

David A. Howe Public Library



Regular Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2025

Present: Donald Comstock, President; Nic Gunning, Director; Nora Burdick, Tim Colligan; Madeline Gasdik, Kris Green, Nancy Reuning; Tom Reuning

Absent: Emily Peavey, and; Jodi Pearson

Call to Order: President Donald Comstock called the November 12, 2025, meeting to order at 7:32 AM.

Discussion and Approval of Minutes & Financials: Motion by Donald, second by Kris, to approve the minutes of October 14, 2025 carried, 7-0.

Public Comment Section: Bill Dibble was present and spoke briefly about the West Pearl Street Reconnect Pedestrian Bridge. Bill was looking for the support of the Library Board to move the project forwards and offered a sample resolution of same. He said he had the approval of Dean Arnold (Village DPW) and other groups. We said we would review his document and advise.

AFTER MEETING NOTE: Tim reached out to Dean Arnold who indicated he DID NOT approve on behalf of the Village and he believed both former Mayor Randy Shaylor and current Mayor Ed Fahs were not in favor of the project.

Also, Tim (who is also a member of the Village Board) recommends this be presented not only to the village, but the Village's Planning Board for comment prior to support by the library.

Director's Report - Discussion on the following items:

Statistics:

- Circulation down from last year, but this is attributed to books loaned to WES in 2024.
- Program Statistics: Up nicely, including podcasts and the community closet
- **News from the Library**
 - General Updates
 - Halloween

- The Fall Festival was very successful.
 - We had 60 pumpkins donated from Bob's Market and live music from The Young Sisters
- Niki arranged a kids Halloween craft which Ally facilitated.
- We had a spooky book raffle and an adult book club at Wandering Nyx
- Ally hosted a kids Halloween storytime as well as the teen Halloween party.
- Kate Elliott led a spooky lantern tour for the winner of the Friends Dinner for 8.
- Ally and Director Gunning recorded special Halloween podcasts with Kendra Mikols and Sally Jacoby Murphy from the Hammondsport Library.
- Outreach
 - We partnered with the Chamber for the second annual Scarecrow competition.
 - We had 12 entries and 56 votes submitted.
 - Ally coordinated with Rotary on the Teen Photo Show, resulting in 158 entries from schools around Allegany County.
 - Director Gunning attended the Annual Meeting for the Cornell Cooperative Extension
 - Kate is working with the Allegany Area Foundation on ways to work more closely with the library
 - Amanda has been working with the East Hill Foundation on upgrades for the community closet.
- Departmental Updates
 - Youth Services
 - Ally has split the teen hangout into two groups to help spread out the numbers to make it more manageable.
 - She then had to split the DND group into two smaller groups to make the games work!
 - We had several guests lead story time in October:
 - October 3: David Stevick from the Willard J. Houghton Library
 - October 10: Haleigh Mikolajczyk from STLS
 - October 17: Raeanne Smith from Scio and Little Genesee Libraries
 - October 24: Ashleigh Beblavy from the Broome County Public Library
 - October 31: Ally Fesmire
 - For November
 - November 12: Aaron Wolfe
WCSD Superintendent

- This seems like a good opportunity for future grants.
 - Director Gunning will begin closing the construction grant for the parking lot work when the final paperwork is in.
- Personnel
 - When Ashleigh was in town for the story time, she was able to meet a lot of the staff and we had very nice lunch together.
 - She is currently set to start in mid-December.
 - Staff evaluations are under way.
 - Director Gunning suggested a title change for Ally from Youth Librarian to Teen Librarian and Youth Services Coordinator. Following discussion, motion by Kris, seconded by Tom to create a new position of Teen Librarian and Youth Services Coordinator, and appoint Ally Fesmire to this position effective immediately, carried, 7-0.
 - It was also suggested that we reactivate the title of Assistant Director.
 - Motion by Tom, seconded by Nora to appoint Kate Elliott to this reactivated position effective January 1, 2026, carried 7-0.
 - Motion by Kris, second by Nora to go into Executive session to discuss contractual matters of an employee. Carried 7-0.
 - Motion by Kris, seconded by Tom to return to regular session, carried 7-0.

Friends Report:

- Dinner for 8 went very well
 - Erik worked the event as maintenance and Kate Elliott provided the candlelit tour.
- Some discussion of funding by the Friends. Donald will talk to appropriate members.

Old Business:

- Director Evaluation – Trustees should return completed forms to Board President, Donald Comstock.
- Policy Updates were briefly discussed.
- Scholarships are in process

New Business:

- Holiday Pictures will be scheduled by Genesee Valley Media.
- Prepping Holiday Mailer
- Free Shelf
- Tim noted Cori Lunn has been a valued addition to the Babcock Theater Preservation Society.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before this Board, a motion was offered by Tom and seconded by Nancy, to adjourn, carried 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:53 a.m., carried, 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy J. Colligan, Acting Secretary