

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes July 15, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Smith, Brian Cunningham, Jon Goodrich, Beth Tegart, Sarah Blizzard, Deirdre Ryan, PJ Venti, Wendy Sharkey (Director), Karson Kiesinger (Reference and Adult Services), Jim Sullivan (Select Board Liaison)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Munson, Kelley Legacy, David Newell

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER (Bruce Smith)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- With no further discussion, minutes from the June 17, 2025 Board of Directors meeting were approved unanimously and moved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS:

- There were no public comments or presentations at the July 15th meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Wendy reminded all members of the Board of Directors to complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form. This will be an annual requirement and a signed copy will be added to the personnel files.

FINANCE REPORT:

A. Annual Fund

- At the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2025, the Annual Fund gift balance was \$86,442, exceeding our goal of \$60,000.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- The Revenue & Expense Report for June was circulated for discussion and reviewed.
- A budget line item has been added to the R&E to reflect the spending and reimbursements associated with the U.S. Treasury Capital Project grant for the HVAC system upgrades.
- Wendy also commented that we remain below budget spending – primarily due to unfilled staff positions.
- With no further discussion, the Revenue and Expenses Report for June was accepted.

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

- Over 55 guests, including State Legislators and the State Librarian, attended the celebration of the Library's 160th anniversary on June 23rd.
- We had a great turnout for the Color Our World Summer Reading Program kick-off with 40 children & adults attending the June 25th event.
- The Stained Glass Workshop (6/21), hosted by Lisa Mendel, owner of Mendel's Stained Glass was also a great success with all spots filled. Karson plans to schedule this workshop again.
- The library is exploring partnering with Meals on Wheels to include a book delivery to participants that live in Bennington.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Buildings and Grounds

- The committee continues to meet every two weeks. Wendy reported that we are still in the planning stages for sizing & placement of new equipment. The next step will be to solidify schematic drawings for the placement design.
- Discussions have also begun on how to insulate the skylight which is a historic feature of the library.

B. Finance Committee

- Kelley and Jon to schedule a committee meeting with the Bank of Bennington/Money Concepts Investments to review the Library's endowment.
- The committee also needs to discuss the policy rate recommendations by the Richards Group for the Library's insurance program and present at a future Board of Directors meeting for approval.

C. Policies & Personnel

- Mike to schedule a committee meeting to review and discuss the five new/updated policies that Wendy has drafted to make a recommendation to the Board for a vote of approval. These include a Snowshoe Waiver, Security Camera Policy, Meeting Room Policy, AED Policy, and Opioid Overdose Prevention Policy.
- The P&P committee also needs to conduct an annual performance review of the Director. A formal signed evaluation will be added to Wendy's personnel file.

D. Strategic Planning & Long Range Planning

- The committee has drafted goals (circulated) for the agreed upon Four Strategic Pillars: Community Engagement, Financial Futuring, People, Space & Physical Resources. It was discussed that the August or September meeting be designated to Strategic Planning to allow for ample time for discussion and participation.

E. Nominating

- Deidre proposed a new board member and Mike (Committee Chair) will circulate a summary bio to the Board via email - or at the next Board meeting on August 19 - for review and a vote to move forward with an invitation to the candidate.

F. Ad Hoc Friends of the Library

- Deidre, Beth, and Wendy are researching other Friends groups (i.e. mission statements, membership, etc.) and will share their findings at the next Board of Directors meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- With low attendance at the June and July Board of Directors meetings, it was discussed if the monthly meeting schedule is warranted and/or if we should return to every other month and eliminate summer meetings (initially intended to keep the momentum of the Strategic Planning moving forward).

With no further agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE: (Third Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.)

- August 19, 2025
- September 16, 2025
- October 21, 2025
- November 18, 2025
- December 16, 2025

Respectfully submitted, PJ Venti