

## Minutes – Cobleigh Library Trustees Meeting, Dec. 17, 2025

Meeting Participants – Trustee Chair Jessica Simpson, Trustee Bruce Starbuck, Trustee Sylvia Dodge, Friends of Cobleigh Library Chair Dorothy Allard, Library Director Kaitlin Wood, and financial planner Joe LeClair.

***Minutes of the last trustees' meeting were approved by unanimous vote.***

**GUEST PRESENTATION** – Joe LeClair of the Edward Jones investment company in Lyndonville reported on the library's investment funds. He said the investments are mostly in index funds, with a small amount in bonds. He said such an investment portfolio is standard for organizations. Joe reported that the average growth for the library's investments over a 10-year period has been 11.73 percent and he said that with slightly different management the library could potentially realize between two and three percent more growth in the funds over the next 10-year period. Joe will put some ideas together for the trustees to consider at an upcoming meeting. Kaitlin suggested, and the trustees concurred, that a 5 percent draw-down from the investment accounts be included in the budget for the upcoming year.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** – Kaitlin said the state of the library's 2025 budget is "great." As of mid-December, 90 percent of the budget had been spent, leaving an end-of-year surplus that can be applied to reduce the library's 2026 budget request.

**FRIENDS OF COBLEIGH LIBRARY** – Dorothy reported that revised bylaws have been finalized and that an organizational meeting will be held on Jan. 6. Dues will now be required of "Friends" members, which will allow the group to differentiate voting from non-voting members. The dues will be by donation. Dorothy said that "Friends" documents are now available on a google-drive and can be accessed by any interested trustees. Dorothy asked for clarification about the use of the "Friends" 501C3 non-profit status in relation to grant awards. Kaitlin explained that many programs require grant requests to be from a 501C3 group (our municipal library does not enjoy that status), making it necessary for grants to be requested and awarded through the "Friends" group. Most recently, a grant request from the Manton Foundation was applied for in this manner (and has been awarded, see Old Business – Bookmobile below). Dorothy asked that in the future, her group be notified in advance of such grant requests, and she also asked if there is a way for her group to see that the money is being spent for its intended purpose. Kaitlin said she will provide documentation of all expenditures. Kaitlin also noted that starting in 2026, "Friends" income from events like the plant sale, bake sale, and book sale will not be included in the library budget's projected revenue section. Kaitlin said she will be asking the "Friends" to fund three things in 2026: the installation of Starlink equipment on top of the bookmobile, the Kanopy film access program, and a sign language program to be offered at the library.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Highlights of the director's report include that approximately \$11,000 in donations have been received to date. The full director's report is appended to these minutes.

**OLD BUSINESS – BOOKMOBILE** – The library was successful in its application for funding to buy a new electric vehicle to be used as the Bookmobile. The Manton Foundation awarded the library \$72,000 and Kaitlin has signed the necessary paperwork to complete the grant. The plan is to purchase a Chevrolet BrightDrop 600 cargo van, and such a vehicle was located at a dealership in Brattleboro. ***A motion was made by Sylvia, seconded by Bruce, to proceed with the purchase before the end of the year. The motion was unanimously approved.*** Kaitlin will request a short-term disbursement from the Edith Bell

Brown account to fund the purchase, and that money will be returned to the investment account on receipt of the Manton Foundation money. The cost of retrofitting the bookmobile is estimated to be between \$30,000 and \$60,000. Maintenance on the vehicle can be carried out at the Chevrolet dealership in Littleton, NH.

## Director's Report

### December 17, 2025

Circulation Statistics For November: 3,198 items (higher than last month's 3,108 figure).

*Print Books Circulated: 2,488*

Adult Fiction	Adult Nonfiction	Juvenile Fiction	Juvenile Nonfiction	Large Print Books	Interlibrary Loan Books	Bookmobile Checkouts
790	331	751	235	28	159	194

*Other Items Circulated: 710*

DVDs / Videos	Attraction / Park Passes	Audiobooks On CD	Libby / E-Books	Library of Things	Puzzles / Games	Charging Ports
45	0	12	598	8	4	43

#### Patrons/Computers Statistics:

We had **1,196 patrons** visit the library in November, and **266 patrons** use our computers/WiFi network.

#### Programs & Community Engagement

- **Robotics Event:** The Saint Johnsbury Academy Robotics Team (also known as Techstorm 2523) came to the library on Saturday, December 6th at 10 am to host a free STEM/Robotics workshop upstairs for children (ages 6 to 14), engaging them in fun, hands-on engineering activities. We had 31 kids in total attend this event.
- **Book Club:** Yesterday, on Tuesday, December 16th, we had another Occasional Book Club session, where we discussed *The Tenth of December* by George Saunders. Snacks and refreshments were available at 11 am, then the book discussion began at 11:15 am. When I started as the Director in June, this monthly program only had five members, and now we are up to 20 people! Next month's session is scheduled for January 20th, and the book chosen by the group is *Pride and Prejudice*, another one of my favorites.
- **Dulcimers:** Earlier this morning on Wednesday, December 17th at 10:30 am, the wonderful Kingdom Mountain Dulcimers performed joyful and festive songs upstairs for all ages. It was well-attended (22 people in total), and several kids from our weekly storytime group also stopped by to listen to children's holiday songs.
- **Music Man:** This Friday, December 19th at 11:30 am, families can hear some catchy tunes from kids' musician Ed Morgan, popularly known as "The Music Man." This event has seen a steady increase in attendance each month, so we plan on bringing Ed back again next year.
- **Holiday Cheer:** For any children who wish to write a letter to Santa Clause, we now have a letter-writing station set up in the Reading Room of the library. Kids can write a letter, stick it in the mailbox in the Reading Room, and then Santa will write them a letter back. Likewise, free candy canes are available near the front desk of the library, and children can participate in a weekly game called "Elf on a Bookshelf" to win a prize. Every week, the library's sneaky elf named Dewey hides in a new location around the building, and when kids find him, they receive a small reward to take home. Dewey moves to a new spot every Monday morning in December, so families have four opportunities to track him down.

- **Weekly Programming:** We continue to offer a fun story-time program on Tuesdays (at 4 pm) and on Wednesdays (at 10 am), as well as a Baby/Toddler Play Group on Fridays (at 10 am). This is in addition to our weekly computer/cell-phone assistance every Tuesday morning at 10:30 am, a Dungeons & Dragons group on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, French Club on Thursdays, Chess Club every Thursday from 5 to 8:00 pm, and the "My Favorite Book" program for families every second Saturday of the month.
- **Volunteers:** We owe a big thank you to Lyndonville Outing Club members, who volunteered at the library last Thursday from 5 to 7 pm. They did a fantastic job (especially with assisting us as we readied envelopes for thank you notes), and we really appreciate their help.
- **Snowy Weather:** On Tuesday, December 2nd, we had a big snow storm in the Northeast Kingdom, so to ensure safe travels for my staff, we closed at 5 pm (as opposed to 7 pm) that evening. Likewise, last Wednesday, local schools – including Kingdom East School District, Lyndon Institute, the Thaddeus School, and several others – closed in anticipation of the storm. Although the library's policy is usually to close for inclement weather when the schools do the same, it was not supposed to start snowing heavily until 10 or 11 am. As a result, I told my staff that they did not need to come in (though Gretchen still did, since she wanted to work on organizing one of our closet spaces), and then I opened up the library early (at 9 am) and closed down at noon so that patrons could still use our resources if they needed to. 21 people came into the library that morning, so it was worth opening up for three hours.

### **Exciting Developments**

- **New Trustee:** Susan Kuecker has agreed to be our next Trustee as of March, and we only need about eight more petition signatures before January 15th to get her on the ballot.
- **Manton Foundation:** I have been keeping this news quiet since last Friday when I found out, but I am excited to share that we were approved for the Manton Foundation Grant! Yay! Therefore, we will receive \$72,000 for a new electric Bookmobile, and we already know which vehicle would be perfect for the library to purchase — the Chevy BrightDrop 600! I have included a picture of it below for your reference, and I will have more details to share about this vehicle later when we move into the "Old Business" part of the agenda.



- **Donations, Donations, and More Donations!:** We have received nearly \$11,000 in donations from the annual appeal letters! Little Dippers was especially generous with a \$5,000 donation, and the Vermont Community Foundation gave us \$2,500 for the library and another \$1,000 specifically for the Bookmobile (with Barbara Bristol of Sheffield as the advisor recommending us). We even received donations from unexpected places, like Lyndonville House of Pizza and Anthony's Diner in St. Johnsbury, and we were given nearly \$200 from Building Bright Futures to cover the cost of pumpkins from Halloween. Just since June alone, we have received \$26,956.50 in donations, and as of last week, we have over \$50,000 in our bank account. Consequently, I would like to request that we pay ahead for the remainder of the painting project (\$10,000), our internet for the next few years (since we have not used \$10,000 of the large tech grant yet that Bryn acquired last year), and heating oil from Fred's Energy. Even after paying ahead for all these items, we should still have between \$20,000 to \$30,000 in our bank account to start 2026.

- **HUD Funding:** The HUD grant officially opened two weeks ago, and the deadline for the application is March 31, 2026. I am applying for funds to completely modernize and upgrade the elevator so that it will no longer break down each year. Although I have not received any official quotes yet from Alpha Elevator, Otis Elevator, and Mack Brothers Inc. (all of whom are supposed to survey the elevator early next month), I imagine this would cost anywhere between \$100,000 to \$250,000, so the HUD funding would be perfect for this type of project.
- **Friends of the Cobleigh Library:** At a meeting earlier this month, I requested that the Friends cover the cost of Starlink (\$1,180), an ASL program (\$600), and Kanopy (\$1,200) for our budget next year. Additionally, I also received a \$2,500 donation from the Vermont Community Foundation, which had to be made out to the Friends of the Cobleigh Public Library due to their 501(c)(3) status, so I requested that \$1,000 of this money be earmarked for Music Man performances next year. All of these requests were approved by the Friends, which was very kind of them! Next month, I intend to request that the remaining \$1,500 from the Vermont Community Foundation be earmarked for a second ILL courier stop here.

### **Looking Ahead**

- **New Hours:** Our hours will be changing the first full week of 2026. Instead of opening at noon on Mondays, we will instead start at 10 am, and we will open at the same time on Saturdays as well. Overall, this means that the library will be open to the public an additional hour each week (38 hours instead of 37). This change will not cost the library more in payroll – in fact, it will cost us less! Susan Mold, our Interlibrary Loan Librarian, is excited to start her shift at 10 am on Saturdays instead of 9 am, so she will work 10 hours (as opposed to 11 hours) per week moving forward, while every other employee will continue to work the same number of hours per week.
- **New Programs:** Jessica Simard will return to teach American Sign Language in February and March on Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 in the children's room. Additionally, we are looking to add a few new programs to our calendar early next year or in the spring, including possibly an audiobook club, a romance book club, a monthly senior yoga class, and an animal shelter collaboration.

**Thank you, and I hope you all have a wonderful holiday!**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kaitlin Wood  
Library Director  
Cobleigh Public Library