Approved 9/4/26

Vernon Free Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Cassie Sailsman, Chair
Julie Nevins, Vice-Chair
Kristin Bratton, Clerk
Nikki Deyo, Secretary
Erin Harris, Member

STAFF:
Gail Zachariah, Library Director

GUESTS:
Beth Armington
Joshua Carnes
Jean Carr
Shelli Harvey
Kathy Korb
Danielle Walker

MEMBERS ABSENT:

REGULAR MEETING
Cassie Sailsman called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

CHAIR'S REMARKS:
Welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave some ground rules: 5 minutes per guest

OPEN MEETING—PUBLIC COMMENTS:
Beth Armington read her letter of resignation from the Vernon Free Library.
Kathy Korb read her emailed letter of resignation from the Vernon Free Library.
Shelli Harvey spoke of concerns on behalf of unnamed town members.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS:
Julie Nevins moved to add Warrants to the agenda. Kristin Bratton seconded. The motion carried 5-0

Juile Nevins moved to update the date on today's agenda for minutes to accept from July 8 to July 9. Kristin Bratton seconded. The motion carried 5-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Julie Nevins moved to accept the minutes of July 9, 2026 as written. Erin Harris seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Kristin Bratton moved to accept the minutes of July 23, 2026 as written. Erin Harris

seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

This month, much of my time has been spent developing an Operations Manual for staff and our new substitutes, as well as beginning staff feedback meetings. Summer Reading, monthly statistics, and finances will be updated verbally at the meeting.

STAFFING

Training is underway for our two new substitute Library Assistants, Nicoal Price and Alison Baitz. Both bring previous library experience and will provide temporary on-call coverage.

- I have eye surgery on Wednesday, September 9. I hope to have the substitutes ready to provide coverage so I can take the full day off.
- I will be taking a short vacation September 22–29.

Youth Services Staffing — Board Discussion

As we consider filling the youth services vacancy, I recommend that the Board first determine what we want the position to accomplish. Priorities include quality programming, school and community outreach, early literacy, promotion of library services, and increased engagement by children, teens, and families.

Option 1: Hire a Youth Services Librarian (20–25 hours/week). Recruit someone with demonstrated programming, outreach, communication, and youth-services skills who can take primary responsibility for developing these services.

Option 2: Expand Library Assistant hours. Add approximately 10 Library Assistant hours per week for circulation and routine operations, while the Director assumes primary responsibility for youth programming, Summer Reading, outreach, and promotion.

The first model provides dedicated leadership for youth services but depends on finding a candidate with the skills necessary to do the job successfully. The second makes use of the Director's youth-services experience but reduces time available for administration, planning, policy development, grants, and fundraising.

Discussion question: Which model best supports the library's priorities at this time?

POLICIES

I added an annual review provision to the draft Volunteer Policy so that volunteers can periodically discuss responsibilities, training, and support needs with the Director.

CREDIT CARD — BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

Please designate a trustee to be listed on the library credit card so the Director is not the sole authorized individual.

DOOR COUNTER

Manual door counts are difficult to maintain accurately while staff are assisting patrons. I am researching automated alternatives ranging from inexpensive infrared counters to a 3D system that provides detailed usage reports. The more advanced system would cost approximately

$1,700, plus an estimated $300–$500 for Ethernet wiring. I will continue researching options before making a recommendation.

PAYMENT PLATFORMS — BOARD DISCUSSION

Following last month's discussion, I researched alternatives to HeyGov. I recommend considering systems that combine online payments with donor management, which could improve both the donor experience and our ability to build long-term donor relationships.

Criteria	Why It Matters
Easy online donations	Improve the donor experience
Low or no mandatory donor fees	Encourage giving
Donor database	Build long-term relationships
Monthly reporting	Simplify reconciliation
Direct deposit to Town account	Meet municipal accounting requirements
Automatic receipts	Save staff time
Recurring donations	Build sustainable support
QR code giving	Useful at programs and events
Security and PCI compliance	Protect patrons and the Town

COPY MACHINE

After several attempts, I received Canon's proposal for a replacement copier with wireless/mobile printing capability. I also obtained a proposal from a local company I have worked with previously. Estimated monthly costs are compared below.

Cost	Current Machine	Canon Proposal	Local Proposal
Monthly equipment lease	$75.00	$77.00	$100.00
Quarterly maintenance lease	$100.00	$100.00	$0.00
Monthly B/W payment	$27.83	$7.13	$12.58
Monthly color payment	$14.73	$10.14	$14.41
Estimated monthly total	$142.56	$119.27	$126.99

I am continuing to compare the proposals before making a final recommendation.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Continue improving the children's area and public spaces.
- Connect with school and daycare staff and Brattleboro Early Education Services.
- Introduce fall programming for adults and families.

- Finish the Operations Manual and begin a Technical Services Manual.
- Work with Facebook to gain admin control over our Business Account.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail Zachariah, Vernon Free Library Director

NEW BUSINESS

Warrants
Discussed the due date of the credit card and that it's been changed to the best date to get warrants signed and time for the bill to be paid on time. Adding a trustee to the credit card (Erin Harris).

Youth Service Staffing Discussion
Tabled until next month

OLD BUSINESS

Lego Grant

Kristin Bratton moved to spend up to $2,500 from the Gift Fund to cover the Lego Club expenditures with intention to reimburse the Gift Fund if the Strive Grant is approved. Erin Harris seconded. The motion carried 5-0.

Volunteer Policy

Volunteer Application to reflect that answering no to any of the questions will not be a no to becoming a volunteer.

Payment Platforms

Trustees will continue to discuss options and will leave on the agenda for next month.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
Julie Nevins moved to enter into executive session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee to include the Library Director. 1 V.S.A. 313 (3)(a)(3). Kristin Bratton seconded. Carried 5-0.

The Trustees entered into executive session at 7:12 p.m.

The Trustees left the Executive Session at 8:39 p.m. No decisions were made during the Executive Session.

Nikki Deyo left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION:
The next regular meeting of the Vernon Free Library Board of Trustees will be held Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. This will be a hybrid meeting.

A motion was made by Kristin Bratton to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m. Seconded by Julie Nevins. Carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Deyo, Secretary