Whiting Library, Chester, Vermont

Regular Meeting of Board of Trustees

Meeting Notes – Tuesday, June 17, 2026

In attendance in Community Room: Penny Benneli, Matt Gorsky, Polly Montgomery, Donna McNeill-Hudkins. Staff: Kale Burr, Carrie King. via Zoom: Linda Diak, Lora Cokolat. Absent: Lyn Smith

Matt Called Meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Any additions to the agenda? – Kale asked if she could bring up meeting with Lora to discuss budgeting? She wants to make sure she understands all of the different pieces, and the general ledger. She would like to meet with a couple of people to make sure she understands the budget sheet, what gets sent in in the financial reports. Lora and Donna will meet with Kale to discuss the budgeting process and what some of the details are.

Kale has concerns about understanding the revenue, how it's set up, etc. We'll set up a time off-line.

Approve Meeting Minutes from May. Move to approve minutes. Approved with correction of a typos (for the record, the corrections are just typos). Submitted hard copies to Donna to update and correct. There was a question on the entry on the MiniSplit not working correctly. They are now. It was a settings issue. Kale & Steve figured it out. Minutes approved.

TREASURER REPORT –

Report is through May 31st, 2026.

Report is available upon request.

Wilmington Trust will join our meeting in August to review.

Was the income from the Book Sale on the Lawn included. Not sure if it was submitted on time to be included in this report. We only brought in $383 at the book sale.

We should probably plan on doing some Fundraising Letters. Donna reminded that we had sent out 60+ cards to those who had donated in the past (high donors). We have received some donations as a result of that. Those donations will be recorded in June report.

We should get out another fundraising effort before Giving Tuesday in November. Fundraising committee will start working on that.

Kale would like to meet with the Fundraising Committee to discuss the September to October Stone Village Art Guild exhibit fundraiser. We have to iron that out. Half of every purchase rice will go back to the artists, and half to the Library. How do we figure that out? Do the checks get deposited into our account, then we write the artists checks? That kind of minutia is what we need to talk about, but, not right now. The committee (Linda, Donna & Lyn) will get together to discuss with Kale.

Discussion on when is best time to send out fundraising letters. We will do a report on the income from past mailings and report to the Board (Action for Donna). Linda asked for a list of past donors. Donna will get that to her. Did look up businesses in our Database, there are not many. So, we should just put together a list of businesses in Chester and target them.

Starting a "Friends of the Library" group to take on fundraising would be great. We have someone who may be interested in starting a group, but needs to have at lest 4 more people. The paperwork would have to be done to set up the non-profit status.

On the expense side, we don't have anything budgeted for Professional Development? Gail did the budget last year and she planned on using the quarterly revenue from the Trust Fund. It should still be a

budget item. It was hard to get the budget passed this year, even though it was less than 3%. We will have to show trends in our presentation for next year's budget. They were happy with our 3% increase for this year, but, that's because we had pushed for larger increases in the past few years in order to bring salaries up.

Motion to approve Treasurer's report made and approved.

DIRECTOR & YOUTH SERVICES REPORT (available upon request).

Kale reports that they had a very positive month. She met with community groups, organized space, created displays, expended the collection and worked on fixing Legacy technical issues.

They have continued all-staff meetings weekly, and those have been instrumental. She has finished some paperwork to hire a substitute library assistant. We'll be welcoming in Talisa Nichols as our substitute library assistant, and she brings a wealth of experience, so she'll be a great addition.
Facility updates, we purchased from the Equipment and Technology Expense Fund a new loveseat, and so we've been able to rearrange the Susie Foley room a little bit to make it more of a comfortable space. I also purchased an insurance policy with it. Then there's the new sunscreen dispenser, which is upstairs in the entry vestibule, it's part of a kind of push in marketing that I'm doing for Whiting Library to be like, a cooling center.
Regarding grants, approved for Vermont Reads 2026, so in September we'll get 50 free copies of Charity and Sylvia by Tilly Walton to distribute, as well she booked two speakers, one for October 11th, Vermont Sampler Stories, which is textile history, and that'll be in conjunction with the Historical Society and since it's September date tentative, today we ironed out that it would be October 3rd for a mag time to do stories from the Queer Archives, and that'll be held at the First Universalist Parish Church.
Carrie had an excellent month. It will all be reflected in June's report.

One thing to note, they are seeing a decrease in virtual author talks, despite more PR. We Kale is looking at previous strategies that got such high viewership.

Had several successful events, one on the Hurricane that transformed New England with 38 and 48 people attended the Vermont Reads. We have had several hosted independent group meetings and the Junior Librarian program is going well.

We have had great volunteer activity. We now have 3 regular weekly volunteers and have recruited a technical volunteer who has helped with a lot of the tech issues with the website and computers,

An MOU has been drafted for the Stone Village Art Guild, Kale has created a Zephi account for that, and that account can be used for other fundraising purposes. She would like to discuss this further with the Fundraising Committee.

Nikki has taken over the on-line resale of books. Selling to 3 different companies. Have been able to get a lot of the older stock out of here.

Carrie discussed her Dinosaur Program and activities – very successful!

Starting to discuss summer reading programs.

Library is being used as a Neutral space for families to come together. A place with parents can engage with the kids and make it a safe place.

Question came up as to whether an adult was always present when children were in the Library (downstairs) for safety reasons. Carrie said, most of the time adults are present. She is usually down here for programs, and if there are older kids down here, she will check on them.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy Committee: Penny distributed the Library Personnel Policy that she has edited. Please read/review and be prepared to discuss/approve at next month's meeting. She apologized for the time it took as she was having computer issues.

Fundraising Committee: Confirming that the last mailing that went out was targeted to existing donors. We have received some donations this week; over $1,000 from just 3 donors. Explaining the process – donations come in, Lora lets Donna know who donated and the amount and check number, Donna enters into Kindful Database. Generates a list and merges it into a Thank you Letter. Mail the letters out from the Town Hall. When we sent out the targeted mailing, Donna should check off who we donations from, to see who actually responded.

Linda brought up that we should target businesses in town. They could sponsor something. The Library may want to put together a "whish list" that a business or person could donate rather than money. We could put a sign indicating something was "donated by". Kale said she would start thinking about a wish list as a long-range project. Something that we can't really afford, and are not likely to purchase. Asks for suggestions on items we could include in our "tools to let" collection. Something to consider is that it takes quite a bit longer to catalogue items (like tools) that we lend out.

OLD BUSINESS

The fireplace insert final bill came in and there was a cost overrun. We had approved up to $1500. which was about 25% over the initial cost estimate of $1180. Steve has now come in with a higher final invoice He said he had what was essentially a handshake deal after talking with the contractor. The contractor came back at $268.33 over what he told Steve it would be. We don't know who the contractor is.

The cost of the installation of the outlet is what was the cost overrun. The electrical cost came in at $555.84

Where would we get the additional funding? We would have to pull it from somewhere else. We had established a budget. Now the board has to decide if we are going to cover the overrun, or do we want to have the town cover the overrun. The Town takes care of the building, and the infrastructure. The Library did ask for this project, but the Town picked the contractor. The contractor should stick to it's original estimate (we even allowed for additional cost). Every project estimate should be in writing. We will have to charge to our Capital project budget, but it was not budgeted for. This will eat into our surplus. Motion made to kick the overrun cost back to the Town. Motion seconded and approved by the board. Matt will contact Steve and let him know.

If the town has a problem with it, maybe compromise and split it. We'll have to wait and see, because we can't say we don't want to pay it, but we can't obligate the town to pay it either. So right now, as the motion stands, it has passed that the Whiting Library Board of Trustees does not want to cover the cost overrun. As the Town negotiated the contract, they should be responsible.

Next Old Business. Linda asked about getting Whiting Library email accounts. Matt is working on it as the platform has changed. We may ask our tech volunteer to work on that.

NEW BUSINESS – Director would like to purchase additional furniture. She has done so and has found the funds. Administrative costs were discussed, spending on the new library cards, and copier supplies and costs. Kale is working through what the previous director had done, and needs to go back to figure out how the costs were allocated in the past.

Also, a discussion on where we purchase books and how we can save money. Questioning the value of Libby and not buying extra like you can buy licensing to get extra copies within your library for Libby. Libby is a huge part of the budget. Costs are based on number of users. Kale is trying to go through the

account to reduce any dead accounts. Also, asking new patrons if they "want" to be part of it, not just adding them on.
We should dedicate funding for books. We just need funding in general right now, but, if you appeal to people and tell them what the money is for, you know where it goes.
Lora asks if we have investigated what it would cost a library to purchase its own copies or be independent from the consortium. Kale will research.
Lora also suggested that Kale talk to someone at Overdrive. It would be good to see a comparison of costs to its independent vs being part of GMLC.
Need to look at options other than Libby.
Back to budgeting items, we need to clarify what budget items are and where expenses should be. i.e. Zoom should be under programming. All of these item clarifications should be added to the "Director's Manuel" for future reference. Another major project for Kale.

PUBLIC COMMENT – no public on the call, other than Carrie

Motion made to adjourn – approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 PM

Next meeting is Tuesday, July 15, 2026 at 6:30 PM