Brownell Library Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
Kolvoord Community Room
6 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT
Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Attendees:
Trustees: Karen Hergesheimer, Dottie Bergendahl, Venessa Luck, Alex Carmical, Christine Packard, Jessica Dow, Shelia Porter, and Kory Riemensperger
Teen Trustees: Rhiannon Adams, Piper Willis
Staff: Wendy Hysko, River West
Public: Jeanne Grant

Meeting Called to order by Karen at 7:00pm

1. Agenda Changes/Deletions: None
2. Public To Be Heard: Jeanne Grant, former trustee, came to say hi and observe the meeting.
3. Announcements: Karen welcomes the new teen trustee, Piper W. Piper has been a Brownell shelving assistant for a year. All welcomed Piper and introduced themselves. Dottie Announced that she has submitted her resignation and that this would be her last meeting. She will be moving to New York to be closer to her children. Dottie acknowledged that it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve Brownell Library. All clapped for Dottie.
4. Minutes of August 18th, 2026: Shelia moved that we accept minutes as written. Venessa Seconded. All in favor.
5. Financial Report: Venessa gave the financial report. The trustee account has $4982.09. Venessa proposed putting $2500 into a CD. Currently, the bank has a CD offer for 8 months at 4%. Dottie mentioned that the Federal government was talking about raising interest rates. It was decided to table this decision until the next meeting to see what the interest rates are then. It was noted in the operational budget that Technical Services was up. Wendy explained there was a wifi issue that required purchasing new equipment. In the buildings budget Venessa took note of the cleaning cost being a bit high. Venessa also gave an update on the budget working group that had met prior to the trustee meeting. She explained that the staff had done a great job on the budget proposal. The first draft of the proposed budget was going to be presented by staff to the city next week and the final draft of the proposed budget would be presented to the trustees in the October meeting. There was a 4% increase to the operational budget, due to increasing adult programming and continued increased digital material demand. The 4% increase is on target for what the city requested. The buildings budget increased 2.95% due to gas and electric rates being higher.
6. Reports: Sign ups for staff and trustees tabling for the Meet Me on Main event were finalized. Karen is going to send out the set up/event information email to those who are signed up. Jessica is going to come early to help Shadia walk over to the event since this is her first time working this event. Staff will decide if a book giveaway will be part of the meet me on Main event. Karen was excited to see the communication and

marketing plan coming together. Wendy is hopeful that the new gutters will be installed before winter, finally finishing the roof project. Wendy also explained the research she has done for how staff can handle service animals in the library. A new policy is being developed.

7. Work Groups: The 100th planning group did not meet this month. The last event for the 100th year celebration will be ghost stories on 10/16. There is also a final push to get book submissions in by 10/1 for the 100th anniversary book. The board is planning to have books for sale for the holidays. The cost of the book has not been determined yet. Alex has been focusing on the 100th anniversary book and not much has been done for sustainability as of late. Venessa gave an update on mentoring. She and Karen met to discuss it and she plans to do some reorganizing and present it at a future meeting.
8. Old Business: None
9. New Business: River discussed the new program policy, Program Proposal Form, and Material Reconsideration Form updates. These changes were made with current program challenges and staff sustainability in mind. River walked the board through the policy and explained how the policy established guidelines and set limits to help staff. Edits and tweaks to the policies and forms were discussed, including potential AI usage, typos, language consistency and clarity. Karen is going to email River small edits. River will make changes discussed in addition to talking with staff about adding an Sustainable Library Initiative explanation under the “About Us” section of the library website. Staff will discuss this paragraph explaining the SLI and make a decision. Trustees were impressed with the policy efforts and glad to have these in place and available for public access. Trustees will vote on policy updates at the October meeting.
   River also provided updates on the strategic plan efforts. Staff has been working on marketing and communication. There have been changes to the newsletter, and staff has shifted their approach to social media posts. They will no longer post flyers for every program. There will be a focus on high priority/investment programs, new items, accessibility, and sharing fun stories and photos. Efforts will also be made to encourage people to use the web and print calendar. The hope is to get more engagement with this approach. Staff will also watch the circulation stats to see how this effort is working. There was also a brief discussion about the mobile website calendar glitches. A temporary link to a pdf copy of the print calendar was proposed as a solution while the website glitches are addressed.
10. Shelia moved for adjournment and Venessa seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.