

**Berkshire Free Library
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
at the Berkshire Free Library
September 9, 2025**

Present: Carol Leigh, Brenda Yaples, Janice Merrill, Lisa Michaud, Sue Ford, Carol Cox, Barbara Schwartz, Graeme Brilliant, Fran Miller and John Stoughton.

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 AM by President John Stoughton. The Agenda was changed to include under New Business: Festivals, Tillers & Toilers Tea, the Annual Fund Raising Letter, and Referendum on Tax for the Library.

REPORTS

Secretary: Minutes of the August 12, 2025 meeting were read. Under Old Business: Building Updates: last sentence of that first paragraph is stricken and the 2nd paragraph should read "Carol Cox said we need to have a feasibility study for the library expansion. Crawford & Stearns from Syracuse did a feasibility study in 2014. Janice suggested we ask Duane Austin to join an Advisory Committee for the building expansion. Janice will contact him." Under Blueberry & Book Festival, the 4th sentence should read "Lisa noted that Donna Davis will be a good worker with the Kiddie Parade and events." No other changes were requested.

Treasurer: Carol said that we had received donations from the Patch family, and money added as requested. She noted that amounts on the Income Statement for Online Used Book Sales and related Fundraising expense were correct per Graeme. After discussion on the advisability of having fixtures, inventory and the building listed as Assets, Barbara Schwartz moved that Carol investigate the process to do so, contacting our tax person and Sarah at FLLS. Sue Ford seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. There were no further questions of the Treasurer.

Director: Fran reported there were about 890 checkouts and renewals last month, lower possibly due to fewer audiobooks/ebooks being available on FLLS as opposed to NYPL. Drew will be asked to draw attention to the large number of magazines and periodicals available through Berkshirefreelibrary.org, to help build circulation. Fran distributed her report on *Summer Reading/Learning 2025*. She felt it was the most successful to date, due to good help from local teens, several Trustees and other Berkshire residents. She had good responses to SPLAT which was the only activity paid for. Money left over from *grants* for the Summer program will be used to fund Story Time that starts next week. Fran will distribute posters on *Story Time* since we need more pre-school age kids as the old ones are now in HeadStart.

Fran said Kids *Farmers Market* was doable this year thanks to help from 6 teenagers and Trustees and community members who helped. She said she was scolded by the Berkshire Community Association for not having the Community Hall room completely cleaned up every day – it fell off during preparation for the Blueberry Festival. John said it was not mentioned at their Board meeting which he attended. Fran is concerned that next year the Farmers Market will not be doable even though it was very well attended, if it has to be completely cleaned each day. Maybe advertise for volunteers from the community to help with daily cleanup. There are meetings with Tioga Food Coalition who may have another plan going forward. Next meeting is in January.

New Business – The *Annual FLLS Meeting* October 17 in Homer, on "12 Steps to a Community-Led Library" author. Maybe the book will be available online on FLLS? *Friday hours* should be returned to Noon to 5 PM rather than to 3 PM because many people come during that time to get books for the weekend. The Trustees agreed. No further questions of the Director.

Barbara Schwartz moved and Lisa Michaud seconded a motion to accept the above reports as given. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Grants covered under Director's Report.

Online Book Sales/Book Sale – amounts covered under Treasurer's Report.

Building Updates – Lisa reported SHPO wouldn't have a reply for us for 6-8 weeks. She suggested we start a "Building Fund" to help with the renovations. She has a list of firms to contact to give us quotes on the job and will contact them soon. Obviously we will be applying to FLS grant for construction next year since deadline was yesterday. She said we need plans to be more specific as to usage – "computer usage room" rather than "multipurpose room." She noted the 2014 feasibility study cost \$2,600, so we may be using the Patch building fund if we don't end up getting approved for the construction grant next year. If approved that cost could come out of the grant money.

Kids Marketplace Review covered under Director's Report.

NEW BUSINESS

Pie & Ice Cream Social – will be held Thursday, September 25 from 6-7:30 PM. A signup sheet for pies was circulated. It will be held at the Fire Station and we can get in at 5 PM to set up. John has the ice cream arranged.

Tillers & Toilers Tea – Last year the craft ladies attended the Tea and paid for the Library table. The Trustees did so the year before. Since it will be held on the same date as the Richford Potato Festival and the library's book sale there, we cannot attend. Janice moved that we donate the \$150 to the Tillers & Toilers in appreciation for the beautiful gardening work they do for the library grounds. Carol Cox seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Festivals – Potato Festival Sept. 20, so we need to move books and help set up Richford Historical Society tent for the book sale on Friday the 19th. Graeme, Lisa and John volunteered to help with that and will meet at the Library at 1:30 Friday to load books and unload onto the tables under the big tent. Saturday Lisa will run the book sale from 9 to 11 AM, Carol Leigh will run it from 11 AM to 1 PM, and Janice will run it from 1 to 3 PM. At 3:30 we will start packing up boxes and Barbara and Graeme and Chuck Merrill will help with that.

Apple Festival is October 4 and 5, so on the 3rd at 12 Noon Graeme will need help moving books to the Bement Billings homestead. Graeme will let them know we will be there today and find out how big a space we will have. We have the library's 10x10' tent and may need another. The Newark Valley library runs the Kids Crafts tent that day. Graeme said he will be able to work both days at the book sale and just needs help getting the books there and back again. Thank you volunteers!

Annual Fund Raising – Nancy wrote the letter John read and it sounded good. Carol Leigh said she planned to only mail to those who donated last year. The letter will be posted on our website, on our Facebook page, and in the Berkshire e-newsletter and Richford's newsletter as well as the Owego Pennysaver in an article and hopefully the Tioga County Courier paper. We can also put up the letter in Post Offices and churches in the area. We have the plastic A-frame poster board to place the thermometer of how our fund-raising goal is being met. Carol said she would get started addressing.

Referendum for Library Tax – After discussion, Barbara moved that we pursue needed funding via a referendum for School Levied Tax in the amount of \$50,000, like Newark Valley has done. Brenda Yaples seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. We need to let the School Board know of our intent by January 1, 2026. Fran will contact Sarah to see what needs to happen next.

ROUND TABLE

Brenda said she had received several emails from the Rumble Ponies asking if we wanted tickets for the Playoffs starting September 18. We will find out who won those tickets and make sure they know of the offer, but at this time we are unable to attend the games. We are appreciative of their efforts and help with the Blueberry & Book Festival raffle ticket donation.

Carol asked Fran if the weekend jail people will again be available to rake the leaves and she said yes, she had contacted them. Leaves will be falling sometime soon!

There being no further business to conduct, Carol Cox moved we adjourn, Lisa Michaud seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully,

Janice Merrill, Secretary