

## Director's Report

### January 2026

Respectfully submitted by Val Finkel on February 8, 2026.

#### Joys and successes:

- We're very grateful to the Alliance for Digital Equity for donating an iPad to GML to lend to patrons.
- Many thanks to Chelsea, who continues to volunteer to offer our services at the Franklin County jail.
- Thanks to four seed companies - Fedco, Johnny's, Baker Creek, and High Mowing - who sent us so many free catalogs! Our patrons have been enjoying them.
- Our patron Kate Bennett is generously gifting us a subscription to Northern Woodlands magazine.
- Our Snow Hero Jade Mortimer continues to volunteer as shoveler, and has been doing an excellent job.
- We're grateful to Richard & Terri Finkel for a generous donation in the amount of \$1000.

#### Building & Grounds:

- Aaron Foster replaced a light in one lamppost. He also confirmed that the tree lights have failed, so we will look at replacing these when the weather warms.
- The Cornerstone Committee will be meeting mid-February to go over the latest updates from Stephen Larocque and to decide on next steps.
- We discovered a rock had broken a west-facing window on Saturday 1/17. It did not break the storm window.
  - Jade Mortimer advised that heat loss is minimal and has provided a quote for the window repair.

- Colrain Police Chief Chris Lannon came to observe the damage and advised that in his opinion the rock may have been thrown from the west neighbor's snowblower. He will confer with the neighbors, file a report, and give us a copy to initiate an insurance claim.
- Jason and Stephanie Hubert, our neighbors to the west side of the building, came to observe the damage. They expressed concern at the situation and assured us they will keep their snowblower chute pointed away from the building in the future - but were also surprised that a rock that large could have been propelled that height and distance from their driveway by their snowblower, and additionally remarked that their snowblower's chute has been stuck in the down position and that in the past they have always been careful to not point the chute at the building.

### Programs and services:

- Our winter display had excellent engagement. We changed it to a Black History Month display for February.
- The "Parents Night Out: Dog Man Party" was a huge success with 40 attendees! We checked out several books to kids, including at least two who hadn't used the library recently. We plan to do this again, in partnership with the PTO.
- We applied to the Mass Kids Lit Fest to be a festival partner alongside Colrain Central School Library, which would bring a local children's book author to present to students. We have been accepted! We will be inviting either:
  - **Hannah Moushabeck:** the author of the acclaimed picture book [Homeland](#), which won the New England Book Award and the Arab American Book Award. She does a lot of programs, workshops, and school visits and she has presentations that explore the immigrant experience, diverse representation in picture books, and social justice.
  - **Vicki Johnson:** Her new picture book [Mac Wears a Hat](#) (Little Bee Books) is coming out this April. Her debut picture book, *Molly's Tuxedo* came out in 2024 and won the NCTE Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children, was an ALA Rainbow Book List selection, and a Children's Book Council Top Ten Teacher Favorite for K-2.
- Our "Knit with Friends" program, led by Jan Jones, continues on Wednesday evenings at 6:00. Attendance is steady.
- The Cyber-Seniors Tech Help program has moved to Saturdays and has found its host: our very own Sasha Rojas!
- The third meeting of the new hybrid format Carol Purington Poetry Collective was held on 2/6, with six in attendance.

- The Patron Picks displays continue to be popular, though no one has reached out to sign up for upcoming months. We will reach out to individuals we think would be interested.
- Story Time is going very well, with between 4 - 8 participants (kids & parents) at every one so far!
- We are beginning planning for Earth Day & William Apess Day.
- We've added a pass to Magic Wings to the Library of Things collection. We've had many inquiries and several uses so far!

### **Administration:**

- Val is still working on restricting purchase options from the Roku and how to handle physical site-specific tracking.
- We got our State Aid award: \$3446.39. This has already been sent to the Town Tax Collector.
- We received a grant award from the Mass Cultural Council for \$500 for Library Movie Nights! We are especially excited to have received these funds just as we also found an avenue to getting more patrons to attend Movie Nights with the Parents Night Out events.
- We postponed the Community Forum to present the Strategic Plan to Saturday, February 28 at 3 PM. We were able to update the insert for the mailer, which the Town Clerk assures us will go out on Monday, 2/9. We have a moderator from MLS scheduled to come out on 2/28 to lead the conversation.
- We submitted the library's proposed FY27 budget to the town on 1/8/26 and attended a Department Heads meeting to discuss the continuing town budgeting process on 1/15. This is the budget schedule:
  - December–January: Department operating and capital requests prepared
  - Early February: Working meetings with Department Heads & Finance Committee
  - Mid–Late February: Finance Committee review and recommendations
  - March: Select Board review; warrant article development
  - April: Final warrant and budget hearings
  - May 5, 2026: Annual Town Meeting
- Dominique got her Incident Command System Training Certificate. Sasha let us know they already have this training certificate as well.

- On Saturday 1/24, we encountered a bare razor blade in the book drop. Because of this and the rock in the window, Chief Lannon will install cameras on the building with a feed to the police station and has directed the police department to keep a closer eye on the library building. He will escalate the response if a third incident occurs.
- Val has begun onboarding to provide library services to incarcerated patrons.
- GML's Annual Report for 2025 to the town is due March 13th.
- We signed up for Language Line Solutions through MLS. LLS is the nation's largest over the phone interpretation service, and is a great option to communicate with a patron who speaks another language. Language Line Solutions has interpreters for 240+ languages, and they can typically connect with a professional interpreter in a matter of seconds.
- The Town has received grant funding to conduct an ADA Self-Evaluation & Transition Plan. The FRCOG will be conducting this work. This Plan will allow the Town to apply for implementation grants to upgrade facilities and make them more accessible. The Plan also protects the Town in terms of liability where features may not be currently accessible. The FRCOG will be going through each municipally-owned building to assess it for compliance with ADA. We have returned a preliminary survey to FRCOG to begin this process.

#### **Other Thoughts/Good to Know:**

- Val attended a Library Legislative Breakfast on 1/16, which was inspiring, informative, and emotional. It was Representative Natalie Blais' final public appearance in her role. Speakers discussed their support for a 3.76% increase in state budget funding, for S.2726, which is currently under review at the State House to protect libraries' ability to offer information to and promote literacy for all, and support for S.2710, which would help libraries negotiate fair prices for electronic materials. (Full article in the Greenfield Recorder: <https://recorder.com/2026/01/16/western-mass-libraries-advocacy/>)
- On Wednesday, January 28, 2026, [Governor Maura Healey released her proposal for the FY2027 budget](#). The \$62.8 billion budget includes a 2% increase for all Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) budget lines. [The full MBLC budget chart has detailed information about the increases](#). [Link to full press release at MBLC website](#)
- After uncertainty surrounding federal funding and the fallout from [Executive Order 14238](#) caused [significant cuts to statewide research databases in May of 2025](#), the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) has started a phased process to restore some databases starting in July of 2026. [Link to full press release at MBLC website](#)

- Facing spending cuts and political pressure, Massachusetts librarians are warning public officials that libraries are being treated as budget leverage — and saying that has to change. [Link to full article from State House News Service via Greenfield Recorder](#)
- The Shutesbury Library opened on 1/10! Around 60 volunteers joined staff members to remove the 12,000 or so books, DVDs and audiobooks squeezed into the M.N. Spear Memorial Library, preparing them for their short journey to the new Shutesbury Public Library. [Link to full article at Daily Hampshire Gazette](#)
- A year after the Montague Public Libraries received funding to join the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program and begin planning for a new or renovated building in Turners Falls, designs for a new library were approved by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) earlier this month. [Link to full article from Greenfield Recorder](#)
- The Trump administration had filed an appeal to overturn the court's decision in November that bars further dismantling of the IMLS. [Link to full article at Book Riot](#)
- **7+ Court Cases About Book Bans to Watch in 2026: Book Censorship News, January 16, 2026:** One of the biggest tools in the arsenal when it comes to book censorship in the United States is the judicial system. Whether that's for better or for worse remains a big question mark, especially under the current federal administration. Lawsuits, however, are a crucial means by which the average citizen learns where and how the rights granted to them via the Constitution actually apply. That includes the First, Tenth, and Fourteenth Amendments, three of the most relevant when it comes to where and how the government can ban books in public and school libraries. [Link to full article at Book Riot](#)