

Friends of the Fiske Free Library

Meeting Minutes July 1, 2026

The meeting was called to order at **5:17 p.m.**

Members in Attendance:

Renee Mayer, President. John Cloutier, VP, Lisa Gosselin, Secretary, Lynsey Lacourse, Treasurer, Colin Sanborne, acting Library director, Josh Reyes, Board Liaison, Elizabeth Cram, Mark White, Katie Welsh, Martha Woods, Marty Davis.

1. Summer Reading Program Update

Martha thanked the Friends for their continued support of the Summer Reading Program.

- The kickoff event featuring **Mr. Aaron's Dance Party** attracted more than **100 people**.
- As of the meeting, **96 children** had registered for the Summer Reading Program, with approximately **10 new registrations** that day (compared to the typical 4–5 registrations per day).
- Registration will continue during the **Caterpillar Lab** event on **July 7, 2026**.
- Renée introduced a new **"Plant a Seed and Read"** craft project. David Putnam donated mat board for the project, which will begin on **Monday, July 6**. Donations of ribbon and fabric are still welcome.
- Martha reported that families are learning about the program through the City website, signage around town, and local summer camps. Due to anticipated attendance, the Caterpillar Lab event was moved to the **Claremont Community Center** to accommodate more participants.
- The Summer Reading Program is off to an excellent start.

- **2. Financial Snapshot**

- Current Balance: \$21,723.35
- Deposits: \$2500.00 CSB Foundation
\$ 10.00 Membership
- Encumbered Funds: \$ 8,490.05
 - \$ 5,000.00 Digitization (\$2500 from CSB + \$2500 Match)
 - \$2215.05 Summer Reading Program
 - Check #185-Mariposa \$346.05
 - #186 Mr Aaron \$440.00
 - #187 Caterpillar Lab \$549.00
 - #188 Comics Workshop \$530.00
 - Mary \$100.00
 - Supplies \$250.00
 - \$575.00 Center for Cartoon Studies
 - \$350.00 Library Magazine subscriptions
 - \$350.00 Tree/Mike
- Available Funds: 13,233.30

3. Board of Trustees Liaison Report

There was no report from the Board of Trustees liaison.

4. Alumni Parade Recap

Members agreed that participating in the Alumni Parade was a success and that the Library received a very positive response from the community.

- Friends distributed bookmarks and candy while promoting the Library's free programs.
- The group discussed creating a float for next year's parade.
- Ideas were shared based on next year's Summer Reading theme, **"Reading Opens Up New Universes,"** including the slogan **"Take Me to Your Reader."**
- The 2027 Alumni Parade theme **"Celebrating America's 250th"**.

5. Funding Updates

Community Service Block (CSB) Grant

- The Friends received a **\$2,500 CSB Grant** to support the Library's digitization project, with a matching contribution of **\$2,500** from the Friends.
- Josh suggested hosting a celebration, possibly an **Ice Cream Social**, to recognize the grant award and introduce the new Library Director, **Jim Allen**.
- A tentative date of **Thursday, August 13, 2026, from 4:00–6:00 p.m.** at the Fiske Free Library was discussed.
- Members will seek donations from local ice cream vendors before establishing a budget. Planning will continue at the next meeting.

Library Book Budget

- The City Council level-funded the Library's book budget at **\$25,000** after initially considering a **\$5,000 reduction**.
- Members acknowledged the success of a community letter-writing campaign encouraging the Council to maintain last year's funding.
- The Council voted unanimously to preserve the full amount requested by then Library Director Mike Grace.

Friends Magazine Renewals

- Membership renewals for the Friends newsletter/magazine are currently being received.

6. Library Director Update

Marty announced that **Jim Allen** has been hired as the new Library Director and will begin on **July 27, 2026**.

Jim currently serves at the **Plainfield Meriden Library** and is also a Claremont resident. Marty noted that Jim is personable and is expected to be a valuable addition to the Library. Members hope he will attend the next Friends meeting.

7. Annual Appeal Letter

Planning for the annual appeal letter is ongoing.

Renée has connected with **Cat Gessner**, theater arts teacher at Stevens High School, who has expressed interest in assisting with the letter's design.

The next planning meeting is scheduled for **July 23, 2026, from 5:30–7:00 p.m.**

8. Broad Street Tree Project

The Broad Street tree planting project has been tabled by the City Council. Since that time, the damaged tree fell during a storm and was removed by the Claremont Fire Department, with the Department of Public Works removing the debris.

The Friends will revisit the project after the new Library Director has had an opportunity to provide input.

9. Book Inventory and Citywide Yard Sale

The Friends have accumulated a large inventory of donated books from book drives and previous sales.

- The Citywide Yard Sale will take place on **Saturday, August 1** at **Josh's Garage**.
- The Friends plan to participate by selling selected donated books.
- Rotary will be notified of the Friends' participation.
- Josh will create a sign-up form to schedule volunteer sorting nights.
- Members also noted that the Little Free Library bookshelf at the Community Center continues to be well used.

10. United for Libraries Virtual Conference

Lynsey shared information about the **United for Libraries Virtual Friends of the Library Day**, scheduled for **July 30, 2026**, from **11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.**

The conference registration fee is **\$65**. Members agreed it would be a valuable opportunity to learn more about fundraising and Friends group development.

Katie offered to stream the conference live using a second monitor if members wish to participate together. Otherwise, the Friends will purchase the recording to watch later.

Renée will complete the registration. A decision regarding live participation will be made at a later date.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at **6:30 p.m.**