

**Bennington Free Library
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes Sept 15, 2026**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Cunningham (Vice-Chair), Sarah Blizzard, Jon Goodrich, Michael Munson, David Newell, Deirdre Ryan, Beth Tegart, Ann Thomayer, PJ Venti, Wendy Sharkey (Director) & Jackie Matts (Select Board Liaison)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kelley Legacy, Rebecca Sentner, Bruce Smith

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

- Vice-Chair Brian Cunningham welcomed Jackie Matts, our new Select Board Liaison.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- With no further discussion, minutes from the June 16, 2026 Board of Directors meeting were approved by majority.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/PRESENTATIONS

- There were no public comments or presentations at the Sept 15, 2026 meeting.

FINANCE REPORT

A. Annual Fund

- The annual fund as of today's meeting was at \$570.
- Wendy has drafted the letter for the annual fund which will be sent out later this month.

B. Revenue and Expense Report

- An unrestricted gift of \$25k was received.
- The library spent less on personnel, some open positions.
- The town provided the first of three payments to the library for the fiscal year.
- With no further discussion, the R&E Reports for June, July & August were approved without correction.

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

- Highlights include the Summer Reading challenge (in partnership with Park McCullough Library), Youth Services Gaming Camp, Table at the Pride Parade.
- Upcoming events include Gentle Yoga (restarting after summer break), Community Conversation with Heritage Credit Union in October, and a new and exciting collaboration with the Bennington Skate Park in the spring
- Wendy and several board members recognized the improvements to the garden and front of the building. Kudos to all! "Best the grounds have ever looked."

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- The slate of candidates was proposed and accepted by a majority:
 - Bruce Smith as Chair
 - Brian Cunningham as Vice Chair
 - Rebecca Setner as Secretary
 - Deirdre Ryan as Treasurer

- The board thanked PJ Venti for her dutiful service and extended term as secretary

MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD COMMITTEE

- Wendy reviewed the current list of chairs and members.
- Deirdre Ryan will be the solo chair of the Finance Committee.
- Ann Thomayer has been added to the Policies and Procedures led by Mike Munsen

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORMS

- Wendy passed out the Conflict of Interest form for those who had not signed it.

HVAC

- The state attempted to take funds back for libraries over budget–Wendy protected the funds and was able to get the foundation and other work covered.
- The new boiler was successfully installed, additions include 1 heat pump, three A/cs and related equipment.
- New windows and a door will also be included–a punch list will be developed for the remaining work.
- The board recognized and congratulated Wendy on her diligence and thoroughness on the HVAC project. Well done.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Long Range/Strategic Planning (Deidre Ryan and Kelley Legacy)
 - Deidre will review and update the Strategic Plan at the next October Working Group.
- B. Finance (Deidre Ryan)
 - Covered by Wendy earlier in the meeting. Wendy and Deidre will meet to discuss salaries and budget planning.
- C. Buildings & Grounds (David Newell)
 - Covered by Wendy during HVAC report.
- D. Policies & Personnel (Mike Munson)
 - Ann Thomayer is continuing to review our current policies for formatting and consistency and will be making recommendations to the committee for a standardized template and revision system.
 - An AI Use Policy for possible note taking of the Board of Directors Meeting minutes will be shared with the board.
- E. Fundraising (Rebecca Sentner and PJ Venti)
 - No updates other than previously mentioned unrestricted gift.
- F. Friends of the Library (Beth Tegart and Deidre Ryan)
 - Beth shared that the costume jewelry fundraising event for HarvestFest is moving forward. Accepting donations from all at the circulation desk.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The library will be awarded the Tree of Life honor, alongside other Bennington Community groups, on Saturday the 19th at the River Walk.
- The equipment to replace damaged internet on June 1st will be replaced. The public have not noticed.
- We reviewed a lovely note from a student and Appalachian Trail hiker who Wendy helped to take an online exam. The student received an “A” and sent a donation. ❤️

With no further agenda items, the regular meeting was adjourned.

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

- November 17, 2026
- January 19, 2027
- March 16, 2027
- May 18, 2027
- June 15, 2027

Respectfully submitted, Deirdre Ryan