

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes May 21, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Munson, Jon Goodrich, Norma McShane, Jackie Marro, Brian Cunningham, Susan McKenna, Bruce Smith, Deirdre Ryan, Beth Tegart, PJ Venti and Wendy Sharkey (Executive Director)

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Newell, Kelley Legacy

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

- The Board of Directors formally welcomed Deirdre Ryan and Beth Tegart as new members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Minutes from the March 19, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

- There were no public comments or presentations at the May meeting.

FINANCE REPORT:

A. Annual Fund

- As of 5/16/2024, the Library has received \$69,709 in gifts or 139% of the \$50,000 goal.
- Jackie noted that we exceeded our goal last year as well and that we should consider increasing the goal in our future budgeting. It was agreed by several board members that although exceeding our annual fund goal is a celebrated achievement, the closer we come to the predicted goal gives the appearance we have a strong sense of our forecasting and planning.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- R&E reports for March and April were circulated for discussion and review.
- Wendy noted unanticipated expenses for repair and replacement of toilet fixtures and costs associated with elevator maintenance and a mandatory weight test by our new vendor.
- The Internet and telephone systems have been upgraded/replaced with minimum impact to patrons. A grant from the VT Department of Libraries for \$20,000 was received to offset the expenditures.
- Wendy assured the Board that we will do our best to meet budget for fiscal year end.
- With no further discussion, the Revenue and Expenses Reports for March and April were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Finance Committee

- As Kelley reported in March, two of our short-term CD's are coming to maturity in May and the Board agreed to Kelley's recommendation via an email vote to roll over options.

B. Buildings and Grounds

- The Board gratefully approved Wendy's request to install raised garden beds for Children's Programming in the Bradford Garden.

- Jon contacted the Town and DRB representatives for processes, permits, and restrictions for exterior signage on Main Street and was told that we will need to complete a DRB application and have permit approval from the Historic Preservation Commission. Jon has also contacted GVH Studio for design options. The Board is in full support that exterior signage is a priority and requested design and cost estimates for painted lettering and raised metal lettering for the Main Street facade as well as installation costs. Jon plans to bring findings to the June 11 meeting for further discussion and next steps.

C. Fundraising

- Mini Golf Tournament is scheduled for Friday, February 28 & Saturday, March 1, 2025; Wendy continues outreach for a lead sponsor at \$3,000 to cover the cost of the mini-golf vendor; Mike also noted that many new regional businesses are coming to Bennington (Hoffman's Car Wash, Town Fair Tire) and they should be contacted for support. Wendy and Karson will schedule the next planning committee meeting in June.
- Pop-Up Book Sale to be held on Saturday, May 25th to coincide with Mayfest; thank you to all those who were able to volunteer their time and sense of adventure.
- A public reading of the Louise Penny Play, *Murder-By-The Book*, will be held on Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 2pm. This enhanced reading is in partnership with the John G. McCullough Free Library and the Bennington Theater performers. Proceeds from ticket sales will be split with the McCullough Library. Wendy will provide more details to the Board on how we can help.

D. Personnel and Policies

- Wendy announced that Karson Kiesinger will be taking on the responsibilities of cataloging. Karson's updated title and job description/responsibilities will be shared more fully at a future board meeting.
- The Board formally adopted the following three (3) updated policy changes:
 - Borrowing Policy for Residents and Non-Residents
 - Inter-Library Loan Policy and Procedure
 - Harmful Language Statement

E. Nominating Committee

- Jackie Marro will be completing her term in June and Michelle Wieggers and family are relocating to Portland ME, leaving two immediate vacancies on the Board.
- Mike invites members to nominate candidates, with attention paid to increasing the diversity of the Board to better represent the towns we serve.
- Mike contacted the Select Board to request a new liaison and we will know more at our June or September meeting.

F. Long Range Planning

- The need for an extensive long range plan was discussed. It was suggested that Matt Harrington/Harrington Brands present a proposal to lead the board through the strategic planning process. Wendy also found a list of resources and examples of long range plans from the State of VT Department of Libraries as well as opportunities for up to \$5000 in grant funding which can be used for consulting. Further discussion and next steps to be considered at a future board meeting.

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

- The Vermont Library Association presented Wendy with a citation award at the Annual Conference in Killington on May 20.
- Wendy met with Stu Hurd, Town Manager, and spoke at a recent Catamount Rotary breakfast meeting to introduce herself as the next director and highlight our services and programming.
- We continue to laud the work of the Children's Room and Adult Programming.

OTHER BUSINESS

- A **Celebration of Service for Lynne Fonteneau-McCann** will be held at the library on Sunday, June 9 from 1-3pm. Mike will invite the Select Board members and notify the Chamber; an invitation should be extended to Barth Van Der Els (and other past board members); PJ has ordered a gift from Simon Pearce; and Deidre has created this [GoogleDoc](#) with more information and a sign-up for food and/or beverage.
- The end of year meeting will be on Tuesday, June 11 at 5:00 p.m. at the library. All are asked to contribute an hors d'oeuvres or beverage.

With no further agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.

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

- June 11, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
PJ Venti