

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes November 18, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Smith (Chair), Kelley Legacy, David Newell, Brian Cunningham, Jon Goodrich, Beth Tegart, Deirdre Ryan, Rebecca Sentner, PJ Venti, Wendy Sharkey (Director), Karson Kiesinger (Reference and Adult Services), Jim Sullivan (Select Board Liaison)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sarah Blizzard, Mike Munson

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- With no further discussion, minutes from the September 16, 2025 Board of Directors meeting were approved unanimously and moved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS:

- There were no public comments or presentations at the November 18 meeting.

FINANCE REPORT:

A. Annual Fund

- The Annual Fund gift balance as of Nov. 4, 2025 was \$36,699; or 52% toward our fundraising goal for the year.

B. Revenue and Expense Reports

- The Revenue & Expense Reports for September and October were circulated for discussion and reviewed.
- With no further discussion, the Revenue and Expenses Report for were accepted.

C. Financial Statements

- The financial statement for June 30, 2025, prepared by McCormack, Guyette & Associates (CPA) was circulated and discussed.

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

- Wendy and Karson attended an AI workshop on Oct. 6 tailored for libraries in Barre;
- Wendy attended the State Library Director's Summit on Nov. 7;
- Interviews continue for a full-time Youth Services Librarian;
- The second community fundraising collaboration with the John G. McCullough Free Library and the Bennington Theater– the play reading, *All Aboard for Fun*– was held on Sunday, Nov 16. Although we hoped for a stronger attendance, we continue to find value in this fundraising partnership. Rebecca suggested that we ask for a copy of the mailing list for the event from the Bennington Theater who managed the ticket sales.

CAPITAL PROJECT FUND GRANT

- It was discussed and agreed that a full update on the status of the HVAC systems upgrades, including a timeline for repairs and replacements, RFPs needed, and expenditures against the grants be added as a standing agenda item for every board meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Strategic Planning & Long Range Planning

- The board approved the One Page Strategy, including the Library's Mission, Vision, and Values and goals for each of the Four Strategic Pillars: Community Engagement, Financial Futuring, People, and Space & Physical Resources; this One Page Strategy will be included in the report to the Vermont Community Foundation as part of the requirements of the Capacity Growing Grant.
- Additional time to be allocated at a future Working Group meeting to confirm key initiatives and establish a timeline for a final document of the Plan.

B. Finance Committee

- The proposed budget reflects an increase in funding requested from the Town of Bennington. It was recommended that the committee meet before to review projected expenses and staffing costs before the budget request deadline to the Town of Bennington. It was also requested that a yearly fundraising plan be developed to address this increase.
- The committee recommended that the balance in a 3-month CD at the Bank of Bennington that is maturing be rolled over for another three months. The recommendation was approved with one abstention.

C. 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.
- Wendy prepared a detailed Infrastructure Repair List per the board's request. The B&G committee to meet to review the list and prioritize projects to stay within budget for FY26 and FY27.

D. Policies & Personnel

- It was recommended and agreed that the December 16 Working Group meeting be dedicated to review and discuss outstanding new/updated policies in order 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.

E. Nominating Committee

- Discussion to extend an invitation to a new board member was tabled until the January 20, 2026 full board meeting;
- It was further requested that we add to our January meeting agenda a review of our board strengths and weaknesses and draft a strategy to fill future positions that address any gaps or needs that may be lacking and/or beneficial.

F. 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.

OTHER BUSINESS

- With no further agenda items, the regular meeting was adjourned and the board moved into executive session.

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

- December 16, 2025 - Working Meeting (Policies & Personnel)
- January 20, 2026 - Full Board of Directors Meeting
- February 17, 2026 - Working Meeting (B&G repairs and maintenance)
- 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