Whiting Library, Chester, Vermont

Regular Meeting of Board of Trustees

Meeting Notes – February 24, 2026
(Postponed from February 17, 2-26)

In attendance at the Whiting Library Community Room: Lyn Smith, Donna McNeill-Hudkins, with Staff: Nikki Geannelis, Carrie Roy King, Kale Burr. Attending via Zoom: Penny Benelli, Matt Gorsky, Lora Cokolat, Absent: Chris Burkes

Public Attendance: None

Matt called meeting to order at 6:42 PM

Additions to the Agenda: Add an Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters – Director Job Description and Compensation.

Approve Minutes from January 20, 2026 Meeting – motion to approve, seconded, no discussion, approved.

Treasurers Report – The board discussed the treasurer's report, which showed total assets of $316,911.77, including $205,520 in wealth management and $30,293.27 in an M&T CD. Lora reported that the town has not yet approved the budget for the new fiscal year, and she will meet with town officials tomorrow to address PayPal account issues.

We cleaning services at the library, with Lora reporting that according to the last invoice, the Cleaners provided a deep cleaning in February that included baseboards, doors, window seals, and other areas, though staff noted that high ledges and certain areas were not properly cleaned. They agreed to create a list of cleaning issues for Lora to address with the cleaning service provider, and Kale will check the post office box for quarterly checks from the Wilmington Trust Fund, which will be distributed on the 17th of the month in the middle of each quarter.

Lora also reported opening a new CD fund on January 16th with a maturity date of July 16th 2027 at a rate of 2.71% and an opening balance of $30,293.27.

Started a discussion on credit card devices, and it was decided to move to another meeting to discuss in detail.

Librarian Reports –

Carrie shared updates on library activities, including successful programs for children and families, and the staff highlighted positive feedback from patrons about the improved atmosphere in the Library. Kale discussed sending out a report to various contacts and mentioned ongoing issues with email access, which Matthew and Lora addressed by providing alternative login methods. Carrie also described a event for school-aged children, which was well-received.

Downstairs Community Room is again opened, and looks great with updated lighting.

Staff will be meeting weekly on Wednesdays for a Staff Meeting.

Fundraising - Donna went through Fundraising report from Kindful showing the summary for 2025 and what's come in so far in 2026. Next meeting we should decide whether or not we do a mailing in June. Donna will get cost estimates.

Discussed the possibility of using SurveyMonkey for targeted fundraising to past donors, with Donna mentioning Kindful's demographic data capabilities, that's she is not sure how it works. Will forward information to Kale who will explore the program.

Donna described the details of what happens when a donation comes in (enter into Kindful, generate a Thank you letter).

Discussed the Book Sale area, pricing of books, where we sell them. Should we consolidate that area so there is more room for other items (games, etc)

The conversation concluded with a discussion about potentially re-establishing a Friends of the Library organization, as Bill Dakin had mentioned there was a previous group that had disbanded.

Policy – Penny edited the Personnel Policy Board will review at next meeting?

Old Business – The group discussed website redesign needs, focusing on integration capabilities with existing systems like Aspen Discovery and Google Suite, including calendars and forms. They agreed to write a request for proposals to find vendors, with Matthew tasked to first review library-specific websites and then local designers.

Donna & Lyn met with Julie Hance and Steve from Town of Chester to discuss a Grant they are applying for and how it would be used on the Library building. This is a $400,000 grant for accessibility upgrades; re-open discussion on moving the ramp from the front of the building to the back. The elevator has to be repaired at an estimate of $90K. Have to replace the Fire Box. Could replace carpeting downstairs with flooring, easier to clean and maintain.

Discussed paving budget being voted on to repair the parking lot. Would initially do the front of the parking lot until any construction is done (to move ramp), then paving and grading the back parking lot.

Motion to enter Executive Session (1 V.S.A. § 313) to discuss Personnel – Job Description and compensation. Motion seconded and approved. Entered Executive Session at 8:15 PM

Motion to Exit Executive Session to discuss Personnel issue. seconded and approved. Exited Executive Session at 8:39 PM with no actions taken.

Public Comments - None

Motion made to adjourn meeting. Seconded and approved.

Adjourn meeting at 8:40 PM

Next Regular Meeting is March 17, 2026.

Action Items:

Donna will send Kindful information to Kale

RE: Recruiting, Donna will follow up with Library Association on the Job posting. After March 6, Donna will send copies of all applicant information to the Board.

Donna will bring her original Trustee binder to Kale so she can update and reproduce for new Board Members.