

Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes September 16, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Munson (Chair), Kelley Legacy, David Newell, Brian Cunningham, Jon Goodrich, Beth Tegart, Deirdre Ryan, Rebecca Sentner, PJ Venti, Wendy Sharkey (Director), Linda Donigan (Youth Services Librarian), Karson Kiesinger (Reference and Adult Services)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bruce Smith, Sarah Blizzard, Jim Sullivan (Select Board Liaison)

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

- We formally welcomed Rebecca Sentner to the Library's Board of Directors. Rebecca brings over 20 years of professional experience in strategic communications, marketing, event management, and fund development for nonprofits; most recently as the Senior Communications Manager for the National Audubon Society.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- With no further discussion, minutes from the August 19, 2025 Board of Directors meeting were approved unanimously and moved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS:

- There were no public comments or presentations at the September 16th meeting.

FINANCE REPORT:

A. Annual Fund

- The Annual Fund gift balance as of today's meeting was \$7,820; or 11% toward our fundraising goal for the year.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- The Revenue & Expense Report for August was circulated for discussion and reviewed.
- Wendy noted that the Library took advantage of the pre-buy option with Green's Oil and locked in for 6,400 gallons @ \$2.75/ gallon. Last year's oil price was \$3.109/ gallon; so a 2025/2026 savings of almost 36 cents a gallon.
- With no further discussion, the Revenue and Expenses Report for August was accepted.

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

- The Town of Bennington Public Works began scheduled work on Silver and Main Streets. The scope of the work includes Silver Street repavement and sidewalk and curb replacement with cut-ins for wheelchair access; tree removal and replacement; and expanded parking spots. In addition, the steps in front of the Library on Main Street will be removed; however, the responsibility and cost falls to the Library to replace and the B&G committee and Trustees are looking into this. The planned work will take approximately 8 weeks to complete and during that time, the Library will remain open as long as access to the building is deemed safe for both staff and patrons.
- We also bid farewell to Diane Howard and Johnna Fredrickson and thank them for the many years of service and dedication to the Library. They will be missed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

- The full slate of officers for 2025-2026 was presented as follows:
 - Chair: Bruce Smith
 - Vice Chair: Brian Cunningham
 - Treasurer: Deirdre Ryan
 - Secretary: PJ Venti
- With no further discussion, the new slate of officers was approved unanimously and moved.
- The Board also approved the authorization of Deirdre Ryan, as incoming Treasurer, as signatory on the Library's financial accounts, and Kelley will file the necessary paperwork with our financial institutions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Buildings and Grounds

- The committee continues to meet every two weeks to advance the HVAC systems upgrades and meet the grant funding and reporting deadlines.

B. Finance Committee

- It was recommended that the committee meets before the scheduled November Board meeting to review projected expenses and staffing costs before the budget request deadline to the Town of Bennington.

C. Policies & Personnel

- The P&P committee completed its annual performance review of the Director and together set measurable goals and objectives for the coming year. A formal signed evaluation will be added to Wendy's personnel file. The Board would also like to publicly acknowledge Wendy's leadership as Director.
- It was recommended that the committee meet before the scheduled November Board meeting and/or at an upcoming Working Group meeting to dedicate the time needed to review and discuss new/updated policies to make recommendations to the Board for a vote of approval. Outstanding policies include a Snowshoe Waiver, Security Camera Policy, Meeting Room Policy, AED Policy, Opioid Overdose Prevention Policy, and Program/Activity Agreement & Waiver. Further discussion is also needed on where and how these policies will be stored.
- The committee will also review an organizational chart and job descriptions for all staff positions (existing and new) to be drafted by Wendy by October 2025.

D. Strategic Planning & Long Range Planning

- The committee will meet on Oct. 21st to review the goals for each of the Four Strategic Pillars: Community Engagement, Financial Futuring, People, and Space & Physical Resources; and allocate lead rolls for each goal; create key initiatives; and establish a timeline for a final document of the Plan. All Board members are welcome to attend the Working Group meeting.

E. Ad Hoc Friends of the Library

- Research and exploration of other Friends groups (i.e. mission statements, membership, etc.) continues to help in the formation of our renewed Friends of the Library.

With no further agenda items, the meeting was adjourned.

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

- October 21, 2025 - Working Meeting / Strategic Planning
- November 18, 2025 - Full Board of Directors Meeting
- December 16, 2025 - Working Meeting
- January 20, 2026 - Full Board of Directors Meeting
- February 17, 2026 - Working Meeting
- March 17, 2026 - Full Board of Directors Meeting
- April 21, 2026 - Working Meeting
- May 19, 2026 - Full Board of Directors Meeting
- June 16, 2026 - Full Board of Directors Meeting

Respectfully submitted, PJ Venti