Approved April 8, 2026

BLAKE MEMORIAL LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
6:00 pm, February 4, 2026
At the library

Trustees present: Rob Rinaldi, Tania Aebi, Stuart Granoff, Kathryn Price, Dean Packard, Ginny Adams, Shirley Montagne. On Zoom: Catherine Tudish. Also present at the library: Carl Demrow, Secretary, Jen Spanier, Library Director and Kimberly Hotelling, Library Assistant. Former trustee Dina Dubois was also present.

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Rob announced to the board that the director of five years, Jen Spanier, will be stepping down as director later on in the early spring.

Rob asked for a motion to approve the agenda adding discussion about a tree and moving forward with a search for a new director. Kathryn moved, Ginny seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Ginny made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2025 meeting. Dean seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurers' Report:
Shirley gave a recap of 2025, which she described as scraping by. It was a year of ups and downs in both revenue and expense lines but the year ended with all balancing out. We have received some significant gifts since the last meeting, some of them in 2026. About 275 letters went out for the appeal. She said she's not seeing anything unusual for the the first month of the year, but electricity is high since it has been a cold winter.

The 2026 budget includes $86K in revenue and $77K in expenses. We'll be taking a Holland fund disbursement that we did not take last year which skews the numbers. Shirley talked with Zoe and she expects there will be a secret garden tour this year. There will be the usual fundraising events like the plant, craft, and book sale. Rob asked if we were touching any of the capital of the endowments that the library uses for income. There are two where we do not make those decisions- the library is able to take what the board wishes on the Holland Fund. The Holland fund annual return on our principle is 8%. The 2026 budget is proposing a draw down of 3%. Therefore the principle will continue to earn interest without reducing principle. On the expense side, Shirley said we were budgeting a payroll increase of 2%. Insurance is not likely to change significantly. The electric bill continues to be an issue. Shirley is recommending dropping the temp one degree in the winter and raising it one degree in the summer. The budget projects a surplus of $1,200. There has been some

additional trash expense due to the groups that are using the library. Kathryn moved to accept the 2026 budget and Tania seconded. The budget passed unanimously.

Director's Report:
Jen noted that there are lots of outside groups using the library and there seem to always be more. The Light Pirate was the Vermont reads book for the winter. John Aberth was at the library this past weekend for a beaver rehab presentation. The Corinth Conservation Commission co-sponsored the program. There will be another speakers bureau talk in April. Kimberly is working with Samara Andersen, a storyteller who is putting on storytelling programs around the region. The one here will be her 16th storytelling program. Kimberly is also working on a dragon-related literacy program for kids. Part of the program is reading 3 different dragon books to help with three different scavenger hunts. There is also a drawing contest and there are a bunch of cool prizes the kids can win. Rob said he stopped by and there were tons of kids in here during the program. Kimberly went to the WRVS to present the dragon program and she says that brought new kids into the building. The CLiF Rural Library Grant is funding the dragon program and the grant should also cover some upgrades in the children's room. There is an upcoming program on understanding AI. The display for January was The Dog Days of Winter and February's display is black history month. There will be another event at WRVS with a book giveaway also funded by the CLiF Rural Library Grant. The library also received a $10,000 grant to upgrade computers. Jen has been working with Dean to figure out priorities for spending the money but it will also include a printer for book labels and a new television for downstairs. The old equipment will be given away competitively to library patrons who can write a letter about why they want and need a computer. Ginny made a motion to accept the directors report and Stuart seconded.

The Buildings and Grounds report was brief and involved snow removal, checking for ice dams and coming up with a solar and charging system for the shed.

Technology:
Rob asked Dean if he was considering replacing the internet switching mechanism and Dean said he'd consider that.

Personnel:
Stuart and Kathryn still need to talk with Kimberly for her annual review.

The tree: Ginny Barlow wrote a grant for a tree last year and did not get it but she has won a tree grant now. She has offered the library a white oak or a basswood. Carl and Rob will get back to her.

Shirley moved to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and Stuart seconded. The director, assistant director, and Carl Demrow and Dina Dubois were asked to join. The board went into executive session at 7:01 PM.

The board came out of executive session at 7:27 PM.

Shirley moved to set up a search committee for a new Library Director and Ginny seconded. The appointed search committee will be Shirley, Kathryn, Tania, and Dina Dubois. The motion carried unanimously.

Shirley moved to advertise the job locally for 2 weeks from March 1 to March 15. Stuart seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

There was no new business.

The next meeting will be April 8 at 6:00 PM.

Stuart moved to adjourn the meeting and Kathryn seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Demrow, secretary