

Brownell Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
Kolvoord Community Room  
6 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT  
Tuesday, December 16th, 2025

Attendees:

Trustees: Karen Hergesheimer, Dottie Bergendahl, Jeanne Grant, Venessa Luck, Alex Carmical, Christine Packard, Jessica Dow, Shelia Porter, Beth Custer, Helen Donahey (remote)

Teen Trustees: Rhiannon Adams

Staff: Wendy Hysko, River West

Meeting Called to order by Karen at 7:00pm

1. Agenda Changes/Deletions: None
2. Public To Be Heard: None
3. Announcements: Erin's last day will be 1/2/2025. A card was passed around for all to sign. No gift will be provided. Moving forward there will be a plan for how to pass out gifts to departing staff equitably. River notified Trustees of a Party for Erin on her last day and that all Trustees are invited. There will be pie at the party and Dottie mentioned that she may bring cookies.
4. Minutes of November 18, 2025: Dottie moved to accept the Minutes as written and Sheila seconded. All in favor.
5. Financial Report: \$2046.76 in Trustee checking. \$2952.90 in Trustee CD. \$3057.18 in Frost Porter Account. \$65.50 in Rotary welcome baby account. The budget is approximately 42% of the year. Most areas were as expected. The deferred maintenance was high due to HVAC work in July and a valve replacement. Karen asked for an explanation on the welcome baby account. Sheila acknowledges the budget and Jeanne seconds. All in favor
6. Reports: There was a new format for the staff report this month and the November calendar was provided to Trustees. The new format was liked by the Trustees. Librarians tried running library programs at the same time to accommodate parents and kids simultaneously. Supplies for cleaning up excrement on the library grounds will be provided by the Library, PW helped install the bag dispenser. Discussion of an upcoming event on the history of the printing press and the new summer theme. River informed the Trustees that the top two candidates for the teen librarian positions have dropped out. There will likely be a gap in the teen librarian position. It is a tough position to fill because of the hours and the tough interview process. Venessa celebrated River and Ariana for being invited to participate on a panel at a conference to discuss the Repair Cafe event.
7. Committee Reports: None
8. Work Groups:  
100th Planning- The kick off event is 1/10/2026 from 2:30 to 4:30. There will be food, tshirts and patches, crafts, music, books, scavenger hunt with prizes. There will also be information tables for the Friends, the Foundation, and the Historical Society. Flyers will

be distributed around town. Trustees can volunteer at the event and a sign up sheet will be sent out.

Sustainability- There will be an opening on the board due to Jeanne not seeking reelection. Further discussion about the need for a trustee job description. Karen and Alex are working on it and will report back. No new updates on the SLI. Karen mentions that if anyone wants to help on the SLI plan they are welcome. There are lots of tasks necessary for the SLI certification. Currently the library is 43% complete. Karen to send out more information on the SLI since not all Trustees heard Erna's presentation on it.

Budget- Dottie recognized Karen's presentation to the City Council. Discussion of how the meeting went-Trustees in attendance were pleased at the level of understanding by council members about how the library budget works and the statutes that the library must follow. Having the MOU with the city has been a benefit.

Foundation Report: Dottie reported the new cash deposit box is checked 2 times per week by Foundation members and they noticed it can sometimes get clogged. The Foundation put up a sign with their address for mailing in funds. An issue that arose is some companies can't mail donations to a PO Box. The Foundation had questions about the installation process of new carpet in the book room. Wendy said the library staff will be the point person for the installers and will update the foundation when they have more information on the process.

9. Staff update/education: River informed the Trustees of the protocols the library has for book challenges. Caregivers often are the people who question a book. The librarians explain how they have a collection for the whole community and try to educate the questioning patron of how the library categorizes the library books so families can self regulate what materials work for their families. River passed out Materials Reconsider form and informed the Trustees what role they would play in the book challenge process. Only residents of Essex Junction can challenge a book at Brownell. A common issue is when a patron doesn't like a book they misshelf it or put it in the book sale room. Discussion of new state law act 150 that allows 12 year olds to have a private library account. There was push back from parents initially. Parent and child accounts are still linked for billing. Librarians work with kids if they receive a fee for a book.
10. Old Business: Venessa is still brainstorming ideas for group norms. Karen shared an update on the new Friends of Brownell organization. A logo has been made, an instagram account was created, and a winter giving fundraising campaign was sent out. It is still early in the creation process, and Karen will add more updates in the future. The Friends of Brownell library will not be selling books to avoid overlap with the Foundation.
11. New Business: Wendy provided all members with library statutes- it was important for Trustees to know after it came up at the City Council meeting. Wendy will also provide them to the City Council. Jeanne discussed her thoughts on the future roles of officers and encouraged Trustees to have more defined guidelines for these roles so the workload is more fairly balanced across the Board. Roles will be voted on in the January

meeting. Discussed the permanent board and also the need for establishing rules for the permanent board.

12. Adjournment: Jeanne moved to adjourn and Sheila seconded. Adjourned at 8:57pm

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