Brown Public Library
Board Meeting July 14, 2026

Present: Dale Kunkel, assistant treasurer; Gail Hall, member; Denise MacMartin, secretary; John Stevens, treasurer; Maryann Beaupre, chair; Sherri Brickey, librarian.

4:00 pm: Meeting called to order by chair, Maryann Beaupre.

Previous minutes: Motion to approve the April minutes made by John, seconded by Dale. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's report: Our new fiscal year began July 1. Dale will have more on the current year budget at the next meeting as he is still working on the end of year reports. All library staff received a 4% increase in salary starting July 1. This is in line with what town employees received for an increase, which has been the practice of the library in establishing changes. Motion to approve the treasurer's report made by Denise, seconded by Gail. Motion passed unanimously.

Librarians' report: The increase in patron visits the past month is due in large part to school being out. Summer programs for kids are in full swing.

Old Business

HVAC system has had work done and more will be done later this month.

Volunteer appreciation day went well, with about 20 people attending. The board was represented by Dale, John, and Nancy, who coordinated the event.

Ceiling tiles have been replaced in the kitchen and bathroom by the volunteer handyman. He also fixed the outside gate to the treehouse, a screen door, and has done other odds and ends.

The roof project status is unclear at this time and we need an update from Tom Davis. He visited with a workman to check the roof for structural integrity prior to the chimney repair but the outcome of that visit is unknown.

Maryann is working on the 5-year plan. It had not been updated since 2018.

The handicap door downstairs continues to be an issue. There is still no way to leave it unlocked without leaving the Community Room unlocked. Sherri (or Rebecca) locks it upon leaving, but this means it is not accessible for after-hours meetings. Sherri will check on who has what keys and see if there is a solution that may be found without major work.

The lamppost is still waiting for work. John will mention this to the select board.

Maryann delivered the chair proposal to Mary Smith, town manager. She spoke with Mary and it's now in the hands of the town to consider the next steps.

New Business

Nancy has raised some questions regarding the configuration and status of the Friends of Library entity, and other board members also had questions that surfaced during the extensive discussion. Gail clarified that the current 20-30 members are mostly older individuals who are not in a position, or not willing, to be active in the group in terms of serving on a board, etc. The Friends is a non-profit separate from the library, and it has its own set of bylaws. It files the required tax forms annually (for the past several years with the help of the current treasurer or co-treasurer). As there is currently no board, Gail has acted as the liaison between the BPL board and the Friends, taking funding suggestions/requests to them and reporting the decisions back to the BPL board. Technically, the Friends and the BPL board are supposed to be independent of one another. Many years ago, the Friends functioned not only as a fund-raising entity, but they also organized speakers and library events. Over the past several years there has been a shift, and now the library (librarians and board) organizes and runs the events (sometimes asking for volunteer help from the Friends). Gail also explained that over the years some individuals have come forward and wanted to take leadership of the board, but they did not want to follow the bylaws and establish a full-board, etc. Interest from individuals was more about fiscal management and handling the funds. While those efforts are appreciated, it does not get the Friends to the fully functioning entity that should exist. There is now an individual who may be interested in reviving the Friends, and Gail has sent her information as requested. There was some further discussion regarding at what point does the Friends become an entity that should dissolve. Again, because the BPL board has no real authority over the Friends, that decision would need to be made by current members, even absent a working board. There was general consensus that perhaps there will be some resurgence of the Friends along with the proper legal configuration of officers, there was also a general sense that there may need to be further discussions. Concerns were raised that there may be confusion by donors as to what happens to Friends donations vs. donating directly to the library, and that the purpose of the friends as originally determined may have evolved and needs addressing by whatever appropriate avenues exist.

Bookstore Spiff Up

Sherri reported that Nancy has worked with volunteer Trudy Boardman to clean up and reorganize the bookstore. Nancy requested funds to paint the outside hallway in that area, with Sherri deciding the final color. Board members generally agreed this was a good idea. Gail will ask the Friends for funding for this endeavor.

Nancy and Trudy also held a book sale and plant sale and made around $300. Sherri used this to buy a vacuum and a cushion for the rocking chair. Funds have been accounted for with the treasurer.

There was some general discussion about spending by board members and how it gets handled to be recorded. There was general agreement that we should consider having a request for reimbursement form that would get submitted so that there is a paper trail for approval and accounting purposes. Gail will share an example at an upcoming meeting.

Labor Day

Preparations for the annual book sale over Labor Day weekend have started. Gail has a sign-up sheet for shifts. She is coordinating with volunteers, Friends, board members, and others to get adequate coverage for all days.

Executive Session

Motion to go into executive session to discuss the board vacancy was made by John, seconded by Dale. Passed unanimously. Executive session ensued.

Motion to come out of executive session made by Dale, seconded by John. Passed unanimously.

Other Business

Next meeting is Tuesday, August 18.

Sherri received an offer from Norwich asking if they could provide student volunteers to provide patrons with tech help. She will follow up. Gail asked if there could be NU help with the book sale set-up as had been done in previous years.

5:00 Adjourn: Motion by John, seconded by Gail. All approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise MacMartin, Secretary