



southburlington
PUBLIC LIBRARY

DRAFT MINUTES

**LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
September 17, 2026**

The committee held a regular meeting on September 17, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the SBPL Board Room, and by Zoom.

Members present: Holly Painter, Chair; Whitney Kirzinger, Rebecca Stazi, Leslie Van Wagner

Not present: Bree Drapa, Library Director; Stacey Pape

1. **Call to order (5:35 p.m.)** Chair Holly P. called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. A sign-in sheet for the Chair and Committee members was shared to mark their meeting attendance.
2. **Review of library exits** Chair provided instructions on emergency building exits.
3. **Additions and deletions to the posted agenda** Committee name discussion
4. **Comments and questions from the public not related to items on the agenda** No public present
5. **Approval of regular committee minutes of July 16, 2026**
MOTION: Rebecca S. motioned to approve the July 16, 2026 meeting minutes with minor edits. SECOND: Leslie V. ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.
6. **Strategic plan & staff communications survey**
 - As a member of the Library's Strategic Plan working group, Whitney S. invited the Communications Committee members to provide early/directional feedback on the draft strategic plan, particularly Goal 3: *Community Awareness and Engagement* and its objectives as it most clearly relates to marketing and communications efforts.
 - Strategic Planning Committee: Incorporate committee feedback before the draft goes to the Board on October 8.
 - Staff communications survey: Use the survey findings to help inform future initiatives under the strategic-plan objectives, particularly outreach to underserved/underrepresented audiences.
 - Flag for further refinement:
 - Consider whether the word "cultural" should be included in the description of the library as a trusted civic, cultural and community resource.

- Make the objectives around the library as a trusted community resource and a community support partner more distinct.
 - Consider how advocacy/support for library resources, staffing and funding fits within Organizational Alignment & Capacity.
- Follow up on strategic-plan implementation: Clarify how annual initiatives will be developed by library staff and how the committee will have visibility into and support those initiatives.

7. Summer Tabling/Pride debrief

Summer tabling takeaways:

- Interactive activities generated more engagement than simply handing out materials.
- Pete the Cat was particularly effective at attracting people.
- For future events, incorporate more hands-on/interactive activities, such as:
 - Library of Things items for people to explore
 - Art activities
 - Kids' activities
 - Special guests/read-alouds or collaborations with other community organizations
- Continue looking for opportunities to piggyback on existing community events, but begin planning the summer outreach schedule earlier in the spring.
- School events were worthwhile and generated library-card/sign-up interest, but stronger signage/branding is needed when the library is participating without a tent.
- Continue using branded tablecloths/T-shirts and consider additional simple signage identifying the library.
- Explore having a library staff member present at events when possible, particularly when library cards or other staff-only services can be offered on site.

8. Fall outreach

8.a. Tabling (schools, AI's, new Rec opportunities)

- Clarify with Bree which upcoming Recreation Department/community events already have library staff attending and where trustees/committee members are being asked to provide additional support.
- Add the October, November and December opportunities to the outreach spreadsheet and circulate them to the full Board of Trustees for volunteer sign-ups.
- Do not include September events in the current volunteer request as the time is too short to secure sign-ups.
- Pace participation realistically given current library staffing constraints; the Committee should be choiceful about covering every opportunity.

- Prioritize events where:
 - Library staff will already be present.
 - Library cards or other library services can be offered.
 - The event reaches audiences beyond people who already regularly engage with the library.

Explore additional outreach opportunities with:

- South Burlington Food Shelf
- Apartment communities
- Local businesses
- Lowe's / Home Depot / Panera or similar community-oriented businesses
- Recreation Department events, including hockey/open skate opportunities
- Other areas of South Burlington identified as having fewer library-card holders

Holly to talk with Bree about the Food Shelf opportunity and determine whether/when the library could participate. If so, Rebecca will reach out to the Director of the Food Shelf.

Holly to talk with Sue about outreach locations and audiences she believes the library should prioritize. For example, follow up with the apartment-management company regarding outreach at the apartment communities previously identified.

Consider using the library's community/library-card data map to help identify areas and audiences with lower library participation and target outreach accordingly.

8.b. December article for The Other Paper

The Communications Committee is responsible for the December article which would be due around the first week of December. We will defer topic selection until the October meeting. Before selecting a topic, check with Bree regarding what they plan to highlight in January and whether there are strategic priorities or recent statistics that would make a strong December story. Possible direction discussed: highlighting library growth and increased community use, using recent statistics such as library-card growth and increased utilization.

8.c. Other Ideas?

The Committee members brainstormed and discussed other ideas including:

Continue developing outreach beyond the committee's traditional "same audience" events.

Explore unexpected/nontraditional community locations where library outreach could reach people who may not already be connected to the library.

Consider partnerships with local businesses and community organizations as a low-cost way to increase library visibility.

Explore opportunities to distribute library information/materials at community businesses and gathering places.

Continue thinking about how to make outreach interactive and memorable, rather than simply informational.

Other business

The Committee agreed that Public Outreach & Communications Committee is the preferred direction/name to recommend to Governance. Holly will notify Governance of the committee's preference. The current name remains Communications Committee until the bylaws are formally changed.

The Committee members agreed to continue discussing/defining the committee's role and scope to avoid mission creep and clarify the distinction between trustee-led public outreach and library staff communications/PR.

Adjourn The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Stazi