Nahant Public Library
Board of Trustees
August 25, 2026

Board Members Present: Anne Spirn (by Zoom), Linda Jenkins, Anne Bromer

Others Present: Nori Morganstein (by Zoom), Carolyn Ziering, Jeff Musman

Convened: 5:09 PM

Acceptance of the Minutes of July 20, 2026. Board President Anne Spirn requested a Motion for acceptance of the Minutes of July 20, 2026. Motion made by Linda Jenkins, seconded by Anne Bromer, and Approved unanimously.

Director's Report.

Finances. Nori Submitted the ARIS report to the state on Thursday 7/30/26. Nori submitted a completed Progress Report (created by Ilisa) to the anonymous donor on Tuesday 8/11. Nori began working on the Financial Report to submit to the state.

Outreach and meetings. Nori and Carolyn attended a final implementation meeting with NOBLE on Tuesday 7/21. Moving forward, library staff will send questions to Support at NOBLE instead of attending regularly scheduled meetings. On Tuesday 7/28, Nori attended a town Department Heads meeting. Also on Tuesday 7/28, Nori gave a tour to another interviewee for the library's feasibility study, led by Ilisa. On Wednesday 7/29, Nori attended a campaign events committee meeting. Nori met with Anne Spirn and the anonymous donor on Zoom on Friday 7/31. On Wednesday 8/5 Nori attended an Overdrive eBook training with NOBLE on zoom. Nori also attended a campaign events committee meeting. Nori also attended the Nahant Public Library Board of Trustees joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen, where the trustees asked for a special town meeting. The Board of Selectmen approved a special town meeting to be held on October 20.

On Thursday 8/6, Nori met with 2 library patrons to discuss starting a Mahjong group at the library. A Mahjong 101 Beginners class is being discussed for September, with a club to follow. Nori also on Thursday 8/6 scheduled a private session with a patron to teach them about Libby/eBooks. On Wednesday 8/12, Nori met with several members of the campaign events planning committee and Heather Castonguay (the principal of Johnson Elementary School) to discuss future collaborations. Also on Wednesday 8/12, Nori met with the full Campaign Events planning committee. Nori met with Laura, the art teacher from the Johnson school on Thursday 8/13. Nori met with the committee again on Wednesday 8/19.

Government Update.
There are now three separate bills in Congress that effect school and public libraries and

would permit widespread book censorship nationwide. The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has the country's e-Rate program on the chopping block.

The first bill, introduced by senators, and the most talked about is HR 7661, also known as the "Stop the Sexualization of Children Act." It would modify the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by prohibiting the use of funds on books, programs, and activities for children (under age 18) that includes "sexually oriented material." Sexually oriented material typically involves books with LGBTQIA characters. This bill is currently on the House Union calendar.

The second bill, HR 2616 is referred to as a "don't say trans" bill and would require that any school receiving federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 require parental permission before using a student's preferred gender pronouns or name on any school form or allowing them to use the bathroom or locker room that aligns with their identity. The bill also prohibits teaching "gender ideology" in public schools. This bill was already an executive order from the Trump Administration. (EO 14168) and is also on the House Union Calendar.

The third bill (HR 8795) also known as "The Charlie Act" would withhold funding from public schools that teach inclusivity, especially when it relates to race and gender. This bill is a combination of the first two and would create the opportunity for rampant book bans and the whitewashing of American history. This bill does not yet appear on the Union Calendar. There are currently 2 states that already have state-wide book bans, prohibiting the books in schools and libraries across the state (Utah and South Carolina). Most of the books on these lists were written by women. The above bills would affect all states.

Also in the news, The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has the country's e-Rate program on the chopping block. The e-Rate program helps bridge the digital divide by providing schools and libraries with access to affordable internet and telecommunications services. E-rate help the poorest and most vulnerable access information. According to the Schools Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition, more than 100,000 schools and roughly 11,000 libraries across the country participate in e-Rate, which extends $3 billion annually. The FCC wants to severely reduce access to the program or eliminate it entirely.

The good news:
A revised **Mass Freedom to Read bill** passed the Senate and the House in MA and was sent to the Governor's Office. Governor Maura Healey signed the bill this week, which makes the state of MA one of the first few states to have legislation in place protecting the freedom to read. The legislation ensures families and community members continue to have a voice when they have concerns about library materials, while establishing an open local process for reviewing book decisions. It protects librarians and educators who make library selections in good faith, reinforces local decision-making, and establishes consistent statewide standards so every community follows the same fair process. Unfortunately, other states have done the exact opposite, with some states issuing state-

wide bans and allowing for the persecution of librarians and teachers who maintain challenged books in their collections.

Technology. One of the laptops awarded to the library from the grant, stopped turning on. Nori reached out to Hubtech (the company who setup up the software) to see what could be done. All computers have a 3-year warranty. As of Wednesday 7/29, the device was running again. The tech grant group reached out to Nori and Heather (Johnson School principal) to say there were extra funds and asked if we the library or school needed anything else. The school requested projectors/Smart boards. The Library requested 4 wifi adapters in case the computers ever need to be moved and will still have internet connections. Nori and Heather submitted requests on Thursday 7/30. On Friday, 8/14 the school and library were told they were awarded the extra technology requested.

Staff/Personnel. Raegan, the Children's Librarian went home sick Thursday morning July 30. Nori received a doctor's note saying Raegan needed to be home until 8/18. Carolyn was off the week of August 11 to get married. Nori called Joanne to work extra hours, and she called in volunteers for extra help. The library has wonderful volunteers, but none are trained to handle regular library procedures which are only handled by trained, professional staff. Nori was alone for hours every day the week of August 11, had no staff help at all on Friday 8/14. She closed the library Saturday 8/15 because no staff were available. Nori could not take a break on Friday because she'd be leaving the library un-staffed. Nori spoke with Alison (town administrator) about staffing possibilities and maybe getting a substitute or temporary staff person in the future. Alison was supportive if Nori could make it work within the library's operating budget. Alison and Nori talked about how it might work. Nori could use funds not used for Joanne's position. She takes time off every year and there is always money left over in her line item on the budget. She could also use state aid money. If any employee uses FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) they can get up to 12 weeks unpaid time off, which means there would be more funds available that were not going to the employee taking leave. Nori intends on looking into hiring an on-call substitute and asking other NOBLE libraries what they do.

Friends. The Friends have made almost $700 from the 3 Markets by the Sea book sales. More and more patrons are using Venmo to purchase books. The Friends estimate earning close to $1,000 by the last sale (a record). Joyce has been diligently working on the eBay page, where the library has earned over $1500 selling used books. See attached Friends Financial Report. The Friends of the library have been attending campaign event planning meetings. They are also supporting the Red Sox program the library is hosting in October. The Friends will also pay the first NOBLE bill for the first year the library is in the network. (The library will pay the NOBLE eBook fee and Wowbrary fee, which is now half the cost in the Noble Network). On 8/21, the Friends began boxing the books for the large book sale set for 9/19.

Programming:

- Weekly Story Time (on a hiatus while Raegan was out).
- Weekly Lego Club or outdoor Game Day (back in September)

- Weekly Italian classes (2 adult-beginner and advanced, and 1 for families)
- French classes are in the works.
- Monthly Mystery Book Club
- Bi-weekly Crafting Circle
- Virtual – Celebrating America's 250th: the black experience of the Revolution with "Herstorian" Gracia Collins Rich, July 20 at 7pm on Zoom
- Summer Reading Program for families:
  June 26: Pop Up Art School painting class
  July 9: Parties by Carol, Pirates
  July 14: Lion Heart Puppet Show
  All Summer scavenger hunt in the library
- Summer Music Series Thursday evenings in July:
  July 9: Don Hammontree, singer/guitar
  July 16: Lisa Haley, singer
  July 23: Marc Maccini, keyboard
  July 30: Tomoko Iwamoto, Gypsy jazz
- Staff Celebration for Carolyn and Raegan July 18 at 1pm
- Copper bookmark (metalworking) workshop 9/3 at 5pm (already has 2 sign ups)
- Tentative date for Intro to Mahjong: 9/15 at 10:30am
- Big Outdoor book sale Saturday 9/19.
- Red Sox presentation Saturday 10/3 at 1pm
- Special Town Meeting scheduled for 10/20, with only item being the Library's.
- "What's Brewing at the library" fall festival scheduled by Campaign Planning Committee for Saturday 10/24.
- Tentative date for Ballet Story Time with a dancer from the Greater Salem Ballet Company (ahead of the Nutcracker performance at Lynn Auditorium) Nov 12
- "Antiques Roadshow" Style Appraisal Program, Co-hosting with the Nahant COA Saturday December 5 at 10am.

Building Report.
On Monday July 20, Nori cleaned dust off the computers in the Nonfiction Room. Not much of the room was protected from dust. The previous time, the crew covered the computers and no dust made it across the space. Patrons could use the space while work was being done. This time, the room was closed off. It's been closed since Thursday July 16. Nori emailed Richard and the head contractor about it.

On Wednesday July 22, the front door handle came loose again. A library patron handed the door handle to library staff. Nori could not reach anyone at the DPW because they leave at 4pm. Nori reached out to the fire department. They were unable to fix it, but at least put things in place so Nori could lock the building.

The DPW came on Thursday July 23 to work on the door. They also could not fix it this time. Zach Taylor, the head of the DPW, told Nori he contacted a locksmith who would come by on Monday.

Also on Thursday July 23, a large tree branch next to the library fell down. It fell in the area where the library hosts outdoor concerts on Thursday evenings in the summer (right next to the playground). Nori asked the DPW to remove the tree branch ahead of the concert. They removed it that day. They also removed other dangerous, low hanging branches on trees in the playground that could potentially fall on the library.

On Monday July 27, Scott worked on the door handle. The handle is still loose and further work might need to be done by a locksmith. On Thursday 7/30, Scott told Nori it was all set.

On Friday 7/31, Richard stopped by to check on the plasterwork. The plasterer had been gone for several days. The piece needed to dry before going up. Richard told Nori he would be back when more work took place. The room remains closed, disrupting library services. There are not enough places for people to work. And the dust and debris in that room remains everywhere.

On Tuesday 8/4, Nori called the non-emergency number at the Nahant Police Department to ask an officer to speak to a group of teenage boys who had been disrupting services and misbehaving at the library every day that week. Nori had kicked them all out of the library the previous week for fighting, yelling, and swearing loudly after leaving trash and food all over the floor upstairs. They also ripped down a library sign. On 8/6, they were disrupting patrons, banging on library property, and disrespecting library staff. An officer came and spoke to them outside, after they left.

On Wednesday 8/5, the plasterer continued to work on the ceiling. The room has been closed off from use for 3 weeks. No Italian classes have been able to use it for 3 weeks. One Italian class has grown to 8-10 people, so they have been using the larger room. Over 40 people needed a place to go to do work over the course of 3 weeks, and the already limited space was unavailable to them. The fire alarm went off due to dust/debris. Carolyn evacuated the building and a fire crew checked that everything was okay (while Nori was on lunch).

On Thursday 8/6, the plasterer returned to meet with his boss to go over the work. He did minimal cleaning. All of the surfaces and books continued to be coated in plaster, dust and debris. The boss told Nori that the plasterer would come at least one more day to sand it more evenly.

On Tuesday 8/11, Steve (head contractor) came to look at the plaster. Richard came by on the same day. Everyone agreed it needed a little more sanding on one side.

On Tuesday 8/11, the teenage boys returned. This time they used inappropriate language while younger children were present and continued to bring food and drinks around the library after being told not to. They left trash on the floor and made a mess in the bathroom. They played loud, inappropriate videos on their phones and on the library computers. Nori again called the nonemergency number and the police have asked Nori to call them as soon as the teens come back, and they will be over to talk to them again. Nori is in touch with the officer who works at the Johnson school. The young teens are mostly going into 6th grade and come in groups of 8-10 people.

On Thursday 8/13, the plasterer returned and did as much as he could. Richard came in to see that things were moving along. Everyone agreed that it was ready to be painted after the plasterer finished. No date was given for when the painter would return.

Also on Thursday 8/13, a patron told Nori that the air conditioner unit came out of the window. Nori called the Town DPW and Scott to fix it. It was fixed an hour later.

On Monday 8/17, Nori received an email from Scott that there was a person at one of the computers in the library and he had to kick him out, because the library was closed. The library is closed on Mondays. He said the cleaning ladies must have left the door open. Nori spoke to the cleaning staff and they apologized. They thought someone else would lock it. The Friends were dropping off books when the cleaning crew was here. Nori told them that they needed to lock the door every time they leave.

On Wednesday 8/19, there was no door handle on the door when Nori came to work at 8am. There was no notice of what happened. Nori texted Carolyn to see if it fell out the previous night when she closed. Carolyn said it was fine. So, Nori went to talk to Scott, who said he left an email. But it seems to have not gone through. Nori received no notice. He told Nori it could take a while to fix because he doesn't think the part for the door that needs replacing, exists anymore. He said calling a locksmith would be a waste of money when they also won't have the part. Nori printed signs, taped them to both sides of the door and then found caution tape, to block off the door on both sides. The sign asks patrons to use the other door. The other door is less accessible and makes loud noises every time someone opens it. The library staff leave it open, despite the air conditioning being on because otherwise patrons struggle to get in and disrupt the whole library when they do.

On Wednesday 8/19, a teen volunteer came in and helped with Children's Room projects, including pulling all the books that were damaged in the power-washing at the beginning of the construction project last fall. 37 Children's Fiction titles (from under the windows) were pulled due to water damage/mold. Adult nonfiction books were pulled earlier, also from under the windows. None of the books could be donated or sold due to the damage. Raegan is in the process of replacing books. Carolyn already re-ordered the adult titles. The Children's books were only noticed in the previous week.

On Thursday 8/20, a library patron came in to tell staff that there was a dead bird outside the library. Nori notified Scott about it right away. He is also responsible for Animal Control. The bird was still there the following day, so Nori notified Scott again. The bird was removed Friday afternoon.

On Friday 8/21, a child shoved the broken front door open and ripped down the signs. He was found banging on the broken door. His mother was in the library with 2 other children. Nori re-applied caution tape and the signs. The child could not read yet.

New Business.

Special Town Meeting. Nori and the Board of Trustees discussed the date and what was needed to do in preparation for the upcoming town meeting. Everyone agreed that the best way to address misinformation is to write up the correct information and get it into the hands of all households in Nahant. Sending an article to the Lynn Item was discussed. Anne Bromer agreed to work on the message and get it to everyone soon, so the library could send out a mailer to everyone in town as soon as possible. The Board will send a second mailer (suggested by Jeff) in October to remind everyone to come to the special town meeting. Everyone agreed that the library needed to send a message of unity among all town departments and Chief Antrim was invited to both the upcoming Friends' big book sale and to the event being planned in October by the Campaign Events Planning Committee.

Meeting Room Policy. All present discussed a change to the Meeting Spaces policy related to the prevention of political candidates using the library space as a place to campaign for upcoming elections. Jeff pointed out that it is important that the library is not biased or seen as prohibiting free speech. The Board does not want the library to seem like they only support one candidate or one political party. Nori will share other library's policies at the next Board of Trustees meeting, and the discussion will continue. All agreed that the wording was important and more time was needed to work on the policy.

Adjourned: 6:22 PM