FRIENDS OF THE BETHLEHEM PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of meeting held October 1, 2026

Board members present: Allegra Wright, Susan Presby, Candy Murphy, Sally Fitzgerald, Norma St. John, Hilary Veilleux, Estelle LaFleur

Librarian present: Laura Clerkin

Meeting called to order: 5:33

Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2026: Hilary made a motion to accept the September minutes as written; Norma seconded. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Paper reports were not available. Norma announced the current balance of all accounts $14,278.38. This includes the CD $8,113.31 and the checking account $6,165.07. Norma did distribute a transaction report, showing Shack transactions. A refund from The Rocks for the cancelled room reservation was received. Allegra asked for donations for her birthday on Facebook, so those donations are coming. Hilary made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, seconded by Sally. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

MascomaPay and Clover machine:

Mascoma needs to meet to teach how to use the machine and set it up. It makes sense that Allegra, Norma, and Laura attend this meeting. Meeting should take place soon so that Friends can accept payment for 2027 dues.

Hilary Veilleux: Hilary, who is stepping down from her duties, listed what she has been doing for the Friends:

- StoryWalk – clean up each spring for downed branches, and maintenance
- Pollinator Garden – organizes clean up and maintenance
- Bake Sale – contacting bakers since 2019. She emails bakers twice before a sale. After a sale, she sends a thank you letter that is put on several Facebook pages. Hilary will coordinate the November 2026 bake sale, but then needs someone to take over.

Pollinator Garden: Six people worked September 30th. The bottom half of the garden is put to bed.

New Business:

Conference Recap: Laura attended the ARSL conference (Association of Rural and Small Libraries) in Alabama recently. Two of the sessions were about Friends groups. One was a talk about turning supporters (who attend events, donate occasionally) into stakeholders (advocate, recruit others, take ownership). Takeaways were to have a strong mission statement, include how money is spent in your by-laws, and consistent communication. Match people's interests with opportunities to contribute and lead.

The second session was a roundtable discussion about Friends and Foundations. Some ideas to find new members included finding people in transition with time on their hands (newly retired, just moved to town). Have a coffee and doughnuts time for parents after school drop-off in the morning. Hold a program as a fundraiser.

There was also discussion about fundraising and grant opportunities

- Walmart Spark Good
- Giving Tuesday (December 1st this year)
- Library Giving Day (next one is in April)
- Candid, formerly GuideStar – helps find grants
- Dollar General grants

Dissemination of Agenda and Minutes: Allegra is looking for a better way to send out the agenda and minutes each month. Discussion was that Substack is not the best alternative to email. Estelle researched and recommended looking at Givebutter or Zeffy. Both are CRM (customer relationship manager) apps. She has cleaned up some of the bounced emails from Google.

Friends Calendar: So that the board can know when important events are occurring each year, Candy recommended that the Friends use a calendar that all can access. Estelle will research. Google calendar was discussed. Board members would need login credentials.

How are we doing: Lengthy discussion about the need for increased membership and volunteer participation. It's important that everyone talk about the Friends in their daily interactions with others.

FOBPL Candidates: Because there are no candidates for either Treasurer or Secretary, as well as enough board members to round out the slate, the Annual Meeting will have to be put on hold until people come forward to run. Laura asked if the Friends could elect officers after board members are voted in, instead of the officer title being on the annual meeting ballot. She said that is what happens with Library Trustees; people run for trustee in March. Then at April's meeting, officers are elected among the board by the board members. The By-Laws would need to be changed for this to happen; By-Laws state "all officers shall be nominated and elected at an annual meeting."

A "crisis letter" will go out as soon as possible to the membership. Sue volunteered to do this.

Meeting adjourned 7:04pm

Next regular meeting: Thursday, November 5, 2026 5:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Clerkin