

Bent Northrop Memorial Library 2025 Trustees Report

This past year once again showed that BNML remains a vital and vibrant hub for our community. Compared to libraries in other towns like ours, we are open more hours, have more borrowers, higher circulation, more programs, and program attendance. Visits and usage continue to grow and are up by 10% this year. This high level of use speaks to how much the community values the library and to the thoughtful care with which it is run.

These 2025 highlights reflect some of the many programs and initiatives that took place at the library this year:

- We offered many programs and events for all ages, including workshops, story hours, lectures, crafts, afterschool series, book discussions, art exhibits, playgroups, cooking and photography classes, Trunk or Treat, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, and more. We added a regular handcrafts group, clubs for chess and Dungeons & Dragons, and a wildly popular adult summer reading program added to the robust one we have for kids and teens.
- The use of our thousands of free Ebooks and audiobooks keeps growing, as does the use of our collection of physical materials such as books and puzzles. Biblio+ (our free steaming service) and our Mango language learning app continue to be popular.
- We continue to offer access to many services like computers, 24/7 wifi inside and out, online resources, copying and printing, Community Room use, space for remote work, attraction passes, and snowshoes.
- The board and staff created a new long range plan to guide our work and initiatives for the next five years and beyond. Check it out on our website and reach out to any board member or Sarah if you have any questions.
- Thanks to the Friends of BNML's generous support, we were able to add a new bookshelf in the loft and now have an ongoing book sale. Shades were also added to the south facing windows to cool the building on those sunny summer days. The Friends also supported after-school snacks, three of our attraction passes, packages to welcome new babies, Summer Reading Program prizes, and a variety of library materials and programs. In lieu of the To Bid or Not to Bid event this year the Friends held a wildly successful raffle. We are grateful for their ongoing efforts to fund so much.
- We are grateful to receive support from the NCSS Parent Child Center, Vermont Department of Libraries, and direct donations which enabled us to provide extra programming and materials for our patrons.
- Trustee transition: We thank Peter Burns for his 8 years of dedicated service as a board trustee and welcome Geoff Pac to the board.

Financial Highlights

To maintain the high level of service and programming provided to the greater Fairfield community, we respectfully request \$140,000 in tax revenue. This modest 3% increase (\$3,841) follows a year with no increase from 2024 to 2025. On a comparable basis, the library's 2026 budget is increasing by 7% with the larger 13% overall increase driven by a change in accounting methods. The Board remains committed to responsible financial stewardship and is leveraging our investment funds to cover the remainder of the increase. Please also note that the final mortgage payment on the library building is scheduled for 2027.

The trustees thank you for your continuous support and recognition of the value the library brings to our community. Thank you to our amazing library director, Sarah Allerton, for her dedication, resourcefulness, and incredible knowledge, and to Wendy Maquera and Tammy Johnson who keep things running smoothly and are always so helpful. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Friends of BNML, as well as our dedicated volunteers and generous donors. If you haven't visited the library, come check us out. We have something for everyone.

Sincerely, the BNML Board of Trustees: Susan Magnan, Sorel Chaput, Michele Feiner, Larry Edelson, and Geoff Pac.