

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Munson, Jon Goodrich, David Newell, Kelley Legacy, Norma McShane, Bruce Smith, Brian Cunningham, Susan McKenna, Deirdre Ryan, Beth Tegart, PJ Venti, Jeannie Jenkins (Select Board Liaison) and Wendy Sharkey (Executive Director)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- With no further discussion, minutes from the June 11, 2024 and the September 17, 2024 Board of Directors meetings were approved unanimously and moved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS:**

- Jeannie Jenkins reported that every third Saturday of the month, the Walloomsac Riverwalk Committee recognizes “unsung heroes” in our community as part of their monthly community walk to build awareness of this recreational resource. The Bennington Free Library was selected to be recognized on January 18, 2025.
- Bruce has invited Dare Chamings, Director of Alliance for Community Transformations (ACT Bennington), to speak to the board on the needs of area youth as it relates to library services and access.

**FINANCE REPORT:**

A. Annual Fund

- As of November 27, 2024, the Annual Fund drive balance was \$33,882 from 178 gifts, or 56% of our 2024-2025 goal of \$60,000.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- The R&E Reports for July and August were re-circulated for discussion and review.
- The R&E Reports for September and August were circulated for discussion and review.
- With no further discussion, all Revenue and Expenses Reports were approved.

C. Financial Review for FY24

- The FY24 Financial Review was unanimously approved by a special email vote on October 30, 2024.

D. FY2026 Budget

- Wendy reported that the final draft of the FY26 Budget will be circulated for review and comment before submitted to the Select Board.

E. Other

- Kelley reported that a 7-month CD, earmarked for capital improvement, is set to terminate and recommended that we roll it into a 3-month high yield CD allowing for more flexibility for reimbursements for the U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund for Libraries Grant. The recommendation was approved unanimously.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

- Mike presented the following slate of officers for adoption for the 2024-2025 fiscal year: Mike Munson, Chair; David Newell, Vice Chair; Kelley Legacy, Treasurer; PJ Venti, Secretary
- Following a brief discussion, the slate of officers, as presented, was unanimously approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

A. Board Committee Members

- A full list of board committees and members is included as a supplemental attachment.
- Mike urged that all committees meet prior to the next director's meeting in January.

B. Buildings and Grounds

C. Fundraising

- The reading of Louise Penny's play "Murder by the Book" scheduled for Sunday, November 17th was a success with a sold-out audience. The BFL will divide proceeds from ticket sales, bake sale and raffle with the Bennington Center for the Performing Arts and the John G. McCullough Free Library in North Bennington.
- The Harvest Fest, a Pop-up Book Sale in October netted \$464.
- The Holiday Book & Craft Sale is scheduled for Saturday, December 14th from 10am-4pm; Wendy will solicit for volunteers.

D. Strategic Planning & Long Range Planning

- Deirdre has proposed January 11th for the first strategic planning retreat with Matt Harrington/Harrington Brands. An agenda to follow shortly.

E. Personnel and Policies

- Jeanne Conner was hired as Circulation & Communications Manager

F. Nominating Committee

- Dr. Sarah Blizzard, Associate Director of Greater Bennington Community Services (GBCS) will formally join the board in January.

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

- On September 30 the BFL was formally awarded \$1.5M from the U.S. Department of the Treasury Capital Project Fund.
- A dedication of the renovated Courtyard and Learning Garden in memory of Chris Poggi, former children's librarian, was held in October.
- The library was selected by the Vitality Committee of the BBC for two 2x2 quilt boards.
- A reminder that the 2024 Vermont Reads statewide one-book community reading program announced this year's selection as *Gather*, by Kenneth M. Cadow. The Library, along with the Mount Anthony Middle School and Turning Point Recovery Center of Bennington hosted a variety of activities. The library was awarded 75 copies of *Gather* from Vermont Humanities and all copies were distributed.
- A second "Fix It Fun" community repair fair was held on November 9.
- The first Vermont Humanities Snapshot Series was held at the library on November 14. The BFL hosted the program series, *What Does It Mean to Create Legacy? The Power of Personal Narrative Poet*, with educator Naima Wade.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

- Wendy reported that the BFL continues to be a resource for free COVID test kits, distributing nearly 10,000 kits to date.

With no further agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.

**BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE (FY 2024-2025):** (Third Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.)

- January 21, 2025
- March 18, 2025
- May 20, 2025
- June 17, 2025

Respectfully submitted,  
PJ Venti