

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes January 20, 2026**

Members Present: Bruce Smith (Chair), Brian Cunningham, Jon Goodman, P.J. Venti, Rebecca Sentner, Mike Munson, Deirdre Ryan, Sarah Blizzard, David Newell, Beth Tegart, Jim Sullivan (Select Board Liaison,) Wendy Sharkey (Director).

Members Absent: Kelley Legacy

Welcome & Call to Order: Bruce Smith

Approval of Minutes:

- With no further discussion, minutes from the November 18, 2025 Board of Directors meeting were approved unanimously and moved.

Public Comments/Presentations:

- There were no public comments or presentations.

Finance Report:

- Annual Fund: gift balance as of January 7, 2026, was \$60,205, or 86.01% of the fundraising goal for the year.

- Revenue & Expense Report: the Revenue and Expense reports for November and December, 2025 were circulated and reviewed; with no further discussion they were approved.

Director's Report Highlights: (full report circulated in meeting materials)

- Partnering with Meals on Wheels continues for expansion of Books on Wheels program.
- Erin Willaims, new Head of Youth Services started on January 5, 2026.
- Wendy attended the Bennington Select Board for an Appropriation request on January 10, 2026.
- Numerous programing for both children and adults continues to be well attended.

HVAC Update:

- The HVAC project went out to bid. Only one general contractor put in a quote, Russell, at \$2,117,334. After a meeting with the Buildings and Grounds committee, Centerline, DuBois & King, and Russell to go over the bid, it was decided to rework the scope of the project and get Russell to rebid based on the new level of work. Careful watch is being made to ensure we are still in compliance with the terms of the grant.

Committee Reports:

- A. Long Range Plan / Strategic Plan
 - Has not yet met and will focus on Key Initiatives in the future.

- B. Finance Committee -
 - Has not met since November
 - It was decided a policy was needed for an endowment for the Children's Room
- C. Building & Grounds -
 - Wendy requested Board Members to respond to the Infrastructure Repair List with top 5 priorities. She will circulate the list again.
- D. Policy and Personnel -
 - The Board voted and approved the AED policy, the AED procedures, and the Security Camera policy.
 - The Acknowledgement of Document Receipt form will be held until the March Board Meeting for discussion.
- E. Nominating Committee -
 - Discussion of the need for a skill set of current Board Members. Rebecca Sentner will coordinate this.
 - Discussion of need for desired skill set for potential Board Members

Other Business: Beth Tegart recommended the film "The Librarians," produced and directed by Kim A. Snyder. It highlights censorship and book bans across America and how libraries are responding. It will be available to stream on PBS Passport Documentaries premiering on February 9, 2026.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Board Meeting Schedule (third Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.)

February 17, 2026 - Working Group - Finance, Strategic Planning, and Policies
& Personnel
March 17, 2026 - Board
April 21, 2026 - Working Group
May 19, 2026 - Board
June 16, 2026 - Board

Respectfully submitted, Beth Tegart