

# **RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**November 19, 2025 5:15PM**

**Meeting at Rutland Free Library Fox Room**

**Attending:** Ann Bannister\_\_x\_\_; Gabi Bourassa\_x\_\_ Clare Coppock \_\_x\_\_; Leonard DeLorenzo\_x\_\_; Fern Fryer \_\_x\_\_; Russell Glitman\_x\_\_; Jeanne Kirbach\_x\_\_; Kevin Klamm\_x\_\_; Carolyn Meub\_\_A\_\_; Matt Olewnik\_\_x\_\_; Joanne Pencak\_x\_\_; Cathy Reynolds\_x\_\_; Cathy Solsaa\_x\_\_; John Skinner\_A\_\_; Randal Smathers\_x\_\_; Bill Wiles\_x\_\_; Amy Williams \_\_x\_\_ (X is present, A is absent)

**Presiding:** Clare Coppock      **Secretary:** Gabrielle Bourassa

**Guest/s:** Hannah Abram, Tiaunna Leddick

## **Agenda Addition(s):**

Fletcher Free Library shared news about their experience operating as a cold weather shelter. Unlike emergency shelters which are low-barrier facilities that allow drugs and weapons, RFL chose not to operate as a low-barrier shelter and prohibits these items. During their [FFL] operation, cots needed to be covered with plastic because users were physically dirty, and the floors required full bleaching daily. The shelter generated substantial amounts of trash, raising questions about who would handle waste management at RFL. Plumbing issues emerged when needles were flushed down toilets, requiring repairs. RFL plans to use the main-level toilets connected to commercial plumbing, with the city on call for any plumbing problems. Concerns were raised about using a multipurpose room for both shelter activities and regular library programs, particularly regarding persistent odors. Joanne requested written agreements with the city and board of aldermen. RFL's shelter capacity is set at 15 people.

## **Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:**

Kevin made a motion to accept the October meeting minutes, which was seconded by Cathy R and passed.

## **Financials (report and committee):**

The financial report showed no surprises in income and expenses. The Friends of the Library have provided strong support for library endeavors. The library received its 13th check in November, which exceeded expectations. Staff salaries and benefits are tracking as expected, and the cash position has improved. According to policy, the library maintains three payrolls' worth of funds in the cash account.

Elisabeth Marks attended the finance committee meeting and offered suggestions for fundraising and grant opportunities. The library plans to apply for a grant in February to support

strategic planning efforts. Elisabeth will serve as a valuable resource when capital fund planning begins and will help identify appropriate candidates for capital fund development. She suggested hosting a loyal donors appreciation event. Lenny made a motion to approve the financial report, which was seconded by Cathy R and passed.

## **Committee Reports and Actions:**

**Executive:** The committee discussed committee assignments but hasn't made final decisions yet. The library needs volunteers for the finance committee, policy committee (Jeanne has agreed to join), and personnel committee. An orientation for new members Bill and Jeanne is scheduled for December 3rd. The committee also discussed the facility and its current condition. The library will serve as the city's cold weather shelter and needs a letter from the city's insurance company confirming they are the primary insurer. There is concern about the absence of carbon monoxide detectors in the building, which must be installed before the shelter can open.

**Nominating/Governance:** The committee did not meet.

**Personnel:** The committee did not meet.

**Development:** The committee met with Gena Grove to discuss the capital campaign. Several questions need board input: What is the current budget goal? What is the deadline? Who will lead solicitation requests? Does the board understand the importance of their role in the campaign? The Murder by the Book fundraising event is scheduled for May 1st at 7 PM. Randal will have a finalized script completed by the end of the year. Anne confirmed that Karen P at Stafford Tech Center's digital arts program can have students begin working on posters and printed materials in February, requiring three weeks for the project. Lenny confirmed the event has been added to the chamber's calendar. RFL will sell both tickets and sponsorships, with sponsorships generating most of the revenue. Board members will be asked to approach local businesses for sponsorship opportunities. The board suggested adding a silent auction to the event, which the committee agreed to include. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 24th at 5:30 PM.

**Policy & Planning:** Amy presented a new Library Programming Policy that protects how RFL plans and provides programming. The policy was initiated by librarians and presented to the policy committee. The procedure for challenging a program follows the same process as challenging library materials. The policy would have been helpful during past controversies such as the drag queen story hour program. Kevin made a motion to approve and adopt the programming policy as presented, which was seconded by Bill and passed.

**21st Century Library:** The committee did not meet. Questions remain about next steps for the project. A preliminary design has been obtained for the plaza. RFL needs to develop better messaging around this project. Potential HUD funding may become available, and RFL needs to be prepared to take advantage of this opportunity. The goal is to partner with the city on this initiative.

**Strategic Planning:** The committee has been interviewing consultant candidates over recent weeks and will proceed with Joan Gamble. Joan will present a proposal next week. The board asked whether board members, staff, and community feedback can be incorporated into the process. The committee discussed conducting one-on-one stakeholder interviews and hosting a pizza party with teens. They are gathering background materials, prior surveys, and attending a weekly webinar about the strategic planning process. The committee needs to identify goals and community needs. RFL is applying for a grant that assists nonprofits with strategic planning.

**Building:** Regarding the oil tank, Cathy R made a motion to hire Elizabeth Kulas to manage the process of obtaining an RFP and quotes to remove and replace the oil tank. The motion was seconded by Lenny and passed.

A valve on the third floor that is part of the dry sprinkler system has failed twice in the last 14 months. The part is too old to be replaced with a new equivalent part. The committee recommends replacing the main fire sprinkler valve. Cathy R made a motion to proceed with the replacement, which was seconded by Kevin and passed.

## **Director & Assistant Director Updates:**

Public response to letting go of the 88 Merchants Row location has been mixed, with some people expressing hope while others felt justified that RFL didn't succeed in relocating. RFL will continue investigating proposals for new locations.

Amy thanked the board and community members for their support with the grant proposal.

RFL is deciding how much funding to allocate toward Libby licensing due to funding changes and suggested sharing this with Elizabeth Marks for fundraising ideas and support.

**Exec Session:** No executive session was held.

## **New Business:**

Suggestion from Hannah A.: The Rutland Food Co-op is hoping to expand and inquired about potential collaboration opportunities. There may also be potential to partner with the Farmer's Food Co-op.

**Adjournment:** Clare adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 5:15 PM.