

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes March 19, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Munson, Jon Goodrich, David Newell, PJ Venti, Kelley Legacy, Norma McShane, Jackie Marro, Brian Cunningham, Michelle Wieggers, Bruce Smith, and Wendy Sharkey (Executive Director)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Susan McKenna

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

- The Board of Directors formally welcomed Wendy Sharkey as the library's next Executive Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Minutes from the January 16, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting were approved unanimously.

FINANCE REPORT:

A. Annual Fund

- As of 3/19/2024, the Library has received \$62,189 in gifts - 124% of \$50,000 goal.
- Wendy noted that the total includes a \$10,000 gift from Peter O. Knapp who was formally thanked.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- Due to vacations and transition of the new director, R&E reports were not available for review; discussion and approval were tabled until the May 21 meeting; however, Wendy noted that expenses were on track.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee

- Kelley reported that the Finance Committee approved a spending allocation of up to \$250,000 to be included in the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund grant application. The library is requesting \$1.5 million in grant funds for capital improvements and a complete overhaul of the existing HVAC and ventilation systems.
- Kelley also reported that our short-term CD's are coming to maturity and will circulate an email with roll over options and rates.

B. Buildings and Grounds

- Jon discussed the immediate need for exterior signage on Main Street; he will talk with Town and DRB representatives to determine options and restrictions (size, cost, materials, historic preservation, etc.) and bring findings to the May meeting for further discussion and next steps.

C. Fundraising

- Mini Golf - the Board agreed that this is a worthwhile event; tentatively scheduled for Friday, February 28 & Saturday, March 1, 2025; Wendy has contacted the organizer and held the date with them; an April 11 committee meeting is scheduled at noon via Zoom to discuss sponsorship and outreach plan.

- Booksale - our next pop-up book sale will be on Saturday, May 25th to coincide with MayFest; Wendy has confirmed with the BBC that MayFest activities will extend to Valentine Street this year; a volunteer sign-up sheet will be circulated via email.
- Louise Penny Play - Wendy presented a unique fundraising opportunity: Canadian playwright Laura Teasdale has teamed up with author Louise Penny to create a comedy-thriller whodunit of *Murder-By-The Book*. The script and producer's handbook are available for free to all U.S. and Canadian libraries who want to stage it for fundraising purposes. It was agreed that Penny's books are very popular and this could make for a wonderful community event. Board members asked about the possibility of teaming up with other libraries and/or one of the community theater companies. Wendy to see if other area libraries are also considering this fundraising event and if there are partnership opportunities.

D. Personnel and Policies

- Wendy presented three (3) policy changes that had been updated but not formally approved and adopted:
 - Borrowing Policy for Residents and Non-Residents - the board was in agreement of removing the non-resident and college student fees from the current policy; Wendy will make revisions and present to the board at the May meeting for formal approval and adoption.
 - Circulation Policy and Late Fees - Wendy presented the policy update made on 1/21/2014; following review, the policy was unanimously approved and the motion passed.
 - Harmful Language Statement - Wendy will also make minor revisions to the policy statement and present to the board at the May meeting for formal approval and adoption.
- Wendy also requested that the board formally adopt Thanksgiving Day (Thursday) and the following Friday as the approved closed dates for the Thanksgiving Holiday; the recommendation was unanimously approved and the motion passed.

E. Nominating Committee

- The board approved two new candidates to join the Board of Directors: Deidre Ryan and Beth Tegart. Kelley and Michelle will reach out to both with our invitation to attend the May meeting. Wendy to schedule orientation and on-boarding.
- Further outreach and follow up needed to determine interest from Erin Potter McEnaney (HR/Orvis), Lisa Shea (Shea Family Funeral Homes), and Kayla Becker (Bennington Rec Center/YMCA).
- Bruce raised concern and the need to diversify the board to better represent the towns we serve; Bruce will invite area organizations (i.e. Alliance for Community Transformations and the Turning Point Club) to speak to the board about their work at a future meeting.
- Mike will contact the Select Board to request a new liaison.

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

- The U.S Treasury Capital Projects Fund grant application was submitted (3/12/24).
- Contracts have been signed and the work to replace the FiberConnect equipment (now 10+ years old) and phone system have begun; Wendy reported that we are still waiting on the grant funding from the VT Department of Libraries; however the transition will be seamless.

- Wendy lauded the work of the Children’s Room and the dedicated STEAM Center programming: Flying Objects, Bracelet Craft, Camping Games, and Paper Folding.
- The first Fix It Fun! day was a huge success and plans to partner with the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance (BCSWA) for a second community repair event in the Fall are underway.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Board of Directors will soon begin planning for a retirement celebration for Lynne Fonteneau-McCann to be held in late May or June.

With no further agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.

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

- May 21, 2024
- June 18, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
PJ Venti