

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes January, 16, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Munson, Jon Goodrich, David Newell, PJ Venti, Kelley Legacy, Norma McShane, Jackie Marro, Brian Cunningham, Michelle Wieggers, Bruce Smith, Gary Corey (Select Board Liaison), and Lynne Fonteneau-McCann (Executive Director)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Susan McKenna

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Minutes from the November 14, 2023 Board of Directors Meeting were approved unanimously.

FINANCE REPORT:

A. Annual Fund: as of 1/11/2024, the Library has received \$55,729 in gifts from 258 donors, exceeding our \$50,000 goal.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- Lynne and Gary shared that at the Jan. 13th Bennington Select Board meeting, the Library's appropriation's request for a 3.5% increase was approved. Lynne thanked all board members that were able to attend the meeting in support of the library.
- Lynne reported that we are at 52% of the expense budget; however, that is expected at this time of year because of pre-payments for fuel; we are on track to meet budget.
- At the November meeting, Jon asked for better representation of interest income on the reports. It was confirmed by Lynne and Kelley that the CD totals do reflect interest.
- With no questions or further discussion from the board, the R&E reports were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee

- Kelley requested that the minutes reflect that the Executive Director of the Library is listed as an authorized signatory at the bank, in addition to Trustees, Kelley Legacy and David Newell.
- It was further suggested that Barth VanderEls be removed as a signatory now that he is no longer a Trustee; motion approved unanimously and passed.
- Kelley will follow up and schedule a Finance Committee meeting before the March board meeting.

B. Buildings and Grounds

- No new updates to report

C. Programming

- Brian Cunningham presented a new programming idea on preventive health: "An Ounce of Prevention."
- The idea was well received by the board and all are excited to collaborate with SVMC/Dartmouth Health and other local medical agencies like VT BluePrint for Health for programming and workshops. Brian will discuss next steps with Karson and SVMC.

D. Nominating Committee

- Four names were presented as possible candidates as new board members: Erin Potter McEnaney (HR/Orvis); Lisa Shea (Shea Family Funeral Homes); Kayla Becker (Bennington Rec Center/YMCA); and Beth Tegart (Educator). Mike Munson requested letters of interest from each potential candidate for review and approval at the March board meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT HIGHLIGHTS (full report circulated in meeting materials):

- The Holiday Book Sale (12/2/2023) was a success and netted \$1,200.
- Lynne noted a few new Adult Programs: “Recycling 101” and “Fix it Fun” in collaboration with Paula Kamperman, Outreach Program Manager Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance.
- Wendy and Lynne continue to address the replacement of the FiberConnect equipment (now 10+ years old) and phone system, to be financed with a grant from the VT Department of Libraries.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The lack of exterior wayfinding signage on Main Street was revisited; Lynne and PJ will work with GVH Studio to design graphics for a sandwich board as a short-term solution until the board undertakes a full overhaul of the Library’s Strategic Plan to include marketing & branding and exterior signage.
- Wendy and Johnna will apply for a \$24K grant through the 2024 Catalyst Fund for YA Programming to bring gaming and in particular, Dungeons and Dragons, to the BFL. The grant proposal includes equipment, consultant fees, and food. They hope to partner with Gamer’s Grotto and Bennington College on this initiative.
- The VT Department of Libraries announced that an informal webinar will be held on Tuesday, January 30 at 10:00 am for an overview of the application and process for grants from the \$16,400,000 in US Treasury ARPA Capital Funds to address critical building improvements. Lynne and Wendy will attend the webinar; PJ and Gary have also registered and hope to attend (or listen to the recording).
- The Executive Director’s search continues with 2nd round in-person interviews scheduled for the weeks of 1/22 and 1/29; Lynne has agreed to stay on in her current position into February as needed. The board gratefully acknowledged this.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- With no further agenda item, the Board of Directors convened an Executive Session.

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE (FY 2023-2024):(Third Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.)

- March 19, 2024
- May 21, 2024
- June 18, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
PJ Venti