



Library Board of Trustees Meeting – APPROVED 12/9/2025
November 18, 2025, in person, livestreamed, and recorded
(Livestream abruptly ended at 8:39 p.m. due to internet failure)

ATTENDEES:

Presiding Officers:

- Charlie Pensabene, President
- Katie Sheehan, Vice-President
- Camie Engel, Secretary
- Nichole Krisanda, Treasurer
- Mari Harris, Trustee
- Kayla Kutzscher, Trustee
- Amanda Miller, Trustee

Library staff, Community Partners & Members of the Public:

- Jill Dugas Hughes, Library Director
- Jenna Schmonsky, Administrative Assistant
- Julie Ann Price, Friends President of the East Greenbush Community Library (exited 8:19 p.m.)
- Jenn Romer, Friends of the East Greenbush Library (exited 8:17 p.m.)
- Tom Grant, Rensselaer County Legislator
- Shay Harrison (exited 7:10 p.m.)
- David Mickiewicz (exited 8:06 p.m.)
- Ed Nestler
- Steve Montano
- Crystal Derico
- Michael Poost
- Theresa Poitras
- Mandy McCord
- Frank Coppa (exited 8:26 p.m.)
- Three members of the public

A Library Board of Trustees meeting of the East Greenbush Community Library was held on November 18, 2025, at the East Greenbush Community Library and was livestreamed. It began at 7:00 p.m. and was presided over by Charlie Pensabene, President with Camie Engel as Secretary. The meeting was recorded.

CALL TO ORDER:

- C. Pensabene called the Library Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

- The agenda was reviewed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ground rules for public comment were noted where speakers are limited to three minutes.

- Steve Montano: Good evening, Library board members. Tonight, we have reason to celebrate. The citizens of East Greenbush have again voted to approve their very responsible library budget. Well done. Also, congratulations to the newly elected board members. Even more important, yesterday, the town of East Greenbush publicly ended its efforts to pursue the ridiculous notion of putting a new police station on the wonderful green space that is part of the library property. We all support a new police station, just not on this beautiful, tranquil, and much needed green space. I commend you for your forethought and good judgment to preserve this area for current and future generations to enjoy. I am always soothed by when passing by this very neat and well-maintained property. Thank you.
- Crystal Derico: I just want to say thank you very much that I'm here for serving the library.
- Michael Poost: I came tonight basically for one thing. I saw that the Town has backed off going after the site. I'll be blunt. I don't believe it for a minute. And I saw on your agenda that was published online, you stated that there would be a discussion and a vote. I sincerely hope that you will and have a vote to turn this down and send it to the Town to once and for all end it. In their discussion at the Town meeting last week on numerous properties were not for sale, and they didn't pursue them any further. I think you need to communicate to the Town in writing that this parcel is not for sale or part of the parcel, or as they call the fringe, the primary piece out front. So, I just want to make sure that my recommendation is that you do have a vote tonight because it would be easy to say, well, they stopped, so we're done. I don't think they're done, so please have a vote tonight.
- Theresa Poitras: Hi, I will be much more brief than I was the other night and I will look for the cue cards because I was looking for them the other night, too. I just wanted to say congratulations. As Michael said too, it's been a good week certainly for the board here. You know, just a couple of things to follow up. I think you know, both for the library separately for the town and for the other main. I think this is a great opportunity. You've, the public is engaged now. So, I think it's a great opportunity to look at a few different things to engage the public more. There's been, I've been trying to stay off social media as much as I can and not read comments, but I know there are still people who are opposed. They're not happy the budget got passed. So maybe there are things that the library can do to reach out more in explaining the strategic plan. You know what is the use of the property as you see it in the future. Maybe there are things you can do. You had, the

Friends had a successful fundraiser with the Night at the Library. Maybe in the summer you can hold purposely on the lawn a day at the library, and you know pull out your library of things for those who are naysayers saying the library doesn't offer anything like giant Jenga and cornhole and stuff they could rent. So, show it out on the lawn and engage the public and get them involved. Maybe a survey can go out and say what, you know, items don't you think that the library provides today that you would like to see, and you know work off of that for the future. So, I think there's a lot of those things. Maybe in the winter, you know, you can't plan ahead for snow, but it's supposed to be the snowiest winter ever. Maybe you can have supplies for building snowmen on the lawn. You know, something in the interim. But from a cost perspective, what is the strategic plan? How does the library foresee potential use in three years and five years and 10 years for expansion and what is needed. Some great points were made the other night, and I think you can continue to build upon what is. And then last thing in regard to the other things with salaries, everybody loves to complain about salaries. Everybody seems to want everybody else to work for free. They want, you know, this to be housed and led by volunteers. Elon Musk is making a trillion dollars. I mean, what's \$1.9 million in salaries for, you know, an average employer works \$280 a year or excuse me, 280 hours a year. What is your full-time equivalent of employees and divide that by your salary cost and that's on average what your employees make. What are your benefits? Are they 30%? Are they 40%? Did they go up this year? You know, are they planning to go up next year as everyone's saying health care is going up. So, just take the opportunity. I think it's great. I'm very happy to support. Apologies for dragging everybody through my long spiel the other night, but I'm happy to see where it went and I'm happy to support you and I look forward to the future of the library here with an empty lawn and no police station. I also agree that I don't think he's done yet. So, just be prepared.

- Mandy McCord: The only thing I just have a comment on is that I was looking at the budget, which is basically the voting from yesterday. And if I was reading it correctly, there's only about 560 people actually voted. And there's like 17,000 people in East Greenbush, So I'm just thinking that I guess it's disheartening. And I just didn't really, maybe in the future there's more outreach, just to remind people and have more signs of something people even know about the vote. But I mean, just for almost a \$3 million budget to have 500 people in the community vote on that, just seems not terribly representative. Again, you know, whichever way it goes doesn't matter. But just again, just thinking in the future, seeing if there's more ways to try to get more of the vote out. That's my only comment.
- Frank Coppa: I missed some of the excitement. I was out of town for a while. But I did see a lot of the communication going back and forth. And I think there's some lack of communication on both sides, as Jack, our supervisor, had mentioned. I think, as Mike has mentioned, for the library, having an area for expansion is critical. But for some reason,

that expansion area could still allow for police station facilities in that property. I'm all for it. And this gentleman spoke about the bucolic nature of the area. But plenty of terrific libraries are in the middle of cars and streets and buildings. And this one could be too. So, depending on what exactly you think is needed for our expansion, I think that would give the town an idea of what they need for the police department. And I think some additional thinking and flexibility would be helpful in that regard in the future.

Four written public comments read aloud by J. Dugas Hughes:

- Janice Wieczorek: I attended the town hall meeting on the proposed site sale to the police department. I am against this sale. I am a licensed mental health counselor and the mental health toll on this proposal will be significant. A quiet library, healthful Y activities and senior care does not belong along with emergency services activities.
- Kristen Schroeder: Greetings, As an avid walker (and resident within walking distance of the library) I would like to voice my opposition to the proposed sale of library land for a new EGPD station. I do agree that our town is in need of a new station, but the town owns a multitude of unused properties that could be considered. Taking up library property will impede any future library expansions. It will also make the space around the library much less accessible to considerable number of local residents who regularly use the green space. Aside from losing access to outdoor space for residents and townspeople, the emergency vehicle traffic on 151 heading toward route 4 could be quite dangerous. The top of the hill is blind. Vehicles shooting up over the hill would be dangerous for the neighborhoods between the library and route 4. One could imagine, as well, that the Couse traffic circle would see an increased number of accidents. Drivers seem to struggle with the traffic pattern now. Toss in a vastly increased number of on call emergency vehicles entering the circle, lights flashing, at a high rate of speed. Not a great mix. The amount of traffic from the YMCA is already rather high. Combined with the high school and library traffic, it's not an ideal place to add a police station. Please take note that there are many dog walkers in the area. Many seniors, and a good number of children. Both as pedestrians and drivers. Thank you for your time and attention.
- Sue Konieczny: Hello, my husband and I, along with our 3 children have lived on Glaz Street for 38 years. We were frequent visitors to the library in the Town Hall in the earlier years, but when we heard the news that a beautiful library was coming just practically across the street from our home, we were thrilled! We have enjoyed the "new" library since day one using it over and over again for our children, for ourselves, and now for our 1-year-old granddaughter who loves Story time and the children's rooms. It is a beautiful, magical place. How lucky we are to have it practically in our own backyard, along with the sidewalks that were eventually added. The entire community and beyond enjoy this space and the wonderful programs, collections, assistance, and technology it offers. We are proud to say our family has a brick out on the front patio that was added later after the

library was built. The side patio is a beautiful space as well, added after the fact. These improvements show that the library is still changing and evolving and will continue to do so in the future. We need to be prepared for this continued growth and keep this green space available for potential additions. When Covid hit, that green space was a solace to me, as I walked through the complex daily. I still do, as do many others. I often cross the street with groups of high school students moving towards the Y or the library. When we found out that the beautiful green space that surrounds the library would possibly be taken to build a police station, we were horrified. The situation only grew worse when we saw how the library board was treated in this process. Our officers are most deserving of a new space. We can all agree upon that. This is not that space. We adamantly feel this is not the place for a police station. That green space should be preserved with the intent it was given when it was first designed. We beg you to say no to this proposal. We spoke against it at the Town Board meeting and will continue to be vocal about our dissent. Thank you for the opportunity to share our feelings.

- Allegra Smith: Dear East Greenbush Library Board Members, I'm writing to thank you for your level headed, objective approach to the past month's public drama surrounding the possible location of a new police station on your property. While the town supervisor resorted to threats made in the local newspaper and on Facebook, you calmly presented the facts in a direct email to patrons and remained as neutral as possible. I appreciated the opportunity to get the facts directly from the Library. While I support the need for a new police station, I'm strongly against using the library property as a site- now or in the future. Community Way is a calm, positive space. A police station would bring increased traffic, parking lots, and noise that would alter the fundamental nature of the library. It would also limit future expansion opportunities for the library. It's possible to support the need for a new police station AND value our current library property enough to recognize that locating a police station nearby would be detrimental to the community. Furthermore, the threat of eminent domain by the town supervisor and the portrayal of the need for a new police station as an emergency when it's been an issue for over 30 years have both left me questioning the true agenda of the East Greenbush supervisor and town board. They seem to value their own ideas more than the community's input and respect. Thank you for taking the high road and letting the community voice our concerns to defeat this proposal instead of undertaking costly legal action. I recognize that members of the Library Board are elected volunteers, and I thank you for your service, time, and energy that you have devoted to this matter.

M. McCord raised a question about expanding the library. In response, the library is not expanding at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- **MOTION #2025-11-81:** M. Harris made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2025, Special Library Board Meeting. Seconded by K. Kutzscher. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

It was noted that all the board packets are on the library calendar for public view.

- **MOTION #2025-11-82:** M. Harris made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2025, Library Board Meeting. Seconded by K. Sheehan. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

TREASURER'S REPORT (N. Krisanda):

- Overall, the budget is on track—some lines are slightly under or over, but everything remains within the planned budget. Later in the agenda, there are proposed transfers between budget lines, previously discussed in committee, that keep us within the overall budget.
- NYSLRS costs are higher this year than last. The annual employer contribution of \$204,600 is included in the packet. Employee contributions are paid each payroll, while the employer amount is handled as an annual prepayment. We're back to the December prepayment schedule, which saves about \$2,000, and this December's payment covers the 2026 obligation.
- **MOTION #2025-11-83:** C. Engel made a motion to accept the Off-Warrant in the amount of **\$164,266.70** for the period of October 11, 2025, through November 14, 2025, as presented. Seconded by C. Pensabene. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.
- **MOTION #2025-11-84:** K. Sheehan made a motion to authorize the president to sign the Warrant for the period of October 11, 2025, through November 14, 2025, in the amount of **\$252,762.30**. Seconded by K. Kutzscher. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.
- **MOTION #2025-11-85:** K. Kutzscher made a motion to approve the November 14, 2025, Financials with 87.05% of the year completed, as presented. Seconded by K. Sheehan. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Services: N/A

Administrative: The written committee report was submitted by A. Miller. Highlights from the written report included: Final Draft Reserves Policy, 2025 budget proposed amendments, board meeting calendar for 2026, library closures, Schodack contract, and facilities update.

- **MOTION #2025-11-86:** The Administrative Committee made a motion to approve the Reserves Policy as amended. Seconded by C. Engel. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

Budget proposed amendments for 2025: As of November 18, 2025, the only change in the proposed transfers is a \$115,425 reduction to salaries and benefits. This results in a \$75,425 transfer to the unassigned balance, reflecting the \$35,000 income offset by the expenditure adjustments. The structure of the transfers remains the same; only the dollar amounts have changed.

- **MOTION #2025-11-87:** The Administrative Committee made a motion to approve the fiscal year 2025 operating budget adjustments as presented, increasing total revenues and expenditures to \$2,630,600, updating line items as detailed, and authorizing transfers to capital and unassigned fund balance accordingly, which reflects an additional \$35,000 in revenue from interest and earnings. Seconded by A. Miller. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

Board meeting calendar for 2026: Typically, board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month except for school breaks and holidays. Committee meetings are generally on Mondays, with occasional Tuesdays. The public hearing for the draft budget will be held on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, keeping meetings consistent on Tuesdays, in line with other key dates like packet availability and the draft budget presentation. The calendar also includes Trustee training, which is especially important for our many new members.

- **MOTION #2025-11-88:** The Administrative Committee made a motion to approve the 2026 Board Meeting Calendar, as revised. Seconded by C. Engel. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

The 2026 library closure schedule lists all regular holidays, a staff development day, and Sundays in July and August, following the usual schedule. No holidays have been added or changed—only updated for 2026.

- **MOTION #2025-11-89:** The Administrative Committee made a motion to approve the 2026 Library Closures Schedule. Seconded by K. Sheehan. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

Nominating Committee: The nominating committee, chaired alongside the administrative committee, reviewed filling the four officer positions—president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary—for 2026. With only three current board members remaining by the end of 2025, the committee discussed potentially hiring a paid treasurer and is still finalizing how to fill the remaining officer roles, considering timing, training, and the potential paid position. The slate of

officers will be presented at the December board meeting. The committee also discussed Upper Hudson liaison appointments, which can be recommended but are ultimately decided by Upper Hudson.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Sale considerations of library property

Board members discussed the town's recent interest in library property for a potential police station, which the town has since decided not to pursue.

- Board members expressed discomfort with the perceived dichotomy of being “pro-library” versus “pro-police,” emphasizing support for both.
- The board agreed that land-use and sale decisions require a clear, documented policy to guide future actions and ensure transparency. This policy should involve input from stakeholders, including the Community Advisory Board, the community, and provide a structured process rather than ad hoc decisions.
- The lack of a clear policy contributed to confusion and stress during the recent discussions about the Town's interest in the property for a police station.
- Board members emphasized preserving the land as green space while recognizing the value of both the library and police department.
- Next steps include developing and adopting land-use policies to ensure structured, evidence-based decision-making and consistent handling of any future proposals.
 - **MOTION #2025-11-90:** A. Miller made a motion to authorize the president and library director to send a letter to the Town advising that the library is not prepared to sell the library property at this time. Seconded by C. Pensabene. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (J. Dugas Hughes):

- **Library Budget Vote:** The Library had 564 voters, up from 257 last year, but turnout still needs improvement. Moving the vote to November aimed to increase engagement and allow more time for budget preparation. There was discussion about coordinating with Rensselaer County or the Board of Elections to include the vote on the November ballot. Past attempts were limited by high costs for electronic voting machines and paper ballots for all registered voters. The board agreed to explore ways to increase voter turnout through community engagement, advisory council input, or coordination with local elections.
- **Library Trustee Election:** There were five candidates for three open board positions. Preliminary results show the budget passed 340 to 223. The top two vote-getters, Sarah Boggess and Crystal Derico, will fill five-year terms. The third position, currently close between Douglas Morrissey (248) and Jordan White (243), will serve a two-year term, with results subject to final certification. Any future openings will be filled based on community vote and candidate interest.

- **Programs & Attendance:** 67 group programs and 141 one-on-one programs, totaling 3,303 attendees—up 19% from last October. Youth program attendance increased 21%; adult program attendance was down 1%.
- **Outreach & Grants:** Outreach efforts are ongoing, and Upper Hudson SAIYL grants are being actively used for programs like period parties.
- **Meeting Room Usage:** 110 outside groups used meeting rooms, a 59% increase from last October.
- **Library Cards & Users:** New library cards are up 15% year-to-date; active users are up 1%; resident users up 2%.
- **Borrowing & Collections:** Physical borrowing slightly increased (1% in October, 3% year-to-date), digital borrowing up 6%. Physical items still account for 60% of total usage.
- **Special Services:** The library continues mailing books to homebound patrons; only books are mailed, though talking/audio books are available through a separate program.

J. Dugas Hughes thanks the staff for their professionalism and positivity. Despite challenges, staff continue to do excellent work, and we're fortunate to have such a dedicated team and supportive community.

PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM:

- **MOTION #2025-11-91:** M. Harris made a motion to approve the November 18, 2025, Personnel Memorandum, as presented. Seconded by K. Kutzscher. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.
- **MOTION #2025-11-92:** C. Pensabene made a motion to approve the 2026 Staff Salary/Wage Schedule. Seconded by K. Kutzscher. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Upper Hudson Library System (Camie Engel):

- Nothing to report at this time.

Friends of the Library (Julie Ann Price): N/A

Rensselaer County (Tom Grant):

- The Rensselaer County budget is scheduled for December 3.

NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Resignations:

- **MOTION #2025-11-93:** K. Kutzscher made a motion to accept the resignation of Trustee, Mari Harris, effective December 31, 2025. Seconded by A. Miller. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

C. Pensabene thanked Mari's diligent work, her eagle-eyed attention to detail. The Library as a board, the Library as an entity, the community as a whole is going to have a big loss by not having Mari on the board because we really appreciate all the time, dedication, and energy she's put to advance the library.

Livestream abruptly ended at 8:39 p.m. due to internet failure.

- **MOTION #2025-11-94:** C. Pensabene made a motion to accept the resignation of Treasurer, Nichole Krisanda, effective December 31, 2025. Seconded by M. Harris. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

C. Pensabene thanked and appreciated Nichole's dedication on the board. Anyone who's ever done the treasurer's roll or reviewed the financials knows how much work is involved.

A Trustee plaque was given to Katie Sheehan for her hard work, dedication, and the insight she's brought to the board.

ADJOURN:

- **MOTION #2025-11-95:** Motion to adjourn the November 18, 2025, Library Board meeting was made by K. Sheehan at 8:42 p.m. Seconded by N. Krisanda. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

Recorded by: Jenna Schmonsky, Administrative Assistant

Respectfully submitted by: Camie Engel, Secretary