my second *Friendship Bracelets* event and it was extremely popular. We had 29 people total(11 tweens/teens, 9 Kids and 8 Adults) throughout this 4+hour drop-in and over 90 friendship bracelets were made!

**Children and Teen Program Attendance Numbers:**

Program	# of kids	# of teens	# of families	# of programs
Storytimes	53			9
Flight of Tea Talk and Tasting	5	8		1
Teen Movie: Night at the Museum		4		1
Friendship Bracelets: Drop-In	9	11	8	1
<b>Total Attendance: 98</b>				

*Building & Grounds Supervisor, Alex Charron*

March was a relatively slow month.

A major amount of snow and ice had to be removed from the rear vestibule roof and lower part of the west wing copper roof. There are multiple punctures in the top roofing material that was temporarily patched to stop the leaking. Also Vermont Roofing was called for a quote to replace the roofing which is pushing 45 years old.

I constructed a new Heavy Duty sandwich board sign for our programs for the road edge. using mostly reclaimed materials we had in the basement.

There have been multiple trips to the transfer station in an effort to assist the friends with the sorting center clean out project, along with multiple trips to continue to remove unused, broken, and debris from the basement.

Spring clean-up has begun outside and the clean-up efforts are ongoing as well as all necessary set-up and tear down for our various community programs.

Unfortunately not too much information regarding the boiler replacement project aside from learning that they will be shipped soon as well I have not received any updates on the window and door project that the town has taken over.

The DPW is still hesitant on removing the propane heaters; the plan is to wait till the threat of old cold weather has passed.